**UNIT – 3 TRAINING STRATEGY**

**INTRODUCTION**

A training strategy is an organized approach to creating a training program for staff members. An effective employee training program is a crucial step for the professional development of staff, ensuring they have the skills needed to provide successful business results.

Strategic training and development is the process of designing specific employee training programs that directly align with business needs. Training with a strategic focus develops the capabilities and tools that employees need to successfully carry out their jobs.

Five strategies for effective employee training and development

Below are five strategies that can help you get your training and development efforts off the ground and that will help you save time and money, increase retention rates, and future proof your business.

1. Get management buy-in

Your training program needs support from the top if it is to succeed. Management needs to champion the program, giving employees the time, motivation, and opportunity to get the most out of the training.

If you make training mandatory and your executive team shows that it actively encourages this approach, then it will gradually become a part of your culture. It will also become not only a way to retain employees, but also to attract top talent.

Ideally, your executive team would deliver courses themselves to proactively show their support and commitment and provide training that links to business goals.

Ideas for training that management can deliver include:

The CEO teaches management skills

The Chief People Officer leads a course on communication

The Head of Sales offers negotiation training

2. Create a formal program

Ad-hoc training programs don’t work. As part of your talent management efforts, you need to create a formal training and development plan that ensures everyone gets access to training on a regular basis, and training isn’t just shoved under the carpet and forgotten about when you’re busy.

To create an employee development program, you need to take these four steps:

Set goals

Identify rewards for employees who achieve their goals

Provide tools to help complete the training

Review progress and adjust goals where necessary

3. Establish metrics

One of the complaints we hear from companies regarding training is that it costs too much and they don’t see the benefits. That’s why you need to establish metrics to track the success of your training and development plan.

Examples of training metrics include:

Cost of training

Course completion rate

Influence on employee goals

Effect on company staffing plan

Tracking these metrics manually is tricky; HR software can help. Zoho People not only lets you tie your training metrics to your performance management plans, but it also has a built-in learning management system. This means you can provide training and track it within the same system.

4. Measure employee satisfaction

You need to make sure your employees are engaging with the training, otherwise, your business won’t reap the benefits. Almost a quarter of HR training and development specialists don’t measure learning engagement.

There are two ways that you can measure engagement and satisfaction: You can look at the numbers, taking into account course competitions, minutes spent training, and repeat visits to the training.

Or you can use employee surveys and feedback forms. Ask employees directly (and anonymously) what they think, what they like, what they would improve, and what training they would like to have in the future.

HR software Workday lets you create and tailor surveys to gauge how satisfied your employees were with your training, as well as learn about areas for improvements.

5: Provide different types of training

Not everyone learns in the same way; it’s important to tailor methods of development to meet the needs of your employees. For some, this might be classroom-based training delivered over the course of one day.

Others might prefer learning by watching one five-minute video every day and filling out quizzes. Or you might prefer to offer a mix of different methods; this is known as blended learning.

**Issues in training strategy**

The following are the top 7 employee training challenges in the workplace:

* Information Overload.
* Workforce Resistance.
* Ineffective Training Methods.
* Mundane vs Periodical tasks.
* Lack of Employee Engagement.
* Employee Roadblocks.
* Poor Feedback and Support System.

**Dimensions of training strategy**

When developing your employee training strategy, try to include all nine of these dimensions:

A skilled and effective training program manager

Assessments of learning needs throughout the company

Training alignment with company objectives

Goals and metrics that show training effectiveness

Leaders advocating for training

Modern and relevant learning content

Creative ideas for training initiatives

Ongoing marketing to encourage participation in training

Reinforcement of what employees learn

Read on to learn how you can implement these training best practices into your own employee development programs.

1. Effective Training Program Management

A high quality training program starts with a person – a champion. We’ll call this person the program manager. In some organizations this person might be the training and development manager, learning and development specialist, training coordinator, chief learning officer… there are a lot of options here. Regardless of job title, this person is the one who manages training and development.

Program managers are responsible for planning and executing all training initiatives within an organization. An ideal training program manager is inherently curious, open-minded, motivated, and invested in developing employees’ skills to help them reach their potential. They are committed to learning and are constantly working to improve their own skills and competencies.

