

Chapter 4: Mentoring and Training

Overview

With the rapid changes in technology, the administrative assistant is constantly in a training situation. This chapter defines training and what it takes for a good program; it should assist all employees.

Lecture Notes

A. Learning Basics

Learning is a lifelong process, both formally and informally.

1. **Learning—A General Overview**
 - a. Learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behavior occurring with practice and experience. It is a continuous process where results last a period of time. Learning is different from maturity, but maturity makes most of learning possible.
 - b. The domains of learning include cognitive (thinking and knowledge skills), affective (emotion), and psychomotor (performance of specific acts).
 - c. Theories of learning include classical conditioning (response to a stimulus, acquiring an association between the conditioned and unconditioned stimulus), operant conditioning (law of effect, B.F. Skinner), cognitive learning (perceived relationship between events and goals and expectations), and social learning (observation and direct experience).
 - d. The learning curve demonstrates the course of learning that most people follow; it shows how behavior changes occur.
 - e. Learning styles include concrete experience (direct involvement), reflective observation (careful observation or reflection), abstract conceptualization (use of logic, ideas, and concepts), and active experimentation (influencing people and changing situations). It is very common to see combination approaches; however, a dominant style usually appears.
2. **Principles of Learning in the Training Context** can be applied to achieve certain goals and objectives through training.
 - a. Preconditions for learning (in order for it to be effective) include learner readiness and motivation. The learner must have the basic skills and knowledge to understand the training material. Also, the learner must be motivated to learn.
 - b. Other prerequisites for learning determine the effectiveness of training. If participants have determined definite career plans, participate in a realistic training preview, and have high expectations for learning, THEN it is more likely to be effective.
 - c. General learning principles apply—feedback (necessary for learning and motivation, positive or negative), reinforcement (directly related to the feedback, continuous or intermittent), practice (necessary), overcoming interference, transfer of learning (apply skills on the job), relevance of material (higher level of readiness and willingness), and conditions for learning (environmental factors make a difference).

B. Employee Development through Mentoring and Coaching

It can be very successful, as long as the programs are well-planned and executed.

1. **Employee and Workforce Orientation** will take place for all new and transferred employees to be sure they have the information necessary to do the job.
 - a. Orientation involves introduction to work, the organization (rules and goals), and other members of the organization to prepare the employee for success.
 - b. Types of orientation include work unit (members, rules and processes, role in the organization) and organization orientation (HR defines structure, mission, policies, and procedures).
 - c. The goals of orientation for the employee include relieving anxiety and stress, offering realistic expectations about the work and information about the organization while making the employee feel welcome.
 - d. The goals of orientation for the employer include saving time over the long run by providing information and reducing turnover.
2. **Mentoring** includes modeling successful skills for the person they are mentoring. Mentors can also be advocates, coaches, and sponsors.
 - a. Characteristics of mentors include:
 - Leads to success
 - Builds relationships
 - Provides guidance
 - b. Mentoring programs can be carefully designed and implemented or occur as a part of the work environment. A designed program utilizes upper-management as mentors in a very structured environment. Unstructured activities take place in a naturally occurring mentoring situation.
3. **Coaching** requires a trainer to serve as a coach in a one-on-one situation with an employee being trained. It relies on expectations, evaluation, and feedback.
 - a. An advantage is its flexibility.
 - b. Coaching can be spread over a long period of time to increase productivity. It is not as widely used because of time commitment.
4. **Employee Development** is more ability-based and future-oriented than training.
 - a. Development is aimed toward improving competence for future opportunities. It differs from training because it is broader.
 - b. Determining management development needs is difficult .It varies depending on the level of management. *(Review details in the text.)*
 - c. Before planning effective development programs, its purpose and objectives must be established. A critical objective is to help managers understand and appreciate their individual strengths, weaknesses, interests, and core values.
 - d. General development approaches focus on the needs of organization and its different constituencies. It is important to design appropriate programs.

- e. On-the-job development methods are used often. They can include understudy assignments, junior boards, coaching, mentoring, and job rotation.
- f. Off-the-job methods include case study, role play, simulation, business games, modeling, and others.
- g. Other management development and training approaches are available; they include assessment centers, various types of exercises, leadership matches, and behavior modification.

C. Training Design and Implementation for Improved Work Performance

Training is concerned with improving the ability to perform in specific jobs; it is oriented to the present.

1. **Training** is the process of providing the opportunity for individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes required in their present job. It is a systematic, continuous, and ongoing process.
 - a. In general terms, training is a systematic process of altering behavior to increase or improve achievement of organizational goals.
 - b. Specifically, training includes activities intended to improve work skills.
 - c. Both definitions provide formal activities to change behavior and improve performance to enhance achievement of organizational goals.
2. **Benefits of Training** are felt throughout the organization.
 - a. Increased job performance occurs because of increased skills and corrections to deficiencies.
 - b. Coping with change is another benefit of training; it is advantageous for a company to offer training along with change.
3. **Assessing Training Needs and Objectives** is the first step toward designing a training program.
 - a. A needs analysis is used to review and analysis of the overall needs; the training program must be linked to the strategic plan.
 - b. A study of present and future job needs should be completed, including job descriptions and required skills.
 - c. An employee needs analysis compares the current skills with those needed. It includes a review of the current employee, current performance, and a comparison of what is required for the job.
 - d. Self-assessments are conducted so employees can identify their deficiencies; they probably know those best.
 - e. Task-person analysis follows self-assessment. It is used to learn the needs and deficiencies revealed during the self-assessment.
4. **Designing a Training Program** is based on the answers to these questions:
 - What types of skills need to be taught and reinforced?
 - Who will provide the training?
 - Where and when will the training sessions occur?

