



# Unit 4

## The Importance of Training & Development in the Workplace

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Appreciate the benefits of employee training and development
- ✓ Evaluate and identify the assessment of training and training needs

## Unit 4

# The Importance of Training & Development in the Workplace

## What is Training?

Training is the teaching and/or learning activities undertaken for the purpose of helping employees of an organisation acquire and reproduce new or developed knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes needed by that organisation. It is aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of employees. With this, the organisation will also benefit.

Training is one of the best ways of helping employees work more effectively. It is a vital task in people management, and organisations must undertake it.

Training encompasses any activities related to teaching or learning that help employees attain more skills, knowledge and abilities in order to perform their jobs more effectively. It also encompasses attitudinal training.

Training equips employees with the proper skills and knowledge which will contribute to organisational efficiency and it enables them to cope with any changes in the work environment. Managers must also be properly trained to deal with environmental changes. In some cases technology advances so rapidly that skills can become outdated and new training is necessary.

## Objectives of Training

The aim of training all employees is to help the organisation meet its objectives by increasing the value of its major resource - its employees. Armstrong (2001) mentions three particular training objectives:

- *To develop the competences of employees and improve their performance.*
- *To help people grow within the organisation in order that, as far as possible, its future needs for human resources can be met from within the organisation.*
- *To reduce the learning time for employees starting in new jobs on appointment, transfer or promotion and ensure that they become fully competent as quickly and economically as possible.*

Cost-effective training can be achieved through clear objectives for employee training. These objectives should describe precisely what the employees must demonstrate after the training. This will show the trainers whether their methods work or not. Without this criterion, which is used to judge the effectiveness of the training, it is not possible to know for sure whether the training has been effective or not. Learning objectives should meet the following criteria:

- 1) They must be expressed in learner-oriented ways. This can be done by explaining what the

learners should be able to do after the training, including certain knowledge and skills.

- 2) Be as specific and clear as possible about the performance expected of the learners, the standards required from them and the conditions of attendance.
- 3) Try to achieve the training in the time specified and allow sufficient time for both the trainer and the learner to achieve the training goals.
- 4) The language used must be clear and describe explicitly what the trainees must do.

Certain learning objectives can still be found in published training manuals. For example, an objective for a management training course might be as follows: 'To familiarise employees with the principles of effective management.' It would be almost impossible to use this type of criterion as the basis for effective measurement of this learning activity. It is far too broad a description.

A better way of phrasing the objective would be as follows: 'In this training programme employees will be able to identify and define principles of effective management and be able to use real examples from practice and personal experience.' With the clear and explicit wording of this objective it would be possible for effective learning to take place.

Despite what is mentioned above, it is in fact easier to formulate objectives that can be easily assessed for some subjects than for others. For certain activities such as computer skills, driving, carpentry, cooking and the like, it is much easier to define objectives in measurable terms. With training programmes such as management, this is a more difficult task, although approaches such as interviewing and chairing meetings are two of the simpler ones. For more complex topics it is better to break them down into separate objectives. Only after the training objectives have been outlined can the next stages of the process be addressed. Then certain questions will need to be asked. For example, what form will the training take? Who will conduct any particular training? What exactly will the contents be? What methods should be used?

## Benefits of Employee Training and Development

Organisations can be transformed with proper training and professional development courses for all employees. These will give employees extra skills which will help them increase their productivity and achieve higher job satisfaction, which will result in a better performance in the organisation as a whole. Situational training is also necessary as it allows employees to learn skills to make informed decisions in a timely manner that benefit customers and the organisation. This situational training may be provided by a supervisor, via employee-to-employee training, or by the HR department itself. There are a number of reasons why supervisors conduct training for employees. These include:

- Increased levels of morale and job satisfaction among employees.
- Increase in (employee) motivation.
- More efficient processes which will ultimately result in financial gain.

- Innovation in strategies and products.
- Reduction of employee turnover.
- A higher ability to adapt to new technologies and systems.
- An improved image for the company.
- Risk management training which will include the elimination of discrimination, sexual harassment, etc.

