



Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VI

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

6. Appraise the importance of project management processes for launching training programs in organizations, to include planning, design, implementation, and evaluation.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 9:

Training for Improved Performance

Chapter 10:

Developing Employees and Their Careers

Unit Lesson

In the HR toolbox, training is a critical resource, but it is not the only tool. There is a saying that goes “when you have a hammer in your hand, everything looks like a nail.” Operations managers may occasionally have this perspective of corporate trainers:

- “I have a sexual harassment problem in my group.” “Training is what you need,” says the trainer.
- “Turnover is too high.” “Training is what you need,” says the trainer.
- “Managers need to “drive financial results.” “Training is what you need,” says the trainer.

All too often, no matter the work, corporate trainers make their rounds to sell their wares (training programs), to no avail. Unfortunately, this is the case in many industries, and it has given the training profession an unwanted and undeserved bad name. The truth is, from an HR perspective, jobs change over time through tools, technology, and processes, and training is an important investment in the firm’s most valuable resource. Think for a minute about the most expensive thing you have. For many people, it is a home or a car. If my mechanic told me my vehicle’s oil needed to be changed and a belt replaced, and I responded by saying, “No thanks, this oil has worked fine in the past,” you might conclude I was foolish. Investing in human capital through appropriate and effective training programs is like protecting, maintaining, and often upgrading your most expensive asset: people.

Rather than rehash the material from the textbook, this lesson will instead cover seven behavioral and organizational problems with training in organizations as well as a few tactics to deal with them. There are many positive aspects to training, and often, employees are eager to learn and grow.

1. When is My Promotion?

Often, there is an unintentional psychological contract that is created by sending employees to training. They often return with a mindset that they are developed and ready for the next challenge. They may conclude that the company was investing in them for the next job, and expectations are high. Managers and trainers would do well to avoid promises and implied promises for growth and career progression where they are not appropriate. The trained employee should feel valued through the training investment but not entitled. These expectations should be set up front.

2. Why am I Doing This?

Research on training motivation has revealed employees who were motivated to be trained were more transformed in knowledge, behavior, and results than those employees who were more intelligent but less motivated. Therefore, in order to harness the benefit of training motivation, it is necessary for managers and trainers to answer one fundamental question from employees: "Why am I here?" A manager may see his or her colleagues try to convince their employees that each training is important to their jobs and future careers. Many may not make this attempt. They may inform employees the candid truth, where appropriate, even if it meant "we have to be here; we do not have a choice, so let's try to have a god attitude about it." This can be helpful when leading teams as they know when their manager argues for the value of a training. The employees are more likely to engage, take it seriously, and grow from the experience. How you deal with this question will depend on your team, your relationship with each person, and your leadership style. However, no matter the context, employees must know why they are being trained before the training begins.

3. What is in it for Me?

It may be shocking, but most people do not go to work for fun but rather for a paycheck. When people say "I love the work I do," I often ask them, "what if they stopped paying you; would you still go to work?"

In HR, we know that people are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically, and thus, as managers and trainers we must answer the *what is in it for me* question. Typically, we want to explain the purpose of the training, what the employee will do different and better afterward, the positive performance effects, and the potential financial and career implications. With the last statement, we must be careful to avoid implied promises. Overall, however, if managers and trainers can give a reasonable answer for why the training is necessary and how it will benefit the employee, there is usually little resistance and often higher levels of engagement.

4. Not Another Dumb Training!

When you hear this as a manager, it is a sure sign you should check the frequency of the training schedule, and see if you can restructure it to increase efficiency. If employees are fearing and avoiding yet another training, evidence suggests they will not receive the knowledge effectively and will have minimal transfer of training to the job. In other words, the firm may be wasting money.

5. Training means I am not Good Enough Now.

This is rarer than other behavioral problems listed here, but it is sometimes said and more often thought. The cognitive process here is simple. If your manager comes to you and says, "you need training," what is heard is, "you are not good enough." Never mind in that moment that the best athletes in the world have many coaches to help train and improve their performance; the manager's words can prey on individual insecurities. Thus, careful delivery is important. If there is a performance issue, then the training provides a platform for an honest discussion. If not, the manager should ensure the training proposition has a theme of "we want to invest in you" rather than "we need to fix you."

6. I have "Real" Work to do.

This reaction to a training announcement is quite common. It is a sign that the employee feels as though he or she sat through trainings that have appeared useless. It is also a sign that the manager has been ineffective at either showing the utility of previous training actions or buffering the employee from training programs with less utility. With this reaction, the manager must convince the employee that the training has utility (if it does), is part of his or her job assignment (if it is), and has potentially positive career effects for the employee (if it does).

7. Is it Really Worth it?

Sometimes, training can be a worthwhile investment for a company. For instance, a training costing a company a few thousand dollars could prevent said company from becoming wrapped up in a multimillion dollar lawsuit. If a good training manager can portray how valuable a training can be, and effectively communicate this to his or her employees, a company will be more productive.

In a large percentage of successful organizations, training is no longer considered a one-time event or even a simple “sit and get” event. In this highly competitive economy, training is one avenue organizations can use to maintain their competitive edge. Some trainings may be preventative, while others might be used to stimulate creativity and innovation.

Commonly, new employees go through a period of orientation that often focuses on introducing the employees to the company culture (but without sacrificing need-to-know administrative information). It is commonly understood that a strong orientation program often significantly reduces employee turnover and in turn reduces training cost (Kelly & Williams, 2015, p. 249).

Other forms of training include, but are not limited to the following training types:

- On-the-job training: Employees begin their job under the guidance of a more experienced employee and learn as they go.
- Off-the-job training: Employees attend classes (sometimes off site) during work hours.
- Computer-based training: Employees work at computer stations on a standardized training program either on-site or off-site.
- Management development: Employees are selected to take part in an internal program to build management skills as a process to assist in developing future leaders within the organization (Kelly & Williams, 2015, pp. 249-250).

Organizations want employees as productive as possible. To reach that goal, they may institute procedures and policies focused on building the skill set for those employees. Employees will get involved in the training process if they perceive it as worthwhile and they can grow from the training. As leaders, we are called upon to help employees seek more intrinsic motivation and not to always rely on extrinsic motivation and rewards.

Reference

Kelly, M., & Williams, C. (2015). *BUSN: Introduction to business* (7th ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

For additional information regarding the topics discussed in this unit, please see the following video. This video visually demonstrates the concepts discussed in the unit lesson and readings.

[Chapter 09: Training For Improved Performance](#)

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.