Additionally, this person is usually tasked with marketing the training program internally, so that employees are aware of development opportunities. Other important skills include problem solving, business acumen, and leadership skills.

2. Assessments of Learning Needs

In getting started, the program manager must be able to identify the needs of an organization. This is where curiosity comes into play – they must take time to understand the past, present, and future direction. A needs assessment can be conducted through research, interviews, and internal surveys.

At the core of any effective training program is correctly identifying who needs to be trained, and on what skills or topics.

A “training need” is the gap between current performance and required performance. For example, if you find that you have unsatisfied customers, there might be a need for customer service training for your sales and support teams.

3. Aligning Training to Business Goals

Once needs are identified, they must be aligned with organizational initiatives. The program manager should build a curriculum to address problems in the organization and support business goals. By following this model, employees will be more likely to understand the training and it will be supported by managers and leaders.

The impact to the organization is the critical piece. No one wants to do something just to do it – you must have a purpose.

When linking training to organizational strategy, you will be able to easily identify the above or bottom line indicators – are you saving the company money or making the company money?

4. Setting Goals and Tracking the Right Training Metrics

The outcomes of training employees can be difficult to quantify. However, when the program manager is able to determine organizational needs that are aligned with the business, quantifying training becomes much easier.

When developing goals, make sure metrics give the whole picture, including quantity, quality, time, cost and effectiveness. You’ll want to develop a benchmarking strategy for evaluating your progress towards your goals and ensure that data and reports are easily available to provide you with the information that you need.

Schedule time to monitor, analyze and review progress towards goals on a regular basis. This will allow you to become agile and shift strategy as needed.

5. Leaders Bought into and Encouraging Employee Learning

One of the keys to a successful training and development program, and possibly the most important, is leadership buy-in from the top down. Having leadership support helps drive the importance of a program, assist with accountability, and establish appropriate expectations.

Leadership buy-in is more easily obtained when the program manager has been able to identify the needs of the organization, align them to the business, and develop formalized goals and metrics that will provide results.

Senior leaders will want to know how the training program can impact the bottom line, so be prepared to talk about this when you present your ideas.

6. Modern and Relevant Training Content

Providing relevant training content is key to a good training program, to ensure your learners are engaged and continue to come back for more.

The modern learner today is distracted, overwhelmed and has little time to spare. Catering content to their needs is not only important – it’s critical.

The training content you present to your employees must be applicable and timely to help them with their daily duties, expand their mind, and provide them with quick takeaways that can immediately be applied.

7. Creative Ideas that Draw Employees into Learning

We’ve found over the years that programs that have some type of creative hook are viewed as more valuable to the organization.

Creativity can start with a program launch that has a theme – it can be as simple as a corporate university or college layout.

Branding the training initiative with a logo or mascot can add a level of fun and familiarity as the program continues. Other creative ploys could include seasonal themes and contests.

8. Consistently Marketing the Training Program

Having a marketing strategy is an integral part of your implementation and an essential component of a successful learning and development program. A successful marketing plan includes not only initial launch activities, but also strong ongoing efforts throughout the program.

As you build your plan, remember to keep your program goals and success factors at the forefront of your decision making, and tie the activities into these goals.

Any communication sent out to employees should include not only an overview and clearly defined expectations, but also show an employee what’s in it for them. You must provide a “why” behind every part of training. Your goal is to use marketing tactics to increase utilization of your training program.

9. Training Reinforcement to Increase Learning Retention

Many organizations spend thousands of dollars per year training employees, only to discover that they’re not applying new concepts. Training reinforcement is a crucial part of ensuring training is applied on the job.

Without being given the opportunity to remember, employees will forget nearly all training in less than a week.

Training reinforcement is a series of small lessons or learning activities that support a core concept or skill. By continuing to teach what was learned at a seminar or from a video, employees will not only remember more, but they will also be more likely to apply it to their everyday work.