## Assessment of Training Needs

### What, Why, Where and How?

A training needs assessment must be made before any training programmes are developed. This will optimise the benefits to employees and keep costs down. The person providing the training, be they a manager, supervisor or another trainer, must first carry out a needs assessment.

### What is a Training Needs Assessment?

Training needs assessments are a means of identifying the educational programmes or activities that must be provided to ensure that employee productivity is improved.

### Why Have a Training Needs Assessment?

- To determine the specific needs of the employees to enable them to work faster and better.
- To determine whether the training will have the desired effect on productivity and cost.
- To distinguish between training and organisational issues.

### How is a Training Needs Assessment Performed?

Training needs assessments can be carried out individually or in combination with one another. Several methods should be contemplated in order to see the 'big picture'. The ultimate decision on which method to use is made by the organisation.

Things that must be done:

- 1) Management Meetings:** Supervisors and managers are more intimately involved with planning projects and have more awareness of the future of the company. Because of this, they know what is needed. Their knowledge of their employees' abilities, strengths and weaknesses is essential for helping them reach the next level or equipping them with the skills for new projects in the pipeline.
- 2) Meetings with Employees:** It is important for supervisors to gain information from employees regarding the issues they are facing and how they feel their jobs might be made easier and more efficient. During this process it is important for supervisors to ensure that employees express what they need rather than what they may want.

- 3) **Conduct Surveys:** Surveys are an efficient way of obtaining information quickly as many people can be surveyed in a short period of time. Asking employees to express their needs on paper can also be more informative as people are sometimes embarrassed to admit certain things in front of others.
- 4) The surveys should be conducted as a questionnaire. The questions might be close-ended (only a Yes or No response is required) or open-ended (employees must give reasons and more details in their answers). The close-ended questions are usually very easy to organise as the answers are limited. The open-ended answers will allow employees to provide more information that might include new ideas or concepts that management may not have originally considered. It is usually best practice to include both types of questions.
- 5) **Focus Groups:** Focus groups are useful for small group communication. Because of their size, it is easier for the supervisor or assessor to uncover more details about the people in the group. Brainstorming is a good means of eliciting new ideas, including ideas about what type of training might be needed. The timing is also important. A good timeframe is about 90 minutes, as this enables the participants to become comfortable with one another and the assessor and begin to feel free to express themselves. These focus groups might be held on a one-off basis or more regularly depending on the time available.
- 6) **Review of Organisational Goals and Mission Statement:** Considering the organisation's past is valuable, as is contemplating its future. This may reveal important information for the scheduling of training. The company needs to look at how the employees are currently working and what they might need to learn or know as the company grows and changes.

There are six steps to identifying organisational training needs:

**Step 1:** Think about what employees' needs are.

**Step 2:** Create surveys that employees must fill out with both open-ended and close-ended questions. Also, provide some statements that they must think very carefully about. For example: I could perform better and more efficiently if.....

**Step 3:** Organise focus groups.

**Step 4:** Have a second meeting (or more, if needed) with the employer to evaluate the feedback from the surveys and the focus groups.

**Step 4:** Create a customised training plan that suits the organisational and employee needs.

**Step 6:** Implement the training.

## Identifying Training Needs

The training needs assessment below is best carried in small-to-medium-sized companies. It will give management a clear idea of what programmes to implement for groups of employees as it will enable a quick assessment of the training needs.

1. The facilitator convenes in a conference room all employees who do the same type of job. The training will require a whiteboard or charts.
2. Each employee must then write ten of (what they believe to be) their most important training needs. Ask them to be as specific as possible.
3. Understand that further training may be required as team-building and effective communication are quite broad topics. More specific topics may include how to give clear feedback, and methods of resolving conflicts with co-workers.
4. The facilitator writes the employees' training needs on the board as they mention them. It may be necessary to double-check through further questioning that these needs are not being duplicated.
5. The employees should then vote for the most immediate needs and perhaps place them in order of priority. By writing down the number of votes per need mentioned, you can then decide which ones are the most important. You can use sticky dots or just write the numbers next to each need.
6. Make sure someone is taking notes of the meeting to keep a record of all the important points.
7. It will be necessary to schedule another session to assess and evaluate the information.
8. Schedule another session to brainstorm the required outcomes from the first few training sessions that have identified the needs.
9. Training needs assessment is usually more complicated than the process set out above but the latter is quite useful for a simple training needs assessment.
10. Make sure you fulfil the commitments made by the training needs assessment process.

