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Staff Organization Training: Designing, Stages, and Methods

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Abstract

This study intends to specify the particular aspects of staff organization training in term of literatures. A content analysis is conducted to provide an overview of the three approaches including “the cycle of course designing”, “the training stages” and “training methods”. In addition, the new directions of instruction are discussed regarding performed courses in some organizations. It is demonstrated that the more future oriented method with education of the employees is “Management development” that attempt to instill sound reasoning processes for better performing of personnel training. We assert that these findings can assist human resource researchers to introduce with basic concepts of staff organization training.

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Keywords: Staff organization training; designing a staff instruction course; staff organization training stages; off- the job training; on- the job training.

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1. Introduction

Training is one of the most important parts of an organization's overall strategy. Before starting a particular venture or considering a potential acquisition, the first question arises that, whether there are skills present in the organization or not. Typically all key skills required for efficient management of a company must be available in a company; however other non core activities can be outsourced. Need of training arises due to advancement in technology, need for improving performance or as part of professional development. In this regard, “Staff Organization Training” is defined acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and attitudes to improve the maintenance and development of organization (Lawson, 2002). One of the most important benefits of training for an organization is that, it provides skills inside the organization which reduces overall cost of an organization's operations. Quality is one of the key features required for survival of an organization in long term. Total Quality Management (TQM) and other quality management techniques require staff training as an important requisite for its successful implementation.

High employee turnover may be a serious threat to an organization existence, major benefit of training is that it reduces staff turnover and help an organization to retain its staff. Better training can provide an organization competitive advantage over others in industry. In service industries the main source of an organization income is its staff expertise and skills, acquiring professional with high skills is comparatively expensive than training current employees to acquire those skills. Training is also a key requirement for new recruits; proper training helps them to understand the job, its requirements and responsibilities. Training also increases understanding of the organizational culture(Industrial Training Report, 2006).

Training programs increases communication between different levels of an organization. Any deficiency in processes and jobs are eliminated and those close to production processes become involve in the management. Staff empowerment is a recent trend in management; such empowerment will only be successful when proper training is provided to those empowered (Soltani, 2006).

According to these significant staff training benefits, it is required that the different aspects of employees’ education; such as designing a training course, methods, and stages are reviewed to provide an overview of personnel instruction. In order to this study is acquired by reviewing significant literatures in term of content analysis, it can support junior management researchers and human resources personnel to make sense of these concepts

2. Designing a Training Course as a Human Resource Plan

Vajehe (2006) pointed out human resource professionals will also need to learn how to create, use and monitor various training programs for employees. The human resources manager may need to write a training manual, instructing employees how to dress and behave on the job. For example, company policy may forbid employee dating. Additionally, the human resource professional may include information on diversity training or sexual harassment in the training manual. Planning a training program to support human resources (HR) functions in an organizational setting involves assessing the need, designing the materials to support human resource professionals, developing the training program, implementing the program and evaluating the impact of the program on departmental operational metrics. In this regard, Fathi (Vajargah Fathi, Training Needs Assessment: Models and Techniques) presented cycle of designing a staff instruction course as a pattern for developing formal training programs with trainers, holding sessions on site, in the classroom. The steps of Fathi’s cycle are as follows:
2.1 First Step

Analyze your human resources department operations. Observe human resources professionals conducting day-to-day activities. Conduct surveys to determine what tasks the HR department workers need the most help in developing expertise. For example, typical topics include approving or denying leave, establishing salary ranges, calculating bonuses, creating performance improvement plans and handling layoffs.

2.2 Second Step

Design your training program by listing learning objectives and creating a content outline. Validate your assumptions by reviewing your design ideas with members of the HR organization. Obtain sponsorship from executive leadership to ensure your program aligns with strategic goals. For example, establish a comprehensive training program to train HR personnel to conduct hiring activities efficiently when the company goal includes plans to expand significantly.

2.3 Third Step

Develop your training materials including presentations, classroom exercises and study guides. Create a list of references and resources. Publish these to a company intranet page and communicate its availability via newsletter or social media technology such as a blog or forum. Create a list of industry Internet links of tips and techniques. For example, the Society of Human Resource Management provides sample interview questions. HR professionals can use these questions as a guideline when conducting effective interviews.

2.4 Fourth Step

Implement your training program by communicating its availability to all employees in your HR department to ensure compliance to company policies and procedures as well state, federal and local regulations. Make the training mandatory for new employees and provide seminars on specific changes for more experienced employees. Popular refresher topics may include benefits, leadership, consulting, ethics, diversity, labor relations, safety and staffing management.

