

Training And Development

Investing Time and Resources to Improve the Effectiveness of Your Staff

The value of investing in the development of staff in order to improve organisation effectiveness has been recognised by successful organisations for many years. The time and resources spent on developing the skills, knowledge and behaviour of staff to achieve the aims and objectives of the organisation is one of the best investments that an organisation can make. Under Supporting People this will take on even greater significance as, before contracts for services are issued, agencies will have to provide evidence that they have formal procedures in place, including staff development procedures.

A number of Home Improvement Agencies will be lucky enough to have the support of a larger organisation, in some cases with Investors in People accreditation, with an infrastructure designed to support the training and development of staff. Many, however, have no support.

This guide is designed to provide agencies with good practice ideas on training and development in order that they can use their limited resources to plan, implement and monitor a structured training and development system for their staff.



- What is Training and Development?**
- Managing the Training and Development Process**
- Identifying Training Needs**
- Meeting the Training Need**
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of Training**
- Investors in People**

WHAT IS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT?

Training and development can be defined as “A planned process designed to bring about a permanent change in behaviour for a specific purpose”

... planned process	A planned sequence of activities agreed by the staff member and supported and monitored by the organisation
... permanent change	Training and development should bring about real change in the way that the staff member carries out their role
... specific purpose	Targeted at the achievement of organisational aims and objectives



Training and development brings about changes in:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Technical skills
- Behavioural skills

MANAGING THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



ESTABLISHING THE TRAINING NEED

A training need can be thought of simply as the disparity between the technical and behavioural skills needed by a member of staff to make their contribution to the aims and objectives of the organisation, and the actual attributes demonstrated by that staff member. It is, however, beneficial to take a wider view.



When establishing a training need there must be an accommodation between the requirements of the business and the goals and aspirations of the people working within that business. The business should have a clear vision of where it is going and how it plans to get there. It will, however, only achieve that vision through the people working for that organisation. These people are the organisation's greatest asset, they must be equipped with the knowledge and understanding, technical skills and behavioural skills required to achieve the business goals and sufficiently motivated to apply those attributes. When establishing training needs, therefore, an organisation should take into account what it requires from the people working within it, and the needs and aspirations of those people.

To establish business led training needs, a manager will require a clear understanding of the following:

- **Organisational Aims and Objectives.** The business should have a clearly stated plan that identifies where the business is going and how it is going to get there
- **Individuals' Aims and Objectives.** Each individual in the organisation plays their part in the achievement of the organisation's goals. In order to make an effective contribution they will need to be made aware of those goals and have a clear picture of the part that they will be required to play in the achievement of those goals
- **Competencies Required to Achieve Those Aims and Objectives.** The individual will only be able to make an effective contribution if they possess all the knowledge and understanding, technical skills and behavioural skills required to achieve the required outcomes

And of course . . .

. . . an accurate unprejudiced perception, by the manager carrying out the needs assessment, of the level of competence demonstrated by the individual is essential for this process to be successful.

However, to establish a full understanding of the individual's training needs, the personal goals and aspirations of that individual should also be considered and provision made for their personal development.

The **Investor in People** (page 7) provides a well established model for this process.

HOW IS THIS DONE IN PRACTICE?

In recent years many large organisations have attempted to produce competency frameworks that provide a comprehensive picture of all the operational and personal competencies required to deliver effective organisational performance. Training programmes based upon these competency frameworks have been implemented to varying degrees of success, but all have required extensive resources to deliver.

Running parallel with these initiatives has been the development of a comprehensive range of occupational competencies developed to underpin the delivery of NVQ qualifications. These occupational competencies now cover most industries and job roles up to senior management level.

In practical terms, the manager can identify a fairly comprehensive list of training needs by a combination of a clear understanding of job requirements and a "subjective" appraisal of staff performance, coupled with a forecast of the factors that will affect the organisation in the future.

CHECKLIST

Training needs will probably exist where:

- The individual is new to your organisation
- They have no experience of Home Improvement Agencies
- Performance is below the manager's expectations
- The accident rate is increasing
- New hardware or software is about to be introduced
- Current hardware or software is not being used
- Structural changes are about to affect the business
- New legislation is being introduced
- Absenteeism or labour turnover is high
- Customer complaints are increasing
- Morale is falling
- Output is falling
- A person is about to take on a new role or responsibilities

MEETING TRAINING NEEDS

HOW DO YOU CLOSE THE GAP?

