

## Competency Enhancement of the Workforce Through An Effective Training Design

**\* Archana Kumari, Research Scholar**  
**Department of Commerce and Business Administration,**  
**Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga**

**\*\* Dr. Pitambar Mishra, Assistant Professor**  
**M. R. S. M. College, Anandpur**  
**Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga**

### Abstract

*Training of a company's workforce results in an increase of productivity and reduces wastage. It is corporate prudence and cost effective practice to retain workers for new jobs than releasing them and hiring new ones. As training enhances the competency of the workforce, it will result in increased morale. A large number of different kinds of activities will be positively impacted if training systems are well designed. Training can pave way for increased quality both in the production and service sectors. Training can facilitate employee retention and faster customer service. If designed and delivered well it will facilitate achievement of organisational objectives- the main purpose of organisational existence.*

**Key words:** *Design Theory, Job Task Analysis, Needs Assessment, Organisational Constraints, Training Design.*

### Introduction

Training design is a matter of experience. An experienced training designer will arrange the contents of training in an orderly and interesting manner. The amount of learning and the effectiveness of a training programme are directly related to its design. A training design is a technique of arranging the course content in a logical manner, so as to enable the trainees to learn maximum from the training course. It is a detailed plan for what an individual will do, why he/she will be doing it and the best ways to reach the training goals or objectives.

The beginning for any design of training should be that the needs for training be identified. When the needs have been identified and uniformly agreed upon, a further analysis is required for providing detailed and specific information, which is required to form the basis of the training design. the training may vary from being for an individual or small group, to a much larger and more general needs. This necessitates job analysis and task analysis that will help to collect appropriate information about the desired job performance. The design of a training intervention involves many variables and prerequisites.

**Factors Affecting Training Design**

When preparing a training design, we need to be aware of the factors that have the potential to influence the implementation of a training programme. The objective of a planning exercise in order to set-up a training programme is to ensure optimum results from the efforts gone into generating it as well as maximum satisfaction to the participants who take part in it. Some of the factors affecting the training design:

- Needs assessment is to be completed as a part of the entire training design content so that the contents and objectives of the programme are clear.
- Job task analysis is to be completed so as to understand the relationships among tasks and the necessary knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks.
- Any new, unknown content added to the training programme could pose problems. Therefore, before moving on each content and module of the programme has to be researched and enough data has to be collected on them.
- The leader's guide should be prepared in detail for those areas, which require an instructor.
- A reference manual of the training programme should be prepared for the participants which gives them details of the programme and what they get out of it.
- Use of video as a media could consume more time.
- The material required for the programme, by the participants as well as the instructor (trainer) should be easily available in order to facilitate the smooth beginning and running of the training programme.
- In case of multiple instructors being used for training programme, there should be a level of coordination and uniformity among them, which will definitely help in solving a lot of problems of the organisers, as well as the participants to a certain extent.
- Revision of the content after a pilot review would unnecessarily consume more time and effort of the organisers and the instructors. The content of the training programme can be planned such that all loopholes are identified and covered before the pilot review and if any such faults do come up, only they can be rectified instead of changing the entire content.
- If the training programme is computer-based, it is advantageous, time saving and effective if it is based on such a platform/software that is simple and easy

and if possible, the use of which is known to all the instructors and participants, because using a new platform/software of which nobody is aware would involve a lot of consumption of time, energy and money in teaching the working of the new platform to all.

### **Constraints in the Design**

It would have been possible to develop a perfect training programme for every training need if there was a perfect work. In reality however, there are many constraints with which influence the training programme that is designed. The two major categories of constraints in designing a training programme are:

- I. Organisational/Environmental Constraints; and
- II. Trainee Population

### **Organisational/Environmental Constraints**

One of the organisational constraints is budget, which limits the chains that must be made about who get trained, what types of training should they receive. One of the ways to make this decision is using the strategic direction of the organisation which provides a rationale to determine who gets how much of what kind of training.

It is essential for the top managers in the HR to develop their own mission and goals for the HR area, even if the organisation does not have a clear strategic plan. This helps define HR priorities and determines how to put available resources in line with the direction of the organisation. Another major advantage is that it involves the top management in strategic planning.

The technological advances used in the organisation affect the type of training it is able to offer. There are certain legal aspects to be taken into consideration while making decisions about the priorities involved in training.

### **Budgeting for Training**

The HRD department presents the budgeting process that charges the others for the services it provides. Charging for the services provided has become an essential and integral part of the HR Department as they are also required to justify their existence and efficiency in an organisation. The budgeting process in an organisation is similar to an outside consultant bidding process.

So, when providing cost estimates the HR Departments need to understand that they are competing with the limited resources made available to them and need to be as accurate as possible in the budgeting process.

Once the length of the training programme has been estimated, it is also necessary to estimate the time that will be taken to develop the training for delivery. The more accurate the estimate the more accurate will be the costing and the higher will be its credibility among the clients. The amount of time to prepare a budgeting programme can be estimated from the length of the training programme.

### **Types of Costs involved in Training Programmes**

The types of costs involved in training programmes include

- I. *Development costs*- All costs related to the development of a programme are included here, along with the cost of front-end training needs analysis, of analysis and tracking results. The cost of all programmes and materials, designs, computer aided programming are all included here. These costs can be reduced if it is planned well for over a year to prevent overly high costs.
- II. *Direct costs* - These are the costs directly attributable to the delivery of the training programme. The facilities like travel, materials to be used in training, food and beverages, equipment, trainer compensation, rentals, etc.
- III. *Indirect cost* - This includes any non-development item that would be incurred even if the training were to be cancelled the day before it was to begin, which includes trainer compensation for preparation, materials to be used in the training programme which have no use otherwise, marketing expenses, administrative and clerical support compensation and materials that might have been sent to the trainees prior to the start of the programme.
- IV. *Overhead costs* - These include costs that reflect the programmes share of the general operating cost of the training and development department of the organisation. This is often taken into account as a portion of revenue generated or fixed amount per day charge of training.
- V. *Participant Compensation* - While employees are participating in a training programme, their salaries and benefits should also be included as cost of training.

Another approach to this is to include only the cost of replacing those employees who are in the training programme. In a lot of cases there is no participant compensation involved because no organisational cost was incurred when the employees were in the training programme.

- VI. *Evaluation cost* - These include the costs that are associated with evaluating the training to find out whether it has been successful or not. These include development of assessment tools, time spent on administrating them, analysing and preparing reports.

In some instances, trainees have negative feelings about a particular method of training. If this is made known during the design stage, a different method can be considered. It is also possible to include attitude change modules in the existing technique of training. That is to say, that if found through the needs analysis that a particular method of training is disliked because of past experience or word of mouth, a technique to change the perception should be included in the training programme or if possible use another method of training.

### **Design Theory**

Theories of training design are not traditional, because they do not predict cause effect relationship. They actually prescribe methods of presenting material to enhance the likelihood of the material being learnt. These offer guidelines as to the methods to be used in different situations in order to design training programmes effectively.

**Elaboration Theory** - This is a macro theory of design. It is based on a holistic alternative to the part/whole sequencing which is usually followed by training. This approach is much more meaningful and motivating for learners because the trainees get to see and practice the entire task. But this is useful and relevant only to complex tasks. In this theory, it is necessary to understand the importance of sequencing, which is the process of coming together as a group and order the content of training. Sequencing is directed at facilitating cognitive organisation. Sequencing is important when there is a strong relationship between the topics of the training programme.

To train individuals in different topics, two sequencing strategies can be used "topical sequencing" which requires complete training of one task or topic, before moving to the next one and "Spiral sequencing" which requires learning the basics of the first task, then the basics of the second task and so on. After the trainees have thoroughly understood the basics of all tasks, the trainees move to the next level of the first task and do the same thing i.e. understand the basics.

A training programme is always a combination of the two sequencing strategies, which are dependent on the relationships among the task being trained. Holistic understanding of the tasks result in formation of a better and stable cognitive scheme and organisation to which more complex tasks can be assimilated.

The Simplifying Conditions Method (SCM) given by Charles Reigeluth is based on the view that for all complex tasks, simple and more complex versions are available. The SCM is based on 2 parts: "Epitomising", which is the process of identifying the simplest version of the task that still is representative of the task as a whole. And "Elaborating", which is the process of identifying more complex version of the task progressively.

In any design of a training programme, epitomising is taught first, followed by increasing complexity (elaborating) of the task until the desired level is reached. Here, first the simplest version of the task possible is determined. Once this is mastered, various elaborations of the task are to be mastered, each of which increases in complexity, until the required complexity of the job is reached. The final elaboration is to match the complexity of the job in the field on the job.

The advantage of this approach for training is that the more complex tasks are presented to the trainees earlier, which helps in fostering better understanding and motivates trainees as they are able to view and understand the relationship between what they are being trained on and job-related tasks. Evidence from research suggests that this approach apart from being effective also appeals to the trainees undergoing the training programme.

**Gagne-Briggs Theory** - This is a micro theory of design. This is applicable to cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal learning. As a micro theory, it provides a set of procedures for each instructional event to facilitate increase in the level of learning. The theory identifies nine events of instructions:

- I. *Gaining Attention* - Seeking/gaining attention of the trainees can be done in many ways. The method of asking questions and requesting trainees to answer them can be a method used to draw attention of trainees towards the training programme. Another method of gaining attention is to have the CEO/chairman of the organisation welcome the delegation of trainees to the programme who could indicate the importance of this training for the future growth of the company. Support from the higher levels of management is always important in training and when someone who is heading the organisation is present on

the occasion to stress the importance of training, the trainees listen will rapt attention.

- II. *Informing the Learner of the Goal* - It is important to get the trainees to focus on what is to be learnt and also to be aware of the requirements of each individual when they have completed the training. If a training needs analysis is conducted, it becomes easy to tie up the training back to the job and to help trainees become better performers.
- III. *Stimulating Recall of Prior Relevant Learning* - This step is important to make sure the trainee has accessed the information that is necessary for learning to take place. Here all previous relevant capabilities come in handy as a part of the learning event
- IV. *Present Material to be Learnt* - Materials to be learnt should be presented in a logical and understandable format. To ensure that understanding is taking place, the method used for instruction should contain questions designed to elicit responses from the trainees which will indicate their level of understanding. Highlighting the important aspects to be learnt, giving examples, etc. can serve to ensure that trainees understand the material. This reflects the way in which the organisation and presentation of learning/training materials assist, training in symbolic coding and cognitive organisation.
- V. *Provide Guidance for Learning* - The important aspect here is to guide trainees to appropriate answers when in difficulty, but not to indicate the answers. This way the trainees get to examine all possibilities related to the topic. A discussion at the end of the session, when the answer is derived, will help the trainees gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the topic. The trainers can give them problems and ask them to come up with possible alternative solutions. This kind of task ignites the thinking and creative powers and gives way to analysing the problem from different perspectives. When these are shared in a discussion, it can help in assessing and increasing one's level of understanding.
- VI. *Elicit the Performance* - The trainees are actually allowed to perform the tasks so that their practice allows them to master the task and they are able to transfer the training to the job successfully.
- VII. *Provide Feedback* - Once a task is completed by the team, a feedback session should follow, so that trainees get to know their performance. The feedback can be given in various ways. The type of feedback used in that particular

training programme will depend on the time available and the number of trainees. The important thing here is that trainees should be given feedback and be aware of their performance and are able to make necessary changes before the end of the training programme.

- VIII. *Assess Performance* - The Gagne-Briggs Theory propagates that assessment of learning should take place after each session/each topic, so that after the training on feedback skills it is essential to assess the level of learning that took place regarding feedback skills, before moving onto performance appraisal training. This approach has two purposes according to the theory: to confirm that the learning has taken place and provide additional practice to perform the skill/task.
- IX. *Enhancing Retention and Transfer* - A very important aspect of training would be its transfer to the job. It is important to see that a programme is designed such that it facilitates retention and effective transfer.

### **Summing-up**

Training is a continuous and perennial activity. It is a sub-system of human resource development. It can help change attitudes and reconcile individual objectives to the corporate objectives. So, an effective training programme needs to be designed. The effectiveness of a training programme depends largely on its design. It is the responsibility of the training designer to design an orderly, motivating, purposeful, useful and interesting training programme. There are some important considerations to be kept in mind when designing a training programme:

- ✓ *Cover all contents of the training programme*: A training programme should include all the contents of the training needs. A training programme may not be effective, if some of the important contents of the training programme are left uncovered.
- ✓ *Motivating/Interesting Training Programme*: A training programme should be so designed that it motivates the participants, as they are adults and experienced people. They want to learn purposeful, useful, interesting, new ideas from a training programme.
- ✓ *Combination of training methods*: It is always good if there is a combination of many training methods, instead of using a single training method. This necessarily motivates the trainees to learn more from the training programmes.



- ✓ *Simple to complex*: A training programme should be designed such that it starts from simple contents. It is useful to design a training programme so as it helps trainees get absorbed into the training activities. If the complex training programme content is taught in the beginning of the programme, the trainees get a psychological fear of its being very difficult and they lose interest in the training activities.
- ✓ *Logical sequence of attitude/knowledge/skills*: The content of the training programme should be such that it changes attitudes of the participants to move on to knowledge improvement and paves the way for development of the required skills among the trainees.
- ✓ *Divide into modules*: The contents of the training programme should be divided into modules, which will help in comprehensive learning. This will also help the trainees to concentrate well when one module at a time is dealt with intensively.
- ✓ *Break-up*: This necessitates a certain amount of time to be allocated for each of the activities and modules of the training programme. The Break-up in any training programme is advised as it has been noticed that break-up of the training content helps trainees to enhance their learning capabilities.
- ✓ *The training programme should not be either on a Monday or Saturday*, because the percentage of participants will be low, for the simple reason that it will hamper the only break individuals get from work during the week

**References:**

1. Bhatia, S K (2005), *Training and Development- Concept and Practices*, Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
2. Deva, Vasu (2000), *Training and Development*, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi.
3. Kapur, Shashi (1999), *Training and Development the Human Resource*, Infinity Books, New Delhi.
4. Rae, Leshie (1991), *How to Measure Training Effectiveness*, Grower Publication Co.,
5. Reddy, Sumati(2007), *Training and Development- Trends and Experiences*, ICFAI University, Hyderabad.
6. Sahu, R K (2005), *Training for Development*, Excel Books, New Delhi.
7. Singh, R P (2000), *Management of Training Programmes*, Annual Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
8. [www.istd.in](http://www.istd.in)
9. [www.nipm.in](http://www.nipm.in)