A Study and Survey of Corporate Training Activities
in East Central Indiana

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the broad field of training and development within corporations. It is a compilation of both a study of the topic, and a sample survey which could be used to gather more specific information pertaining to training and development.

This study and survey has two major components. After a brief statement of the problem to be discussed, the first major component is a review of literature related to the field of corporate training and development. This component discusses the nature and importance of training, elements of training, different training techniques and training evaluation.

The second major component is a sample survey that could actually be used as a pilot study for more extensive research on the topic of training and development within East Central Indiana.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many organizations within East Central Indiana are discovering the need to remain at a constant high productivity level, or to increase their productivity in order to remain competitive with other organizations. Although the number of college graduates in the workforce is increasing, they too need training in order to do their job more effectively and productively. Unfortunately, many corporations cannot afford, or do not have the resources needed to conduct the type of training needed.

This thesis examines literature which discusses the topic of training and development. This discussion is followed by a survey designed to be mailed to corporations within East Central Indiana having more than 100 employees . This survey could be used to investigate several elements of training and development which would provide very specific information about training activities conducted within corporations of East Central Indiana.

The survey specifically investigates:

1) The size and type of organizations that do train their employees, and the type of training techniques utilized.

2) The relationship between the size and type of organization and the type of employees trained.

3) The relationship between the size and type of the organization and the skills employees are being taught.

Purpose of the Thesis

Being granted a college degree no longer guarantees one a job. In addition, if a college graduate does get a job, the person, or employee, will not have all the knowledge or skills needed in order to perform his or her job effectively and productively over a long

period of time. Organizations must commit to training their employees if they wish to remain productive and competitive.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the many elements of corporate training and development. In addition, a survey was developed which could be used as a pilot study for a more detailed study of corporate training activities in East Central Indiana. This study focuses on finding the correlations and relationships mentioned on the previous page.

As an honors student, completing a thesis or project is mandatory. As one who will enter the corporate world and would someday like to pursue a career in training and development, this thesis was valuable to my college education.

Statement of Methodology

As part of this thesis, a survey/questionnaire was developed to investigate the level of corporate training activities conducted in East Central Indiana. This survey was not actually conducted, but could be used as a pilot study for more extensive research.

If the survey would have been conducted, information about specific organizations within East Central Indiana would have been gathered from the Chamber of Commerce within the immediate location of the organizations. This survey would then have been sent to the Personnel or Human Resource Managers of the prospective organizations.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

a. Introduction

An extensive amount of literature exists on the topic of training and development. It's easy to determine the main reasons why the topic of training and development is so widely discussed and written about. The growing diversity of today's workforce and today's ever-growing developing technology, coupled with greater international competition has forced businesses to re-evaluate their business practices and the overall productivity of their employees.

The following information is taken from a variety of sources, and discusses several elements concerning corporate training and development. First, the importance and nature of training is discussed, followed by an examination of the key elements of training. Different training techniques, training evaluation, and the reasons why training fails are also explained.

b. The Importance and Nature of Training

The American Society for Training and Development estimates that total U.S. and Canadian expenditures on training and development were between $30 and $40 billion (Munson, 1984, 1). This amount has since increased and continues to increase. An Oct. 22, 1992 Wall Street Journal article states that the society is urging American businesses to increase training expenditures to at least $44 billion annually.

Even though such a great amount of money is spent on training, the same article says that "corporate commitment to training is inadequate and uneven," according to analysts. It goes on to explain that businesses that do provide training "concentrate on managers, technicians and professionals, not rank and file workers. As a result, fully 89% of American workers never receive any formal training from their employers."

But both need and necessity may cause this to change. The article explains that a 1990 report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce inspired legislation that "would require all companies to invest 1% of payroll in training."

According to Lawrence S. Munson's book, How to Conduct Training Seminars, statistics on productivity are often "persistently unfavorable" (1984, 2). Munson also states that "there is a widespread need in business, industry, government and other institutions to make people more productive and to make people in new jobs more quickly productive. Natural talent gets people only so far" (1984, 2). Most businesses have found shortening the time needed to make new employees productive is providing a "great payoff" (Munson, 1984, 2). In addition, with the spread of advanced technology there is a greater need for specialized knowledge and skills, meaning that "natural talent may not even get one started." Even positions requiring advanced degrees are requiring "some training in the specifics of the particular job" (Munson, 1984, 2).

