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IMPEDIMENTS TO SUCCESSFUL TRAINING IN SELECTED FIRMS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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Abstract

It is the systematic training of personnel on continuous basis that can harness the totality of human resources towards high productivity in the organization. There are varieties of training techniques that can be used. These could be summarized into on-the-job; off-the-job; and on-or-off- the-job techniques. There is no hard and fast rule as to how to select methods and techniques of training. New training methods are constantly being experimented upon and each produces the desired effect. The study was designed to examine the factors that serve as impediments to successful training in selected firms in Ilorin metropolis. Both primary and secondary sources were used in obtaining the information which were analyzed using percentages. Despite the benefits of training, it cannot be stressed that it can cure all ills in an organization. In many documents and comments it is usually assumed that all issues can be put right by means of training. This is not always the case. There are factors that affect the success of training in an organization. These include the work environment; motivational problems; poor leadership; lack of required skills; interest of senior management staff; incorrect target-setting; and poor recruitment and selection efforts. Some of the impediments that could affect the success of training in an organization include work environment; motivation problems; poor leadership; lack of required skills by employees; changes in the environment; interest of senior management in training; incorrect target settings and faulty recruitment and selection efforts. Based on the findings, the paper recommends ways to tackle those problems that affect the success of training in an organization.

Introduction

Training is perhaps, the fastest-growing segment of personnel activities. It is an organizational effort aimed at helping an employee to acquire basic skills required for the efficient execution of the functions for which he was hired. It is basically meant to prepare individuals towards future encounter with their job. It is also meant to minimize if not completely eliminate the gap between actual performance and expectations on the job. Training is important to the quality of service or product and long range staff effectiveness. Training is not only to sharpen the various skills of employees but also to tailor and pattern the general attitude to the work of an organization with a view to achieving the desired objectives for which the organization was set up.

On the whole, training reduces cost as it increases productivity, reduces employee turnover and promotes goal congruency. Lack of training in most cases increases absenteeism rate, low output, poor quality and rejects and results in high unit cost. That is, one of the potent factors militating against the good performance of employees is inadequate training. It is an established fact that no seriously minded organization can be staffed by people with expertise and

potential in the various disciplines needed for its total functioning simply by recruitment. It is the systematic training of personnel on a continuous basis that can harness the totality of human resources towards high production in the organization.

Therefore, this paper attempts to discuss the impediments to the success of training in an organization. In doing this, the paper discusses the meaning of training; and training programmes. It also tackles the likely impediment to success of training in an organization. The paper is concluded with recommendations.

Training

Training is usually aimed at solving significant problems because they are supposed to be used as the key requirement for ensuring that any training which takes place is based on proper analysis of its contribution to the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization.

Cascio (1989) perceives training as consisting of planned programmes designed to improve performance at the individual, group and/or organizational levels. Cascio, stressed that improved performance in turn, implies that there have been measurable changes in knowledge, skills, attitude and/or social behaviour.

Training according to Cole (1999) will be understood as any learning activity which is directed towards the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills for the purposes of an occupation or task. In the view of Armstrong (1999), training is the systematic modification of behaviour through learning which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience.

A critical look at the selected views revealed that they appear to be saying the same thing and what differs is the choice of words. One could then say that the fundamental aim of training is to help the organization achieve its purposes by adding value to its key resource-the people it employs. That is, training means investing in people to enable them to perform better and to empower them to make the best use of their natural abilities.

Training Programmes

Companies run schools of their own; arrange for special courses, pay tuition for school, college and correspondence courses. The subject matter of the courses and the methods of training naturally vary with the jobs of the employees, who may be rank-and-file workers, those being groomed for supervisory jobs, first-line supervisors, young college graduates, or seasoned executives. That is, there is no hard and fast rule as to how to select methods and technique of training. New training methods are constantly being experimented upon and each produces the desired effect.