2.5 Fifth Step

Evaluate your training program effectiveness by conducting follow-up interviews, surveys, focus groups and operational analysis. For example, examine HR operation metrics using the metrics calculators provided by the Society of Human Resource Management. Calculate the diversity hire ratio before and after providing a course on how to hire a diverse population. Use higher diversity ratios as a validation point for the success of your training program. Figure 1 presents the cycle of designing a staff instruction course.
3. Methods of Training: Cognitive Methods

There are various methods of training, which can be divided into cognitive and behavioral methods (Chris, 1999). Trainers need to understand the pros and cons of each method, also its impact on trainees keeping their background and skills in mind before giving training. Cognitive methods are more of giving theoretical training to the trainees. The various methods under cognitive approach provide the rules for how to do something, written or verbal information, demonstrate relationships among concepts, etc. These methods are associated with changes in knowledge and attitude by stimulating learning. The various methods that come under cognitive approach are:

3.1 Lectures

“It is one of the oldest methods of training. This method is used to create understanding of a topic or to influence behavior, attitudes through lecture. A lecture can be in printed or oral form. Lecture is telling someone about something. Lecture is given to enhance the knowledge of listener or to give him the theoretical aspect of a topic. Training is basically incomplete without lecture. When the trainer begins the training session by telling the aim, goal, agenda, processes, or methods that will be used in training that means the trainer is using the lecture method. It is difficult to imagine training without lecture format. There are some variations in Lecture method. The variation here means that some forms of lectures are interactive while some are not” (Vajehe, 2006).

3.2 Demonstrations

This method is a visual display of how something works or how to do something. As an example, trainer shows the trainees how to perform or how to do the tasks of the job. In order to be more effective, demonstration method should be should be accompanied by the discussion or lecture method. To carry out an effective demonstration, a trainer first prepares the lesson plan by breaking the task to be performed into smaller modules, easily learned parts. Then, the trainer sequentially organizes those modules and prepares an explanation for why that part is required (Vajehe, 2006).

3.3 Discussions

This method uses a lecturer to provide the learners with context that is supported, elaborated, explains, or expanded on through interactions both among the trainees and between the trainer and the trainees. The interaction and the communication between these two make it much more effective and powerful than the lecture method. If the discussion method is used with proper sequence i.e. lectures, followed by discussion and questioning, can achieve higher level knowledge objectives, such as problem solving and principle learning. The discussion method consists a two-way flow of communication i.e. knowledge in the form of
lecture is communicated to trainees, and then understanding is conveyed back by trainees to trainer (Vajehe, 2006).

3.4 Computer-based Training

With the worldwide expansion of companies and changing technologies, the demands for knowledge and skilled employees have increased more than ever, which in turn, is putting pressure on HR department to provide training at lower costs. Many organizations are now implementing CBT as an alternative to classroom based training to accomplish those goals (Lawson, 2002). Some of the benefits of Computer Based Training are illustrated in Figure 2.

![Benefits of CBT Diagram]

Fig. 2. The benefits of Computer Based Training (Lawson, 2002)

4. Methods

Behavioral methods are more of giving practical training to the trainees. The various methods under Behavioral approach allow the trainee to behavior in a real fashion. These methods are best used for skill development. The various methods that come under Behavioral approach are as follows:

4.1 Behavioral Modeling

It uses the innate inclination for people to observe others to discover how to do something new. It is more often used in combination with some other techniques (Chris, 1999).

4.2 Games and Simulations

They are structured and sometimes unstructured, that are usually played for enjoyment sometimes are used for training purposes as an educational tool. Training games and simulations are different from work as they are designed to reproduce or simulate events, circumstances, processes that take place in trainees’ job (Lawson, 2002).
4.3 Business Games

These methods are the type of simulators that try to present the way an industry, company, organization, consultancy, or subunit of a company functions. Basically, they are based on the set of rules, procedures, plans, relationships, principles derived from the research. In the business games, trainees are given some information that describes a particular situation and are then asked to make decisions that will best suit in the favor of the company. And then the system provides the feedback about the impact of their decisions (Lawson, 2002).

4.4 Case Studies

These methods try to simulate decision making situation that trainees may find at their work place. It reflects the situations and complex problems faced by managers, staff, HR, CEO, etc. The objective of the case study method is to get trainees to apply known concepts and ideologies and ascertain new ones. The case study method emphasize on approach to see a particular problem rather than a solution. Their solutions are not as important as the understanding of advantages and disadvantages.

4.5 Equipment Simulators

They are the mechanical devices that necessitate trainees to use some actions, plans, measures, trials, movements, or decision processes they would use with equipment back on the their respective work place.

4.6 In-basket Techniques

It provides trainees with a log of written text or information and requests, such as memos, messages, and reports, which would be handled by manager, engineer, reporting officer, or administrator (Fathi Vajargah, 2002).

4.7 Role Play

It is a simulation in which each participant is given a role to play. Trainees are given with some information related to description of the role, concerns, objectives, responsibilities, emotions, etc. Then, a general description of the situation, and the problem that each one of them faces, is given.

