

**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – LECTURE 9**

**CHAPTER 9 – TRAINING FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE**

**LESSON 9**

How Can Strategic Employee Training Improve an Organization?

Almost everyone who has ever worked has participated in a training program. A company's organized attempt to assist employees acquire job-related knowledge, abilities, and attitudes called training. 1 The vast majority of companies offer training programs, which come in a variety of forms: large group lectures given by an expert, on-the-job training delivered by a supervisor, simulations guided by a computer program, small-group projects coordinated by an executive, and online discussions with colleagues across the country. The defining characteristic of training is that employees undergo an organized experience that enables them to acquire knowledge that will improve their performance at work. We typically link education with learning. For instance, when we were younger and in elementary school, we acquired information, which comprises many facts and ideas. We acquired abilities that enable us to accomplish things like as tossing a ball, utilizing a computer, and solving geometry issues. We also adopted new perspectives, such as (hopefully) the notion that school is both enjoyable and advantageous. When our experiences alter our knowledge, abilities, or attitudes, we refer to this process as learning. Consequently, learning is a change in what we know, what we can do, or what we believe as a result of our experiences. Although informal learning approaches can be effective, they are not always suitable. What if new employees at a factory that manufactures car parts were required to educate themselves on metal stamping independently? This procedure involves the use of heavy and potentially hazardous machinery to form metal objects such as pipes. If an employee were hurt due to the firm's failure to train him on how to use the equipment, the company may be held accountable. Formal training is also advantageous since it assures that everyone learns the same things, such as the most effective approach to complete a given work.

### **1.1. Learning Objective 1 - How Is Employee Training Strategic?**

#### **Differentiation Versus Cost Leadership Strategy**

A cost leadership plan, incorporating both the Bargain Laborer and Loyal Soldier techniques, necessitates that employees possess the information, abilities, and attitudes that contribute to cost reduction and efficiency improvement. A local restaurant attempting to compete on the basis of low-cost menu items, for instance, must have personnel who know how to work quickly and with minimal waste. In other words, they must possess the necessary knowledge and skills to quickly make and serve food. In addition to believing in efficiency and cost reduction, employees should be enthusiastic about working rapidly. Therefore, training for staff at this restaurant should not only develop their knowledge and skills so they can work fast without wasting materials, but also convince them of the necessity of doing so. By educating their personnel on quality control principles and procedures, many businesses have become more efficient, consequently decreasing expenses and increasing profits.

A differentiation approach, including both the Free Agent and Committed Expert techniques, necessitates that employees be able to provide or create products or services that are superior to those supplied by competitors.

#### **Internal Versus External Labor Orientation**

Additionally, training initiatives must be linked with the organization's emphasis on internal versus external labor orientations. A company with an internal labor orientation aims to develop its own talent, whereas a company with an external labor orientation attempts to acquire already-developed talent. These distinct perspectives determine the amount of time and money a corporation will invest in training. Organizations with an internal labor orientation are willing to invest time and money in training current employees, whereas companies with an external orientation are more likely to hire new workers to replace vacancies. The distinction between internal and external labor orientation can also manifest at the organizational level when a business decides whether to train its staff for new business opportunities or to purchase a new company.

**1.2. Learning Objective 2 - What Are Key Principles for Getting Benefits from Training?**

Training can strengthen employees' commitment and motivation, improve their performance, and assist the firm in achieving its strategic goals. In order to obtain these three advantages, training must result in both learning and transfer. When trainees apply what they have learned in training to their work, training is transferred. Employees must first recall what they have learnt or sustain an attitude over time for transfer to occur. For instance, if a trainer demonstrates to a new employee how to operate a piece of manufacturing equipment, the employee must retain this information once training is over. Additionally, the person must use these steps back on the job. How can training be designed to promote transfer and learning? Two key strategies will assist HR professionals in achieving this objective: (1) managers, employees, and HR professionals must collaborate, and (2) businesses must implement a systematic approach for creating, developing, and delivering training.

