

Training and Methods of Training

Training is a process of learning a sequence of programmed behavior. It is the application of knowledge & gives people an awareness of rules & procedures to guide their behavior. It helps in bringing about positive change in the knowledge, skills & attitudes of employees.

Thus, training is a process that tries to improve skills or add to the existing level of knowledge so that the employee is better equipped to do his present job or to mould him to be fit for a higher job involving higher responsibilities. It bridges the gap between what the employee has & what the job demands.

Training refers to a planned effort by a company to facilitate employees' learning of job related competencies. These competencies include knowledge, skills, or behaviors that are critical for successful job performance. The goal of training is for employees to master the knowledge, skill, and behaviors emphasized in training programs and to apply them to their day to day activities. Training is seen as one of several possible solutions to improve performance. Other solutions can include such actions as changing the job or increasing employee motivation through pay and incentives. Today there is a greater emphasis on-

- Providing educational opportunities for all employees. These educational opportunities may include training programs, but they also include support for taking courses offered outside the company, self-study, and learning through job rotation.
- An ongoing process of performance improvement that is directly measurable rather than organizing one time training events.
- The need to demonstrate to executives, managers, and trainees the benefits of training.
- Learning as a lifelong event in which senior management, trainer manager, and employees have ownership.
- Training being used to help attain strategic business objectives, which help companies, gains a competitive advantage.

The term **training** refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies. It forms the core of apprenticeships and provides the backbone of content at institutes of technology (also known as technical colleges or polytechnics). In addition to the basic training required for a trade, occupation or profession, observers of the labor-market recognize as of 2008^[update] the need to continue training beyond initial qualifications: to maintain, upgrade and update skills throughout working life. People within many professions and occupations may refer to this sort of training as professional development.

Training usually refers to some kind of organized (and finite it time) event — a seminar, workshop that has a specific beginning date and end date. It's often a group activity, but the word training is also used to refer to specific instruction done one on one.

Broadly speaking, there are two methods of training, viz., on-the-job training and off-the-job training.

A. On-The-Job Training:

In this method the employee learns by doing. He is exposed to the real work situation. An experienced employee will act as the friend, philosopher and guide. The new employee follows the orders, carries out instructions and adopts the right technique while doing the job. In this way, he is able to learn the work practically.

While doing so he can ask questions, seek clarifications on various job-related matters and obtain guidance from his senior employee. Important on-the-job methods of training include, job rotation, coaching or job instruction, working as an assistant or understudy under senior employees, temporary promotions etc.

Some of the widely used on the job training methods are discussed below:

1. Job Instruction Training (JIT):

The JIT method (developed during World War II) is a four step instructional process involving preparation, presentation, performance try out and follows up. It is used primarily to teach workers how to do their current jobs. A trainer, supervisor or co-worker acts as the coach.

The four steps followed in the JIT methods are:

- (i) The trainee receives an overview of the job, its purpose and its desired outcomes with a clear focus on the relevance of training.
- (ii) The trainer demonstrates the job to give the employee a model to copy. The trainer shows a right way to handle the job.
- (iii) Next, the employee is permitted to copy the trainer's way. Demonstrations by the trainer and practice by the trainee are repeated until the trainee masters the right way to handle the job.
- (iv) Finally, the employee does the job independently without supervision.

Merits and Demerits of Job Instruction Training:

Merits:

- (a) Trainee learns fast through practice and observation.
- (b) It is economical as it does not require any special settings. Also, mistakes can be corrected immediately.
- (c) The trainee gains confidence quickly as he does the work himself in actual settings with help from supervisor.
- (d) It is most suitable for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs where the job operations are simple;

easy to explain and demonstrate within a short span of time.

Demerits:

- (a) The trainee should be as good as the trainer. If the trainer is not good, transference of knowledge and skill will be poor.
- (b) Trainee while learning may damage equipment, waste materials and cause accidents frequently.
- (c) Experienced workers cannot use the machinery while it is being used for training.

2. Coaching and Mentoring:

Coaching is a one-on-one relationship between trainees and supervisors which offer workers continued guidance and feedback on how well they are handling their tasks. Mentoring is a particular form of coaching used by experienced executives to groom junior employees.

Normally, mentoring involves one-on-one coaching for a period of several years until the individual is eventually capable of replacing the mentor.

Merits and Demerits of Coaching and Mentoring:

Merits:

- i. There is an excellent opportunity to learn quickly through continuous interaction.
- ii. Constant guidance helps the trainee to be on track, using facilities to good advantage.

Demerits:

- i. It may create feelings of jealousy among other workers who are not able to show equally good performance.
- ii. If mentors form overly strong bonds with trainees, unwarranted favoritism may result. This can have a demoralizing effect on other workers, affecting their work performance in a negative way.

(3) Apprenticeship Training:

Apprenticeship training dates back to Biblical times and is frequently used to train personnel in some skilled trades such as electricians, mechanics, tailors, bricklayers, and carpenters. The period of training ranges from two to five years depending on the occupation in which the trainee is engaged.

Frankly speaking, apprenticeship refers to a combined on-the-job as well as off-the-job training approach in the sense that the trainee agrees to work for a salary below that a fully qualified employee gets, in exchange for a specified number of formal training hours in the organization.

One advantage of apprenticeship training is its success; success because apprenticeship

programmes employ many of the principles of learning-such as modeling, feedback, class-room training etc., and are often quite effective.

The principal drawbacks of apprenticeship training include the period of training at which the employees are underpaid may be quite long. Also, the uniform period of training is not suitable to all people have different abilities and learn at varied rates. Those who learn fast may quit the programme in frustration.

