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## Training in an Organisation

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### Abstract:

*Training is the systematic modification of behaviour through learning which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience. Learning has been defined by Bass and Vaughan (1998) as a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice or experience. Training is a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose in the work situation is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organisation.*

**Key words:** *Systematic modification, permanent change, attitude, skill behavior, manpower*

### 1. Introduction

Activities which aim at developing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than a knowledge and skill relating to only a limited field of activity. The purpose of education is to provide the conditions essential to young people and adult to develop an understanding of the traditions and ideas influencing the society in which they live and to enable them to make a contribution to it. Smith (1986) says that it involves the study of their own cultures and of the laws of nature as well as the acquisition of linguistic and other skills which are basic to learning, personal development, creativity and communication.

Revans (1997) says that training brings the growth or realization of a person's ability through conscious or unconscious learning. Development programmes usually include elements of planned study and experience, and are frequently supported by a coaching or counseling facility. The fundamental aim of training is to help the organisation achieve its purpose by adding value to its key resource—the people it employs. Training means investing in people to enable them perform better and to empower them to make the best use of their natural abilities. The particular objectives of training are to:

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

### 2. Background to the study

The training philosophy of an organisation expresses the degree of importance it attaches to training. Hamblin (2000) says that some firms adopt a laissez-faire approach, believing that employers will find out what to do for themselves. If this firm suffers skill shortage, it is remedied by recruiting from firms who do invest in training. It is the existence of a large number of laissez-faire firms which explains why in 1985, private sector organisation devoted no more than 0.15% of their turnover, to in-service training. In the same year, employees in West Germany received two and a half times as much off-the-job training as their UK counterparts.

Other companies pay lip-service to training and indiscriminately allocate money to it in the good times. But at hard times, these firms are the first to cut their training budgets.

Organisations with a positive training philosophy understand that they live in a world of skills shortage, especially when demographic forces restrict the flow of qualified young people into the labour market. In hard times, these firms persuade themselves that training is an investment that will pay off. They understand that it may be difficult to calculate the return on that investment, but they believe that the tangible and intangible benefits of training as described earlier will more than justify the cost.

Bass and Vaughan (1998) say that training strategy takes a long-term view of what skills, knowledge and levels of competence employees of the company need. Training philosophy emphasizes that training and development should be an integral part of the management process. A performance management system requires managers to review regularly, with their teams and the individuals,

reporting to them performance in relation to the agreed objective, the factors that have affected performance and the development and training needs that emerge from the analysis. The satisfaction of these needs is a joint process between managers, teams and individuals by means of coaching, counseling and relevant training courses.

### **3. The Learning Process**

Learning is really the core of the training process. When management installs a new training activity, it reasonably expects that through participation in these training employees will exhibit new or changed behavior. Learning can be defined as that human process by which skills, knowledge, habits and attitudes are acquired and utilized in such a way that behavior is modified (Kenney and Reid, 1998).

### **4. Principles of Learning**

Psychologists, primarily through experimentation have developed a number of important principles of learning. These are equally pertinent for application by training directors who administer programmes for classroom instructors who teach employees, and for supervisors who train employees on the job.

### **5. Motivation**

If trainees are not receptive to instruction, if they can see no reason to learn, then a training effort can hardly get off the ground. Adequate motivation is essential to the success of any learning situation. Smith (1986) says that people are goal-oriented in their behavior. They will exert themselves to fulfill a felt need. Learning is effective when the trainees perceive that they can satisfy some goal through participation in a training programme.

There are two kinds of motivations and these are intrinsic and extrinsic.

In intrinsic motivation the work itself is satisfying to the individual who takes pleasure in the work or schooling and derives a feeling of accomplishment upon successful completion. Extrinsic motivation refers to the holding out of incentives or external rewards for the successful completion of the tasks. Such incentives may be "praise" from the boss or the instructor, higher pay, a bonus, prestige, better working conditions etc. Both types of motivation are important to the learning process. However, learning is quite difficult if the external incentives are available but intrinsic motivation is lacking.

