

Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

Definitions

Organisational basis:

“The systematic gathering of data to find out where there are gaps in the existing skills, knowledge and attitudes of employees. It involves the gathering of data about existing employees capabilities and organisational demands for skills, and the analysis of the implication of new and changed roles for changes in capability” CIPD.

Individual basis

“An examination of the training and development needs of an individual to enable him/her to reach the required standard of performance in his/her current or future job”

Factors to be considered in TNA

Current skills, knowledge and experience (CV)
Job role and requirements (job spec and person spec)
Performance objectives and related skills, knowledge and experience
Organisation competency frameworks (if any)
Continuous Professional Development (CPD) requirements
Legislative requirements
Compatibility with business needs

CV and Job specification

Comparison of what an individual knows and can do against what they are expected to know and do forms the basis of identifying training needs as gaps in knowledge skills and experience become apparent.

Performance objectives

These are linked to organisational objectives and set out what individuals are expected to achieve in their job role. They may be referred to as “targets”. Individuals may have the pre-requisite skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to achieve their objectives. If not, there is a training and development need.

Competency Frameworks Models

Many organisations use competency frameworks as a basis for staff development. They are commonly seen in large organisations, and those that are highly regulated such as the care sector, and petro-chemical industries. Examples of competency framework models include:

- i) **Core frameworks** – training and development that applies to all employees
- ii) **Role specific competencies** – often used to supplement the core framework, these are based on developing competencies required against specific roles or responsibilities eg, people management, financial management, project management.
- iii) **Competency menu** – where competencies are listed and managers and staff select those that are relevant to the role and individual performance.
- iv) **Functional competencies** – similar to role specific competencies in that they relate to individual responsibilities, but with more emphasis on operational requirements and job functions. They are likely to be listed by department so for example there would be a set of competencies that apply to Finance, another for IT and another for HR etc

Continuous Professional Development

This is often required for individuals to maintain professional status. Many organisations support and fund such development, e.g. solicitors, accountants, HR. It is an important factor in TNA for professionally qualified individuals.

Legislative requirements

These may be addressed via competency frameworks and/or CPD, or may be considered on an individual basis. There may be legal requirements for employees to hold specific qualifications related to their job role e.g. Health and Safety certificates, care qualifications, food safety. Organisations sometimes require employees (especially managers) to undertake awareness training to ensure compliance with legal requirement related to their policies and procedures e.g. diversity, recruitment and selection, disciplinary and dismissal.

Compatibility with business needs

Personal (career) development in a work-based situation, may be problematic, as an individual's development objectives and ambitions may not be compatible with the organisation's business objectives. Some organisations encourage and support career development, and have structured approaches to coaching and mentoring, and succession planning. Some may provide financial support, or study time, whilst others will only support personal development that directly aligns with organisational development.

Many organizations require flexibility and on-going development to cope with change and new business challenges. Any analysis of individual training needs must take the business needs into account to avoid frustration and conflict.

TNA Methods and Tools

Some commonly used methods are:

Gap analysis
SWOT analysis
Knowledge, Skills and Experience Assessment
Skills Matrix
Competency Assessment
Assessment Centre Tests

Gap analysis

This involves comparing current skills, knowledge and experience of the individual against the skills, knowledge and experience required to carry out the job, and/or to achieve performance objectives. The process involves assessing what the individual has already learned and can do, and this is usually done by reflecting on their CV. Then the current job specification, and any performance objectives/targets are examined to ascertain what skills and knowledge are required. This will identify any gaps that can be addressed via training or development activities

SWOT analysis

Conducting a simple SWOT analysis can be a very effective means of identifying an individual's training needs, particularly if the individual completes the SWOT themselves and then discusses it with their manager.

The SWOT analysis should focus on all aspects of the individual's performance, so will include things like interpersonal relationships and customer service as well as technical aspects of the job.