When we talk about training programmes we are essentially discussing the means by which we intend to communicate information, ideas, skills, attitudes and feelings to learners. Here, there are a wide variety of training techniques that can be used. Armstrong (1999) divided training techniques that can be used into: on-the-job techniques; off-the-job and on-or-off-the-job techniques. We accept this classification because Armstrong appears to have

captured the views of other notable authorities. For instance, Cole (1999) also adopts similar categorization. Mondy and Noel (1981) lend credence to the same classification. Daft (1988) also shares the same view on these methods.

On-The-Job Techniques

On-the-job techniques according to Armstrong (1999) are practices on a day-to-day basis or as a part of a specially tailored training programme. These include demonstration, coaching, job rotation, planned experience and mentoring and other personal development activities.

In on-the-job-training an experienced employee is asked to take a new employee "under his or her wing" and show the newcomer how to form job duties. On-the-job training can also be provided by managers, team leaders colleagues or mentors (fellow employees who are given a particular responsibility to guide, advise and generally look after trainees). On-the-job training has many advantages, such as few out-of-pocket costs for training facilities, materials, or instructor fees and easy transfer of learning back to the job. The learning site is the work site.

On the other hand, the one-on-one or small-group instruction provided in on-the-job training requires that the organization be willing to free the trainer from normal duties. Also the trainer must be willing and able to help newcomers and not feel threatened by them.

Off-The-Job Techniques

Off-the-job techniques are used in formal training courses away from the place of work. These include lecture talks, discussions the discovery method, case study, role-playing, simulation, group exercise, team building, distance learning, outdoor learning and workshops. This category of training techniques according to Cole (1999) and Armstrong (1999) may be provided by members of the training department, external education and training establishments, or training providers-training consultants or guest speakers.

Advantages of off-the-job training include adequate attention being paid to the trainees. The trainer will also be willing and able to help newcomers and will not feel threatened by them. Modern ideas and knowledge are also imparted on the new employees.

However, off-the-job training methods involve additional cost.

On-or Off-The-Job Techniques

On or off-the-job techniques in view of Cole (1999) and Armstrong (1999) include instruction, question and answer, action learning, assignments, projects, guided reading, computer-based training, interactive video and video.

At this juncture, it needs to be noted that the only general rules for conducting training programmes are that:

1. The courses should continually be monitored to ensure that they are proceeding according to plan within the agreed budget; and
2. All training should be evaluated after the event to check on the extent to which it is delivering the required results.

These are the job of whoever has the responsibility for employee training, which should be required to report on progress against plan at regular intervals.

Methodology

The survey method was employed for designing this empirical research work. The methods used here include questionnaire and personal interview. Information was also gathered from internal records and publication.

Population Selection

The population of the firms used for this study was drawn mainly from nine firms taken from two different groups listed below:

Group 1: Service sector

Insurance 2 firms -28 Respondents

Banks 3 firms -26 Respondents

Group 2: Manufacturing sector

Food and Beverages 2 firms -28 Respondents

Soap and Detergent 2 firms -21 Respondents

These firms were chosen based on the fact that they appear to be common in the Nigerian industrial set-up. The nature of their products is very sensitive to both human life and economic activities of the nation. This is because:

1. A great variety of risks are nowadays covered by insurance. The main principle underlying insurance is "the pooling of risk", a large number of people contribute to a fund out of which compensation can be paid to those experiencing a particular type of loss.
2. Banks accept deposits, allow customers the use of cheques, grant credit by loan or overdraft, discount bills of exchange, and are involved in foreign exchange transactions. Banks also acts as agents for customers in the sale or purchase of stock exchange securities, act as executors or trustees, and provide safe custody for valuables.
3. Food and Beverage are very important. These are taken to maintain life and growth. No one can survive for long without food and drink.
4. Soap and detergent are also important. We use them for washing and cleaning of the body as well as removing of dirt from the surface of clothes or dishes.

In addition to all the above these sectors also create jobs that serve as sources of livelihood to many people. So training cannot be compromised in these sectors.

Data Collection Procedure

Two sets of data were collected for analysis. These include:

Primary source - this involved questionnaires containing different sections, which took care of each group of the respondents. Oral interviews were also conducted with some selected senior staff.

Secondary sources - this is mainly from the internal records and publications as well as related literature.