- Which specific training techniques will be utilized to overcome worker deficiencies?
5. **Purposes of Training Programs** vary, though they all focus on modifying or improving behavior.
 - a. Technical skills focus on specific job skills; they are used for changes in technology/equipment and revised work methods.
 - b. Interpersonal skills focus on the need for interaction between diverse departments. Interaction with others is critical to success in most jobs.
 - c. Problem-solving skills are critical for job performance, no matter what position they hold.
 - d. Basic literacy skills focus on reading, writing, math, listening, and public speaking.
 - e. Professional certification is available in some areas (*that is what the students are doing here*).
 6. **Instructional Staff** may come from inside or outside the organization to provide the training. The resources should be used efficiently to be effective for increasing morale.
 - a. Trainers inside the organization may be from within the same department as the trainees or from HR; outside trainers can be consultants or represent educational institutions.
 - b. Use of interactive educational strategies might include electronic media for teleconferences or other training.
 7. **On-the-Job Training** is the most common type of training provided.
 - a. Types of programs include apprenticeships, internships, field study, and supervisory assistance.
 - b. Advantages include being efficient to operate, easy to observe, and providing transfer of learning.
 - c. Problems include the high cost and the fact that the supervisor may not have training skills.
 8. **On-Site/Off-Job Training** programs are held at the work site, but away from the actual job. Employees may be strongly encouraged to participate in the training while completing their job assignments; negative morale can follow.
 - a. Types of programs include telecommunications, computer-assisted instruction, and video-based materials.
 - b. Advantages include the fact that it takes place after normal work hours and uses technology for access; however, with people training at the site, they may get called away in needed situations.
 9. **Off-Site Training Programs** are used by organizations of all sizes because they are relatively inexpensive; they can be used for training or development.
 - a. Types of programs include formal classroom training, seminars, in-basket exercises, distance education, and simulations.

- b. Benefits of the programs include flexibility, motivation, good learning environments, and increased commitment to the organization.
- c. Disadvantages include the required travel and that the material may not be specific enough. Transfer of knowledge is often not as high in this type of training situation.

D. Assessment and Evaluation of Training and Development

This process determines what is working and what needs further improvement in the training program.

1. **Evaluating Effectiveness** should be done systematically at the end of training.
 - a. Compare trainees' behaviors before and after training.
 - b. Determine the relevance of training to behavioral change.
2. **The Training Evaluation Process** should evaluate the program based on its strengths and weaknesses, the cost/benefit ratio, who benefits most and least from the training, and how can it be improved.
3. **Kirkpatrick's Method** was developed in 1977 and utilizes four hierarchical levels. If the method is used with only some of the criteria, the program is not being evaluated fully.
 - a. Reaction is the most important criterion of effectiveness. Look at how the employee felt about the training.
 - b. Learning is the second level of evaluation; determined the extent to which trainees learned the content.
 - c. Behavior is the third level; it focuses on the changes in worker performance.
 - d. Results demonstrate the improvement in the person, unit, and organization because of the training.
4. **Designing Effective Training Evaluation Programs** has led to improved organizational operations, and the opposite is also true.
 - a. Use multiple measures of effectiveness that are prepared before the training begins.
 - b. Ineffective evaluation programs focus on evaluating only one or two criteria, or they are designed after the training has begun.
5. **Training Evaluation Program Designs** should include
 - a. Effective program features like pretest, posttest, and control groups and multiple measures over time.
 - b. Ineffective designs feature one-shot design with only a posttest or a pretest/posttest only. These are one-dimensional.

Additional Resources for Students

Recommended readings (no texts should be more than two years old):

- Bateman, Thomas S. and Scott A. Snell. *Management: Building Competitive Advantages*. Irwin/McGraw Hill.
- Bittel, Lester R. and John W. Newstrom. *What Every Supervisor Should Know*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Carrell, Michael R. *Human Resources Management*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- David, Fred R. *Strategic Management: Concepts & Cases*. Prentice-Hall.
- Davis, Fruehling, and Oldham. *Psychology: Human Relations and Work Adjustment*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- DeCenzo, David A. and Stephen P. Robbins. *Human Resource Management*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Dessler, Gary. *Essentials of Management*. Prentice-Hall.
- Dessler, Gary. *Human Resource Management*. Prentice-Hall.
- DuBrin, Andrew. *Human Relations: A Job Oriented Approach*. Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Gomez-Mejia, Luis, David Balkin, and Robert Cardy. *Management Human Resources*.
- Griffin, Ricky W. *Management*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Haimann and Hilgert. *Supervision*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Harris, Michael. *Human Resource Management*.
- Hersey, Paul, Kenneth H. Blanchard, and Dewey E. Johnson. *Management of Organizational Behavior*. Prentice-Hall.
- Ivancevich, John M. *Human Resource Management*. Irwin/McGraw Hill.
- Milkovich, George T. and John W. Boudreau. *Human Resources Management*.
- Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux. *Human Resource Management*. Prentice-Hall.
- Robbin, Stephen P. *Organizational Behavior*. Prentice-Hall.
- Robbins, Stephen and Mary Coulter. *Management*. Prentice-Hall.
- Sherman, Arthur W. Jr. and George W. Bohlander. *Managing Human Resources*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Stoner, James, R. Edward Freeman, and Daniel R. Gilbert, Jr. *Management*. Prentice-Hall.

Current issues of periodicals or business publications are also an excellent resource. Some of the following periodicals have an accompanying Web site.

<i>Current Periodical</i>	<i>Web Address</i>
<i>BusinessWeek</i>	http://www.businessweek.com
<i>Fortune</i>	http://www.fortune.com
<i>IAAP Complete Office Handbook</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/products/handbook.htm
<i>Modern Office Technology</i>	
<i>OfficePro</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/officepro/toc.htm
<i>The Office</i>	