

Top Ten Tips for Training

1. Ask yourself, why do you see a need for training?

- Where are the gaps in performance? Look ahead to your plans for the business – what skills, knowledge and ability do you need to achieve your long term goals? Once you have identified the skill, experience, knowledge and ability gaps, then you can understand the training 'need'

2. How will training achieve goals for the business and/or employee?

- Sometimes training is NOT the answer. If an employee is consistently not performing to expectations look to other processes – are you recruiting and selecting the right people? Are the jobs challenging your employees – can you change their roles in any way to increase job satisfaction and motivation to achieve greater performance?
- If training is the answer, the learning objectives and outcomes should align specifically to the development and/or growth of the business and employee alike – remember to measure results, this is key to understanding whether you have achieved your goals

3. What are the expectations related to training?

- For the business the focus will be on improving performance, increasing productivity, heightening profitability, gaining or maintaining a competitive edge and establishing and developing greater intellectual capability within the business. Therefore, when deciding on training options, as mentioned above, make sure you assess your 'return on investment'. You need to be able to demonstrate whether training really was worth the expense
- For the employee the focus is on increasing skills and knowledge, training is an opportunity to enhance work experience, increase promotion and career opportunities, increase confidence, self esteem and job satisfaction and motivation

4. Where will the training take place?

- **Internal** – on the job training – this enables you to provide opportunities for your employees to gain skills through shadowing, observation, being given greater responsibilities, working on a new project, being supported by a reliable and knowledgeable mentor
- **External** – workshops and courses can teach you theory and knowledge outside of the immediate scope of the work environment and perhaps extend the thinking of your employee's further. However, the training must be applicable to your business and readily transferable. Furthermore, if no-one within the business (i.e. a manager) understands fully the training undertaken externally, it can be more difficult to determine whether the employee is using their newfound skills, knowledge and/or abilities
- Training doesn't end at the end of the course or workshop it should be an ongoing process – if you stop learning, you stop growing, you become stagnant – work with your team to encourage and promote a learning culture

5. Ensure that all training is transferable to the workplace

- If you can't effectively measure the impact that training is having on either your employee or the business – what is the value?
- Introduce methods to support training including follow up sessions with managers and other team members to share practical knowledge and introduce tests to ensure that the desired learning objective has been achieved

6. Joint Responsibility

- Arguments regularly occur regarding who should pay for employee development – in my opinion it is the responsibility of both parties. For the employer you need the new skills/abilities to add value to the business, and for the employee, new training will be beneficial to their 'portfolio' of skills which can be used in their current and future roles – how can you make things more equitable?
- If you are concerned that you are paying a high price for training but understand the value of training, form an agreement with your employee i.e. you agree to pay for the training course that the employee wishes to undertake; and as a business the expectation is that the employee will remain within the business utilising their new skills and knowledge for a specified period of time. If they do decide to leave during this time, they agree to pay back a portion of the training fees
- Put a performance management framework in place around training
 - If your employees are going to undertake training, together create targets and goals that they will be endeavouring to achieve as an outcome of the training
 - Furthermore, you may feel it is appropriate to set a performance management framework in place with regards to the actual training i.e. the employee is expected to attend all training sessions/workshops, complete all assignments and pass the required papers

7. Make training part of the job – essentially this means make training a positive learning experience

- Support employees undertaking training. Think how frustrating it can be to attend a two day accounting course to improve business processes for your boss, then having to return to work and find out that none of your work has been done and clients and team members all have urgent matters for you to resolve...
- Don't forget also that when employees are training, their productivity will be lessened, this can of course hurt a business as low productivity equates to lessened profit, BUT the long term benefits should outweigh the short term down time costs

8. Create career development plans for the whole team

- Not every training option is expensive and you should seek to develop your entire team, remember you are only as good as your weakest link

9. For training to be a success you need both employee and management buy-in

- If your employees are not motivated by training and are unlikely to gain from the experience, stick to training them on the essential job skills; and if your management team don't support the employees to develop their skills when back in the workplace – the relevance of the training experience will be undermined

10. Remember - everyone learns in different ways

- we have different motivations, we come from differing backgrounds and have different experiences – when creating a learning experience consider the specific needs of each individual employee