

Evaluation of Training as an Adjunct in Organizational Transformation

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Organizations invest money, time, effort and manpower resources on training and development programs. Training has been viewed as a process of enhancing the knowledge, attitude, skills and practices of organizational members to contribute to the productivity, quality and profitability of organizations. The role of training in an organization is critical because it addresses improved job performance for organizational success. The acquisition of new and additional knowledge, insights, skills, attitude and behaviors are necessary in a world characterized by rapid changes and developments in economy, technology, communication, and social and organizational structures.

Aside from the objective of achieving sound, effective, and healthy relations between management and employees, industrial relations aims to facilitate production and productivity; promote and safeguard the rights and interests of workers and employers; attain a harmonious and mutually beneficial labor-management relations; and establish and sustain industrial peace in an organized and orderly socio-economic system following technological and socio-economic developments.

Companies have been operating under the assumption that they are gaining positive results from training activities. However,

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in view of changes in the economy, some have started rethinking about their investments in training. There has to be substantial justification to support decisions on training expenses.

At present, evaluation of training programs is one of the neglected functions of human resource development. Organizations should measure the benefits and relate them to the cost of training to show the rate of return on investments (ROI). But in order to accomplish this, there is need to develop training metrics.

Importance of training evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic examination of actions and outputs vis-à-vis objectives and policies. It is an essential component of any program, project or activity. This is true whether the undertaking is cyclical, recurrent, terminal or ad hoc. It is a process of discovering deviations from the plan while action is taking place or after it has run its full course so that on-course improvements can be made and similar occurrences in the future can be avoided. Evaluation has preventive, remedial and enhancement purposes behind its installation in a program.

There are certainly problems with measuring the impact of training on productivity. Ideas, abilities, insights, motivations and aspirations are intangible and difficult to quantify. Further, training results may be difficult to identify and segregate from other aspects of management. The improvement of supervisory techniques, entry of an effective supervisor, introduction of new equipment, change of physical layout, and revision of salary scale and additional compensation packages may altogether generate higher productivity and changed attitudes. These improvements in the human resource may be attributed wrongly to training unless the change factor is identified.

Attention is given to the evaluation of training because it is essential that some measure of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the trainees be identified to determine the changes before and after training. Evaluation designs, however, may not always suffice to reveal the appropriate attributes after training so that it may be necessary to determine if it is indeed training or some other factor which led to enhanced performance. The importance of evaluating training programs has convinced those involved in conducting trainings to the systematic documentation of the outcomes of the activity in terms of how the participants behave when they go back to their workplaces and the effects of their behavior on the goals of the organization. The following questions are typically asked: