

Understanding Training – The HR Perspective

How can an organisation be sure that training is worthwhile?

Rather than asking whether you can afford to train your staff, the real issue is that you can't afford not to! There are many reasons why learning is essential for every organisation:

- The world is changing faster than ever before
- Products and services are evolving every day
- Customers expectations are increasing relentlessly
- Competitors are getting more aggressive
- Finally, your own staff expect and deserve to be learning at work to keep their skills marketable, and to avoid stagnating.

So, keeping the skills of your people as sharp as possible will be a good way to keep them future-proof. Unlike computers, people don't necessarily end up obsolete! In fact, technology is a good example of the importance of training as it has created enormous gaps and gulfs in age terms. Those in their fifties may be less technically confident than those in their twenties. This can create tensions in the workplace, as the older people are no longer the ones with the most relevant experience. To counter this, organisations have to ensure that they develop their people throughout their working lives, and individuals have to take responsibility for their own learning – to draw on personal experience from work and 'real life'.

It isn't always cost effective to train your own people rather than buy in experience and knowledge. For many smaller companies it may be crucial to have skilled staff immediately. They may simply not have the resources to train people over a period of time.

Training today is all about anticipating what sorts of skills people will need in the future that are different from today. That's why it's essential for HR managers to stay closely involved in the future plans and aims of the organisation.

When we think of training we usually imagine a 'lecture' scene, and classroom training certainly has its place in bringing people together to share experiences and learn together. This sort of 'off-the-job' training can allow people to reflect and develop away from the immediate pressures of the job, and can also be fun, as well as helping to shift a mindset of an organisation.

But learning needn't be confined to the 'classroom' or training course. In fact, the most effective learning often takes place on the job. Having said that, team leaders and HR managers can help to shape the learning process to help people make the most of their experience. Facilitation is increasingly an essential tool to support learning in the workplace. Team leaders can involve their staff in reviewing tasks, sharing ideas, and

supporting each other. All of which contributes to practical learning and skill development.

Professional trainers can ensure their efforts are worthwhile basically by REALLY UNDERSTANDING the business they are in: the performance, the strategy, the competitive position (all with training in mind). A trainer should get to know the culture – what's important to the organisation and why. Trainers should also get to grips with how particular people learn and how they feel about the company and their jobs. In a nutshell, do your homework about the organisation, and stay close to the people. Lose your empathy and you lose your license to operate. To dispel this myth training needs a more robust and results focused approach. To keep training relevant, we have to bring a hard edge to a 'soft' topic.

What is the future of training with the entry of the Internet ?

People in training and development could be better at designing learning solutions using all available sources including the Internet/intranet. It's important to be technically capable but it's even more important that trainers have to retain the ability to talk to, listen to and understand people; and then be able to advise them.

Continuous change, ambiguity and technological advancement are all hallmarks of today's organisations; but person-to-person training remains critical.

It is the endeavor of the careersindia research team to bring to you the contemporary developments in the field of Human Resources. These articles are published papers obtained by scanning the web extensively. This month's article is originally by Paul Swift BAA (owners of Heathrow and Gatwick in the UK).