The above situation can be illustrated by a college student who has chosen to enroll in an engineering curriculum because the salaries paid to graduate engineers are very good. However, this long-range goal is unlikely to motivate a student to learn mathematics, physics, electronics, solid mechanics and fluid mechanics if he/she dislikes these subjects. He/she may grit his/her teeth and force him or herself to get through these courses, but the learning will be quite painful. Conversely, learning engineering is easy for the student who has the aptitude plus the intrinsic interest in the subject matter.

### **6. Research Methodology**

As the study was qualitative, it mainly applied survey, interview and case study methods. Secondary sources included relevant academic journals, textbooks and publications by employment agencies. The primary sources involved the use of well structured questionnaires administered to 200 randomly selected respondents from Lyons Pvt. Ltd – Tea Leaves making company.

By the nature of their working conditions in an assemble line, each worker is totally confined to his/her area exhibiting the culture of assemble line work, requiring uttermost discipline. Being a qualitative study the data collected were content analysed. The respondents expressed need for assistance from their company in the form of accommodation.

### **7. Knowledge of Results**

The learner also gets motivated if he/she is given results for that makes the learner to know his/her progress. Research experiments have demonstrated that people learn faster when they are informed of their accomplishments. Thus in a training classroom students' examinations should be graded and returned to them so that they can know where they have erred and what they have done correctly. In on-the-job training, the supervisor should inform the employees of their success and failures so that employees can adjust their efforts if necessary. People like to experience a feeling of progress. If an instructor returns examination papers to a class of students with only the raw scores recorded, this knowledge will be meaningless until they are told how all the grades were distributed and how they stand in relation to expected performance. According to Hamblin (2000), learning is facilitated when the trainee has some criterion with which to judge progress.

### **8. Learn by Doing**

Revans (1997) says that it is extremely difficult for a learner simply to listen to a teacher explain how to do something and then be able to do it solely from the explanation. It is actually by performing the task that a student really learns. The greater the number of human senses involved, the more complete is the learning. If one is teaching a physical task, such as operating a machine or sharpening a tool, it is easy to see how practice can be provided. Actually a variety of techniques are possible. Laboratory experiments can be devised. Written problems can be assigned. Case studies and role playing can be utilized. Although not constituting full learning by doing, oral discussion and debate help to strengthen the learning of ideas.

### 9. Why do Organisations undertake Training?

As Kenney and Reid (1988) say, people cannot be brought into an organisation to achieve any kind of common purpose without learning taking place. As a result they will change their behaviour in various ways. The organisation can be described as a learning environment. The most important way in which people learn is through experience in undertaking new tasks or developing skills. But they need to be provided with the right sort of experience and they need help and guidance to make the best use of that experience. A training course could be regarded as a formal way of condensing experience and ensuring that it is channelled in the direction of acquiring the right knowledge, skills and attitudes in the optimum time. This will be the time it takes to ensure that learning is retained and can be translated into appropriate action.

Learning is a natural process, but it is necessary to create conditions in which it can take place effectively. These consist, in the words of Kenney and Reid (1988) of planned training interventions, but they also exist when individuals are helped to make the best use of their own experience and to find out things for themselves. Bass and Vaughan (1998) say that training interventions and helping people to help them work best if they are conducted on the basis of an understanding of learning theory. The four main learning theories are:

