

BA (Hons) Management and Leadership – Skills for the Workplace

BMSW5102: Developing Relationships and Workplace Achievement



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Introduction

Training and development, an essential part of human resource management, is pivotal to the success of a business organisation which aims at enhancing the qualities, knowledge, and skills of the employees in order to achieve higher productivity and performance. According to Buckley and Caple (2009), in an organisational context, training and development means a systemic and comprehensive approach designed to foster the personal and professional growth of the employees through sharing knowledge, supporting to build skills, and adopting strategies to improve mental health with an objective of achieving competitive advantage and attaining organisational goals. Training and development not only encompass the development of job-specific skills and knowledge or improving individual performance of the employees but also ensure the acquisition of future employability skills through analysing changing demand of employee competencies, delivering knowledge to employees, cultivating broader skill sets, preparing employees personally and mentally for future and also preparing them to become the future leaders in the job sectors (Evans, 2009). An effective training and development program improves employees' competencies for job-specific role and also ensure mental and physical well-being as well as advancement (Andersson, 2010). The realisation of such importance of training encourages scholars to do deep research and build theories and models to foster this employee development process. With the modernisation of the business world, different new approaches, models and theories of training and development have been introduced such as E-learning. This report has been prepared to develop a case study on an organisation with a focus on the training and development process of the organisation. To complete this report, a local coffee shop with more than 30 employees in Wales was investigated and the store managers were interviewed to get an idea about their training and development practices. This report has analysed the advantages of E-learning to employees and organisations, how training and development play important roles in business success and the model used to train the employees, etc. have been discussed in the context of the coffee shop in concern. Hence, this study will provide significant insight into the training and development process of how a firm practices training and development-related tasks.

Benefits of E-learning to employees and organisations

With the introduction of technology in education, e-learning has become increasingly popular for convenience, flexibility and other benefits. Similarly, companies have started to use this concept of e-learning for training and development purposes. E-learning can be defined as the delivery of learning materials and programs through electronic media and platforms such as websites, the Internet, etc. (Batalla-Busquets and Pacheco-Bernal, 2013). E-learning is exclusively used in complex jobs, for example, doctors use simulation to teach or learn medical issues, pilots use simulation for training purposes, etc. However, the firms such as manufacturing or service, are also using E-learning for training and development purposes. E-learning is significantly related to the theory of constructivism theory which states that learners construct their own knowledge and understanding from the experience and interaction with the world. Through E-learning, employees can make their own learning environment using interactive technology, engage and experience them and build knowledge (Navimipour, and Zareie, 2015). While conducting a case study over a local coffee shop, the employees as well as the manager were interviewed. The coffee shop in question provides online tutorials on coffee making, service, communication, etc, using their website. According to the explanation of employees, e-learning has the following potential benefits for them.

- **Flexibility and convenience:** According to the employees, the main benefit of E-learning is the flexibility and convenience of learning through electronic media. Employees state that currently, they are required to join training programs on holidays or after office hours which is an extra burden. But, with E-learning, they will be able to learn on flexible hours, without be hustle of moving and in their productive hour. Especially, the employees stay away from the stores mentioned E-learning will be more effective in managing schedules.
- **Personalization:** E-learning allows to tailor learning materials to the individual needs and learning styles of employees. This will increase the learning efficiency of employees and also save time and cost of learning. Besides, this will also better match with a personal development plan of the employees which sets an action plan for achieving certain skills to remove skills gaps considering a personal or professional goal.
- **Engagement:** E-learning allows the development of an engaging and interactive learning environment which can better attract employees' attention and increase effectiveness compared to traditional classroom-based training (Navimipour and Zareie, 2015). Most of the employees in the firm in concern mentioned that they find e-learning more enjoyable

compared to lecture-based training programs. Besides, this also feel more motivated to learn and participate in future training programs when e-learning is concerned.

- **Instant access to knowledge and resources:** Employees mentioned that they generally forget the training after a certain time or miss out on many things during the session. However, E-learning can provide them instant access to the learning materials, and they can review the training at any time. Besides, the HR team of the stores can continuously share content on trends, business news, technologies, personal development, etc. which will keep them updated in terms of knowledge and skills.

From the interview with the managers, the following benefits of e-learning to organisations can be found.