The SWOT examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats inherent in an individual's job performance. These may be identified using a grid as illustrated below. When the SWOT has been completed and discussed, a training and development plan may be formulated. This will be based on:

- Building upon and developing a person's strengths, e.g. giving someone with good organisational skills more responsibility

- Addressing weaknesses e.g. arranging an IT course to improve computer literacy.
- Using opportunities for development e.g. giving someone an opportunity to work on a cross departmental project.
- Taking action to counter threats e.g. someone who is careless with health and safety may need training to avoid accidents and/or disciplinary action.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience (KSE) assessment

This method is based on comparing the level of an individual's current knowledge, skills and experience against the levels required for their job. The grid below (see next page) is used in conjunction with the job specification. The knowledge, skills, and experience required are specified in the first column. The second column is used to identify the levels required. The third column assesses the levels of knowledge, skills and experience that the individual currently has, using a rating system. The last column is used to record of development needs arising from the assessment.

Skills Matrix

A simple format for identifying key skills required for a job, and assessing a person's ability to use those skills.

Competency Assessment

Used by organisations which have competency frameworks in place, assessment against defined competencies may be carried out via objective tests, or performance review.

Assessment Centre Tests

Although assessment centres are mostly used for recruitment and selection purposes, some organisations also use external or internal assessment centres to assess development needs. Tests may include psychometrics, group work, presentations and in-tray exercises. The results often inform decisions about individuals' suitability for career progression, and/or are used to identify development needs.

Kinesthetic Study Strategies

If you have a strong Kinesthetic preference for learning you should use some or all of the following:

Intake

To take in the information:

- All your senses - sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing ...
- Laboratories
- Field trips
- Field tours
- Examples of principles
- Lecturers who give real-life examples
- Applications
- Hands-on approaches (computing)
- Trial and error
- Collections of rock types, plants, shells, grasses...
- Exhibits, samples, photographs...
- Recipes - solutions to problems, previous exam papers

SWOT - Study Without Tears

To make a learnable package:

- Convert your “notes” into a learnable package by reducing them (3:1)
- Your lecture notes may be poor because the topics were not ‘concrete’ or ‘relevant’.
- You will remember the “real” things that happened.
- Put plenty of examples into your summary. Use case studies and applications to help with principles and abstract concepts.
- Talk about your notes with another “K” person.
- Use pictures and photographs that illustrate an idea.
- Go back to the laboratory or your lab manual.
- Recall the experiments, field trip...

Output

To perform well in any test, assignment or examination:

- Write practice answers, paragraphs...
- Role play the exam situation in your own room.

You want to experience the exam so that you can understand it.

The ideas on this page are only valuable if they sound practical, real, and relevant to you.

You need to do things to understand.

Multimodal Study Strategies

If you have multiple preferences you are in the majority, as approximately 60% of any population fits that category.

Multiple preferences are interesting and varied. For example you may have two strong preferences Visual and Aural (VA) or Read/write and Kinesthetic (RK), or you may have three strong preferences such as VAR or ARK. Some people have no standout scores. Their scores are almost even for all four modes. For example one person had scores of V=6, A=6, R=6, and K=6. She said that she adapted to the mode being used or requested. If the teacher or supervisor preferred a written mode she switched into Read/write for her responses and for her learning.

So multiple preferences give you choices of two or three or four modes to use for your learning and for your interaction with others. Positive reactions mean that those with multimodal preferences choose to match or align their mode to the significant others around them. But, some people have admitted that if they want to be annoying they may stay in a mode different from the person with whom they are working. For example they may ask for written evidence in an argument, knowing that the other person much prefers to refer only to oral information. This can be used in argument or debate.

You will need to read two or three or four lists of strategies provided in the Helpsheets. If you have two almost equal preferences please read the study strategies that apply to both preferences. If you have three preferences read the three lists that apply and similarly for those with four. There is obviously no multimodal helpsheet. One interesting piece of information that people with multimodal preferences have told us is that it is often necessary for them to use more than one strategy for learning and communicating. They feel insecure with only one. Alternatively those with a single preference often "get it" by using the set of strategies that align with that single preference.

We are also noticing some differences among those who are multimodal and who have chosen fewer than 25 options and those who have chosen more than 30. Those who have chosen fewer than 25 of the options in the questionnaire prefer to see their highest score as their main preference - almost like a single preference and they use their preferences singly to suit each situation. Those who have a total VARK score larger than 30 tend to use their preferences in combination.