**Partnership**

To ensure learning and transfer, the first important practice is to operate training as a collaboration between employees, their supervisors, and HR specialists. A cooperation between HR professionals and employees is essential because HR professionals cannot identify the knowledge and skill levels of employees without their assistance. In addition, HR specialists are unlikely to be able to alter the real workplace behavior of employees without management assistance. For instance, if management do not want employees to take the time to work on cost-cutting and quality-control initiatives, then teaching employees on how to manage these projects is unlikely to influence how employees perform their duties or benefit the organization's bottom line.

The conventional model of instructional design begins with a needs analysis, followed by design, delivery, and evaluation. Obviously, the process is never complete because training needs are constantly evolving; hence, another needs assessment will be conducted following evaluation.

The **rapid model of instructional design**. Organizations may utilize this version of the procedure when they need to reduce the amount of time between identifying a need and delivering training. As illustrated by the overlap of the bars, the quick model commences training design while the needs assessment continues. Importantly, training begins prior to the completion of program design, and evaluation is used to modify training as it is produced.

### **1.3. How Are Training Needs Determined?**

This procedure is known as needs assessment, and it takes place in two distinct ways. First, regular needs evaluations may be conducted while training programs are designed and funds are established. This planning procedure necessitates a proactive approach to identifying training requirements and establishing training strategies. Secondly, needs assessments may also be conducted in response to requests for specific training programs. The reactive and proactive techniques are elaborated upon in the following section.

#### **Proactive Needs Assessment**

**Proactive needs assessment** is a method for determining and prioritizing the training programs that a company will develop and provide. Typically, it consists of three independent phases: organization analysis, task analysis, and person analysis. Each stage requires distinct data types.

#### **Organization Analysis**

**Organization analysis** required information regarding the strategic objectives, environment, resources, and features of the business. Using this data, an organization can assess whether certain sorts of training will be beneficial for its personnel and the organization as a whole. As previously said, the organization's strategy is crucial to training decisions since different strategies need varied employee knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. For example, firms that attempt to differentiate themselves from their competitors by superior service are more likely to gain from service-related training courses than those with a cost-cutting approach. The labor orientation of a business helps decide whether training is viewed as an effective means of enhancing employee knowledge and skills.

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**Task analysis** entails determining the work activities done by trainees as well as the knowledge and skills required to complete the tasks effectively. Depending on the task being examined, distinct task analysis methodologies are employed.

There are three common variations of task analysis: competency modeling, cognitive task analysis, and team task analysis.

1. **Competency modeling** resembles task analysis but produces a broader, more worker-focused (rather than task-focused) list of training needs. The cheaper cost associated with adopting a competency model for needs assessment is one of its advantages, as this sort of analysis does not need identifying specific competencies for a given position. In a similar vein, the output of competency modeling may lack sufficient specificity to drive training for a specific position.
2. **Cognitive task analysis** examines the objectives, judgments, and decisions that employees make on the job. Traditional task analysis focuses on observable activities and actions, whereas cognitive task analysis examines the thought processes underlying effective task performance. Experts are required to verbalize their thoughts as they do each phase of the activity. The transcripts of their speech are then evaluated to determine the knowledge and abilities required at each phase.
3. **Team task analysis** include analyzing the task and coordination needs of a group of individuals working toward a common objective. In instances where the performance of interest to the organization is substantially determined by coordinated efforts, team task analysis is essential. Research on the operation of nuclear power plants, for instance, reveals that operating teams must share knowledge and essential responsibilities in order to function well. The knowledge and skills underlying these interactions will be identified through the task analysis of the team. The training will then concentrate on the knowledge and abilities indicated in the team's task analysis, as well as the necessary technical skills.

### **Person Analysis**

Person analysis involves answering three questions:

1. Is training necessary to ensure that employees can perform tasks effectively?
2. If training is needed, who needs the training?
3. Are potential trainees ready for training?

**Person analysis.** A process used to identify who needs training and what characteristics of those individuals will influence the effectiveness of training.

### **Reactive Needs Assessment**

**Reactive needs assessment.** A problem-solving process used to determine whether training is necessary to fix a specific performance problem and, if training is necessary, what training should be delivered.

