

Extension Material 11.1

Types of training

Training differs widely in terms of its purpose and focus. The following categories represent the most familiar contexts in which training is used.

1. *Induction*

This type of training is used to facilitate the entry, participation, and socialization of new recruits into the job and organization. This form of training primarily provides knowledge about key aspects of the employment contract, HR procedures, health and safety issues, and the social organization of work.

2. *Job-specific operational procedures*

Employees whose work involves performing manual or administrative tasks that define the work they do need to be competent in each of the tasks or elements that constitute their jobs. Each task or element has a knowledge and skill level that, once attained, means the employee is qualified or competent to do the job. Training, often based on a mixture of on-the-job and classroom-based instruction followed by practice and testing, has been the conventional way of generating what can be described as job 'know-how'.

3. *Technology*

An increasing number of employees use technology as part of their jobs and job performance is often critically linked to the ability to use software applications. Learning the intricacies of software functionalities through trial and error, watching others, or by any other informal method would probably take longer, involve more mistakes, and cost more than a training-based approach. Training will involve an element of instruction, structured practice, and feedback from the trainer, and testing against established performance standards.

4. *Mandatory*

This is training that the organization must perform to comply with its own, or externally imposed, rules and regulations. Much of this is driven by health and safety regulations, and involves a mixture of knowledge and some operational skills. Training tends to be the preferred way of generating the required learning, with a mixture of training methods used under the control of 'experts'.

5. *Improvement*

Improvement training is focused on developing competencies that are additional to core job competencies, and which are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of job performance. The areas that are covered might include problem solving, selling techniques, customer service, the giving of feedback, interviewing methods, change management, and so on. Training, in the form of planned and structured knowledge-exchange sessions, is usually employed for these purposes, at least in part, to provide the necessary knowledge base. This type of training does, however, lend itself to more experiential learning, with videos, exercises, role playing, and reflection being used in addition to more traditional methods.

6. *Attitudinal*

Training has been increasingly used to influence not only what employees know and can do, but what they believe, how they think, and how they behave towards others. The growth in the use of training in areas such as equal opportunities, diversity, and race relations reflects the growing importance of such matters socially and the importance they are given by many HR professionals, particularly in the public sector. This type of training relies heavily on the role of experts, classroom instruction, and the transference of language, beliefs, and procedures in highly formalized settings. As suggested earlier, such methods have not always proved successful and more powerful and effective learning experiences may need to be employed if changes in attitudes and behaviour are to be achieved. One of the difficulties of using training to change attitudes is that it is difficult to establish what has actually been achieved. Success is more likely to be expressed in terms of participation rates and budgetary expenditure, rather than in terms of the value of any improvements in job performance.