Training and Development Practices of Selected Companies: Basis for Training and Development Program

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the existing training and development practices of selected companies as basis for the formulation of training and development program. This paper tests a hypothesis that there is significant difference in the extent of use of training and development tools and techniques when the selected companies were classified as large, medium, and small. It was concluded that some of the companies did not implement performance evaluation system. One of the recommendations cited therefore was that companies should employ said system on performance evaluation to substantiate the wholeness of personnel training and development program.

Key words: orientation, training needs analysis, design, training evaluation, performance appraisal

1. Introduction

Training and development, as one of HR's core functions, has become increasingly vital to the success of modern organizations. It plays a central role in nurturing and strengthening competencies – the core sets of knowledge and expertise that give them an edge over their competitors, and in this way has become part of the backbone of strategy implementation. It has become more significant globally in order to prepare workers for new jobs. Noted management author Peter Drucker said that the fastest growing industry would be training and development as a result of replacement of industrial workers with knowledge workers.

Training and development is necessary to enhance employees' skills and reveal hidden capabilities in the area in which they work. By training and developing workers, the productivity of a company can be increased and company growth in many areas can be realized. Training is also required to update employees of the market trends, the change in the employment policies and other things. All of these are critical to the success of the organization; thus the HR managers need to be prepared to develop and deliver training and development programs that will help the organization achieve a competitive advantage.

2. Literature Review

Training is a learning process that involves the acquisition of skills, concepts, rules, or attitudes to enhance the performance of employees. Generally, the new employee's manager has primary responsibility for job training. Sometimes this training is delegated to a senior employee in the department. Regardless, the quality of this initial training can have a significant influence on the employee's productivity and attitude toward the job (Byars and Rue, 2004).

After people are hired, they must be oriented to the organization and to their jobs; they must also be trained to perform their jobs. Furthermore, employees must periodically have their skills updated and learn new skills. The orientation and training of new employees and the training of longer-term employees are major responsibilities of the human resource department (Byars and Rue, 2004).

In order to have effective training programs, the systems approach is recommended. This approach consists of four phases: (1) needs assessment, (2) program design, (3) implementation, and (4) evaluation (Bohlander and Snell, 2004).

Analyzing training needs depends on whether one is training new or current employees. The main task in analyzing new employees' training needs is to determine what the job entails and to break it down into subtasks. Analyzing current employees' training needs can be more complex, since one has the added task of deciding whether training needs can be more complex, and of deciding whether training is the solution (Dessler, 2000).

In designing a training program, managers must consider the two fundamental pre-conditions for learning: readiness and motivation. In addition, principles of learning should be considered in order to create an environment that is conducive to learning. These principles include goal-setting, meaningfulness of presentation, modeling, individual differences, active practice and repetition, whole-versus-part learning, massed-versus-distributed learning, and feedback and reinforcement (Bohlander and Snell, 2004).

With today's emphasis on measuring HR management's financial impact, it is crucial that the employer make provisions to evaluate the training program. There are basically three things one can measure: participants' reactions to the program; what (if anything) the trainees learned from the program; and to what extent their on-the-job behavior changed as a result of the program (Dessler, 2000). Relative to evaluation of training

effectiveness, Marie-France Waxin and Alexandra Panaccio (2005), in their study, examine what are the effects of the different types of cross-cultural training (CCT) on expatriates' adjustment and whether prior international experience (IE) and cultural distance (CD) have a moderator effect on the effectiveness of CCT.

Appraisals play an integral role in employee training and development. There are several reasons to appraise subordinate's performance. First, appraisals play, or should play, an integral role in the employer's performance management process; it does little good to translate the employer's strategic goals into specific employees' goals, and then train the employees, if one does not periodically review his employees' performance. Second, the appraisal lets the boss and subordinate develop a plan for correcting any deficiencies the appraisal might have unearthed, and to reinforce the things the subordinate does correctly. Third, appraisals should serve a useful career planning purpose by providing the opportunity to review the employee's career plans in light of his or her exhibited strengths and weaknesses. And, the appraisal almost always effects the employer's salary raise and promotional decisions (Dessler, 2000).

The performance appraisal process itself contains three steps: define the job, appraise performance, and provide feedback. Defining the job means making sure that the subordinate agree on his or her duties and job standards. Appraising performance means comparing the subordinate's actual performance to the standards that have been set; this usually involves some type of rating form. Third, performance appraisal usually requires one or more feedback sessions. Here the two discuss the subordinate's performance and progress, and make plans for any development required (Dessler, 2000).

3.   Methodology

This is a descriptive study utilizing self-made survey questionnaire in which validity and reliability measures were established. To test the hypothesis, a survey on fifteen selected companies in the Philippines was conducted in 2005 in which the subjects were classified as large, medium, and small. The subjects were determined by employing stratified random sampling method, while the respondents were the HR managers, supervisors, and rank-and-file who were randomly picked out to represent each category.

Frequency and percentage were used to determine the existing training and development practices of selected companies, mean for the extent of use of training and development tools and techniques. One-way ANOVA was used to compare the extent of use of training and development tools and techniques when the subjects were classified as large, medium, and small as perceived by the respondents.