#### Problem Definition

**Problem definition.** The gap between desired and actual performance.

**Problem definition** begins with identifying a business requirement. When a training request is received, the first thing to ask is if the problem is significant. Companies must establish priorities, and it may be the case that the issue is not sufficiently relevant to the company's existing strategy and objectives to merit allocating the necessary resources to resolve it. If the problem is significant enough, the next question to ask is, "What should be occurring, and how does that differ from what is occurring?" This involves describing the issue as a difference between desired and actual performance.

### **Causal Analysis**

A procedure used to identify the root causes of a performance issue. Once a problem has been identified as a gap, it is crucial to determine its causes. This is achieved via causal analysis. To comprehend the causes, we must question, "Why is this gap present?" The gap could be caused by a lack of knowledge, motivation, feedback, or surroundings. To uncover the root reason of poor performance, human resource specialists investigate what employees do and why.

### **Solution Implementation**

Selecting and executing the best solution or solutions is the final phase. This process includes brainstorming potential interventions, evaluating their effectiveness and efficiency, and ranking them in order of preference.

### **Prioritizing and Creating Objectives**

#### **Determining Priorities**

Frequently, a business recognizes more training needs than can be met given the training budget and the amount of time that employees may spend away from the office.

#### **Creating Objectives**

**Learning objectives** are training's intended individual learning outcomes. An outcome for a veterinary surgeon, for instance, could include knowledge of the anatomy of a certain animal or the ability to use a scalpel to remove cysts. The learning objectives should be utilized to decide the training's content, methodology, and medium (we describe these elements of training in the next section). Learning objectives are beneficial because they provide a basis for selecting training features, provide measurable outcomes that can be used to determine if training was effective, instruct learners on what they should do, and ensure that the same outcomes are achieved even if multiple trainers or sessions are involved.

Effective learning objectives have three components:

1. Performance identifies what the trainee is expected to do or produce.
2. Conditions describe important circumstances under which performance is to occur.
3. Criteria describe acceptable performance in a quantifiable and objective way.

**Organizational objectives** capture the desired outcomes of training for the organization. Examples include higher production, less waste, and enhanced customer service. Specifying the desired organizational outcome of training programs ensures that the training gives value to the organization as a whole and that each program is aligned with the firm's strategy. Consequently, establishing organizational objectives might aid in prioritization. For instance, if a training

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program's purpose is to increase customer happiness, but the company's primary strategic direction is to reduce costs, then the training program should be given a lesser priority than a program designed to assist cut expenses.

**Training Methods**

**Training methods.** How training material is arranged and organized for the student. Training methods are the many means of structuring content and motivating learners to learn.

**Training methods** varying levels of learner engagement during instruction. Passive approaches can be valuable, but they should be employed infrequently without at least one active method. Methods should be chosen primarily based on their utility in achieving the training program's goals.

**Presentation**

The major passive technique of instruction is presentation. A presentation is the direct, non-interactive delivery of knowledge to learners. When combined with active approaches, presentations can aid employees' learning even further. You have likely encountered this in school. Listening to a lecture may help you acquire a few facts, but without the opportunity to apply those facts, you forget them.

**Discussions**

Discussions are a more active kind of instruction. Discussions improve trainee participation by facilitating two-way dialogue between the trainer and trainees as well as among trainees. Discussion can help students fulfill a number of objectives:

- Recognize the information they lack but should have.
- Respond to their queries.
- Seek guidance on areas of concern.
- Communicate ideas and build a shared viewpoint.
- Learn about each other as individuals

### **Case Study**

Case analysis is an active technique of teaching in which trainees discuss, analyze, and solve problems based on real or fictitious events. Cases can be used to teach fundamental concepts, boost motivation, and alter attitudes. In most cases, however, the primary purpose is to build proficiency in analysis, communication, and problem-solving. Cases vary in duration and intricacy. Although business schools frequently use lengthy, difficult instances, corporate trainers shy away from them in favor of shorter scenarios.