**Options of training strategy**

**ANALYZE YOUR NEEDS AND GOALS**

Take the time to carefully analyze your business and employee needs when designing your training plan. This will help you choose the right type of training for your requirements. Above and beyond your business needs are to review what the trends are in your industry. Will you need to train seasonal staff for new health and safety protocols? Or perhaps you may need to invest in upskilling existing employees for future needs.

**IDENTIFY SKILL GAPS**

You can do this by looking at a written job description (make sure you have one!) and comparing the skills the position requires with your employees’ current abilities. Understanding where there may be gaps will help you identify the type of training you need.

**PRIORITIZE**

Assign the training you’d like to provide into categories. Is it mandatory, or nice-to-have? If it’s absolutely required, training for your staff becomes imperative. If it reflects an ideal situation that isn’t immediately feasible, you’ll know to plan for it in the longer term.

**PLAN AND DELIVER THE TRAINING**

Once you have assessed and prioritized the need for training, the next step is to secure what type of training you will use and how you will offer it. There are several factors to consider:

**TYPES OF TRAINING AVAILABLE**

Internal resources: Ask yourself what resources you have in-house. Seasoned employees may be perfect to take on coaching or mentoring roles. Inexpensive to provide, these are among the most effective types of training.

External resources: Formal seminars, conferences, private trainers and videos are all good methods for learning. These tools are generally more expensive but are professionally developed and often yield good results.

**DELIVERY OPTIONS**

One-on-one vs. group sessions, e-learning vs. in-person instruction, on-site or off-site, or self-directed vs. guided? These questions will be answered by a blend of factors: what’s available, what best suits your needs, what you can afford, and what your employees’ learning styles are.

**YOUR BUDGET**

It’s important to balance your need to save with the long-term benefit of developing staff. Try to determine the best type of training available for the amount you have available to spend. For more information, we suggest reading go2HR’s article on Budgeting for Training.

**SECURE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF BUY IN**

Before you can execute a training program, getting a collective agreement from senior management in your company that training is a priority will go a long way. You will need their support the plan fully and agree to milestones, costs, dates and deliverables.

Securing employee buy in is also required. Talk to your staff about the goals for training and why it’s important to the business that they undertake the learning effort. Most often, employees will respond favourably to your investment in their development. Today’s employees look beyond their paycheques; they value and embrace opportunities to learn new skills.

**ANALYZE TRAINING EFFORTS AND THEIR IMPACT**

Training can be costly, so you will want to assess its impact. However, sometimes its effect cannot be translated simply into bottom line dollars and cents.

Ideally, you might track variables before and after training to verify improvements after development efforts. If the training focused on customer service, the end result may be fewer customer complaints and/or an increase in sales. Training on a new computer system may net fewer errors or quicker processing. You may need to review why you sought training to begin with and whether your concerns have been remedied.

**Training Process**

**Introduction:-**

Training is the process for providing required skills to the employee for doing the job effectively, skillfully and qualitatively. Training of employees is not continuous, but it is periodical and given in specified time. Generally training will be given by an expert or professional in related field or job.

**Definition**: The Training Process comprises of a series of steps that needs to be followed systematically to have an efficient training programme. The Training is a systematic activity performed to modify the skills, attitudes and the behavior of an employee to perform a particular job.

**Stages of training Process:-**



**Needs assessment**: The first step in the training process is to assess the need for training the employees. The need for training could be identified through a diagnosis of present and future challenges and through a gap between the employee’s actual performance and the standard performance.

**The needs assessment can be studied from two perspectives**: Individual and group. The individual training is designed to enhance the individual’s efficiency when not performing adequately. And whereas the group training is intended to inculcate the new changes in the employees due to a change in the organization’s strategy.

**Deriving Instructional Objectives**: Once the needs are identified, the objectives for which the training is to be conducted are established. The objectives could be based on the gaps seen in the training programmes conducted earlier and the skill sets developed by the employees.

**Designing Training Programme**: The next step is to design the training programme in line with the set objectives. Every training programme encompasses certain issues such as: Who are the trainees? Who are the trainers? What methods are to be used for the training? What will be the level of training? etc.Also, the comprehensive action plan is designed that includes the training content, material, learning theories, instructional design, and the other training requisites.