Impediments to Successful Training in Selected Firms in Ilorin Metropolis

The questionnaire was directed towards the three categories of staff in each of the selected firms. These include:

1. Junior staff -74 questionnaires
2. Middle level managers -50 questionnaires
3. Management staff - 36 questionnaires

The selection of these groups is based on the fact that matters relating to the success of training programmes involve all categories of staff in any organization.

Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered through questionnaire and publications were analyzed using percentages and descriptive analysis. This is mainly due to the nature of the data collected.

Findings

Out of 74 questionnaires sent to Junior Staff 47 (63.51%) was returned. The middle level managers returned 34 (68%) out of 50 questionnaires sent to them. Returns from the management staff were 22 (61.11%). Meaning total returns from the respondents were 103 (64.38%) out of 160 questionnaires sent out.

The following tables give the summary of the percentage of returns from each of the industrial sectors covered as explained above.

Table: Percentage of Response to Questionnaire to Firms Covered

Firm	No of firms chosen	No of questionnaire sent out to respondents				No of questionnaire returned				Percentage of returns from:			
		Junior staff	Middle level manager	Management staff	Total	Junior staff	Middle level staff	Management staff	Total	Junior staff	Middle level manager	Management staff	Total
Group 1 service sector													
(a) Insurance	2	18	16	10	44	12	10	6	28	66.67	62.50	60.00	-
(b) Banks	3	22	12	08	42	14	8	4	26	63.64	66.67	50.00	-
Sub total 1	5	40	28	18	89.2	26	18	10	54	65.00	64.29	55.56	62.79
Group 2 Managing sector													
(a) Food & Beverage	2	16	14	12	42	11	09	08	28	68.75	64.29	66.67	
(b) Soap & Detergent	2	18	08	06	32	10	07	04	21	55.56	87.50	66.67	
Sub total 2	4	34	22	18	74	21	16	12	49	61.76	72.73	66.67	66.22
Grand Total (i+ii)	9	74	50	36	160	47	34	22	103	63.51	68.00	61.11	64.38

Sources: Response from the Staff of the Firms Selected

The Analysis of the Results is Spilt Into Three

- i. Based on the opinions of junior staff.
- ii. Based on the opinions of middle level managers.
- iii. Based on the opinions of management staff.

Impediments to Success of Training in an Organization

Some form of training is needed for all employees. It may give a wider general knowledge of new techniques of a broader outlook but can be most beneficial to employee and employer. An effective training can improve efficiency and morale; introduce new techniques; provide for succession; enabling qualified replacements to be available; raise the standard of unskilled personnel, thus helping overcome labour shortages; develop supervisors and decrease the amount of supervision needed; and lead to a reduction in scrap rates and improve machine utilization.

However, it cannot be stressed that training cures all ills in an organization. In many documents and comments it is usually assumed that all issues can be put right by means of training. This is not always so. The findings in this respect are then analyzed as follows:

Analysis Based on the Opinions of Junior Staff

More than 60 percent of this group named working environment, lack of motivation and poor leadership as factors that could affect the success of training in an organization.

That is, work environment may affect employee productivity, such as lack of air conditioners during the hot season, poor lighting, dirt and lack of space. It is seen that the emphasis a firm places upon its employees' health and safety can also impact on a training and development programme. Heavy emphasis in this area can provide the way for extensive training programmes through out the firm. Providing a healthy and safe work environment can affect not only training but also all other personnel functions as the firm gains a reputation as a healthful and safe place to work.

Motivational problems may well lie at the root of most cases why an employee is not performing efficiently. This category of staff asserted that a firm's employee relations' efforts exert influence upon the training and development. Workers want to feel that the company is interested in them. To this group, one way to express this interest is through management's support of good training and development programmes. These programmes can also train managers in more effective means of dealing with employees and their problems. Managers should be taught to treat employees as individuals and not merely as numbers.

Poor leadership is also identified by this category of staff as a factor that is inhibiting the success of training. To them, employees might have acquired the necessary training but poor leadership at the place of work might make it impossible for the training to have the desired impact. At times supervision may be bad because the superior may not have enough information. That is a superior officer may fail to carry his subordinates along.

