Training Needs Analysis in Contemporary Organizations

Savita Choudhary

Department of Management Studies

Swami Keshvanand Institute of Technology, Management & Gramothan, Jaipur, India

Email: savitakarwasra@gmail.com

Abstract: **Knowledge becomes obsolete if not refurbished. It is a very common phenomenon in the organizations to train the employees. This is done not only with the objective of imparting them the knowledge of newer happenings in their field but also aims at acquisition of latest skills by providing them requisite training. Training should be a planned activity as it consumes considerable amount of organizational resources. Expected outcome of any training programme is enhanced efficiency while performing the task. This gives way to the methods and techniques to be adopted in order to make training more effective. This can be achieved by matching the training needs with training techniques. For example, if office staff is trained for sales, it might not give any result as office staff is not engaged in selling. However, if the sales staff is trained in computer skills, it will be helpful in increasing their work efficiency as they will be able to give product presentations, send emails to clients, tabulate prospective customer list, generate sales report in excel sheet etc. whether the training will be effective or up to what degrees the training objectives are achieved, depends on training need analysis. Training needs analysis is the process of identification of the requirement of training needed by the employees in order to enhance their efficiency.**

Key words: **Training, Training needs, Training needs analysis, Contemporary organizations**

1. INTRODUCTION

Training is a very common activity undertaken by human resource department. It is one of the many functions performed by the human resource department. By training, we mean imparting knowledge or skill specifically to a group of employees by the experts from within the organizations or from other organizations. Training is a planned activity undertaken by the organization with specific objectives. Training aims at improving work efficiency either by improving upon present methods or by acquisition of newer skills or adoption of latest technology. Training affects overall organizational productivity. It is also helpful in overall organizational development, with long-term benefits to the organization. It is expected that after training, there will be a positive change in the operational aspects of the organization. Training increases the utilization of manpower. Training has greater significance for the success of contemporary organizations as theses have to compete globally. It is actually change in technology that creates the demand for training. It is the up-gradation of knowledge, skills, abilities, technical competence etc. Training helps the organization in gaining competitive advantage. A particular organization can develop expertise in specific area and can develop competitive advantage in the same. Training is an attempt to improve employees' performance with the use of newer methodologies. Training is an intentional activity, conducted in programmed manner to achieve specific objectives, to bring about desired change in the behavior of employees. It also improves the quality of wok life and also motivates the employees for better work-life balance. Training is a planned process of modifying attitude, behavior, skills, knowledge etc. Training enhances the capacities and capabilities of the employees being trained. Training refers to the process of imparting knowledge and skills, technical or non-technical, to the employees, with a specific purpose in mind [1]. Training has great importance since it helps in avoiding personnel obsolescence. It also motivates the employees to learn newer techniques to perform the same task or to shoulder further responsibilities with effectiveness. Training raises the bar and encourages the employees to achieve increased target, which ultimately increases the productivity of employees and thus, the overall profitability of the organization. Training consumes considerable amount of any organization's resources. It is an activity which requires proper planning and effective execution of the plan, if the training objectives are to be achieved. For this reason, it becomes imperative to first specifically identify the training need. After identification of training need, training plan should be tailor made. Training needs analysis (TNA) will definitely serve the purpose by correctly identifying the gap between pre and post training performance of the trainees. Training needs analysis also ensures that right type of training is provided to the employees who require it. Arousal of training needs is a condition of requirement of moving to desired level of performance, behaviour and attitude from existing level. This condition of requirement is specific to all organizations. The gap between actual and expected performance, behaviour and attitude leads to emergence of training needs. Training needs arise when there is requirement to move in at a specific level of performance [2].

2. CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY

Training should lead to increased profitability. It improves the job knowledge and skills, at almost all levels of the organization. Training has to be a continuous activity. It is a method of modernization of the whole organizations. In contemporary organizations, the dependency on technology has increased

considerably. This spells the need of tech savvy manpower at every operational level. Jobs these days have become complex, in comparison to older days. As the manpower is crucial asset of any organization and is the basis of utilization of all other assets. In many of the newer businesses, the involvement of technology is really high and even if not online presence of business is the need of the hour. Thus, it is almost impossible to avoid many of the technological processes, even in routine operations. Training is one of the most important techniques of human resource development in the organizations. Training plays a vital role in achieving individual and organizational objectives of sustainability, growth and development. Training aims at improving one's capabilities and capacities in alignment with organizational objectives [3]. The amount of resources involved and the productivity foregone during the training period highlights the necessity of training needs analysis in effective manner. Training needs determination is also important to make training purposeful and to deliver expected training outcome. A Sales Executive might not require high typing speed but he must have working knowledge of computer. An Office Clerk would require both, in order to enable him to work faster using computer. So it may not be necessary to train the Sales Executive for typing. Similarly, Sales Executives will be required to be trained for newer sales techniques which will not be needed by Finance Executives. Accounts Executives will require training on ERP Tally 9.0 with GST, which will be of no use to HR Executives. If a new machine is installed with the objective of increasing production with enhanced efficiency and better quality, the workers need to be trained. What is meant to be said is that the training needs of different groups of employees are different. The skill set required is different, performance targets and the yardsticks to measure the performance, expected outcomes, level of efficiency in different tasks etc. are all different for various employee groups. Training needs analysis is the combination of various needs for which training is to be conducted. It is basically the assessment of the requirements of the training programme, more of the outcome expected out of the training programme. Training needs analysis ensures that right type of training is provided to the required group. Training needs analysis finds out about the present level of knowledge, skill or attitude at individual, group or organizational level and the expected level of the same keeping in view the future objective of the organization [4]. There is not any exact technique to clearly analyze the gap between actual and expected performance, i.e. pre training and post training performance unless and until it is mathematical or measureable. It is possible to identify the training needs when the production is to be increased by 20% or sales are to be increased by 25% or another objective of this nature but it is usually difficult to impart newer skill to any group of employees at any level, as it is difficult to pull out any individual from his comfort zone. Everyone wants to maintain status quo. Training also encourages the employees to come out of their shells and perform better. Training can also be a source of competitive advantage. In order to take advantage of various dimensions of training, it is must that the training needs analysis is conducted with highest degree of accuracy. Training

needs analysis is the key to the success of any training activity. The methodology needs to be adopted is very simple as the analyst has to identify the gap between the present and the expected. Analyzing newer employees training needs is easier in comparison to the analysis of the training needs of current or older employees. Newer employees training is in fact induction oriented while continuing employees' training is focused on skill updating.