There are a large number of ways to meet the training needs. The one thing that they all have in common is that they all require a significant investment.

- A financial investment by the organisation to “buy” the training
- An investment in the time and effort required from management and staff that contributes to the development of colleagues
- A personal investment by the learner in their development

The word “investment” has been chosen deliberately (rather than “cost”) as the time and resources put into meeting the training need should always give a return to the organisation and the individual. The choice of which development process to use when planning to meet the training need is critical.



WHAT ARE THE CHOICES?

Commercial Training Courses

This is the most common method by which most training needs are met. There are a lot of commercial training organisations offering places on training courses, including Foundations' own training programme. The decision whether to use any programme is often taken on the basis of cost and location. But this is not always a reliable indicator as to their effectiveness. When choosing a course, consider the following:

- **The Learning Outcomes:** If these are written well, they should clearly indicate who the course is intended for and what they will do as a result of the course. If this is not clear, get in touch with the training provider and ask them to clarify this

■ **The Training Activities:** Does it say what will be done on the course. Is there a sufficient variety of activities to achieve the learning outcomes?

■ **The Trainer's Profile:** What is their background? Does it suggest that they will have the abilities to achieve the stated learning outcome?

■ **The Time Scale:** Is it feasible that the learning outcomes can be achieved in the time that has been allocated?

The “In-House” Course

Most commercial training organisations will design courses to your specific requirements and run them on your premises (or locally to your premises). This can be very cost effective as it can often reduce the cost per trainee and trainee expenses. It also enables you to specify course content and required outcomes. Unfortunately, most individual HIs are too small to commission an in-house course for themselves. This can, however, be overcome if a number of agencies work in partnership.

Certificated Courses

These are, typically, provided by local further or higher education institutions. They are particularly useful for achieving long term development and represent very good value for money. It is still useful, however, to try to establish whether the learning outcomes claimed for the course match the training needs that have been identified.

Coaching/Mentoring

This, in its most simple form, may be no more than “sitting with Nellie”: shadowing an experienced member of staff to learn new skills. If, however, effort is made to plan and monitor this process, it can be a very effective way of developing the skills of an individual. Coaching occurs when a manager or experienced member of staff takes the responsibility for facilitating the development of a team member or colleague.

Coaching has the advantages that:

- It allows managers to take ownership of the process of developing the abilities of the members of their team
- It allows the learner to take ownership of their own development
- It is cost effective

MEETING TRAINING NEEDS

HOW DO YOU CLOSE THE GAP? (continued)

An effective strategy that can be used during the coaching process is the planned work assignment.

Planned Work Assignments Designed to Develop Your Staff

AGREE OBJECTIVES – brief the trainee prior to the assignment and agree:

- The outcomes required from the assignment/project including timescale, quality, costs etc.
- The stages at which the assignment/project will be reviewed
- The support that is available

Make it clear that you are available for guidance or advice.

REVIEW REGULARLY – At the predetermined review points, review progress giving positive feedback where appropriate and corrective feedback where necessary.

EVALUATE OUTCOMES – At the end of the project/assignment evaluate the outcomes, including:

- Performance against the required standards
- Development achieved by the trainee
- Any further development required

Self Development

The development does not necessarily need to be the responsibility of the organisation. Many individuals take responsibility for their own development. As with any other training and development, this process needs to be planned. This can be done by following these stages:

Stage One: Where am I?

- What are my strengths?
- What are my weaknesses?
- Feedback from appraisals

Stage Two: Where do I want to be?

- Personal and professional development
- New roles and responsibilities
- Career advancement

Stage Three: How will I get there?

- Internal/external training
- Special projects and task forces
- Self-directed learning

Stage Four: When will I get there?