**Implementation of the Training Programme**: Once the designing of the training programme is completed, the next step is to put it into the action. The foremost decision that needs to be made is where the training will be conducted either in-house or outside the organization.

Once it is decided, the time for the training is set along with the trainer who will be conducting the training session. Also, the trainees are monitored continuously throughout the training programme to see if it’s effective and is able to retain the employee’s interest.

**Evaluation of the Training Programme**: After the training is done, the employees are asked to give their feedback on the training session and whether they felt useful or not. Through feedback, an organization can determine the weak spots if any, and can rectify it in the next session.The evaluation of the training programme is a must because companies invest huge amounts in these sessions and must know it’s effectiveness in terms of money.

Thus, every firm follows the series of steps to design an effective training programme that serves the purpose for which it was intended.

**7 steps for identifying the training needs of your employees**

**1. Set clear expectations for each role**

To identify employee training and development needs, you must first set clear expectations for each role within your business. This creates a benchmark to monitor performance against.

Review job descriptions when new positions are created, or when making substantial changes to existing roles. Remember to periodically account for smaller changes as well.

Doing this makes it easier to understand what skills an employee needs if they are to be successful in each role. And in turn this helps you identify skills gaps and potential training and development needs.

**2. Monitor employee performance**

Measuring and monitoring performance should be embraced as a means of supporting employees (not penalising them) and can be a valuable tool in identifying development opportunities.

Set clear goals for employees and respond to performance blips on an individual basis. Understanding why performance is off kilter puts you in a better position to respond positively and offer appropriate training.

Conversely, if an employee continuously over delivers, you could work with them to set more challenging goals to stretch their abilities.

**3. Ask away**

Now this may seem obvious, but employee feedback can be a valuable addition to your SMEs training and development plan.

Instead of traditional employee surveys, use focused employee evaluation to encourage honest and open feedback. This will create helpful dialogue about career development and help you identify specific employee training requirements.

A simple way to do this is to ask employees to rate their job satisfaction and performance and then ask them what would make it better. Also ask them to comment on your current employee training and development programme and to understand whether it's supporting their career goals.

Don’t restrict your business to individual level feedback, ask managers for feedback on employees and compare that with employee self-evaluation to identify differences. It is equally useful to ask for employee feedback on managers.

**4. Analysis (and lots of it)**

You’ll already have your SME's strategies and goals set up. Complement this with an analysis of the work that delivers those goals. This should help you identify employee training and development needs that are specific to each team and job.

Tapping into what's going on under the surface will help you spot gaps in your training and development schedule.

It’s likely that training and development needs will fall into one of three categories:

* Improving staff knowledge about your industry
* Job-related needs
* Personal development

**5. Make the most of personal development plans**

Giving employees the opportunity to lead their personal development can have a profound effect on their motivation and their engagement in your business.

Well-managed personal development plans improve communication and will also help you identify any relevant training and development needs.

Use cloud-based HR software such as Breathe – this way both the employee and their manager can easily stay on top of objectives and performance.

**6. Use focus group to understand employee training and development needs**

Focus groups are a useful tool to help you identify training and development needs within your business. A focus group looks at a cross-section of employees within your business under the guidance of an expert facilitator.

They are a useful way of gathering employees’ views and opinions about current training and how to improve what is on offer. Focus groups also help demonstrate that you are genuinely interested in your employees' opinions.

**7. Set up a system of mentoring and coaching**

Closely aligning staff with a mentor will help develop skills while identifying additional employee training and development needs. Mentoring programmes are a great way of helping employees succeed in their careers and can be as powerful for the mentors as they are for the mentees.

