



Developing a Successful Employee Training Program

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How do you decide when employee training is needed? Using this simple model, employers can develop and manage training programs that address problems specific to their own business, fulfill the learning needs of employees, and strengthen the overall work environment.

Step 1: Decide If Training Is Needed

The first step in the training process is a basic one: to determine whether a problem can be solved by training. Training is conducted for one or more of these reasons: 1) Required legally or by order or regulation 2) to improve job skills or move into a different position 3) for an organization to remain competitive and profitable. If employees are not performing their jobs properly, it is often assumed that training will bring them up to standard. This may not always be the case. Ideally, training should be provided before problems or accidents occur and should be maintained as part of quality control.

Step 2: Determine What Type of Training is Needed

The employees themselves can provide valuable information on the training they need. They know what they need/want to make them better at their jobs. Just ask them! Also, regulatory considerations may require certain training in certain industries and/or job classifications. Once the kind of training that is needed has been determined, it is equally important to determine what kind of training is not needed. Training should focus on those steps on which improved performance is needed. This avoids unnecessary time lost and focuses the training to meet the needs of the employees.

Step 3: Identifying Goals And Objectives

Once the employees' training needs have been identified, employers can then prepare for the training. Clearly stated training objectives will help employers communicate what they want their employees to do, to do better, or to stop doing! Learning objectives do not necessarily have to be written, but in order for the training to be as successful as possible, they should be CLEAR and thought-out before the training begins.

Step 4: Conducting The Training

Training should be conducted by professionals with knowledge and expertise in the given subject area; period. Nothing is worse than being in a classroom with an instructor who has no knowledge of what they are supposed to be teaching! Use in-house, experienced talent or an outside professional training source as the best option. The training should be presented so that its organization and meaning are clear to employees. An effective training program allows employees to participate in the training process and to practice their skills and/or knowledge. Employees should be encouraged to become involved in the training process by participating in discussions, asking questions, contributing their knowledge and expertise, learning through hands-on experiences, and even through role-playing exercises.

Step 5: Evaluation

One way to make sure that the training program is accomplishing its goals is by using an evaluation of the training by both the students and the instructors. Training should have, as one of its critical components, a method of measuring the effectiveness of the training. Evaluations will help employers or supervisors determine the amount of learning achieved and whether or not an employee's performance has improved on the job as a result.

Step 6: Improving the Program

There is always room to improve a training program! Things change. Regulations, procedures and policy as well as teaching methods change with time. Keep current for the best result. Also if it is clear that the training did not give the employees the level of knowledge and skill that was expected, then it may be necessary to revise the training program and/or provide periodic retraining. At this point, asking questions of employees and of those who conducted the training may be of some help.

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