Most current research is indicating that corporate training and development is important because it improves productivity. In today's global economy, American businesses must be highly competitive in order to survive.

Another related point that must be emphasized is that today, businesses themselves are becoming a global entity; more and more minorities are in the workforce, and their numbers will continue to increase. As a result, employees are having to be more conscious of the way in which they interact and communicate with each other, and they must learn to be aware of their prejudices.

Fortunately, this fact is being recognized by more and more businesses, and being addressed through cultural/diversity training. A May 1992 Training and Development article titled "Shedding New Light on Diversity Training" says that a major public utility company utilizes diversity training "to create an environment in which cultural diversity improves the organization's competitive advantage in such areas as productivity, customer service, employee recruitment, and employee retention" (May 1992, 45).

From the information given, it can be concluded that corporate training and development is important because of the growing need for American businesses to be productive in today's competitive global market. Munson's book says the ultimate aim of training is to improve the productivity of human resources (1984, 1). The nature of the training itself depends on what the company perceives its major barrier to productivity as being. Many companies may utilize a diversity or cultural training because of problems in employee relations. Another company may utilize a more technical, specialized training program because it detects a lack of technological knowledge in its employees. Whatever the situation, increasing productivity is the ultimate goal. But determining the goal and nature of the training are just preliminary steps. There are many other elements involved in developing a successful training program.

c. Elements of Training

1. Developing an Effective Training Program

Within the corporate structure, the human resource department usually has the responsibility of developing training programs (unless an outside consultant is hired). Developing an effective training program requires careful, extensive planning. Unfortunately, this is not always possible within the corporate structure when almost everyone is facing time constraints and numerous responsibilities. Even though the importance of planning is "preached in virtually all management training courses," it is generally not practiced by training directors. "In a limited survey of some 61 training directors in 1979, 21% of the respondents admitted that they had no 'written statement of overall purpose or mission' for their departments. Only 15% reported that they had a written plan" (Munson, 1984, 62).

Even though conducting extensive planning may be difficult to do, the benefits of having a carefully constructed written plan are numerous: better results, better use of

resources, making work easier, having more control, and gaining management support (Munson, 1984, 63-66).

First, when one takes the time to plan the training program there is time to consider what exactly needs to be accomplished and why it is valuable to the organization. Time also allows the planner to anticipate potential problems that may occur and prepare alternative actions. Planning also gives one the chance to evaluate the cost of the program, eliminating any surprise costs at the end of the training program. When trainers know exactly what needs to be accomplished, why it is valuable, can anticipate problems and are aware of costs, the training program will have better results.

Secondly, planning allows trainers to have better use of available resources. Planning enables trainers to find needed resources, and alternative resources if primary sources are not available. Without planning, a trainer may find a resource he/she may need is not available at the time of training, and he/she is stuck without an alternative plan, and no resource from which to refer.

Of course planning makes a trainer's job easier at the time of the training program. Trainers can refer to a written plan anytime during the training program. In addition, a written plan can be used for future training programs; it is a "continual guide to action" for future training, therefore eliminating a great deal of work (Munson, 1984, 64).

When a trainer knows what needs to be accomplished, has all available resources and a written plan to refer to, he/she is bound to feel more in control. With a written plan, the trainer can determine what must be done each day prior to the program, reducing the chance that something is forgotten. It also gives the trainer a chance to divide the plan and distribute responsibilities to assistants.

Finally, a carefully planned training program has a much better chance of attaining top management support, which is so vital to the success of any training program. More and more corporate trainers are realizing the success of their programs is dependent on management support of their efforts. A written plan enables trainers to

provide proof of what will occur during the program. More importantly, discussing the plan with management lets them have input. Munson says that "more people should produce more ideas; and more ideas should result in better plans" (1984, 66). In addition, remember that top management has the power to eliminate training programs, and when they see a written plan they are more likely to believe in its success.