- Reinforcement, which in its positive sense involves commending trainees when they have accomplished a task successfully, thus, motivating them to extend their learning. Positive feedback and knowledge of results is an important way of ensuring that learning takes place. The concept of reinforcement has been strongly influenced by Skinner's (1988) conditioning and social engineering theories and although they are sometimes criticized as being simplistic, they continue to have a considerable effect on the design of training programmes.
- Cybernetic and information theories, which, in essence, suggest that feedback, can control people's performance in the same way that a thermostat controls a heating system. Trainees react to cues as the basis for training programmes. If a task can be divided into a number of small parts, each with its own cue or stimulus, the learning of each part can be accelerated by ensuring that trainees concentrate on one easily assimilated piece of learning at a time.
- Cognitive theories describe the way in which people learn to recognize and define problems and experiment to provide solutions. If according to this theory, people can discover things for themselves, they are more likely to retain the skill or knowledge and use it when required to. Cognitive theory is the basis for discovery or "do-it-yourself" learning procedures and it provides the rationale for workshop, participative and case study training, which help people to own the solution as one they have worked out for themselves rather than something they have been forced to accept by an instructor.
- Experiential learning, has been described by Kolh, Rubin and McIntyre (1996) as a four-stage cycle:
  - The actual experience;
  - Observations and reflections on that experience;
  - The formation of abstract concepts and generalisations which explain the experience and determine how it will be applied; and
  - The testing of the implications of the concepts in new situations and a return to the actual experience at the beginning of the cycle.

Every person has his or her own learning style and one of the most important arts that trainers have developed, is to adjust their approaches to the learning styles of the trainees. Trainers have also to help trainees to understand how best they can interpret and benefit from their experience.

### 10. The Learning Curve

Mant (2001) says that when planning and implementing training programmes, one must take account of the phenomenon known as the learning curve. This refers to the fact that it takes time for an inexperienced trainee to achieve a reasonable standard of skill in a task. This is usually called the "experienced worker's standard" (EWS). The standard learning curve is shown below in Figure 1. (A standard learning curve 1).