4. The Findings

In the analysis and interpretation of data, Table 1 with its graphical presentation revealed that the extent of use of training and development tools and techniques was to a *moderate extent*. Some companies believed that employee training and development is a costly long-term activity which perceived as having less certain payback. They recognized however the need of employee orientation. Companies believed that hiring high-potential employees doesn't guarantee that they will perform effectively. Employees must be oriented on what to do and how to do it. Employee performance evaluation, on the contrary, is looked upon by some companies as additional administrative burden and stress. They considered performance appraisal as an   "overkill" administrative activity that they can put off until their business gets bigger.

Table 1. Extent of Use of Training and Development Tools and Techniques as Perceived by HR Managers, Supervisors, and Rank-and-File

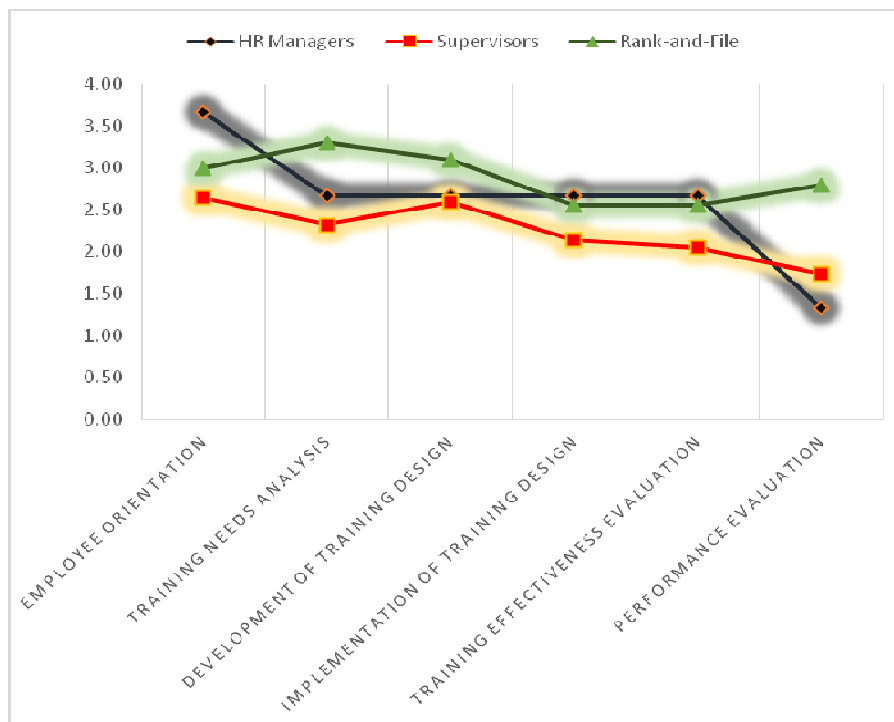| Training & Development Tools & Techniques	HR Managers		Supervisors		Rank-and-File		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd		
Employee Orientation	3.67	1.53	2.64	0.95	3.00	1.34	3.10	Great Extent
Training Needs Analysis	2.67	1.53	2.32	1.04	3.30	0.73	2.76	Moderate Extent
Development of Trng. Design	2.67	0.58	2.59	0.50	3.10	0.64	2.79	Moderate Extent
Implementation of Training	2.67	1.15	2.14	0.47	2.55	0.89	2.45	Moderate Extent
Training Evaluation	2.67	1.15	2.05	0.38	2.55	0.94	2.42	Moderate Extent
Performance Evaluation	1.33	0.58	1.73	0.83	2.80	1.24	1.95	Moderate Extent
Over-all Extent	2.61	1.09	2.24	0.69	2.88	0.96	2.58	Moderate Extent

Table 2. Differences in the Extent of Use of Training and Development Tools and Techniques of Selected Companies

Sources of Variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F - Value		Interpretation
				Computed	Computed	
Between groups	18.67	2	9.34			
Within groups	28.00	24	1.17	7.98	3.40	Significant
Total	46.67	26				

Significant differences were noted in the extent of use training and development tools and techniques among the selected companies as indicated by the F-ratio of 7.98 in Table 2 . Differences were noted between large group and medium group and between medium group and small group. These results can be interpreted to mean that in terms of using the training and development tools and techniques, companies have different perceptions.

Table 3. Differences in the Perceptions of HR Managers, Supervisors, and Rank-and-File in the Extent of Use of Training and Development Tools and Techniques of Selected Companies

Sources of Variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F - Value		Interpretation
				Computed	Tabular	
Between groups	79.01	2	39.51			
Within groups	8115.97	42	193.23	0.20	3.23	Not significant
Total	8194.98	44				

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the extent of use of training and development tools and techniques among selected companies as perceived by the HR managers, supervisors, and rank-and-file as indicated by the F-ratio of 0.This finding can be interpreted to mean that the three groups of respondents have almost the same perception in the use of training and development tools and techniques.

5. Summary and Conclusions

The results showed that respondents rated the highest in employee orientation. Companies conducted employee orientation upon hiring and on the job. Orientation was on the organization and the corporate vision/mission, terms and conditions of employment, employee handbook, job description and tools to be used. Training needs assessments were also conducted to identify the specific job performance skills needed, assess the prospective trainee's skills, and develop specific, measurable knowledge and performance objectives based on any deficiencies. Effectiveness of trainings conducted was likewise subsequently evaluated.

Respondents, however, rated the lowest in performance evaluation. This implies that there are companies which hardly ever conduct job performance evaluation, because it is an additional burden and too complex to administer due to human factors such as employee's perception and personal biases. One of the recommendations cited therefore was that companies should conduct performance evaluation to substantiate the wholeness of personnel training and development program.

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