- Timescales
- Learning goals
- Operational objectives
- Development projects

Self-Development Projects

Here are some ideas for self-development projects:

- Volunteer for a task force or project group
- Study a new technical area
- Teach a course or workshop
- Plan/conduct a meeting
- Complete a self-study project e.g. distance learning
- Explore e-learning opportunities
- Ask to work in another unit
- Attend a Foundations event
- Look at the interactive CD list in this brochure
- Volunteer for additional and/or higher level work to expand your experience
- Ask your manager to give you development projects
- Find a manager with the skills/knowledge/experience you want to develop and ask them to be your mentor.
- Undertake voluntary work that will also develop your skills, knowledge and experience

Distance Learning

Distance learning is any learning medium that allows the trainee to undertake a programme of planned learning in a place, and at a time, chosen by them. Distance learning typically involves:

- A set of learning materials designed and written specifically for self-learning purposes
- The use of multi-media (printed, video, CD Rom, on-line learning)
- Remote tutor support

There are a number of sources of distance learning materials which can be accessed at local colleges of further education. On-line learning is readily available from Learning Direct.

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING

This good practice guide began by recognising that the time and resources spent on the process of developing the skills and knowledge of staff, to help them achieve the aims and objectives of the organisation, are amongst the best investments that an organisation can make. This principle is also reflected in the Investor in People Standards discussed on page 7.

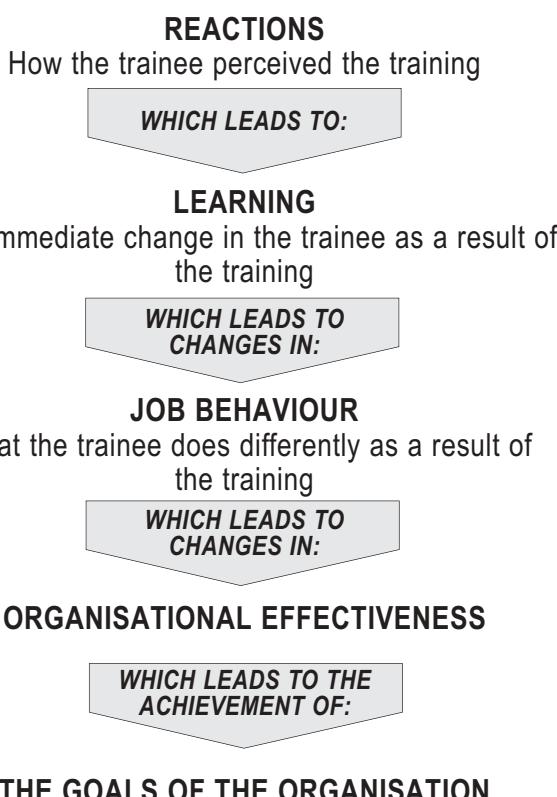
An Investor in People understands the impact of its investment in order to improve importance

Many organisations, even those with large training budgets, fail to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of the training. Often they have nothing more than anecdotal evidence that the training undertaken has had an effect on the business aims and objectives. This need not be the case. Relatively simple procedures can be put in place to ensure that the organisation can evaluate the effectiveness of its training investment.

THEORETICAL MODEL

Hamblin's Cycle of Evaluation (see references) provides a useful framework from an evaluation process. This cycle has five stages.

Training intervention leads to:



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IN PRACTICE?

Reaction

Most commercial training courses have some type of evaluation form that is completed by the trainee at the end of the programme, designed to measure their immediate reaction. An evaluation form typically measures the trainee's reaction to the venue, the timings, the content, the learning activities, the trainer's skills and the "enjoyability" of the course. All these things will have an effect upon the trainee's motivation to learn during the programme, which in turn has an effect upon how much they learned.

Ask the training provider to let you have a copy of the evaluation form completed by the trainee. Better still, design your own form which can be used by any member of staff undertaking a training programme. If the reactions to the training are negative, it is unlikely that they will have learned anything new. The implication of this is that careful consideration should be given as to whether to use that method of training in the future.

Learning

Information provided on the post course evaluation form is useful. Far more information can, however, be gained from a post course interview. Through the post course interview it is possible to establish details about what the trainee has learned as a result of the training (this is termed "Capability": an indication of the new thing that they will be able to do).

During the course of the interview:

- Determine whether the trainee has developed all the new abilities that the aims and objectives for the course claimed
- Establish how the trainee will apply the new skills that they have learned and agree an action plan for this

Job Behaviour

In the longer term, the trainee should be able to turn the capability gained from the training into applied behaviours that positively affect job performance. As part of a regular performance review process, questions can be asked relating to what the trainee can do differently as a result of the training. Again, the effectiveness of the training can be established by comparing the increased ability of the trainee, against the aims and objectives that were established for the training programme.