It is often difficult to do such careful planning within a corporate setting. This is due to many factors, some already mentioned such as time constraints. Other factors include budgetary constraints, and the need for other's cooperation. It is often difficult to attain the cooperation of others because of their time constraints and responsibilities.

Even with these difficulties, planning is essential in the development of an effective training program. When possible, some type of planning must be conducted if the training is going to succeed.

Although it may be impossible to do a plan that is as complete and thorough as desired, Munson's book provides some general guidelines "for an acceptable training plan." No matter what form the training program takes "these fundamentals should be followed" (1984, 76).

First, the program must be "needs related," meaning there is a legitimate reason why employees need the training. This is determined by conducting a needs analysis (Munson, 1984, 76), which is later discussed in more detail.

Second, a plan must make assumptions about future conditions of the organization. For example, is the company expected to grow within the near future? If so, management training may be needed. Another example is that there may be an expansion of technology within the company, requiring more technological training (Munson, 1984, 77). Making assumptions helps justify the training.

Third, and probably most important, the plan must outline specific measurable objectives. According to Munson, the plan "should provide two kinds of objectives. There should be broad objectives covering the overall program for the time period involved. There

should also be specific, behavioral objectives for each of the separate programs included in the plan" (1984, 77). By determining objectives, the results of the program can more easily be determined.

Fourth, the subject matter, or content, of the training program should be fully explained. The specific audience, or employees for which the training is intended should also be stated (Munson, 1984, 78).

Fifth, the plan should include a schedule of activities, seminars and lectures that are part of the program. This includes listing the place of each event. All activities should be described in detail. This schedule can then be used as a promotional piece within the organization to facilitate registrations (Munson, 1984, 78).

Sixth, the plan should outline any coordination the trainer has made with other departments, groups or management within the organization. When this information is included in the plan, it may prevent these groups from backing out on their responsibilities (Munson, 1984, 78).

Seventh, the time-span of the entire training program should be outlined in the plan. This helps in predicting budget constraints, and may help in forecasting any changes that must be made to specific aspects of the program (Munson, 1984, 78).

Finally, the overall cost-effectiveness of the program must be explained. The value the training program will have on the organization must be outlined, along with an estimated cost for conducting the training. Many times it is difficult to place a monetary value on the benefits a training program may have, but the program is more easily accepted by top management when there has been an attempt to determine the overall cost-effectiveness of the training (Munson, 1984, 78).

2. Trainers' Skills

The importance of having a well-planned training program is immeasurable, but even the best designed and most thoroughly planned programs can be unsuccessful if the trainer, or leader is ineffective. Without a knowledgeable, dynamic leader, participants may become bored, uninterested and unmotivated to learn.

There are many important skills a trainer must possess if the training program is to be completely successful. In addition to specific skills, there are also certain qualities a trainer must possess to ensure the program will be successful. Depending on who one talks to, one may get a variety of suggestions as to what the most important skills and qualities are. Even with the various suggestions, there does seem to be general agreement on several abilities and skills that a trainer must possess.

One important quality a trainer must have is commitment. Munson says to "look for people who have a high, positive motivation toward training" (1984, 119). This will ensure that the trainer believes in the importance of the training. Kate Ludeman, an owner of a California training company agrees, and says to look for someone who is committed to the cause and the company (Ludeman, 1992, 21).

Another important quality is credibility. The trainer must have proven success. The trainer should be "someone whose position, background, or personal impact predisposes these groups to accept the ideas presented" (Munson, 1984, 119). In other words, trainees should be at least willing to listen and learn new ideas before the training even begins, simply because of who the trainer is.

Finally, another highly regarded quality is knowledge of the subject matter. The most important reason for having knowledge of the subject is that "it gives the seminar leaders personal experiences and insights to share with participant groups, thus adding interest and credibility" (Munson, 1984, 120). In addition, it makes the ideas and the trainer more believable to the participants. The most obvious reason for having a trainer with knowledge of the subject is that the training will be much more accurate, and because

the trainer will not have to do as much research or constantly refer to notes, the training will flow much more smoothly.

3. Who Needs to be Trained?

Determining who needs to be trained may be the most difficult, or time-consuming aspect of developing a training program. If done correctly and thoroughly, the process of determining who needs to be trained consists of testing employees and predicting future needs of the organization.