### **Discovery**

Discovery is an active strategy that entails assigning learners a task that provides ample possibilities to acquire new abilities. For instance, employees may be given access to a new computer software and asked to figure out how to complete their job using the program on their own. Even though this may sound more like learning through exploration than instruction, discovery can be arranged so that job-related abilities can be gained. In essence, discovery is controlled experimenting in a training setting.

### **Role Play**

Each participant performs a role in a simulated situation when trainees engage in role playing. This strategy allows students to practice newly acquired abilities in the training environment. It is most commonly utilized to teach interpersonal and human relations skills to trainees.

### **Simulation**

Simulations are active approaches that replicate the events, processes, and conditions that the learner may encounter on the job. Participating in a simulation enables trainees to experience at least some components of their career in a safe and controlled setting and to develop skills pertinent to those aspects of the job. Pilots, for instance, can be trained using mechanical flight simulators.

## **Modeling**

Behavior modeling is an effective technique that integrates learning ideas from numerous disciplines. As explained in the "How Do We Know?" section, research has repeatedly demonstrated the effectiveness of this strategy for enhancing skills. The technique is straightforward:

The trainer describes important learning aspects.

2. While trainees observe, the trainer or another model does a task.
3. While the trainer observes, trainees practice performance.
4. The trainer provides learners with feedback.

## **On-the-Job Methods**

Training on the job that is effective is structured and systematic. In small-group work settings, structured on-the-job training is an application of behavior modeling. The technique is identical to that outlined in the section on behavior modeling: the trainer explains essential learning elements before performing the task while trainees observe. The students then engage in performance practice while the instructor observes and provides feedback.

## **Training Media**

**Training media** are the ways by which learners receive material and methods. Each of the passive and active training methods outlined can be administered in a variety of ways.

## **Media Requirements**

Research has showed that training delivered via technology (such as computers or videoconferencing) or in-person can be equally successful if it is well-designed. Several studies have demonstrated that technology-delivered training can be more successful than conventional in-person instruction.

## **Cost and Accessibility**

Different training media have varying costs, with technologically advanced media not only being more expensive but also posing potential access issues. It is probable that not all employees will

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be able to use a CD-ROM–delivered computer training course, for instance, if it only operates on high-end PCs with Windows operating systems. It may be inconvenient for employees who do not have high-end computers or who use Apple Macs to participate in training.

**Transfer-Enhancement Techniques**

**Before Training**

An example of a highly structured method for managers to collaborate with employees is through a behavioral contract, which outlines what both parties expect to occur during and after training. A behavioral contract would specify how the employee will apply newly learned information and skills on the job, as well as how the supervisor will support these efforts. Employees should collaborate with their bosses to draft and sign a contract that is acceptable to both parties.

**During Training**

During training, the trainer may employ at least two distinct methods to facilitate transmission. The first strategy is to structure the training such that learners may apply what they've learned back on the job. This can be accomplished by emphasizing broad concepts and altering the contexts in which skills are exercised. For instance, teaching managers to conduct performance evaluations should provide general guidance rather than a rigid, must-follow procedure. The knowledge provided by general rules is adaptable enough to be employed in a range of contexts.

**Relapse prevention training.** A transfer enhancement activity that helps prepare trainees to overcome obstacles to using trained behaviors on the job.

**After Training**

After completion of training, the management and trainee must collaborate to ensure transfer. Managers can employ techniques such as providing positive feedback for skill use, organising practice sessions, facilitating trainee reunions, and publicizing skill use accomplishments. Managers could also consider minimizing job expectations in the first few days after employees return from training to give them time to apply their new skills and knowledge.

### **1.5. Learning Objective 5 - How Do Organizations Determine Whether Training Is Effective?**

Training evaluation is the process used to determine the effectiveness of training programs.

**Training effectiveness** refers to the extent to which trainees (and their organization) benefit as intended from training. The training evaluation process typically involves four steps: (1) determining the purpose of the evaluation, (2) deciding on relevant outcomes, (3) choosing an evaluation design, and (4) collecting and analyzing the data and reporting the results.