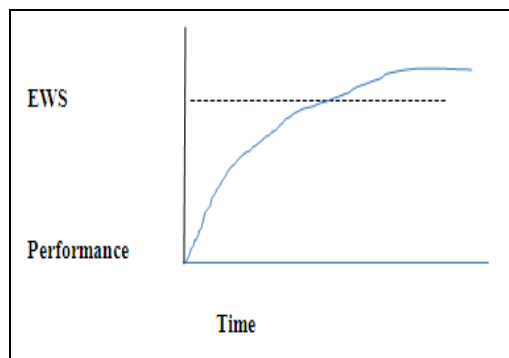


Figure 1: A Standard Learning Curve

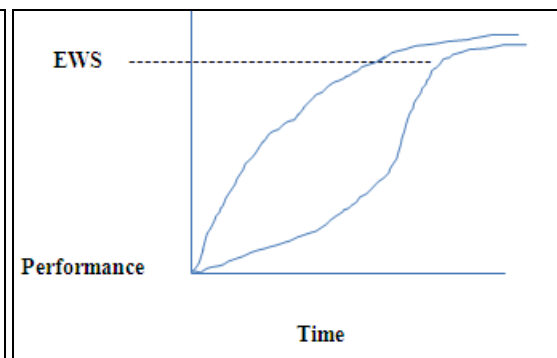


Figure 2: Different Rates of Learning

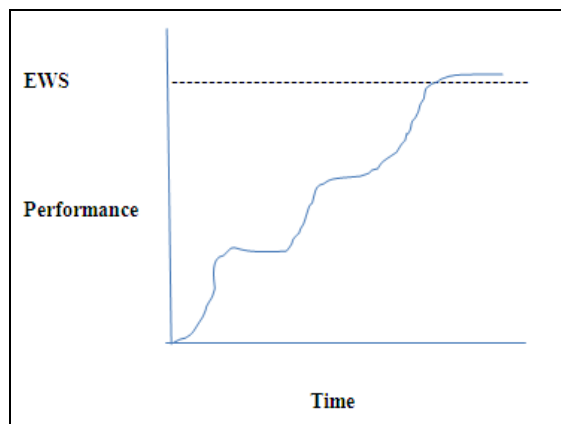


Figure 3: A stepped learning curve

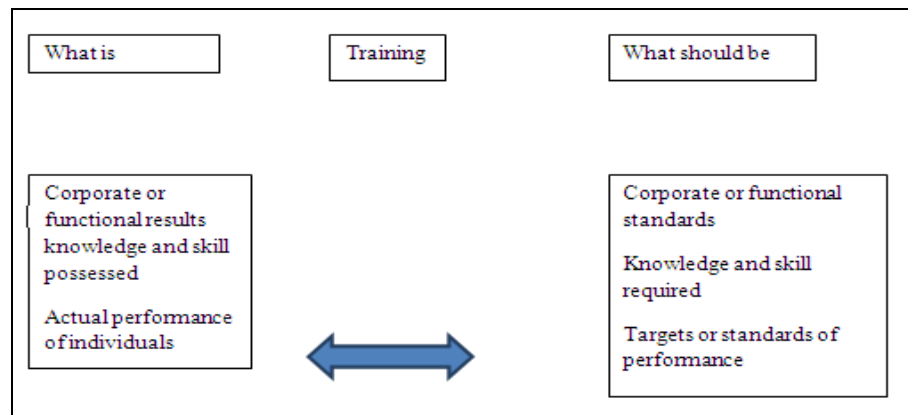


Figure 4: The training gap

Rates of learning vary, depending upon the effectiveness of the training, the natural aptitude of the trainee and the latter's interest in learning. Both the time taken to achieve the expected worker's standard and the speed with which learning takes place at different times, affect the shape of the curve, as shown in Figure 2 (Different rates of learning 2.).

Learning is often stepped with one or more plateau while further progress is halted. This may be because the trainees cannot continually increase their skills or speed of work and need a pause to consolidate what they have learnt. The existence of steps such as those shown in Figure 3 (A stepped learning curve) can be used when planning training to provide deliberate reinforcement periods when newly skills are practised in order to achieve the expected standards. When one plans a training module which describes the training required to acquire a particular skill, it is often desirable to proceed step by step, taking one task at a time, reinforcing it and then progressively adding other parts, consolidating at each stage. This is called the progressive parts-method of training.

### 11. Training Needs Analysis

Mant (2001) says that training needs analysis is concerned with defining the gap between what is happening and what should happen. This is what has to be filled in by training as is exhibited by Figure 4. (The training gap).

It is necessary to avoid falling into the trap of adopting the deficiency model approach which implies that training is only about putting right things that have gone wrong. Training is much more positive than that. It should be more concerned with identifying and satisfying development needs – multiskilling, fitting people to take on extra responsibilities and increasing all-round competence.

### 12. Training Needs Analysis

Training needs should be analysed for the company as a whole. The needs are interconnected. The analysis of corporate needs will lead to the identification of training needs in different departments or occupation, which these in turn will indicate the training required for the individual employees (Revans, 1997). As the needs of individual employees are analysed separately, common needs emerge which can be dealt with on a group basis. Kolh and Rubin (1996) indicate that the sum of group and individual needs will define corporate needs, although there may be some super-ordinate training requirements which can be related only to the company as a whole – the whole training plan may be greater than the sum of its parts.

### 13. Where training should take place

Training is intended to be up-dating workers with the job knowledge. To this end, there are three places where training can take place and these are:

- In company, on-the-job,
- In company, off-the-job, and
- External training

### 14. In Company, On-The-Job

On-the-job can consist of teaching or coaching by managers, supervisors or trainers at the desk. It may also consist of individual or group assignments and projects. Bass and Bass and Vaughan (1998) say that it is the only way to develop and practice managerial, supervisory, technical, selling and clerical skills. This has the advantage of actuality and immediacy. The trainee works, learns and develops expertise at the same time. Theory is put into practice immediately and its relevance becomes obvious.