The long-term profitability of an organisation depends on the quality of employee training and on putting that training to good use. Investing in proper training for employees is a sound investment, as is the hiring and retention of quality people. Training should be provided across all departments and for all employees, not just new ones. Those already employed need training to help them adjust to changing work environments and changing job requirements. This increases productivity and effectiveness, thus benefiting the organisation.

## Training Designers and Providers

Training does indeed concern all staff members of an organisation, as it is a vital part of work and requires the collaboration of everyone in the company. Managers or management advisors and supervisors are responsible for the supervision of many training systems. On-the-job training, coaching and the provision of distance learning are all aspects of their jobs. Management development advisors can be relied upon to give presentations, facilitate learning or assist supervisors in the process of training in the workplace.

It is usually the permanent higher-level employees who are charged with training others in an organisation. Increasingly it is managers, both HR managers and other managerial staff, who provide training for other employees. These staff members therefore need to be properly trained. It is important to understand that someone who knows how to do a job doesn't necessarily know how to teach it. This is why it is essential to train managers if they are to train other employees. Incorporated work and training systems can only be effective if everyone in an organisation uses the same philosophy and the same practising principles.

## The Training Process

Training process steps are:

- Working toward the organisational objectives
- Doing a needs assessment analysis
- Detecting gaps
- Agreement on the training objectives
- Choosing the trainees
- Choosing training methods
- Deciding on the evaluation means
- Administering the training
- Evaluating the training

Ask these questions before deciding on what training strategy should be used:

- Who are the company's customers?
- Why do customers buy from the company?
- Who are the competitors?
- How do the competitors serve the market?
- What competitive advantages do the competitors enjoy?
- What parts of the market have the competitors ignored?
- What strengths and weaknesses does the company have?
- What social trends are arising that will affect the organisation?

Formulating a training strategy is necessary in order to answer a couple of critical questions:

1. What is your business?
2. What should your business be?

Answering these questions as clearly as possible will make it easier for a company to identify its mission and company vision, thereby identifying the training needs.

Training needs can be assessed by analysing three human resource areas. Assessments must be done for:

- The organisation as a whole,
- The features of the jobs, and
- The needs of all the individuals within the organisation.

Analysing these will offer answers to the following questions:

- Where specifically is training needed?
- What exactly must an employee learn in order to be more productive?
- Who needs to be trained?

To begin with, it is important to analyse the current position of the organisation and how it works. It is also necessary to assess the abilities of all employees in their specific roles. The company must have a five-year plan and know what it wants to achieve in that time. When all of the above have been done, it will be easier to identify the required training programmes.

It is necessary for the company to commit the finances necessary to put these training programmes in place and ensure they are carried out. Without this commitment the company will probably not achieve its five-year goals. Concentrate resources where they are needed and use an audit to uncover specific areas for which training is needed. This audit will identify what skills are available to the company at this moment and what skills will be needed to achieve future objectives. Discrepancies between the skills available now and those anticipated in the future will show where training is needed.

### Selecting Trainees

When the required type of training has been identified, the next step is to choose who will be trained. This is an important decision for all businesses, especially small businesses. The selection of employees to be trained should be made very carefully as considerable expense will be incurred, especially if the people who have been trained leave for another job.

It is important to select training programmes that consider the capacity for employees to be motivated by the training and to use what they learn as effectively as possible. Efficient use of resources is essential. If any employee fails in the selected programmes it will cost the company both time and money and will be detrimental to the employee. This is where the right selection comes into play, as mentioned above.

### Training Goals

The training programme goals must match the needs identified by the assessment process. These goals must be clear with regard to the behaviour and skills that are to be changed through training. They must also correlate to the mission statement of the company and address the strategic plan. It is advisable to allow employees to contribute to setting the goals as this often increases the likelihood of success. It will also help if the goals incorporate milestones to give the employees an idea of where they are and to guide

them to where the company wants them to go in the future.