Table 1: Methods Used in Training Needs Analysis

Group or Organizational Analysis	Individual Analysis
Organizational Goals and objectives	Performance Appraisal
Personnel / Skills Inventories	Work Sampling
Organizational Climate Indices	Interviews
Efficiency Indices	Questionnaires
Exit Interviews	Attitude Survey
Management by Objectives	Training Progress
Work Planning Systems	Rating Scales
Quality Circles	
Customer Survey	
Consideration of Current and Projected Changes	

Source: Aswathappa K. - Human Resource Management-Text and Cases

3. ADVANTAGES

The biggest advantage of training needs analysis is that the trainer is aware of the specific needs of the trainees. This enables the trainers to align the training plan as per these needs. Training needs analysis ensures that the objective of training are achieved in meaningful manner and the organizational resources are not wasted [5]. It also makes the trainer more accountable towards the achievement of the objectives of the training. Training needs analysis ascertains the optimum use of resources deployed for the purpose of training. As training devours substantial amount of organizational resources, it is much needed that the task of training is accomplished with great efficiency.

Training needs analysis helps in deciding the training plan and finalization of training schedule. It is advisable to assess the training needs ahead of any training programmes as it further directs on many dimensions of the training programme itself. Like how many trainees will be there for training, what resources will be required, what type of experts should be engaged, what should be the method of training, what will be the duration of training etc. answers to all these questions will ensure the success of training programme. None of the training

programme is without objectives. Training needs analysis assures that the objectives of the training programme are achieved efficiently and effectively.

Training needs analysis makes the planning for the training programme more efficient and once the planning is near to perfect, there are chances that the execution may also be near to perfection. There is a common saying that well begun is half done. Training needs analysis is the first step towards any successful training programme as once the needs are analyzed, it becomes easier for the trainers to develop and deliver the training programme. Training needs analysis is like ascertaining the demand for specific knowledge or skills and once the demand is correctly forecasted, planning the supplies becomes easier.

Training needs analysis also ensures that the organization is moving in right direction. Wrong type training provided to employees will mar the future of the organization. The future course of action of any organization will depend on the acquired skill set of its employees. This way right type of training serves the purpose. Training needs assessment, training needs measurement, training needs evaluation, training needs determination etc. are all synonyms of training needs analysis. Limitations

Training is imparting specific job related skills and behavior to employees. Training is any activity performed with the objective of fulfilling the gap between present performance and expected performance. Training brings positive changes and focuses on better performance. However, the biggest limitation of the training is that any individual can be trained only for 'can't do' type of problems and not for 'won't do' ones. Training needs analysis may not be able to distinguish between can't do and won't do type of problems. If it is able to distinguish, it would be the best thing as the training efforts will not wasted on won't do type of issues. [6]

Another limitation of training needs analysis exercise is the diagnostic skill of the analyzer. It is similar to the diagnostic skills of physician. If the physician is not able to catch hold of the right disease, he will never be able to prescribe correct medicine. The training needs analysis must surface the exact training requirements which will be possible with the expertise of the expert conducting this analysis.

In most of the organizations, training is considered as a waste-of-time activity, as it consumes resources and also that the productivity for the training duration is also lost. Most of the organizations believe that why employees need to be trained if present performance is up to the mark. These organizations fail to understand the future requirements of the environment. In such cases, training needs analysis cannot be conducted.

Many organizations also think that providing training to employees is not really fruitful, as employees keep changing jobs. In such cases, newer employees also require training. So it is not worth providing training to employees. Employee retention ratio plays an important role in designing training needs analysis programme.

4. Conclusion

Future trends in training indicate that there will be more use of technology while imparting training. This would emphasis on the importance of training needs analysis. Training of the workforce of any organization is expected to enhance its overall productivity and reduce wastage. As training increases productivity, it also boosts the morale of the employees. Training is supposed to reduce total operational time of organizational activities. Training today has immense importance especially in technology based organizations. The fear of obsolescence has increased in today's swiftly changing and highly competitive world. Personnel obsolescence would lead to organizational failure. This can be checked by providing proper training to the definite set of employees who needs it. Training helps in increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the operational procedures. It also aids in acquisition of newer skills, helpful in career growth and development of employees as well as the organizations. Training directs the organizations on the contemporary path of action and stay ahead of time, in this competitive era. Change is inevitable and training is the technique to acclimatize to any change, internal or external to the organizations. The biggest example of inevitable change is the computerization of reservation procedures at Indian Railways, computerization of banking procedures, postal services etc. All the employees of these departments were provided with training of working on computers. Accurate training needs analysis gives requisite results.

Considering that training consumes substantial amount of organizational resources, it is very important to first analyze the training needs, so that organizational resources are not wasted. Training needs analysis also helps in ascertaining and achieving the training objectives effectively. In the absence of training needs analysis, it becomes difficult to decide upon various issues related to the training to be provided to the trainees. Thus, training needs analysis is a pre requisite of any successful training programme.

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