

## TRAINING AND SKILL ACQUISITION FOR MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

This paper gives a clear conceptual framework of training and development, the functional needs of training, the types and techniques of training, and the processes for post training evaluation. The approach is from a standpoint of non-empirical discussions, hinging basically on the dynamics of different training techniques that are fundamentally designed to cater for different work environments and needs especially in the practice of radiography. The paper concludes with suggestions on how to achieve an optimal value in a cost benefit analysis of corporate training sessions.

### INTRODUCTION

The subject of development and training is one that has often been misunderstood by many individuals and corporate bodies, employees and employers alike in both the service and manufacturing industrial sectors of the economy. One indisputable fact of life is that the process of learning is one reality of an individual's life that has no end, it operates like a continuum that begins at birth, and terminates at death. In the very wise opinion of Robert Appleby, a management guru of our time, much of the learning process that the individual is exposed to in a lifetime, is vocationally relevant, (Appleby, 1994). "Training and Development" is one conceptually functional synergy that parades essential ingredients for the sustainable growth of every dynamic organization.

### WHAT IS TRAINING? WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Egbuji (2002: 36) defined Training and Development as "a planned effort to facilitate employee learning of job-related behaviours in order to improve employee performance". Nwaochei (1997), in his own attempt, defined

Training and Development as "a set of activities whereby workers are assisted in improving their individual competence and performance as well as the organizational environment with the ultimate goal of raising the standards of organizational performance"

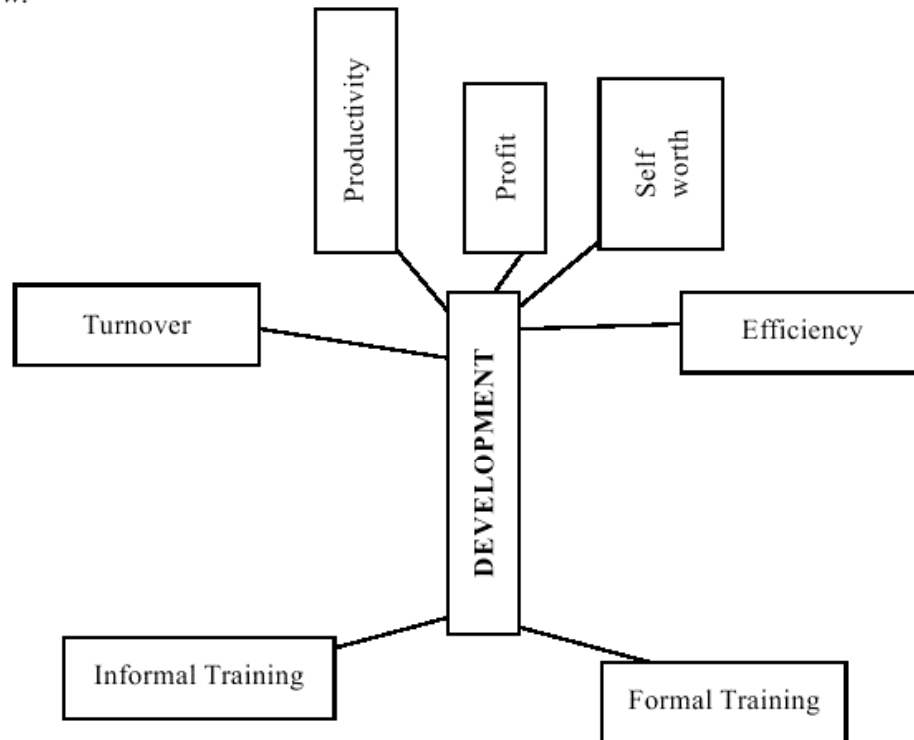
A similar definition offered by the Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, as restated by Obikoya (2002:21) runs thus, "Training is the process of developing a worker's knowledge, skills, and attitude through instructional demonstration, practice and planned experience to meet the present and future needs of the business"

The terms "training" and "development" are often used interchangeably, and often in a confused manner. While the two words may not exactly mean the same thing, the distinction between them is not very clear, as they tend to overlap considerably, both in use and in contextual meaning.

In the opinion of Egbuji (2005), while training relates to the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the purposes of an occupation or task, development is concerned more with changes in attitude, behaviour and employee potential than with immediate skill.