#### **Purpose**

The first step in evaluation is to determine the purpose of the evaluation. Most of the reasons to evaluate training fit into three primary categories: (1) provide feedback to designers and trainers that helps improve the training; (2) provide input for decisions about whether to continue or discontinue the training; and (3) provide information that can be used to market the training program.

#### **Outcomes**

The consequences of training can be loosely split into four categories: reactions, learning, transfer, and organizational outcomes. Depending on the objective of the evaluation, these outcomes provide different forms of information on training that are more or less relevant.

#### **Reactions**

Reactions of trainees reveal how trainees felt about training. Did they like it? Did they find it entertaining and valuable? Most institutions require students to submit end-of-semester teacher evaluation forms. Reaction measurements are comparable to these forms. This type of evaluation is beneficial for assessing how learners react to the training material and design, but it is not a reliable indicator of learning.

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**Learning**

Each of information, abilities, and attitudes that comprise learning can be evaluated. Traditional knowledge assessments include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and open-ended tests. It can also be measured using various methods, such as asking trainees to describe the relationships between essential ideas and comparing trainees' beliefs about relationships to those of experts. The usage of desired abilities can be evaluated through scoring role plays, simulations, and behavior-modeling activities. Asking trainees about their ideas and motivation, as well as observing their conduct for indications of the desired attitude, can be used to evaluate their attitudes. If one of the training's goals is to instill in employees the belief that promptness is vital to customers, for instance, trainees could be graded on their promptness in end-of-training activities.

**Transfer**

As we have seen, transfer refers to the application of training knowledge to behavior on the job. To measure transfer, evaluators may interview employees about their own post-training conduct, as well as peers and managers of trainees. Existing records can sometimes be utilized to investigate transfer. For instance, if sales training encourages trainees to offer things with both high and low profit margins, employee sales records can reveal whether real sales progress in this direction.

**Organizational Results** Obviously, organizational results are outcomes that accrue to a group or the entire organization. To evaluate organizational outcomes, we can use basic measures of effectiveness, such as a rise in companywide sales or a decrease in turnover, or we can utilize efficiency metrics, which balance benefits and costs. The results of an organization can be made more informative by considering the resources necessary to attain them. When we compare the costs and benefits of training, we are analyzing the effectiveness of training. Return on investment is a common efficiency metric that is growing in popularity (ROI).

**Training efficiency.** The extent to which the benefits of training exceed the costs of developing and delivering training.

**Return on investment (ROI).** An efficiency measure created by dividing the monetary value of training benefits by the costs of delivering training and multiplying the result by 100

## **Design**

Different evaluation designs acquire data at different times and from different sources. Some evaluation designs provide greater assurance on the results of training, but at the expense of more resources.

## **Post-Test Only**

Post-test only designs are the most prevalent designs utilized by companies. This implies that training outcomes are only measured at the conclusion of the program for the training group. After training, a survey or test is administered to the group, and the findings are analyzed to determine if they match expectations. Post-test-only designs provide little assurance that training caused the observed outcomes. It is feasible, for instance, that the learners already knew the training material. It is also feasible that they acquired this knowledge outside of formal schooling. Despite the minimal confidence provided by this design, it may still be effective if the primary objective of the evaluator is that trainees achieve a given degree of competency. For instance, if the purpose of training is to ensure that assembly-line employees capture all products with a problematic manufacturing flaw, it is less important to determine if training was the cause than it is for all trainees to be able to recognize the defect.

## **Pre-Test and Post-Test with Control Group**

To determine with greater certainty whether training was effective, evaluators can test employees both before and after training (to search for change) and compare trained employees with untrained employees who have similar characteristics (to verify that training caused the change). To ensure the highest level of reliability, personnel should be randomly assigned to either a training group or a control group that does not get training. When random assignment to training and nontraining situations is available, pretraining differences between trained and untrained employees are eliminated, and we can be more confident that changes observed after training are due to the training and not another reason.