Even though it is a difficult process, Munson's book says that "the first, and probably the most important step in developing a training plan is to determine the current and future training needs of the organization. All planning should start with an assessment of the future environment" (1984, 69).

After this is completed, trainers must determine which employees will need the appropriate training in order to achieve the forecasted goals and needs of the organization. This is done by conducting an employee skills assessment.

Conducting employee skill assessment tests, or needs analysis is probably the most vital element of training. "Employee skills assessments can identify the logical, relevant developmental needs of a company's workforce" (Mirabile, 1991, 19). Conducting a superb training program will prove to be no benefit if the wrong people are being trained.

"Pinpointing Development Needs," a December 1991 Training and Development article, outlines six steps for "identifying the skill requirement of jobs and people" (Mirabile, 1991, 19). These steps are just one of many approaches used as a model for determining who needs to be trained.

The six steps are: 1) identify competency or success factor information, 2) build profiles, 3) assess employees, 4) identify gaps, 5) identify development options, and 6) follow through.

The first step of identifying competency, or success factor information means identifying "the things people must know and be able to do in order to perform a set of job requirements." Competencies, or success factors, include the "knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and characteristics that represent the fundamental skill or behavioral components of a job" (Mirabile, 1991, 20).

After completing the first step, trainers must now "construct job profiles using the previously created success factors." The ultimate goal in constructing profiles is to produce "a relatively clear and accurate picture of a particular job or job family" (Mirabile, 1991, 20).

The third step is probably the most difficult and time consuming. The process of assessing employees can be done in a number of ways. One of the most common is by using a rating system. Information from performance appraisals can also be used. Many performance appraisals are done using a rating system. Some common performance appraisal methods used include graphic rating scales, behaviorally anchored rating scales and mixed standard scales. Although these methods vary slightly, they all function on the same principle; rating employees against an established set of criteria (Schuler, 1993, 296-299). When doing needs analysis, the criteria could be the pre-determined success factors.

Whatever method is used to assess employees, it is suggested "to gather information from the employee, the employee's immediate supervisor, and two of the employee's peers" (Mirabile, 1991, 21).

After assessing the employees, the next step is to compare the results to the previously created job profile (done in step two). By doing a thorough comparison one can "identify the most logical and most critical gaps in development" (Mirabile, 1991, 21). The comparison is done by examining the actual levels of competency in relation to the required levels of competency according to the job profile. "The difference between the two is the gap" (Mirabile, 1991, 21).

The fifth step is identifying development options that will directly address the relevant competencies. This of course is when the actual training activities are conducted. Most are either formal, in-house training, or external programs such as workshops, seminars or classes (Mirabile, 1991, 21-22).

The sixth and final step is follow through. This means providing rewards to employees for their progress. Mirabile says that if organizations expect employees to acquire higher and more complex skill sets, then they should create or modify reward systems to address participation . . . In other words, some type of mechanism should be in place to commend and reinforce desired behavior. People need to see tangible rewards for their efforts (Mirabile, 1991, 22).

In summary, in order to determine who needs to be trained, one must first construct desired job profiles, assess employees, then compare the results to those desired. This will determine the areas in which the employees need training and development.

4. Where Training Takes Place

Choosing a location for training activities is an element of training, the importance of which is often overlooked by trainers. But the location is often more vital than one thinks, as Munson's book says that the "best designed seminar may nevertheless fail if the seminar setting is wrong" (Munson, 1984, 103).

But this applies to all training activities, not just the seminar. Whatever type of training is being conducted, whether it be a seminar, lecture or other activity, the environment in which it takes place is an element that must be considered when planning. Munson says "a good environment can't assure success, but a poor one can mean failure" (Munson, 1994, 103).

Munson's book lists and describes the various settings used most often for training activities. Some of the locations are in-house (within the organization's building or immediate area), while others are off-site. Whether the training takes place on or off-site

depends on two main factors: the type of training being conducted, and who is conducting the training.

