

## **Employee Training and Development: The Success of Your Business Depends on it**

Does your company invest in its future by investing in employee training and development? Or, does your company view employee training as an optional expense? In today's fast-paced business environment, if your employees are not learning, then your company may just be falling behind. After all, companies learn as their people do. But, no matter whether you have 5 employees or 5,000 employees, there are some tried and true ways to achieve and/or improve the successes yielded by those training dollars.

1. ***Develop and execute a training program that supports your organization's strategic plan.*** The days of "training for the sake of training" are long gone. Training needs to be executed in a manner that gives your employees the information, skills, and motivation they need to aid your organization in the achievement of its strategic goals. To do this, consider conducting a thorough needs analysis. Determine what's going to change as a result of the training – in the performance of your employees – that will produce a positive result for the company. This exercise may be time consuming but, if done correctly, should force management to look at the need for process changes.
2. ***Create a learning culture in your organization.*** Communicating your expectations with employees is essential – from the identification of training needs for a given position to the desired results. Of course, it is then up to you to provide the resources the employees need to achieve those desired results. In addition, a great organization is constantly learning from its clients, its competitors, and even itself. Be sure to foster an environment where information sharing is encouraged, and even rewarded.

Of vital importance to the development of a learning culture is the establishment of a training and education department inside your organization. Even small organizations need to have someone who leads this initiative, in an effort to maximize the results of the resources allocated to education.

3. ***Provide the right training, at the right time, for the right people.*** Better known as “just-in-time training,” this concept is a key element in any successful education program and includes four phases: assessment, planning, delivery, and evaluation. Providing a good mix of programs (technical, professional development, customer service, etc.) through a variety of delivery methods typically yields the best results. Conventional delivery methods include e-learning, live/interactive classroom events, self study, seminars and workshops.
  
4. ***Use training and education to develop leadership skills.*** Every successful corporate training program addresses the issue of leadership development. To make this training initiative a success, however, some time must be dedicated to identifying what style of leadership makes someone successful in your company and/or line of business. Training modules can then be designed accordingly. As an example, many of today’s businesses fail to provide a training course for new managers. Often, employees are promoted into managerial positions because of their technical acumen. Without training, however, they simply do not possess the skills required to motivate their subordinates to achieve maximum results. Another example would include motivational training for senior level executives. This is essential because their attitudes influence lower-level employee morale.

Several trends also prevail in today’s marketplace, including:

1. ***Training is out and learning is in.*** It is no longer acceptable to teach a single, stand alone skill. Teaching and learning transferable skills, or those which may be applied directly and indirectly in many situations, is the goal. Encourage moderated brainstorming sessions as a way to gather and disseminate feedback on these skills.
  
2. ***Hire the right people, and train them to perform the required skills.*** With the abundance of applicants in the job pool today, it is tempting to hire someone who has the exact experience your position requires. But, it is even more important to get the

right person into your organization, even if they do not have the exact skills at the onset. A motivated person who has a good attitude and a vision that is aligned with your organization can be trained to perform any number of skills. Remember, skills are easier to teach than attitude.

3. ***Incorporate technology into the classroom.*** While corporate culture has been enhanced in so many ways by technology, its presence has also made it to the training room -- from wireless web access to videoconferencing systems. PowerPoint presentations are becoming passé in the corporate classroom while smart boards are now being used to increase team interaction and capture information from the session.
4. ***Automate the administrative issues of internal education with a Learning Management System.*** Though this may not be the solution for every company because of cost considerations, automation streamlines the training process, especially in professions that require documentation. Depending on the specific needs of your organization, you can select systems that have the ability to track internal and external courses, as well as handle course registration and the distribution of evaluations automatically. Some extras which can be valuable include e-learning components and course material storage. Learning Management Systems run on many platforms.

***Concluding Remarks.*** Is training an essential investment or optional expense for your company? Most would agree that today's successful businesses treat employee training and development as an essential investment. After all, they could not do business without their employees and making sure these employees have the tools they need to be successful is just part of the deal.

An employee training and development program realizes the most success when it is properly executed, including the development of methods to identify training needs that correspond with corporate goals. If your training is targeted at achieving specific

business goals, any financial considerations resulting from the training will indeed prove to be an essential investment in the longevity of your business.

*For more information, contact Angie Martin at 214.461.1524 or via email at [amartin@lgt-cpa.com](mailto:amartin@lgt-cpa.com).*