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**Results**

After defining the evaluation's aim, outcomes, and methodology, the evaluation can be undertaken. The obtained data must next be examined and reports generated. Depending on the evaluation's goal, the reports may be publicly distributed or merely summarized for the trainer. In any instance, it is essential to reexamine the evaluation's goal and ensure that the report is distributed to the appropriate parties so that the evaluation's findings are utilized as intended.

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**Online Sources**

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- <http://downloadslide.blogspot.com/>
- [http:// www.wiley.com/college/sc/stewart](http://www.wiley.com/college/sc/stewart)

**Progress Check**

1. What kinds of training content are most important for organizations using cost strategies? differentiation strategies?
2. Why do organizations following an internal labor orientation generally offer more training than organizations with an external labor orientation?
3. What are the key differences between the proactive and reactive needs assessment approaches?
4. What are the strengths and weakness associated with the following training methods: presentation, discovery, simulation, and behavior modeling? How can each method be made more effective?
5. Have you ever taken an online course or another form of distance education, such as a correspondence course? How was the experience different from a traditional face-to-face class?
6. What is transfer enhancement, and why is it helpful for employees?
7. Consider the classes you have taken throughout school. How have they been evaluated? What purpose or purposes do you think these evaluations have served?
8. It is often easy to confuse training methods and training media. Consider the human resources course you are currently taking. What are the methods and what are the media being used?



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## SELF EVALUATION TESTS/QUIZZES

### Section A

#### Identification

1. The extent to which the benefits of training exceed the costs of developing and delivering training.
2. An efficiency measure created by dividing the monetary value of training benefits by the costs of delivering training and multiplying the result by 100
3. The extent to which trainees and their organizations benefit as intended from training.
4. Allowing employees a chance to use the skills they learned in training back on the job.
5. A transfer enhancement activity that helps prepare trainees to overcome obstacles to using trained behaviors on the job.
6. An agreement that specifies what the trainee and his or her manager will do to ensure training is effective.
7. Training delivered through computers and network technology.
8. How training content and the associated methods are delivered to the learner.
9. How training content is organized and structured for the learner.
10. Organizations that sell existing training programs or services to develop and deliver training programs.
11. The organization result sought by training.
12. The individual learning outcome sought by training.
13. A process used to determine the underlying causes of a performance problem.
14. The gap between desired and actual performance.
15. A problem-solving process used to determine whether training is necessary to fix a specific performance problem and, if training is necessary, what training should be delivered.



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16. A process used to identify who needs training and what characteristics of those individuals will influence the effectiveness of training.
17. A process used to describe the work activities of employees, including the knowledge and skill required to complete those activities.
18. Environmental factors that support training, including policies, rewards, and the attitudes and actions of management and coworkers.
19. A process used to identify characteristics of the organizational environment that will influence the effectiveness of training.
20. A systematic process for determining and prioritizing the training programs to be developed and delivered by an organization.
21. A process for determining what training to offer and who should be trained.
22. A process used to create training programs in which assessment, design and delivery, and evaluation overlap in time.
23. A process used to create training programs in which needs assessment is followed by design and delivery and then by evaluation.
24. Application on the job of knowledge, skills, or attitudes learned in training.
25. Natural learning that is neither planned nor organized.
26. A change in knowledge, skill, or attitude that results from experience.
27. An evaluative reaction to particular categories of people, issues, objects, or events.
28. Proficiency at performing a particular act.
29. Memory of facts and principles
30. A planned effort to help employees learn job-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes.



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## Answers

1. Training efficiency
2. Return on investment (ROI)
3. Training effectiveness
4. Opportunity to perform
5. Relapse prevention training
6. Behavioral contract
7. e-learning
8. Training media
9. Training methods
10. Training vendors
11. Organizational objective
12. Learning objective
13. Causal analysis
14. Problem definition
15. Reactive needs assessment
16. Person analysis
17. Task analysis



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18. Training climate
19. Organization analysis
20. Proactive needs assessment
21. Needs assessment
22. Rapid model of instructional design
23. Traditional model of instructional design
24. Transfer of training
25. Informal learning methods
26. Learning
27. Attitudes
28. Skills
29. Knowledge
30. Training