### 15. In Company, Off-The-Job

This type of training can take place on special courses or in training areas or centres which are specially equipped and staffed for training. Murphy (1998) states it is the best way to acquire advanced manual and clerical skills and to learn about products. It helps to increase the identification of the trainee with the company as a whole, and the use of systematic training, basic skills and knowledge can be acquired quickly and often economically.

### 16. External Training

This type of training is useful for the development of managerial, supervisory, technical and social knowledge and skills, especially if the courses cover standard theory and practice which can easily be translated from the general to the particular. External training should be able to supply the quality of instruction which it might be uneconomic to provide from internal resources. It can be used to implant highly specialized knowledge or advanced skills and has the added advantage of broadening the horizons of those exposed to it. Off-the-job courses, whether internal or external, should be regarded as complementary activities which may stimulate learning or provide knowledge and skills that cannot be obtained internally; but they are always subsidiary to what individuals do and learn in their normal place of work.

### 17. Who Provide Training?

On-the-job training can be provided by managers, supervisors, colleagues or mentors. It is essential to train anyone involved in on-the-job training in techniques such as coaching, instructing and mentoring.

Off-the-job training may be provided by members of the training department, external education and training establishments. Line managers should be involved as much as possible to bring reality into the classroom, to ease the transference of learning to work and to underline their prime responsibility for training. Anyone who provides off-the-job training must be mentored to ensure that he/she make the right contribution. Natural trainers are fairly rare and even professionals need all the guidance one can give them to ensure that they are providing relevant training.

### 18. Orientation of Employees

One of the programmes of the training process in an organisation ensures that new employees get off to the right start. According to Hamblin (2000), the orientation is the guided adjustment of the employee to the organisation and work environment. In carrying out such a programme, management seeks to:

- Create favourable attitudes toward the company, its policies and its personnel;
- Instill a feeling of belonging and acceptance;
- Generate enthusiasm and high morale;
- Mold employees' attitudes and behavior so that they fit in well with the organisation and accept management policies and ethos; and
- Minimize the likelihood of rules violations, discharged, quits, grievances and misunderstandings.

After an employee is hired, both the personnel department and the supervisors play key roles in the orientation process. The relative part played each depends upon management intention and the resources of the personnel department. However, the major responsibility for new employee orientation falls upon the operating supervisor. The role of the supervisors,

They are responsible for:

- making the new employees feel wanted and needed;
- Paving the way ahead of time by informing present employees that new employees are going to work in their midst;
- Introducing the new employees to one another and show them their departments and their facilities;
- Explaining to the individuals their duties and what is expected of them on their respective work; and
- Also explaining to them the wages and salaries, promotional opportunities, holidays, vacations and benefits.

The personnel department is responsible for seeing that the orientation programme is undertaken according to plan. Further, it should train line supervisors in the performance of their orientation responsibilities. In some companies, it exerts staff control over the line supervisors by requiring them to fill out a check-list form that shows they have done specific orientation tasks for each employee.

## 19. Methods of analysing Training needs

The four methods of training needs analysis are:

- Analysis of human resource needs;
- Job analysis;
- Analysis of performance review; and
- Training surveys

The above methods are discussed below.

### 19.1. Human Resource Plans

The training strategy of an organisation should largely be determined by its human resource plans, which in turn are derived from its overall strategies. The plans should indicate in fairly general terms the types of skills that are required in the future and the numbers of people with those skills who will be needed. These broad indicators have to be translated into more specific plans which cover, for example, the outputs from training programmes of people with particular skills or a combination of skills (multi-skilling).

### 19.2. Job Analysis

Job analysis for training purposes means examining in detail the content of jobs, the performance standards required in terms of quality and output and the knowledge and skills needed to perform the job competently and thus meet the performance standards. It is necessary to ensure that the data obtained from this analysis specify:

- any problems faced by the job holders in learning the basic skills and apply them successfully;
- Any weaknesses in the performance of existing job holders arising from gaps in knowledge, lack of skill or poor motivation which need to be rectified by training; and
- How training is carried out at present.