Analysis Based on the Opinion of the Middle Level Managers

Many factors were identified by this group but the common ones are: lack of required skills by employees; changes in the environment; interest of senior management in training; and incorrect target setting.

Lack of required skills by employees is another factor identified by this group that affect training. This has to do with inadequate skills. That is if a staff does not possess the right skills, training may mean a waste of time.

Also identified by this group is a change in the environment. In recent years, changes in products, systems, and methods have occurred at increasingly rapid rates. These changes according to this group have had a significant impact on jobs that are required by the organization. To them, employees must constantly update their skills. Also, they need to develop an attitude that permits them not only to adapt to change, but also to accept and even seek it.

Another important factor that affects training according to this group is the interest of senior management in training programme. What is first and foremost here is that training and development programmes must have top management's full support. That is the support must be real-not merely lip service. True support becomes evident when the executive group provides the resources needed for the training and development programme. The support is further strengthened when top executives actually take part in the training. These actions tend to convince employees of the significance of training and development programmes.

Incorrect Target-Setting is another impediment to training. This has to do with unrealistic target. It may occur that it is the person who is setting the target that requires some training as he may set unrealistic ones or these which cannot be attained.

Analysis Based on the Opinions of Management Staff

The management staff generally agreed on the teaching ability of those responsible for actual training as the major factor affecting training programmes.

During the past few decades, a vast amount of new knowledge has emerged. A large portion of this information relates directly to the management of human resources. Therefore today's managers must be aware of and capable of utilizing this new knowledge.

As a specialist, one must be know more than the topic to be presented. There must be some understanding of basic learning principles.

Also this group want us to note that successful accomplishment of other personnel functions can have a significant impact upon training and development. For instance, if recruitment and selection efforts only produce unskilled workers, an extensive training and development programme may be needed to train entry level workers.

Conclusion

It is clear from our discussions in the preceding sections that training is important to the quality of service or product and long range staff effectiveness. Organizations therefore embark on various training programmes to minimize if

not completely eliminate the gap between actual performance and expectations on the job.

When we talk about training programmes we are essentially discussing the means by which we intend to communicate information, ideas, skills, attitudes and feelings to learners. There is a wide variety of training techniques that can be used which we summarized into three.

Training programmes cannot be conducted without problems. That is, there are impediments to success of training in an organization. These impediments include among others, interest of senior management staff, poor leadership; work environment and motivational problems.

Recommendations

With the findings on the study, we can then deduce some recommendations that would be of immense help in tackling the impediments to the success of training in an organization.

1. The work environment should be made conducive. During the hot season for instance, air conditioners should be provided. Providing a healthy and safe work environment can affect not only training but also all other personnel functions.
2. A firm's employee relations effort exerts influence upon training and development. Workers should be assured that the company is interested in them. One way to express this interest is through management support of a good training and development programme. Managers should be taught to treat employees as human beings that is as individuals and not merely as numbers.
3. People playing the leadership role in an organization need to be well tutored, for training to achieve the desired result. Employees might have acquired the necessary training but poor leadership at the place of work might make it impossible for the training to have the desired impact.
4. The changes in the environment need to be studied before embarking on training programmes. Employees must also constantly update their skills. They need to develop an attitude that permits them not only to adapt to change but also to accept and even seek it.
5. The support of top management. That is the executives of organizations should provide the resources needed for the training and development programme. The management staff should even deem it fit to actually take part in the training.
6. Need for a correct target-setting. Unrealistic target is an impediment to training. In most cases it may be the person who is setting the target that requires some training as he may set unrealistic ones or those which cannot be attained.
7. Utilizing new knowledge. Modern managers must be aware of and capable of utilizing a vast amount of new knowledge that is emerging. That is as a specialist one must know more than a topic to be presented.
8. A good recruitment and selection exercise. That is a good recruitment and selection exercise must be carried out. A faulty recruitment and selection effort will produce unskilled workers that necessitates an

extensive training and development programme. This may not even achieve the expected result.

Once, all the above recommendations are given consideration, there seem to be no inherent reasons why the impediments to success of training in an organization would not be removed.

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