Examples of on-site training may include training which requires trainees to use company technical equipment, or a training seminar which is being conducted by the company's human resource training and development staff. Common locations include a room designed especially for training, away from other operations, or a company conference center, usually located on or near the premises.

An example of off-site training may be a training seminar which is being conducted for, and relevant to more than one company. The most popular of these being workshops, classes or other seminars. These are usually conducted by independent consultants. Common off-site locations include: hotels, conference centers, remote retreats and resorts.

Once a location has been decided, there are several factors to consider. These are physical and psychological considerations. Because these considerations include physical comfort and room set-up, they are vital to training success.

Munson states that participants' physical needs must be considered when choosing a location. "Their minds cannot function with full effectiveness if their bodies are uncomfortable" (Munson, 1984, 110).

One of the most important physical considerations is temperature. As temperature increases, there is an increase in lethargy and drowsiness, and a decrease in quality of group discussion. On the other hand, if the room is too cool, participants become too uncomfortable to concentrate. A factor related to temperature is ventilation. Once again, if the air within the room is not moving adequately, concentration and involvement will decrease.

Vision and hearing are two additional factors to consider. Participants must be able to see the instructor, any visual aids being used and a chalk board or easel (if used). This of course means that adequate lighting is needed. In conjunction, participants must

be able to hear the instructor and the other participants, especially if a discussion is facilitated.

These are the main factors to consider when deciding a location for the training program. As mentioned earlier, the importance of the location, and its comfort is often overlooked by trainers. If overlooked, it could mean the program will not be as successful as it possibly could have.

d. Training Techniques

As just explained, the location of the training program is an element that can be vital to the success of the training. But just as important is the technique used to train employees. Many trainers believe the saying, "The medium is the message," (Goldhaber, 1993, 400). Although this is not entirely true, the importance of the technique used cannot be overlooked.

"Communication training techniques are the instructional procedures or approaches the trainer uses to accomplish the behavioral objectives of a program." The question asked at this point in developing the training program is how should the training be administered (Goldhaber, 1993, 400).

There are numerous techniques from which to choose, but Goldhaber's book on Organizational Communication says to "select instructional techniques that are appropriate in creating optimum learning conditions for meeting the objectives of the training program" (1993, 400). Following is a discussion of several techniques commonly used in corporate training programs.

Lectures

A lecture is "a live oral presentation made with the intention to transmit information to trainees" (Goldhaber, 1993, 400). It is the most commonly used training technique because it is economical; a large number of people can be trained at one time. But

it is probably the most misused technique also. If one were to study communication theory, one would learn that communication is a dynamic process, not a one-way, sender-receiver activity. Communication is an interactive process that actively involves both the sender and receivers. This fact is very important when discussing corporate training, because information is being communicated to employees. Training should allow for some type of interaction between the trainer and trainees (Goldhaber, 1993, 401).

Goldhaber suggests that lecturers provide copies or handouts with the necessary information to the trainees and spend several minutes summarizing it. After the summary, the trainer can form groups of trainees to allow for discussion and interaction (Goldhaber, 1993, 401).

If, for economical reasons, the lecture is the best choice for training, it may be a good idea to intermix group discussions, activities, or question and answer sessions with the lecture. This would help break the monotony of the program, and would improve the overall effectiveness of the training.

Media Techniques

There are several techniques from which to choose, all of which are used frequently and sometimes in combination. It is well known that many people learn more effectively when they are able to visually see intended results or responses. This is why all of the following techniques are usually very effective because they provide visual information and examples to trainees.

Film: It is suggested that when using a film that covers the desired concept, that it not cover too much information. It could possibly overload the trainees. It's also suggested to follow the film with a brief discussion of the concepts covered and trainees' reactions (Goldhaber, 1993, 402). Trainers should always preview the film before showing it.

Videotape: Depending on the type of training being conducted, videotapes can be the most effective tool used. One such example would be if public speaking, or group decision making training were being conducted. The individuals or groups could be videotaped, then watch and critique their performances as part of the training (Goldhaber, 1993, 402).