### 19.3. Performance Reviews

The performance management system is based on agreed objectives which are related to each of the key task areas in the employees' job. Both managers and individuals are required to review how well these objectives have been achieved and to analyse the factors that have affected performance. This analysis should reveal development or training needs which are agreed by both parties. An important part of this performance agreement is the preparation of joint plans for development. Managers are expected to agree how they will help to develop individuals and what training they will recommend. Individuals are required to prepare their own self-development plans, with the help of their managers. The latter can refer individuals to the personnel department for further help on their development plans.

### 19.4. Training Surveys

Training surveys assemble all the information obtained from the other methods of analysis in order to provide a comprehensive basis for the development of a training strategy and its implementation. It may be necessary to supplement that information by interviewing managers to establish their view about training needs and by discussing with people undergoing training or who have just completed a training course for their opinions about its effectiveness. Training survey pays particular attention to the extent to which existing training arrangements are meeting training needs. It may be also necessary to assess training programmes in terms of the quality of training provided, their output and the level of performance achieved by the ex-trainees.

## 20. Evaluation of Training

Hamblin (2000) states that, it is at the planning stage that the basics upon which each category of training is to be evaluated, should be determined. At the same time, it is necessary to consider how the information required to evaluate courses should be obtained and analysed. The process of evaluating training has been defined by Hamlin (2000) as any attempt to obtain information (feedback) on the effects of a training programme, and to assess the value of training in the light of that information. Evaluation leads to control which means deciding whether or not the training was worthwhile and what improvements are required to make it even more cost-effective.

Evaluation is an integral feature of training. In its crudest form, evaluation is the comparison of objectives with effects to answer the question of how far training has achieved its purpose. The setting of objectives and the establishment of methods of measuring results are or should be an essential part of the planning stage of any training programmes.

Hamblin (2000) gives five levels at which evaluation can take place and these are reactions, learning, job behaviour, organisation and ultimate value.

- **Reactions**

The reactions of trainees to the training experience itself, how useful or even how enjoyable they feel the training is, what they think of individual sessions and speakers, what they would like put in or taken out, and so on.

- **Learning**

Evaluation at the learning level requires the measurement of what trainees have learnt as a result of their training – the new knowledge and skill they have acquired or the changes in attitude that have occurred. This is the terminal behaviour that occurs immediately after the training has ended.

- **Job behaviour**

At this level, evaluation attempts to measure the extent to which trainees have applied their learning on the job. This constitutes an assessment of the amount of transfer of learning that has taken place from an off-the-job training course to the job itself. If the training is carried out on the job, there should be little difference between learning and job behaviour.

- **Organisation**

Evaluation here attempts to measure the effects of changes in the job behaviour of trainees on the functioning of the organisation in which they are employed. The measurement might be in such terms as improvements in output, productivity, quality, morale, contribution or sales turnover. In effect, the question answered by this type of evaluation is not simply what behavioural changes have taken place, but what good have those changes done for the unit or department in which the employee works.

- **Ultimate value**

This is a measure of how the organisation as a whole has benefited from the training in terms of greater profitability, survival or growth. Fundamentally, however, evaluation at this level is related to the criteria by which the organisation judges its efficiency and its success or failure.

## 21. Conclusion

To operate organisations, large or small, requires staffing them with competent personnel. Our public educational system is primarily oriented toward teaching broad knowledge and skills to enable people to cope successfully with their environment to support themselves and to advance the society as a whole. Generally speaking, it is not designed to teach specific job skills for positions in particular companies or organisations. Training is a vital and necessary activity in all organisations. It plays a large part in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of the establishment. Training enables employees acquire new knowledge and job skills and increase their market value and earning power. The possession of useful skills enhances their value to their employers and thereby increases their job security. Training may also qualify them for promotion to more responsible jobs in the current organisation or others.

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