**POTENTIAL SOURCES OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRAINING NEEDS**

* Regular management reports tell about production, warehousing or inventory problems about trends in turnover, or grievances about an array of things that cause T&D managers to ask whether human performance could be a cause. A great deal of valuable news can be discovered by reading the reports the upper management requires to run the organization.
* Special reports and requests reveal future plans, shifting priorities, problem areas, successes, failures—many of which either result from human performance or will involve it. They reveal new strategies and programs that may require people to do things they have never done before. That means potential inadequate human inventories, and inadequate human inventories are symptoms of potential training needs.
* New plants usually mean new hiring, sometimes new positions.
* New products, which can result only if a new technology (or significant amendments to old technologies) are acquired by significant numbers of employees.
* New equipment or machinery can arrive when there are new plants or new products—or simply because somebody found a better way to handle old tasks. Examples:The Accounting Department gets a new computer, or the Print Shop buys new equipment. If many people become involved with these machines, there is an organizational training need.
* Changes in standards, as we have noted so many times, inevitably mean that large numbers of people must be informed—and sometimes trained. Frequently,incumbents need a chance to express their feelings about the change, to understand the reasons for the new standard so that they can accept it more easily—or at least respond effectively by "going along with it."
* Trends in any operating or management index are signals for training needs for populations of employees—especially if the trend is in the wrong direction.Thus sales reports, productivity indices, cost figures, waste reports, backorders, reject rates, turnover, grievance trends, and frequent recommendations in appraisals—all these are good data for the T&D manager who is deciding what training needs might exist in the organization.
* New policies frequently result from the changing position of the organization in the marketplace. If times are tough, the employment, layoff, benefits, and salary "package" may be changed. When that happens, the expectations of employees often change, too. How will they know the new policies, and where will they express the new expectations, unless in training-type sessions? The alert T&D manager sees that such sessions are considered.

**Role of Training and Development**

* **Reduces cost of production**: Training is always better than hit and trial methods, which are mostly a waste of time and effort. On the other hand, training is a systematic approach for the employees to learn and gain knowledge. The employees work economically, using the resources efficiently, which prevents wastage of materials and reduces the cost of production.
* **Higher productivity**: Training strengthens the productivity of the employees both in qualitative and quantitative terms, which further leads to higher profits.
* **Prepares future managers**: Training benefits all employees whether they are new or old. It also trains the future manager who can take charge of the organization in the absence of the present manager due to any kind of emergency.
* **Better response to fast-changing environment**: Training keeps the employees of the organization updated on the changes in the organization as well as increases their response to the rapid changes in the business environment, be it technical or economical.
* **Increases morale of employees**: Training helps increase the morale of the employee and also decreases absenteeism and employee turnover.
* **Reduces accidents**: Training helps to reduce accidents in the workplace as employees are given proper training on how to operate machinery or the system on which they are working.

**FUNCTIONS OF A TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:-**

* In any organization, having employees who aren’t adequately trained can be a nightmare. To address this issue, training programs are implemented to guarantee that everyone is capable of performing their duties appropriately.
* Successful training programs do not happen by themselves. They often necessitate a great deal of planning. Training and Development managers assist employees in learning new skills.
* They help them develop existing ones, ensuring that they are adequately trained and capable of performing their jobs efficiently.
* In terms of trends and practices, the T&D Manager assists the company in staying ahead of the competition.
* He reports directly to the Senior Manager and is in charge of the development, coordination, and reporting of the company’s staff training programs. He must value efficiency and be willing to advocate for organizational reform.

**DUTIES OF A TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS:-**

* **Management**:  The Training and Development Manager is in charge of developing and maintaining scalable systems for onboarding, training, and fostering the growth of all workers across all areas of the company. He is in charge of managing, improving, and expanding the company’s present training programs for personnel in all departments. The managers also ensure that the junior department’s manuals and procedures are always in line with the company’s objectives.
* **Strategy**:  The T&D Manager has a strategic role in the organization, where he oversees the strategy, execution, and delivery of training programs. In this role, he plans and directs training and development programs for employees. The goal is to boost individual and organizational performance as well as employee morale while also strengthening their abilities. Based on the business ethics stated training needs, he creates appropriate training schedules and tactics.
* **Support**:  The Training and Development Manager also serves as a support position within the company, assisting individual employees in maintaining and improving their job skills as well as preparing for promotions or roles that require more advanced abilities. In order to develop existing abilities or foster new ones, he creates tailored training programs for staff. He also responds to requests for training from project leaders, which he designs and delivers on time and on budget. New employees also receive training by the Training and Development Manager. He ensures that they become a part of the workplace culture and integrate into the departments.