Telelecture and Teleconferences: "The telelecture is a conference-call system that allows a group of trainees to listen to one or more speakers from various places in the country," while teleconferences allow trainees to both hear and see the trainer or trainers. Usually the trainer calls or is called at a prescribed time, and the call is amplified through a loudspeaker. Listeners can respond individually through special microphones placed around the room. This technique is not always the best way to train employees, but it may be economical and useful if the desired trainer cannot be at the desired location, or if there is a severe time constraint influencing when training must take place (Goldhaber, 1993, 403).

Projectors: There are a variety of projectors available, all of which are used frequently. One of the most commonly used is the overhead projector, which allows the trainer to write on transparencies which all can see quite clearly without having to strain to see a chalkboard. Filmstrip projectors, which display a set of 35mm pictures are also commonly used.

Chalkboard and Easel: Most trainers have used a chalkboard or easel, especially if an overhead projector was not available. These are handy because trainers can quickly write down any information they wish. "It is especially useful during lectures and discussions to summarize comments, list ideas, and outline results" (Goldhaber, 1993, 403).

Games and Structured Experiences

Games and other structured activities are often successful because they require full participation from participants. "A game is a competitive experience played by participants in an environment simulating that of the organization" (Goldhaber, 1993, 404). A game can represent a conflict situation, a decision making process or other commonly faced situations. After the game, participants are usually brought together to discuss the game and their feelings or reactions about themselves and the other players.

"A structured experience is a collaborative experience-based learning situation in which learning goals are specified beforehand" (Goldhaber, 1993, 405). The most important part of this technique is the discussion which follows. Participants must process what was specified, then be able to relate it to their own organizational experiences. An example of a structured experience includes the "rumor clinic" which demonstrates how a message changes and is distorted as it is passed on to individuals.

Case Study

A case study is usually a written document outlining specific organizational problems, many times real situations and problems faced by corporations. Participants are given time to read and analyze the situation, then are brought together to discuss the problem and their solutions (Goldhaber, 1993, 406).

Role Playing

This technique also involves real situation or problems often encountered in organizations. Participants are chosen to act out the problem. "Only the situation is provided for the actors; therefore, dialogue is generated spontaneously during the experience" (Goldhaber, 1993, 407).

These are often very effective because they force participants to deal with a situation and develop a solution to a crisis they may truly face in the future.

As one can see, a variety of training techniques are available to trainers. Usually a mixture of several techniques is used in the most successful, effective training programs. No one technique is best, it just depends on the overall goals and objectives of the training program.

e. Training Evaluation

According to the Handbook of Training Evaluation and Measurement Methods, by Jack J. Phillips, evaluation of training activities is among the "hottest" issues in the human resource development field. Why is this so? Phillips says it's because there is more pressure today than ever before to produce results with human resource development programs. Training and development departments are struggling to meet demands from management for profit contributions and from participants who want a program that produces results (Phillips, 1983, vii).

Even though the evaluation process is so vital, many training professionals hesitate to conduct evaluation because it is often difficult and costly. But Phillips argues that "with all the tremendous growth and expenditures in this field, today's HRD [human resource department] professionals can no longer ignore the basic responsibility to evaluate programs and measure the results of their department's efforts" (Phillips, 1983, vii).

Training evaluation is such a detail oriented subject, it alone could be a research topic. But this paper will discuss the basic elements of evaluation. Phillip's book suggests that evaluation is a systematic process, and must be conducted both before, during and after the training process. There are several methods of evaluation from which to choose, "and these methods have to be tailored to the organization and to the proposed program" (Phillips, 1983, 53).

Although there are a variety of methods, Phillips lists some of the most popular ones being:

1) precourse and post-course examinations

   having participants take the same test both before and after the training, then comparing the results

2) participant feedback

   having participants complete surveys or questionnaires about the training training at the conclusion of the program

3) feedback from others

   receiving feedback from trainees' supervisors, or co-workers about their performance

4) participant follow-up

   having participants follow-up their training by completing reports about how they have used new skills or techniques learned during training

5) performance contracts

   having participants and supervisors develop a contract stating that new techniques learned in training will be used

To make the process even more complicated, there are a variety of evaluation instruments from which to choose when conducting any of the above mentioned methods. An instrument is a data-gathering tool. "It collects data on attitudes, learning, behavior change, or the results achieved from the program" (Phillips, 1983, 59). It is suggested that the instrument be designed before the actual training program is developed. This is because the training program is often altered while being conducted to address specific needs of the participants (Phillips, 1983, 59). The instruments used for collecting data usually are within one of the following categories:

1) questionnaires

2) attitude surveys

3) tests

4) interviews

5) observations

6) performance records

Questionnaires are probably the most common instrument used. There are a variety of questionnaire types, but most contain five basic types of questions: open-ended, a checklist (the employee checks any given answer that applies), a two-way question (such as a "yes or no"), multiple-choice, and ranking scales. Wording is very important when designing questionnaires because they can be designed to obtain a variety of information. Therefore, questions must be as specific as possible to satisfy the intended purpose.

An attitude survey is a type of questionnaire that assesses employees' attitudes toward work, policies, procedures or the organization in general.

Tests are another commonly used instrument, especially pre and post test comparisons. Participants are given tests before training, then given the same tests after training. Evaluators look at any improvement in scores after the training program takes place.

Interviews are a very effective method of evaluation, but are not conducted often because of time constraints. They are effective because many people will provide more information in a personal setting. Many prefer to talk to someone rather than fill out any more "paperwork."

Observations are also common. Many times, evaluators observe the employees before, during or after training to assess any improvement in performance, knowledge or skill.

Finally, many companies choose to evaluate their training programs by assessing the employees' performance records, such as performance appraisals conducted after the training program. Doing this enables management "to determine performance in terms of output, quality, costs, and time." Evaluators look at such factors as the percentage of quota achieved, productivity, total output, reports completed and efficiency (Phillips, 1983, 89).

Regardless of the type of instrument used, according to Phillips, there are basic principles which "can lead to a more effective instrument" (Phillips, 1983, 65).

The first of these principles is validity. This means the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Reliability is the second principle. "A reliable instrument is one which is consistent enough that subsequent measurements of an item give approximately the same results" (Phillips, 1983, 69). The third principle is called "ease of administration." This simply means that the instrument should be easy to administer. "It should not be burdensome or difficult for the participant or the HRD specialist" (Phillips, 1983, 70). Instruction should be easily understood by the participant, and answers should be easily calculated by the administer.

Another important factor is that the instrument should be simple and brief. Phillips says "short objective, whenever practical, should be sought." He also suggests using the smallest number of questions needed to cover a topic. Finally, the instrument should of course be economical. If calculating the results is too costly, it could be difficult to make up the difference in productivity, or at least prove its worth to management.

SUMMARY

Productivity and competitiveness are priorities of today's businesses. In order to be productive and competitive, organizations must develop training and development activities for their employees.

When developing a training and development program, it is important that the program be carefully planned. Taking the time to thoroughly plan the program increases the success rate, makes measuring the results easier, and increases management's support.

Other vital elements that must be considered when developing a training program include determining who needs training and what type of training is needed, the trainer's skills, and the location of the training program.

.   Probably the most vital training element is the type of training technique used. There are a variety of techniques from which to choose, but the goals and objectives of the program must be considered when determining the technique. Lectures, games or structured activities, case studies, role-playing, and a variety of media techniques such as films, tapes and teleconferences are available for training.

Finally, all training programs must be evaluated to determine its success. Of course there are a variety of evaluation methods, and a variety of instruments from which to choose when doing evaluation. Questionnaires, surveys, pre and post test, interviews and performance records are commonly used.

Because training and development activities are so vital to the success of today's organizations, it's important that all programs be carefully planned, and all elements should be carefully considered when planning. This will ensure the success of the program and will increase the chance of upper-management accepting and supporting the program.

Your Name
Title
Company Name
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City, State, Zip
Date

Name (of person to whom the survey is being sent)
Human Resource Manager or Personnel Director
Company Name
Company Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

      As you are probably aware, employee productivity is a major concern for businesses today. As technology continues to develop and expand, and as competition increases, it is more important than ever to be sure your company's employees are trained to do their job effectively and to be as productive as possible. A college degree no longer ensures that one will have the knowledge and skills needed in order to be productive over a long period of time.
      Because of this reality, more and more businesses are realizing the importance of training their employees. I am currently doing research on corporate training and development activities conducted by businesses within East Central Indiana and am in need of information from your company.