For the sake of clarity I would like to define training as the "acquisition of knowledge, information and skill by an individual, through either a formal or an informal procedure", while development is describable as "the concomitant result of training, which manifests in the enhancement of the individual's innate competence and competency, thus yielding higher dividends in productivity toward a desired goal". These concepts have been compressed in what I express as the Training/Development Tree in figure 1 below.

figure 1 below.



Source: Author's Concept (2006)

### THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Many organizations see staff as a privilege for employees, rather than as a means towards development for the organization. For such organizations, in the event of a corporate economic downturn, the first subhead to receive the sledge hammer in a budget cut is the Staff Training Budget. Unfortunately, such corporate bodied forget that today's competent employees may not necessarily remain competent tomorrow, as skills are subject to deterioration, and often become obsolete with time. The need for training and development can not be overemphasized. The numerous benefits a corporate body can derive from training of its staff, include the following:

1. It affords employees the ability to achieve the corporate target in quality and quantity of production.
2. It helps to build an effective and highly motivated workforce, thus enhancing the employee's morale and the employer's competitive position.
3. Training helps to ensure availability of human resources that are needed for

corporate expansion into new product lines, and to adopt and adjust for advances in technology.

4. Staff training and development will help to ensure a more cost effective and efficient resource usage for the organization.
5. Staff training helps to minimize work errors, and to reduce industrial accidents and their attendant individual and corporate legal and financial liabilities.
6. Training will usually enhance the values of the individual staff in the labour market, thus enhancing his/her morale and performance.
7. Training usually increases the worker's versatility, by widening his expertise for relevance even in other job functions.
8. An organization that is reputed for providing good training will attract and retain a good quality workforce which will eventually lead to an enhanced corporate image, corporate productivity and a larger market share for its products and services.
9. Staff training will usually help to create a readily available pool of work force as replacement for aging or existing staff.

## IDENTIFYING THE TRAINING NEEDS

Staff training often comes as a reaction to an existing situation through two major approaches, the Reactive and the Proactive approaches. The Reactive approach to training tries to identify and seek solutions to current needs and problems of the organization. These problems may include resource usage wastage, low product quality, or even increasing incidents of industrial accidents in the organization. The Proactive approach on the other hand, is an approach that is forward looking, whereby training is conducted in anticipation of future needs for the organization. For example, the advent of computerization has posed challenges to many corporate bodies to train their staff in computer usage. I will imagine even now, that expected new development in Radiation and Imaging medical procedures will also necessitate the training and retraining of members of this noble professional body of Radiographers and Radiologists.

Training needs can be identified at a company's three levels, the organizational general level, the group or departmental level, and the individual staff level. Usual techniques for the training needed identification are along the following format:-

- A. Identifying the organizational general need:
  - Staff attitude survey
  - Management audit
  - Analysis of records and reports
  - Analysis of reports from or about competitors.
  - Reports from relevant external consultants.
- B. Identifying the Group or Departmental need:
  - Assessment by management team.
  - Assessment from departmental or group meetings.
  - Analysis by external consultants.
- C. Identifying the individual needs.
  - Assessment through questionnaires
  - Through interviews, test, and explanations
  - Assessment through job analysis
  - Assessment through observation
  - Through self assessment
  - Through performance appraisal -
  - Examination of career plans.

It is expected that sequel to the training needs assessment and identification as specified above, the organization will be able to provide answers to questions that include the following:

- a) Which staff needs to be trained and why?
- b) What type of training is required, on the job or off-the-job?
- c) Where should the training be done?
- d) When should the training be done?
- e) What does the organization stand to benefit from such training?
- f) What is the cost of the training to the organization in financial, material, or human terms?

In identifying training needs for staff, and arranging to meet those needs, there is usually a unit of the organization that is charged with the responsibility. The size or composition of an organization training department will very often vary from one organization to another. The functions of the Training Department will however, remain the same, i.e. To develop staff for organizational corporate growth. The staff training needs that have been identified, as specified above, can be categorized into two major divisions and groups:

Micro and Macro Training Needs. While Micro training needs are targeted at the individual worker who may need to improve performance by adapting into a new job description, a macro training need is often designed for the larger group in the organization, due to changes in or projected product lines or standards.

## POST TRAINING EVALUATION

There is a general need to evaluate the impact of a training program, to ensure that organizational goals are being met by such training programmes. Adeoti (2002) recommended the following post training evaluation processes:

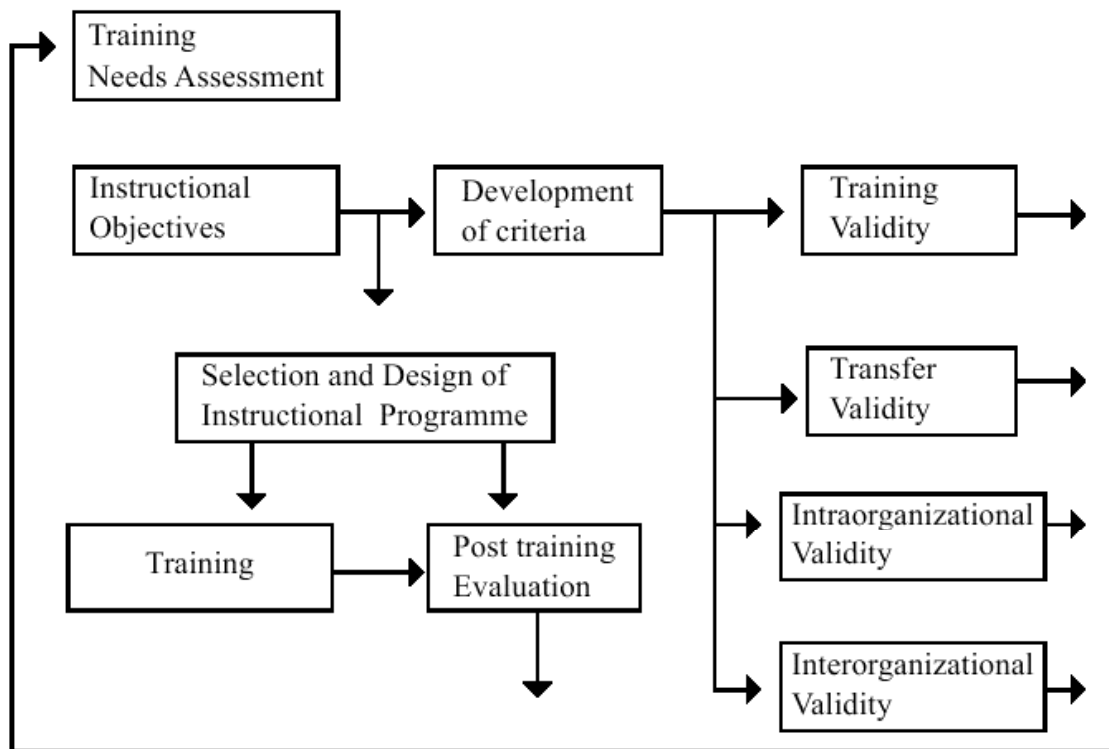
- 1. Determine the performance objectives based on the current job description of the staff, and what he is expected to be competent in, upon the completion of the training programme.
- 2. Determine performance indicators, and criteria for measuring unit of work per hour,

per day, or per such unit of period that the organization may choose. This may equally include performance indicators like volume of sales, amount of waste material generated, etc.

3. Data gathering formats and mechanisms should be designed to capture feedback from training participants.
4. All relevant data collected should be analyzed and a formal report presented on the trained staff.

5. If the need arises, from the result of the post-training evaluation, the training format, type, mode or place could be modified.

The training cycle, from the conception of training need to the post training evaluation can be simply portrayed through the system training and development model shown in figure 2 below:



Source: Adapted from Goldstein (1993)

## TYPES AND TECHNIQUES OF TRAINING

The various types of training include the following:

### I. INDUCTION TRAINING

Induction training is an organized system by which new employees are introduced formally into their new working environment. Such employees are thereby helped to ease into, and familiarize with their work, new jobs, new tools of work, new schedules of work, and new work colleagues. It is usually a short term formal induction ceremony.

### II. SUPERVISED ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

This is a situation whereby new entrants into a job environment learn new methods, new systems, or new technologies, while actually being involved in the job performance, and being supervised by a more experienced operator in the same job description schedule. Through this method, employees do not lose productive time even while learning.

### III OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

This is carried out with the employee attending a training programme while being away from the immediate job environment of the employer.

In most cases, off-the-job training schedules require formal training programmes.

#### **IV FORMAL/OPERATIVE TRAINING**

This is usually a traditional training method that will require a planned and well articulated programme of training that will include the following:

- i) A segmented training schedule for various parts of job to be learnt
- ii) A time table of the various parts and times for (1) above
- iii) A target time and period for the completion of the training programme
- iv) A programmed syllabus for the training
- v) A format for evaluating how much has been learnt by the trainee.

This type of training format will be most suitable for an operator who is upgrading from the use of the conventional X-Ray Imaging to the application of further techniques in Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Angiographical Formulators, Ultrasonic Imaging, Fluoroscopy and Thermographic Imaging.

These modern technology techniques are best learnt through a formal teaching set up.

The training techniques that are commonly used include the following:

##### **a) LECTURES, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

These require a formal class room presentation of prepared course materials in which trainees are taught new materials, technologies and techniques. Such trainees are thereby given the opportunity to ask questions and also make contributions and allow for an interactive learning environment

##### **b) CASE STUDIES**

A trainee is presented with information on a real life situation, and he is expected to study it, and come out with an informed decision on what should be done to solve the presented problem.

##### **c) SIMULATION**

This technique involves simulated models of possible real cases, and the trainee is required to make decisions on the simulated case. This method of simulation is often used with advanced

software computer applications. It is a common method of training when and where human lives and expensive machineries are involved. It is a favorite method for initial training of air craft pilots and also in radiotherapy planning.

##### **d) JOB ROTATIONS**

In this case, a trainee is made to move from one job schedule to another in the same organization. In this way, the trainee is provided with a broad spectrum of experience on the various job schedules in the organization. A typical example of where this method is applied is the banking industry.

##### **e) APPRENTICESHIPS**

This is a common method of training on the job where a trainee is attached, or apprenticed, to an experienced hand in a particular job schedule.

##### **f) INTERNSHIP**

This training method involves the attachment of a part qualified professional to a relevant institution of professional competence, so that he can be provided with an extensive practical knowledge and practice of what he had earlier learnt mostly theoretically. This is a common form of training fresh graduates in the medical and allied fields.

#### **THE TRAINING COSTS**

This is an area that is fast generating unwholesome developments that have tended to impact negatively on training schedules and budgets for many corporate bodies. Costs of seminars, conferences and such training modalities have spiraled so much that employers have often become scared of such training for their employees. A situation where a 3-day training workshop attracts a fee as high as N200,000 can be worrisome, and this can put such workshops at the threat of being exploitative and subjective. Much of such high cost training schedules can be attributed to reasons that include the following:

- a) Package of frivolities with expensive bags, P/R items, luncheons and drinks that do not add value to the taught materials. Such unnecessary niceties shall be minimized to reduce training cost.

- b) The choice of exotic training venues. This can sometimes pushed-up training costs unnecessarily, without adding any value to knowledge gained. A training workshop for workers in the supervisory operative cadre, scheduled for a 5-star hotel, for instance, is undoubtedly a financial waste or even recklessness by the employer. It is advised that such workshop should be avoided.
- c) Management corrupt practices. There have been reports of backdoor dealing, where by training packages are deliberately over invoiced, so as to allow a margin of financial returns as P/R for the Training Manager of the sponsoring organization. Such corrupt practices often lead to expensive training costs, without adding value to knowledge gained by participants.
- d) Poor costing methods. Sometimes, training costs have been fixed arbitrarily by learning outfits and consultants, due to an application of a poor costing technique. Ordinarily, the cost of training can be computed simply as follows:

Cost per participant =

$$\frac{\text{Fixed Cost}}{\text{No. of participants}} + \text{Variable Cost per participant} + \text{Profit Margin where required}$$

The fixed cost here will normally include the venue, rental, while the variable cost will include cost of tea breaks, and workshop materials.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Training is an invaluable intervention that can help to improve the employee's knowledge, competence and performance, for the overall development of the employee. There is no doubting the fact that, like many corporate bodies must have discovered, training is the only inexpensive option to ignorance.

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