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING – (continued)

Organisational Effectiveness

This is more difficult to measure. To establish the effect of the training on the organisation, several assumptions are made:

- That organisational performance is measured at regular intervals
- That it is possible to identify what changes in performance have been stimulated by improved staff performance and those changes caused by other factors (investment in new equipment etc.)

It is, however, worth trying to make this measure as it is this that gives the best indication as to whether there has been a return on the investment in the training.

The Goals of the Organisation

Here we return to the starting point. On page 3 of this guide, it was established that the training need was directly related to developing staff with the skills and knowledge that are necessary to achieve the aims and objectives of the organisation. The investment that has been made in training and developing staff will have made a significant contribution to the achievement of those goals, if:

- The training needs have been clearly influenced by the goals of the organisation
- The training medium has been chosen to meet the training needs
- The training programme has been delivered effectively
- The organisation has supported and encouraged the learner to apply the new skills gained during the training

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

The 'Standard' provides a national framework for improving business performance and competitiveness, through a planned approach to setting and communicating business objectives and developing people to meet these objectives. The result is an equilibrium between what people have the ability to do and are motivated to do, which matches what the organisation needs them to do. The Investors in People Standard is based on four key principles which can be regarded as a cyclical process. These principles are broken down into 12 indicators, against which organisations wishing to be recognised as an 'Investor in People' will be assessed.

THE INVESTORS IN PEOPLE STANDARD

PRINCIPLES	INDICATORS
Commitment An Investor in People is fully committed to developing its people in order to achieve its aims and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The organisation is committed to supporting the development of its people■ People are encouraged to improve their own and other people's performance■ People believe their contribution to the organisation is recognised■ The organisation is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in the development of its people
Planning An Investor in People is clear about its aims and its objectives and what its people need to do to achieve them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The organisation has a plan with clear aims and objectives which are understood by everyone■ The development of people is in line with the organisation's aims and objectives■ People understand how they contribute to achieving the organisation's aims and objectives
Action An Investor in People develops its people effectively in order to improve its performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Managers are effective in supporting the development of people■ People learn and develop effectively
Evaluation An Investor in People understands the impact of its investment in people on its own performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The development of people improves the performance of the organisation, teams and individuals■ People understand the impact of the development of people on the performance of the organisation, teams and individuals■ The organisation gets better at developing its people

Source: *Investors in People*

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE – (continued)

Benefits of Being an Investor in People

Significant commercial benefits may be gained by organisations who achieve the Standard. These benefits begin to appear whilst working towards becoming an Investor in People.

The practical benefits of working towards and achieving the Standard are many.

They include:

- Skilled and motivated people work harder and better. Productivity will improve
- Reduced costs and wastage. Skilled and motivated people constantly examine their work to contribute to reducing costs and wastage
- Enhanced quality investment in people significantly improves the results of quality programmes. Investors in People adds considerable value to BS 5750, ISO 9000 and other total quality initiatives

■ Improved motivation through greater involvement, personal development and recognition of achievement. This leads to higher morale, improved retention rates, reduced absenteeism, readier acceptance of change and identification within the organisation beyond the confines of the job

■ Customer satisfaction. Investing in People is central to helping employees become client focused. Thus enabling the organisation to effectively meet customer needs

■ Public recognition. Investor in People status brings public recognition for real achievements measured against a rigorous National Standard. Being an Investor in People helps to attract the best quality job applicants

■ Competitive advantage through improved performance, Investor in People organisations develop a competitive edge

USEFUL INFORMATION

Investors in People Standard: <http://www.iipuk.co.uk/thestandard/>

Evaluation and Control: For Training Evaluation see:

Hamblin, A.C., The Evaluation and Control of Training, published by McGraw-Hill, 1974

Foundations: For training courses for the HIA sector:

<http://www.foundations.uk.com/> or contact Foundations at Bleaklow House, Howard Town Mill, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 8HT. Telephone 01457 891909

Housing and Training Services: Training courses designed for the social housing sector in the North West:

<http://www.cel.co.uk/hats/> or contact HATS at Bleaklow House, Howard Town Mill, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 8HT. Telephone 01457 869032

Learn Direct: Website offering online learning courses:

<http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk>

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