      Please fill out the enclosed survey and return it in the postage paid envelop. The survey is not long and will not take a great deal of time. This information could be very beneficial in determining several important elements related to corporate training and development and how it could be improved in East Central Indiana. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Your Name

TRAINING NEEDS SURVEY

Please respond to the following questions by checking the appropriate answer to the best of your knowledge. Your time and input are appreciated.

1. Please indicate in which county your organization is located.
   - a. Blackford
   - b. Delaware
   - c. Fayette
   - d. Franklin
   - e. Grant
   - f. Henry
   - g. Jay
   - h. Madison
   - i. Randolph
   - j. Rush
   - k. Union
   - l. Wayne

2. How many people does your organization employ?
   - _____ 0-499
   - _____ 500-1,000
   - _____ 1,001-2,000
   - _____ 2,001-5,000
   - _____ 10,0001 and above

3. Please check the primary area of business in which your organization is involved. (Check only one.)
   - _____ Manufacturing
   - _____ Transportation
   - _____ Retail
   - _____ Service organizations
   - _____ Finance
   - _____ Other

4. How often does your organization assess the training needs of employees?

   - a. Yearly
   - b. Semiannually
   - c. Quarterly
   - d. Never
   - e. Other (please specify) _____

5. What is the best time to send employees to a training session?

   - a. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Monday-Friday)
   - b. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Saturday)
   - c. After 5:30 (Monday-Thursday)
   - d. Other (please specify)

6. Are your firm's training needs currently being met? Yes   No
   If no, please indicate why.

    a. Do not know what type of training is needed.
    b. Cost of training is too high
    c. Suitable training programs are not available.
    d. Other (please specify)

7. In the past year, who has provided training programs for your organization. (Mark all that apply.)

    a. In-house training department
    b. Private consultants
    c. Colleges/universities
    d. Vocational schools
    e. Joint training efforts (union and company)
    f. Other (please specify)

8. Over the next five years, will your organization's training expenditures

    a. Increase?   b. Decrease?
    c. Remain the same?

9. Within your organization do you employ: (Please check when applicable.)

    _____ Professionals (engineers, nurses, scientists, accountants, etc.)
    _____ Sales Representatives
    _____ Executives (top policy level managers)
    _____ Senior managers (top non-policy level managers)
    _____ Middle managers
    _____ First-line supervisors/foreman
    _____ Secretarial/office employees (word and data processing, typing, etc.
    _____ Production workers (machine and equipment operators)
    _____ Customer-service employees (desk clerks, service representatives, etc.)
    _____ Other (please specify) _____

Questions 10-12 involve the training conducted in your company. For the purpose of this survey, training refers to planned activities which provide the employee with skills, knowledge and/or attitude change which can be used on the job.

10. Of the people you employ, who receives training? (Check when applicable.)

_____ Professionals
_____ Sales Representatives
_____ Executives
_____ Senior managers
_____ Middle managers
_____ First-line supervisors/foreman
_____ Secretarial/office employees
_____ Production workers
_____ Customer service employees
_____ Other (please specify)

11. Please check the skills in which your organization provides some form of training.

_____ Performance appraisal interview skills
_____ Time management skills
_____ Leadership skills
_____ Interpersonal skills
_____ Stress management skills
_____ Group dynamics skills
_____ Public speaking skills
_____ Other (please specify) _____

12. When training, which training techniques are used in your organization? (Please check all that apply.)

_____ Lecture
_____ Discussion
_____ Demonstration
_____ Games/Simulation
_____ Laboratory training (in the company)
_____ Video tapes
_____ Manuals
_____ Other (please specify) _____

13. Over the next five years, what areas of training will be most critical for your employees? (Mark all that apply.)

    a. Computer literacy
    b. Customer service
    c. Personal enhancement
    d. Communication: listening and oral communication
    e. Basic skills (i.e. reading, writing)
    f. Problem solving/creative thinking
    g. Technical training
    h. All of the above
    i. Other (please specify)_____

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

    Most employees within this organization support
    and willingly participate in training programs.

    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

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