

FIVE LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

There was a great deal learned about training and development. Included in the learning process of Training and development was how to build a training manual. I learned that learning is done and conducted in several ways to increase effectiveness. Using multimedia for training can be a very effective tool for learning. Leadership is an important aspect to training, as is effective communication. Coaching is also an important aspect that should be utilized properly in training.

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Idea One-The Process For Learning

I like the idea of processes for learning. I am a firm believer that there is always more than one-way to do just about everything. I like it when people show me ways that they like best. I usually find a way to adapt it and make it my own.

From chapter 3 of our assigned text, I like the idea of using this methodology for training as originally taken from Baldwin & Ford (1988):

1. Develop (and follow) clearly stated learning objectives for the training.
2. Maximize the similarity between the training situation and the job situation.
3. Provide ample opportunity during training to practice the task.
4. Use a variety of situations and examples, including both positive and negative models of the intended behavior.
5. Identify and label important features of a task.
6. Make sure trainees understand general principles.
7. Provide support back in the work environment, including clear goals, checklists, measurement, feedback, and rewards for using the new behaviors on the job.
8. Provide ample opportunity to perform what is learned back on the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

I particularly like this method because it is easy to remember and follow. I like to use references when I describe ideas and methodology when teaching. This assignment certainly provides reiteration that will aid in that process.

Idea Two-Using Multimedia

The benefit of using multimedia for training is my second idea. Before coming to Capella, I had never really considered training and learning online. After enrolling, I

found that our company uses multiple media resources for training. I like the interactivity of it and the ease of application and access of multimedia. I particularly like learning this way. I enjoy being able to access the material when I need it. I love the interaction with other learners and the professors and can see the responses that people post anytime I want and as many time I want to see it. This is particularly helpful when I am considering what someone may have commented and can later go back and either comment on it or reread what was said. It fantastic!

Idea Three-The Ideal Apprenticeship Program

I teach leadership, management and technical skills in an apprentice program. I found this following information to be quite useful in developing a curriculum.

Positive outcomes of a successful apprentice program include:

1. Reduced absenteeism, turnover, and cost of training.
2. Increased productivity.
3. Improved community and employee relations,
4. Facilitated compliance with federal and state Equal Employment Opportunity requirements.
5. Ensured availability of related technical instruction.
6. Enhanced problem-solving ability of employees.
7. Ensured versatility of employees (Desimone, R., Werner, J., & Harris, D, 2002, p. 329).

Idea Four-Effective Communication

Training involves effective communication. I have always been a huge fan of the idea that communication is when both people understand what each other is saying and

can come to some kind of agreement, --even agreeing to disagree. I like the communication recommendation for Microtraining found on page 384 from our text (Desimone, R., Werner, J., & Harris, D., 2002, p. 384):

The Six Skills of Microtraining In Face-To-Face Communication

1. Basic attending skills to help involve the employee in the discussion. These include:
 - a. A slight, but comfortable, forward lean of the upper body and trunk
 - b. Maintaining eye contact
 - c. Speaking in a warm but natural voice
 - d. Using sufficient encouragers (e.g., head nods, saying yes and us-huh)
 - e. Staying on the topic
2. Feedback
 - a. providing clear and concrete data
 - b. Using a nonjudgmental attitude
 - c. Using timely, present-tense statements (e.g., “John, I just made some suggestions for how you can present your ideas more clearly. But you don’t seem interested. How can I help you improve your presentations” As opposed to, ”your last four presentations were disasters. I won’t tolerate another one.”)
 - d. Providing feedback that deals with correctable items over which the employee has some control.
3. Paraphrasing a concise restatement, in your own words, of what the employee has just said. Paraphrasing helps clarify the issue, lets the employee know you understand what has been said, and encourages him or her to continue. Paraphrases should be nonjudgmental and matter-of-fact.

4. Reflecting of feeling reinforces the employee for expressing feelings and encourages open communication. Identifying and recognizing an employee's feelings can help the supervisor establish a closer rapport.
5. Open and closed questions to support your purpose. (Questions that begin with how, would, could, or why is a good way to start open questions.) Closed questions could begin with did, is, are or how many. They invite a response of a few words that can be used to clarify, identify specific points, and speed the discussion.
6. Focusing helps identify potential areas of organizational difficulty (person, problem, context, other, and self) and ways to deal with each.

Idea Five-Coaching

The fifth idea is useful when coaching. I have been in my organization for many years and have witnessed some really poor coaching and management abilities. This guideline from chapter 10 of our assigned text is very helpful. I agree with the text that, "For performance management to be most effective, top managers and HRD professionals must ensure that as many of the following conditions and tasks as possible are actually present or done (Desimone, R., Werner, J., & Harris, D., 2002, p. 387)":

1. An effective performance management system is operating within the organization. Among other things, this means that the organization's recognition and rewards system properly rewards managers and supervisors for effective coaching.
2. All managers and supervisors are properly trained in coaching skills and techniques.
3. A thorough coaching analysis has been done before employee performance issues are discussed with employees.
4. Supervisors prepare in advance for the coaching discussion.

5. Supervisor comments are constructive, helpful, and supportive.
6. Supervisors provide specific and behavioral feedback on employee performance.
7. Employees are involved in the coaching discussion.
8. Specific goals are set during the discussion.
9. An action plan is jointly established between the employee and the supervisor.
10. Coaching discussions are followed-up, to ensure that the employee is following the action plan and to recognize performance improvements when they occur

Conclusion

I learned much more than I can express in five segments. Training and development are extremely important for maintaining a strong and effective organization. There are many techniques, skills and philosophies that must be utilized when doing it. Too often organizations forget the value of HRD programs and discontinue or scale them back. This is a costly mistake.

People learn in many different ways. Effective communication, feedback and practice are all essential in training and development. Doing this correctly is a science that should be done every time a message needs to be heard or spoken.

The most important lesson learned: Putting together a training manual takes a lot of work, research and patience. It can be rewarding when it is effectively used and feedback is positive. I have really enjoyed the class.

References

- Baldwin, T. T. & Ford, J.K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research, *Personnel Psychology*, 41, 63-103.
- Desimone, R., Werner, J., & Harris, D. (2002). *Human resource development* 3rd edition. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc.
- Kikoski, J.F. & Litterer, J. A. (1983). Effective communication in the performance appraisal interview. *Public Personnel Management Journal*, 12, pp. 33-42.