- **Cost-effectiveness and Scalability:** The store manager mentioned that E-learning is more cost-effective compared to traditional classroom-based training because this requires no cost related to venue management, travelling, etc. They can also use their current website for training purposes. Besides, a large number of employees can be trained using the same tutorial at the same time which will significantly reduce the cost (Acton, Hill and Scott, 2005). According to managers, E-learning can be more effective for them due to its interactive approach, and the employees will be more satisfied with this training approach.
- **Continuous learning:** Currently, the company is required to arrange different or new training programs for every new group of joiners. However, with E-learning, the organisation can use similar videos or content several times and reduce the cost. Moreover, employees can continuously learn through the e-learning portal, even without the supervision of the organisation.
- **Performance management and appraisal:** Performance management means a continuous exchange of information between employees and managers to identify, measure and improve an individual's performance. On the other hand, appraisal means reviewing employee's performance and recognising their contribution. E-learning allows both key HR actions to be performed more effectively and efficiently. In the coffee shop, the E-learning program will allow to monitor employees progress in achieving skills, their scores on different tests, the number of training programs they attended, etc. The manager uses the information to identify the skills gaps of employees, their growth, etc. and uses the information while making promotions or managing individual performance.

- **Real-time updates and Compliance:** E-learning in the coffee shop, can be used to provide necessary information about jobs, market, etc. and also ensure that employees are well-known and trained about relevant policies and procedures.

However, both employees and managers mentioned some issues in E-learning. According to employees, some of them feels less connected to online training session due to a lack of physical interaction, which also makes them less motivated. Some employees also mentioned that virtual training hampers their two-way communication process and failed them to get immediate feedback. Technical challenges are also a major challenge in E-learning, especially during live sessions. The managers, on the other hand, mentioned that the cost of holding a learning portal is significantly high. Moreover, website maintenance costs, optimisation with upgraded devices, etc. are becoming more costly. Besides, going online with their secret strategy of coffee making, delivery, etc. poses a security concern (Ali and Magalhaes, 2008). The manager also stated that employees may choose unethical ways while learning such as starting class but not joining actively or telling others to join the exam, etc. (Lee, Hsieh and Chen, 2013) which potentially reduces the effectiveness of e-learning.

However, these issues can be addressed by enhancing the monitoring process or taking other approaches such as shifting to a third-party e-learning platform to reduce cost and using their tutorials, arranging live classes with a recorded version, etc. After all, E-learning can benefit the firms in a number of ways only if the organisation and the employees can adopt it properly.

Importance of training and development

In any organisation, including the coffee shop in concern, the training and development provide the employees with the necessary competencies to perform their tasks or roles properly. The importance of training in the chosen coffee shop can be explained using different theories.

According to the Service Quality Model (SERVQUAL) the customer service of an organisation, especially a service-based organisation like a coffee shop, are influenced by five key factors which are tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy map (Seth, Deshmukh and Vrat, 2005). Although the tangibles are physical elements which can be improved through higher investment, reliability (ability to consistently meet the promises made to customers), responsiveness (willingness to serve the best to customers), assurance (achieving the trust of the customers in respect to quality service) and empathy (emotional attachment with customers), can be improved through proper training and development program. Hence, training has a significant influence on customer service and firm performance.

Training also enhances the product knowledge of the employees, which employees can deliver to the customers and enhance brand awareness as well as improve revenue. Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) also supports the idea that if employees have significant knowledge about the product and brand, they can transfer this knowledge and communicate the values to the customers resulting in higher sales, brand awareness and organisational performance (Selase Asamoah, 2014).

Training and development programs also have a prominent impact on motivation and employee satisfaction. According to the need theory of Abraham Maslow, people belong to different stages of need, and they become motivated when they find an opportunity to mitigate these needs. Similarly, at a certain point, employees want to grow personally and professionally and when they get training or similar development opportunities, they become motivated. Besides, the Herzberg two factors theory also identified the development opportunity as a motivating factor and contributes to higher employee satisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). If the employees in the coffee stores get proper development opportunities, they will demonstrate higher productivity, improve their performance, meet personal goals, face little difficulties in the workplace, and have higher job satisfaction. According to De Sousa Sabbagha, Ledimo and Martins (2018), higher job satisfaction is positively related to a higher employee retention rate. Hence, training and development not only improve performance and motivation but also enhance employee retention as well reduce the cost of hiring new employees on a regular basis.

Finally, learning organisation theory is another highly used theory in modern organisation which indicates a company that facilitates continuous learning and development of employees and helps the employees to reach their desired success. Training and development ensure that employees in the coffee can get an appropriate learning environment, stay updated in terms of skills and knowledge and boost their employability skills.