Slow learners may require additional training time. It is also likely that in these days of rapid changes in technology, old skills (remembers Java?) may get out dated quickly. Trainees who spend years learning specific skills may find, upon completion of their programmes that the job skills they acquired are no longer in the market place.

(4) Job Rotation:

Job rotation is also known as cross training. Job rotation is the process of training employees by rotating them through series of related tasks. In job rotation, an individual learns several different jobs within a work unit or department. He performs each for a specified time period.

The trainees, therefore, are exposed to various coaches, points of views, and task operations. Job rotation has one main advantage; it makes flexibility possible in the department. For instance, when one employee of a work unit is absent, another employee can perform his job.

Job rotation is uncommon and not useful for training technical skills such as programming and welding. Job rotation is common for training managers. Job rotation rather is very necessary for middle managers because through rotation managers are exposed to different operations, departments and acquire general knowledge of the company's procedures and policies.

The principal weakness of job rotation includes:

- (i) It is very difficult to coordinate various assignments such as production, finance and marketing etc. (the jobs usually vary in content and the trainee might be moved from production to finance, to sales, to personnel etc.).
- (ii) Some of the coaches may not be motivated to concentrate on trainees assigned only for short period.
- (iii) Different coaches may espouse conflicting viewpoints of company policies and procedures.

(5) Refresher Training:

Rapid changes in technology may force companies to go in for this kind of training. By organizing short-term courses which incorporate the latest developments in a particular field, the company may keep its employees up-to-date and ready to take on emerging challenges. It is conducted at regular intervals by taking the help of outside consultants who specialize in a particular discipline.

(6) Orientation Training:

Orientation or induction training tries to put the new recruits at ease. Each new employee is usually taken on a formal tour of the facilities, introduced to key personnel and informed about company policies, procedures and benefits. To be effective, orientation training should be well planned and conducted within the first week of employment.

Such a pre-job training helps the recruit to familiarize himself with the job and its settings. The aboveon the job methods are cost effective. Workers actually produce while they learn. Since immediate feedback is available, they motivate trainees to observe and learn the right way of doing things.

Very few problems arise in the case of transfer of training because the employees learn in the actual work environment where the skills that are learnt are actually used. On the job methods may cause disruptions in production schedules.

Experienced workers cannot use the facilities that are used in training. Poor learners may damage machinery and equipment. Finally, if the trainer does not possess teaching skills, there is very little benefit to the trainee.

B. Off-the-Job Training:

Under this methods of trainee is separated from the job situation and his attention is focused upon learning the material related to his future job performance. Since the trainee is not distracted by job requirements, he can place his entire concentration on learning the job rather than spending his time in performing it. There is an opportunity for freedom of expression for the trainees.

Off the job training methods are as follows:

(a) Vestibule Training:

In this method, actual work conditions are simulated in a class room. Material, files and equipment those are used in actual job performance are also used in training. This type of training is commonly used for training personnel for electrical and semi-skilled jobs. The duration of this training ranges from a few days to a few weeks. Theory can be related to practice in this method.

(b) Role Playing:

It is defined as a method of human interaction that involves realistic behavior in imaginary situations. This method of training involves action, doing and practice. The participants play the role of certain characters, such as the production manager, mechanical engineer, superintendents, and maintenance engineers, quality control inspectors, foreman, workers and the like. This method is mostly used for developing interpersonal interactions and relations.

(c) Lecture Methods:

The lecture is a traditional and direct method of instruction. The instructor organizes the material and gives it to a group of trainees in the form of a talk. To be effective, the lecture must motivate and create interest among the trainees.

(d) Conference/Discussion Approach:

In this method, the trainer delivers a lecture and involves the trainee in a discussion so that his doubts about the job get clarified. When big organizations use this method, the trainer uses audio-visual aids such as blackboards, mockups and slides; in some cases the lectures are videotaped or audio taped.

Even the trainee's presentation can be taped for self-confrontation and self-assessment. The conference is, thus, a group-centered approach where there is a clarification of ideas, communication of procedures and standards to the trainees.

Those individuals who have a general educational background and whatever specific skills are required—such as typing, shorthand, office equipment operation, filing, indexing, etc. may be provided with specific instructions to handle their respective jobs.

(e) Programmed Instruction:

In recent years this method has become popular. The subject-matter to be learned is presented in a series of carefully planned sequential units. These units are arranged from simple to more complex levels of instructions. The trainee goes through these units by answering questions or filling the blanks. This method is, thus, expensive and time-consuming.

Importance:

Training is crucial for organizational development and success. It is fruitful to both employers and employees of an organization. An employee will become more efficient and productive if he is trained well. The benefits of training can be summed up as:

1. **Improves Morale of Employees-** Training helps the employee to get job security and job satisfaction. The more satisfied the employee is and the greater is his morale, the more he will contribute to organizational success and the lesser will be employee absenteeism and turnover.
2. **Less Supervision-** A well trained employee will be well acquainted with the job and will need less supervision. Thus, there will be less wastage of time and efforts.
3. **Fewer Accidents-** Errors are likely to occur if the employees lack knowledge and skills required for doing a particular job. The more trained an employee is, the less are the chances of committing accidents in job and the more proficient the employee becomes.
4. **Chances of Promotion-** Employees acquire skills and efficiency during training. They become more eligible for promotion. They become an asset for the organization.
5. **Increased Productivity-** Training improves efficiency and productivity of employees. Well trained employees show both quantity and quality performance. There is less wastage of time, money and resources if employees are properly trained.