5. Staff Organization Training Stages

Staff organization training is divided to three main stages: “Pre-service training”, “on-the-job training”, and “off-the-job training”. The term “pre-service training” is used to describe formal introductory training provided at an academy site for new employees, in other word it is instruction which takes place before a person begins a job or task. It is one of the training methods, which is considered as a corrective method for inadequate performance. According to a survey conducted by International Coach Federation (ICF), more than 4,000 companies are using coach for their executives. These coaches are experts most of the time outside consultants. The procedure of the coaching is mutually determined by the executive and coach. The procedure is followed by successive counseling and meetings at the executive’s convenience by the coach including understanding the participant’s job, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and resources required to meet the desired expectation, meeting the participant and mutually
agree on the objective that has to be achieved, mutually arriving at a plan and schedule, showing the participant how to achieve the objectives at the job, observing the performance and then providing feedback, and repeating last step until performance improves. For the people at middle level management, coaching is more likely done by the supervisor; however experts from outside the organization are at times used for up and coming managers. Again, the personalized approach assists the manager focus on definite needs and improvement (Pakdel, 2004).

5.1. Mentoring

It is an ongoing relationship that is developed between a senior and junior employee. Mentoring provides guidance and clear understanding of how the organization goes to achieve its vision and mission to the junior employee. The meetings are not as structured and regular than in coaching. Executive mentoring is generally done by someone inside the company. The executive can learn a lot from mentoring. Mentoring is one of the important methods for preparing them to be future executives. This method allows the mentor to determine what is required to improve mentee’s performance. Once the mentor identifies the problem, weakness, and the area that needs to be worked upon, the mentor can advise relevant training.

5.2. Job Rotation

This technique allows the manager to operate in diverse roles and understand the different issues that crop up. If someone is to be a corporate leader, they must have this type of training. A recent study indicated that the single most significant factor that leads to leader’s achievement was the variety of experiences in different departments, business units, cities, and countries. An organized and helpful way to develop talent for the management or executive level of the organization is job rotation. It is the process of preparing employees at a lower level to replace someone at the next higher level. It is generally done for the designations that are crucial for the effective and efficient functioning of the organization.

5.3. Off-the-Job-Techniques

The third stages of staff organization training is called “off-the-job training”. There are many management development techniques that an employee can take in off-the-job. The few popular methods are:

5.4. Sensitivity Training

This method is about making people understand about themselves and others reasonably, which is done by developing in them social sensitivity and behavioral flexibility. Social sensitivity in one word is empathy. It is ability of an individual to sense what others feel and think from their own point of view. Behavioral flexibility is ability to behave suitably in light of understanding (Lawson, 2002).

5.5. Transactional Analysis

It provides trainees with a realistic and useful method for analyzing and understanding the behavior of others. In every social interaction, there is a motivation provided by one person and a reaction to that
motivation given by another person. This motivation reaction relationship between two persons is a transaction (Lawson, 2002).

5.6. Strength Lectures

Straight lecture method consists of presenting information, which the trainee attempts to absorb. In this method, the trainer speaks to a group about a topic. However, it does not involve any kind of interaction between the trainer and the trainees. A lecture may also take the form of printed text, such as books, notes, etc. The difference between the straight lecture and the printed material is the trainer’s intonation, control of speed, body language, and visual image of the trainer. The trainer in case of straight lecture can decide to vary from the training script, based on the signals from the trainees, whereas same material in print is restricted to what is printed (Pakdel, 2004).

5.7. Games and Simulations

These ways are structured and sometimes unstructured, that are usually played for enjoyment sometimes are used for training purposes as an educational tool. Training games and simulations are different from work as they are designed to reproduce or simulate events, circumstances, processes that take place in trainees’ job. Training game is defined as spirited activity or exercise in which trainees compete with each other according to the defined set of rules. Simulation is creating computer versions of real-life games. Simulation is about imitating or making judgment or opining how events might occur in a real situation. It can entail intricate numerical modeling, role playing without the support of technology, or combinations. Training games and simulations are now seen as an effective tool for training because its key components are challenge, rules and interactivity (Chris, 1999).

6. Conclusions

This paper indicates that due to achieving organizational goals depends on the ability of the employee in conducting duties and adaptation to change environments, the demands for knowledge and skilled employees have increased more than ever. Furthermore, improving education and human resources assist staffs to work effectively and increase productivity regarding to the organizational change and the environment. Accordingly, both the cognitive and behavioral methods can be used to change attitudes, develop employee’s abilities, however the more future oriented method is “Management development” that attempt to instill sound reasoning processes for better performing of personnel education. On the other hand, it is needed to be regulated the learning outcome of these instructions in term of a standard assessment tools, recently, such as ISO 10015 to empowers the managers within institutes for reviewing and assessing the pedagogical process of learning, and adapting standard curricula according to changing demands.

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