## Training Methods

Types of training methods include on-the-job and off-the-job practices. Determining whom to train, what programmes to use, and the reasons why it is important to train will tell you what training methods to use.

**On-the-Job Training** is delivered while employees go about their regular jobs. This is a good way to ensure that time is not lost while they are learning, and it includes items such as job instructions, apprenticeships, orientation, and coaching, etc. The contents and plan of the training programme must be given to the employees. A timetable must be set, including evaluation times to let employees know how they are progressing.

**Off-the-Job Techniques** include conferences, case studies, lectures, laboratory training (if appropriate) and films. These can be expensive; therefore, small business in particular must be careful about what they choose.

**Orientations** are for new employees. The first days on the job are crucial to the success of new employees. This point becomes clear if one considers the fact that 60% of employees who leave a company quit in the first ten days. During orientation training the following topics must be stressed:

- The company's history and mission.
- The central members of the organisation.
- The key members in any department, and how the department helps achieve the company's mission.
- Rules and regulations for personnel.

Both written and verbal presentations are used by companies in order to stress these points. Orientations are also conducted on a one-to-one basis, especially in smaller businesses. It is vital to ensure that the new employee knows and understands his/her new place of employment.

**Lectures** are orations or verbally expressed presentations. They are the best method to use when there is a lot of material to be covered and a lot of people in the audience. This method is more cost-effective than teaching or training employees individually. However, lectures are not necessarily the most effective way of training people. It can be difficult to ascertain whether the audience understands what is being presented and how much they understand. Some people may only understand a little and be left undertrained, and others may be lost completely.

**Role-playing and simulation** are techniques used to depict realistic situations in which the employees are required to make decisions and discuss the effects of and possible solutions to these decisions later. Role-playing can be a very effective technique. This particular method is very cost-effective and, as such, is

often used in marketing and management.

**Audio-Visual Methods** include films, television and DVDs. The use of these sources is very effective as a way of learning because they can show real-life situations in a very short time. The Audio-Visual Method, however, does not allow for questions or interaction with the speaker and is therefore a somewhat limited method.

**Job Rotation** engages the employees in many different job areas. This allows the employees to experience the tasks associated with different jobs as they learn a little about everything. It is the most common method for training people for supervisory roles and is also a good method for small businesses to use.

**Apprenticeships** are also known as “traineeships”. This includes a contract between an employer and an employee whereby the employee (or apprentice) learns skills on the job for a particular trade or occupation. The apprentice works with a senior skilled worker who oversees the training and it usually lasts for at least a year and often more.

**Internships and Assistantships** are opportunities offered to employees who are then called ‘interns.’ They work in a company for a fixed period of time ranging from one week to a year. Internships or assistantships include both classroom and on-the-job training and are normally used to train prospective managers or marketing personnel.

**Programmed Learning** is a method whereby information is broken into sections, enabling the employees to learn at their own pace and test themselves. This method of teaching and learning is based on taking small steps, going at one’s own pace and receiving immediate feedback. Computer instruction and interactive videos are very useful in this regard. The teacher or instructor only really needs to be present for the first part, the introduction, after which the employees can take things at their own pace. This method may not be easily available for small businesses, however.

**Laboratory Training** is provided for small groups and usually for upper and middle management trainees. It enables them to foster a spirit of teamwork and a better ability to interact with management and their peers. This method can be expensive but is also used by small businesses.

### Training Administration

Following through and ensuring objectives are met is an important part of the training process. Before training begins, it is important to consider certain matters such as:

- Location
- Facilities
- Accessibility
- Comfort
- Equipment
- Timing

The training is more likely to be successful if these questions are considered carefully. A successful training programme administrator must take these steps:

- Clearly define the organisational objectives.
- Determine the needs of the training programme.
- Define training goals.
- Develop training methods.
- Decide who is to be trained.
- Decide who will provide the training.
- Run the training.
- Assess the training programme.

By taking these steps the administrator can develop effective training programmes and help ensure that the organisation retains qualified, productive employees who are happy in their jobs. Of course, the follow-on effect will be the success of the organisation.

Small businesses receive specific types of benefits from the training and advancement of their workers. These benefits include:

- Increased productivity.
- Reduced employee turnover.
- Improved efficiency resulting in financial gains.
- Less need for supervision.

