

Chapter One

Training for Improved Performance

Our discussion of training begins with the concept of improved job performance. Improved job performance enables organisations to make the most positive impact on protected areas and the many aspects of their management. This chapter describes the link between training and organisational impact to highlight the roles of the Training Officer and the training unit as essential to organisational effectiveness. Concepts will be introduced which will help you to build a foundation for effective training within your organisation. This chapter is designed primarily for training officers, but it may also be useful for supervisors, administrators and trainers.

The Role of Training

Training is a process which helps individuals develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, based on principles of how adults learn best. Training is one of the most important factors which influence the way employees perform and carry out their duties. Effective training programmes approach behaviour change as a learned process. This chapter will present the concepts of behaviour based training and adult learning as means to increase performance. It will also address the numerous factors which influence learning. Through this chapter, you will learn how training activities can be supported by well planned strategies which define how training needs should be addressed.

Organisations such as yours function in a complex environment and face many challenges every day. A high level of performance is expected from employees to overcome challenges and reach institutional objectives. Training is the most direct way of improving performance, especially if it focuses not only on knowledge acquisition but also on the employee's attitudes and the skills required to act. As the Training Officer, you are responsible for ensuring that training is used strategically to strengthen your organisation and improve the performance of its employees.

Improved Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes = Enhanced Performance

To increase job performance, three components of behaviour should be addressed: knowledge, skills and attitudes. Employees must have adequate knowledge, they must be motivated and they must have the skills in order to feel empowered to act. It is not enough just to know facts. Employees should be interested in their work, have positive attitudes towards the tasks at hand and have the skills to act on what they know. Simply put, knowledge, skills and attitudes add up to performance. Therefore, training should focus on all aspects of behaviour in order to improve on-the-job performance.

OBJECTIVES

THIS CHAPTER WILL ASSIST YOU TO:

Describe the factors which influence learning.

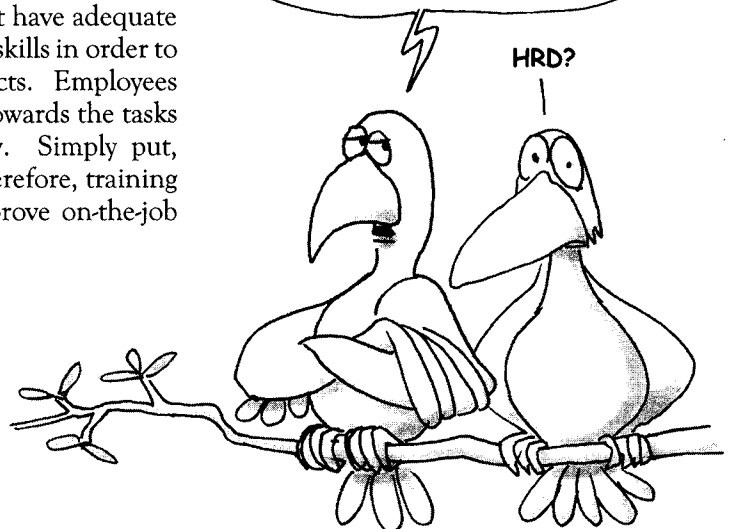
Explain the Principles of Adult Learning.

Describe how training can enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes within your organisation and raise performance.

Establish behaviour change as the outcome of training.

Develop a training strategy to guide performance improvement in the organisation.

By systematically enhancing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees we raise performance and contribute to HRD!





Human resource development (HRD) is the integrated use of training, career development and organisational development to improve personal and organisational effectiveness.

HRD includes activities which:

- ① Are designed to produce change in the physical and mental effort people put into their work.
- ② Are designed to produce behaviour change.
- ③ Attempt to produce greater capability of individuals within the organisation.
- ④ Are designed to help individuals realise their personal potential.

We have a role in developing human resources within our organisation in order to improve performance and reach objectives!



Targeting Performance

When addressing training needs within your organisation, it may be helpful to think in terms of the specific actions or behaviour which you hope will result from training activities. Just as your organisation's programmes must realise certain objectives, you can think of training as assisting employees to reach their individual objectives for attaining or exceeding performance standards. Improved performance helps employees to address their job responsibilities and fulfill their role within the organisation.

Training can be defined as 'a systematic development of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for an individual to perform adequately a given task or job.' This definition includes three important concepts which will serve as the basis for our discussion about training:

Training processes should be systematic. Systematic approaches to training make the best use of scarce organisational resources. Good planning demonstrates organisational commitment to effective human resource development, and it leads to the establishment of effective systems for planning training activities. Training processes require careful planning as well as support from a number of organisational levels, especially from the top. A systematic approach to training ensures that all training activities work towards a common goal and help to develop human resources.

Training should address the employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes.

It is not enough for employees to be able to memorise theories, procedures and rules. Behaviour and performance is determined not only by knowledge, but also by ability, motivation and attitude. Training must therefore take a much broader perspective than simply teaching people what they need to know ~ it should help them to change their behaviour.

Training should enhance job performance. It can be a challenge for trainers, training participants and supervisors to link training activities to the workplace, but this link is critical. By accounting for the impact of training on organisational performance, support from senior management and donor agencies can be strengthened. Accountability begins with the planning of training activities based on high priority needs, addressing those needs effectively through training, and then measuring behaviour change.