However, there are some shortcomings or challenges which can arise in the training and development process in the coffee shop. An unplanned or unstructured training program, without analysis of employees, needs or skills gap, etc. add little or no value to employees as well as cost employees valuable time (Mathis et al., 2017). Besides, the mismatch between training goal and organisation goals, inappropriate training method, etc. reduces the effectiveness of training and enhance employee dissatisfaction. Frequent training program is also associated with higher operation cost that might create operational risk. Besides, time constraints in regular operation or arranging long training sessions can demotivate employees to participate in the training and can negatively impact their work-life balance. Hence, the management of the coffee shop must

arrange training programs based on employees' needs, and organisational goals and deliver the training effectively so that the employees as well as the organisation can benefit.

After all, training and development are pivotal for the coffee shop in achieving superior customer service, and organisational efficiency, improving employee satisfaction and remaining competitive in the market.

Model of Training Process

As mentioned earlier, a training and development program can be ineffective if they are not designed properly considering the needs of employees and without appropriate training method. A model for the training process sets a framework for understanding the training need and designing a training program considering all the relevant factors. A model for the training process provides a sequential set of actions that controls the development and execution of the process, increases the effectiveness of training, reduces the wastage of resources, and saves costs.

There are different learning and training models used to implement the training process with a firm. One such model is Bloom's Taxonomy which assists in setting appropriate learning objectives by categorising them into cognitive affective and psychomotor domains (Forehand, 2005). The teachers, instructors as well and professional trainers use this model to develop SMART objects aligning with the needs of learners. ADDIE model is another model which includes five stages, analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (Armstrong, 2006). This is used for designing training processes by professionals, especially educational instructors for developing instructional materials and learning programs. Another model for the training process was introduced by Donald Kirkpatrick in the 20th century which is called Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006). This model is composed of four stages, which are reaction, learning, behaviour, and results. This model is widely used to evaluate the training effectiveness at different levels of the firms. Moreover, Goldstein and Ford also developed a training Process Model that supports a firm to appropriately determine the training needs of the employees and design the training program appropriately encompassing the needs (Armstrong, 2006).

However, the coffee shop in concern also used a model for the training process but it does not fit into any of the standardised models, rather it includes different characteristics of these models. The model for the training process in the Coffee shop includes the following stages,

- Need analysis

- Setting learning objectives
- Designing training programs
- Actions
- Evaluation of performance
- Feedback

The first stage of the model for the Coffee shop includes need analysis where the quality assurance team analyse the customers' feedback on product quality, taste, delivery, decoration and customer service.

Secondly, based on the development needs, the HR team along with the store manager set an objective for training such as improving waiters' behaviour or improving the espresso delivery process, etc.

Thirdly, the HR team with professional trainers designs the training program using appropriate methods and materials. In most cases, the training program includes physical presentation, video presentation, self-study and practice sessions to ensure the highest participation of employees with the program.

Fourthly, the programs are executed in person and a recorded version is provided for further revision.

Fifthly, an instant online test is taken to analyse the understanding of the training program and within a period of three months, another evaluation is performed to analyse the effectiveness of training on organisation.

Lastly, based on evaluation, further training programs are designed.

This model used by the Coffee shop is mainly a reflection of the ADDIE model with some modifications. Besides, Bloom's Taxonomy, Kirkpatrick's model, and Goldstein and Ford's model for training can also be connected to different stages of the training process in coffee stores. However, all these models ensure that the training process within the shop is effectively contributing to the performance of employees and the organisation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this report has shown the benefits of E-learning, the importance of training & development for a firm and the model used for the training process. Using different secondary sources and research, it can be found that the contribution of training and development on individual and organisational growth and performance is immense. Recent reports show that e-learning has been popular among business organisations due to its interactive nature, flexibility, and scalability. However, sometimes learning through the electronic channel can be challenging due to technical errors or lack of interaction. The investigation of the importance of training and development stated that training and development is significantly connected with individual physical competencies and mental well-being. An appropriate training program can boost more, personal growth and performance, whereas ineffective training can hamper employee motivation. The last section of this report shows that an appropriate training model can contribute to designing and implementing an effective training and development plan. In contrast, its management fails to apply the framework for the training process properly, which will lead to a waste of resources and an increase in cost. Therefore, a firm like the Coffee shop in concern, must analyse the “Skill gaps” of the employees, set objectives and design with the support of professionals to generate the most effective development plan and get the highest benefit.

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