

Ten Reasons Training and Development Should be Managed by Experts

Don't leave this important function in the hands of generalists.

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Expecting HR generalists to do a good job managing training and development (T&D) is like expecting electrical engineers to be good at mechanical engineering, or a marketing team to be good at closing sales. Just as engineering has many radically different disciplines and sales is different than marketing, "human resources management" is not the same competency as "training and development management."

Organizationally, T&D can fall under the HR umbrella, but it should be managed by T&D experts. If this expertise doesn't exist in house, consider outsourcing T&D management. Here are 10 reasons why expert management of training and development activity is important:

1 Productivity and the Bottom Line

What is a 5% productivity gain worth? What if 10% or greater productivity gains could be achieved? How are you measuring productivity? T&D applied toward meaningful productivity improvements can provide huge ROI. For example, if a product development team with \$2 million annual labor cost could improve their productivity by 10%, the cost for the same amount of output going forward would be reduced by \$182,000. In many cases these gains can be achieved with T&D efforts costing a small fraction of the return when the appropriate experts are engaged.

2 Time-to-Market Benefits

Time-to-market savings as a result of T&D related to product development performance can be even greater than general productivity gains. Delays on most development projects cost businesses thousands of dollars per day – and tens of thousands or more per day for more significant projects. A minimal T&D

investment can result in significant gains as a result of improved time-to-market, but applying relevant T&D expertise is essential.

3 Managing T&D is Difficult

It requires constant assessment of needs across the entire business; influencing company support; a high level of service; access to the best T&D providers available; and ensuring the desired outcomes and measurable results. Generally this is a full-time job for multiple people, and if internal staffing is inadequate, T&D management functions should be outsourced.

4 Complexity of T&D Delivery

Delivering effective T&D programs is also very difficult. Educational programs need three important ingredients: relevant content, good design, and strong presentation. Only the most skilled subject-matter-expert training professionals excel in all these areas, and T&D managers need to understand the complexity of T&D delivery to manage it well.

5 Long-Term Stability and Growth

The best indicators of future potential for virtually every business are the employee skill and talent pipeline; pipeline of new products/services; teamwork; and leadership competencies. Focused efforts to continuously strengthen the future potential should be high-priority for every business leader.

6 Balanced Scorecard and KPIs

T&D focused on a balanced scorecard and functional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should improve financial

performance, customer satisfaction, and internal business processes – in addition to the learning and growth performance that well-managed T&D programs deliver.

7 A Systematic Approach is Needed

An ad hoc approach to T&D is inefficient and generally ineffective. The investment will produce better returns with a systematic approach.

8 Broad Range of Competencies

Business performance in this competitive world requires a broad range of skills – and depth in the most critical competencies such as leadership. Constantly improving performance in key competencies across an entire business requires expert T&D management.

9 Balancing Cost and Effectiveness

Important business competencies can be improved by engaging the appropriate T&D professionals. Many providers in the "business skills" space are not experts, and a seasoned T&D manager will recognize this. (Tip: Avoid inexpensive soft skills providers unless you are certain about their effectiveness.)

10 Product Development is Highly Complex!

The complexity of product development environments and the associated costs require professional development programs that are aligned with the unique demands of R&D. Training and development programs that include expertise specific to product development should be considered, as opposed to more "generic" approaches.