If employees are trained to become more valuable to the organisation, they will also reap the rewards of greater self-worth and dignity and generally feel better about themselves and life. They will also receive more material gains, such as incentives and/or other benefits, with their increased productivity. The achievement of personal and company goals will result in further satisfaction for the employees.

Training employees and increasing their development are good management practices. They are also a good risk management tactic.

Below are several issues that may indicate a need for employee training and development:

- Employees requesting training
- Employee survey results
- Evaluation deficiencies
- Individual development plans
- Law and regulation changes
- A need to develop new leaders
- New employees
- New equipment

- New managers
- New programmes
- New technology
- Reassignment
- Safety issues

Unfortunately, many organisations are cutting costs, with a detrimental effect on learning and training courses. This is despite the fact that the need for training employees has actually increased. The good news is that there are numerous relatively inexpensive methods of training. These methods have emerged from the need for inexpensive training for organisations. One approach is to pay employees to study or train while they are on leave. This will keep them satisfied and give them time to develop their skills, which will in turn benefit the company.

There are five major benefits of this type of training:

- 1) Impact on the Bottom Line:** As mentioned above, successful employee training will benefit the company because employees' performance will improve and the business will benefit.
- 2) Staff Retention:** The right training will ensure a higher level of staff retention and this, in turn, will save the company money because there will be no need to spend money on recruiting new people to replace the ones who leave. This also saves on management time that is also spent on recruiting. Since this is the case, it is obvious that organisations understand that employees are their prime asset and will bring increasing returns to the company if properly trained.
- 3) Quality and Productivity Improvement:** The right training will increase the quality of an organisation's services. Hence, identifying the needs and deciding on the right training are important first steps.
  - With the right training, the company will increase:
  - Accuracy and efficiency.
  - Good work safety practices.
  - Excellent customer service.
- 4) The Flow-on Effect:** The benefits received through the right training will almost always flow through to all the other levels of a company. This will increase business success and reduce costs by:
  - Decreasing wasted time and materials.
  - Decreasing maintenance costs of machinery and other equipment.
  - Decreasing workplace accidents, thereby leading to lower insurance premiums.
  - Decreasing recruitment costs through higher retention of staff and internal promotion of skilled staff.
  - Decreasing absenteeism.

- All these lead to a generally satisfied, productive and innovative workforce. As mentioned in Unit 1, human capital, i.e. the employees, is an organisation’s biggest asset. Respecting, appreciating and investing in your workforce will bring success and financial returns to your company.

**5) Remaining Competitive:** To remain competitive, especially in a global market, businesses must always look at changing their work practices and also their infrastructures. Technology is important but not as important as the people who work for an organisation. Economies are becoming more and more service-oriented and it is the human capital, the employees, that provides the long-term sustainable success of an organisation. Properly trained staff will have the ability to manage new business strategies and improve procedures and customer services. Obviously, this will positively affect the organisation’s profits and also set the standard for future recruitment and quality assurance practices.

Other aspects that will be positively affected are:

- Staff morale and satisfaction levels.
- Inter-staff communication and leadership.
- Time management.
- Customer satisfaction.

It is crucial to understand how investing in skills for employees can benefit the business, increase profits and save money or time. It is also crucial to align all training programmes with the organisation’s objectives. Without this, success will be at risk.

### Training vs. Development

Training	Development
1. Training = learning skills and knowledge to do a particular job successfully. It increases job skills.	1. Development = the growth of an employee in all respects. It also shapes attitudes.
2. The term “Training” generally = passing on specific skills to operative workers and employees.	2. The term “development” = the overall growth of the executives.
3. Training is focused on maintaining and improving current job performances. As such, it is a short-term perspective.	3. Executive development involves developing competencies and skills for future performance. As such, it deals with long-term perspectives.
4. Training is job-focused in nature.	4. Development is career focused in nature.
4. The role of a trainer or supervisor is crucial in training.	4. All development is “self-development.” The executive must have internal motivation for self-development.

Human resource development is a vital HRM function that entails not only training and development but also individual career planning and certain developmental activities. Organisational development and performance assessment and activities that stress the importance of training and development needs are also vital.

In order to develop and teach effective training programmes, it is imperative for instructors to have an understanding of basic human learning behaviour. They must also know what learning skills the employees already possess in order that the latter might learn new information effectively.

Understanding learning behaviours will enable the instructor to properly develop the training programmes and choose the right process of teaching. If the training programme has been well thought-out and developed, the employees are more likely to learn well and apply that learning to their jobs.

The ADDIE Model of developing training programmes is able to expand to a wide range of learners. It provides guidelines for building effectual courses. It does this in five phases:

- Assess
- Design
- Develop
- Implement
- Evaluate

During the developmental stage of a training programme, the ADDIE System can be quite effective when all the phases have been properly implemented. After the programme has been taught it is then validated and its success considered.

One can tell whether a programme has reached its intended goals by evaluating and validating whatever training took place and viewing the results. This is an extremely important step in the development of any training programme. Any information obtained from evaluating the results of training will help reveal whether and where any changes need to take place. The correct type of training will prepare the employees with suitable skills and knowledge to contribute effectively to the organisation and to deal with any changes that might occur within the work environment.

### Standard Areas of Employee Training

- 1) Communications:** Because of the diversity of the modern- day workforce, a wide variety of languages and customs will probably be found in most workplaces.
- 2) Computer Skills:** Computer skills are almost certainly a necessity for any administrative and office tasks.
- 3) Customer Service:** It is vital that employees understand and meet the needs of customers. This is

especially true in today's global marketplace.

- 4) **Diversity:** Diversity training aims to equip employees with an understanding of how different people have different views. Methods are used to teach employees to value this diversity.
- 5) **Ethics:** In today's world, people expect corporate social responsibility. With the diversity in the workplace, employees bring with them different values to the organisation.
- 6) **Human Relations:** Misunderstandings and therefore conflicts can sometimes occur in workplaces due to increased levels of stress. Proper training to help avoid or resolve any misunderstandings that may arise is of benefit to everyone.
- 7) **Quality Initiatives:** Basic training regarding quality concepts and guidelines are essential to any organisation. Thus, training would include total quality management, quality circles and benchmarking.
- 8) **Safety:** Occupational health and safety is a major component of safe workplaces, especially those involving heavy equipment, chemicals or continuous repetitive activities. It can also be useful for avoiding other personal safety issues.
- 9) **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment training is, unfortunately, necessary and includes careful descriptions of the organisation's policies, especially with regard to inappropriate behaviour. Sexual harassment usually affects women (although it can sometimes affect men as well), but these policies (and laws) are intended to protect everyone.

## Assessing the Cost Effectiveness of Training

The question to ask after training has been provided is as follows: "Has the training had the desired effect on individual employees and the organisation as a whole that it was intended to have?"

Sometimes it can be difficult to properly assess training programmes, in particular in the management development area. There are certain principles to follow when evaluating training and development activities. Hessling (1966) explains the need to be knowledgeable about the stakeholders in the organisation and to assess the results of training in terms of goals achieved by the participants, managers, customers and any other groups involved.

Data sources include:

- questionnaires or surveys filled out by participants and their managers
- feedback before and after the events (over a 12-month period at least), showing any improvements
- surveys to find out the morale, environment and attitudes with appropriate questions (again, before and after, over a one-year period)

- information on any improvements, changes to output or service quality data before and after
- testing of trainees at the end of programmes and later to evaluate learning retention
- interviews with trainees and their managers, staff and customers to clearly assess what improvements have been achieved.

It doesn't matter whether the training is done internally or externally: receiving feedback from staff is vital. The questions to ask include:

1. To what extent has the training met the specific needs of work for which it was intended?
2. Do any changes need to be made in future training?
  - a) Was any material included that has since been identified as limited or of no value?
  - b) Was any material omitted that has now been identified as being necessary?
  - c) How suitable were the training methods for learning purposes?

Correct judgements can only be made after a certain period of time, when line managers and employees have gained some perspective about their work performance after training.

### Further Reading:

- ✓ *Blessing Adegoke (2020), Effect of Training on Employees' Productivity in Public Service Organisation*
- ✓ *Nick Wilton (2019), An Introduction to Human Resource Management*