

## Evaluation of Training by Corporate Houses

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### 1.0 Objective

Any training programme conducted by the corporate organization needs to be followed by an evaluation process. The reason for evaluating is not only to determine the effectiveness of a training programme, but also to determine the value for money spent on training. When the evaluation is done, one can hope that the results are positive and gratifying, both for those responsible for the programme and also for upper-level managers who will make decisions based on their evaluation of the programme. Therefore much thought and planning need to be given to any programme to make sure the effectiveness of the manpower and man hours spent are effective for the overall growth of the company.

### 2.0 Need for Evaluation

J. P. Huller of Hobart Corporation in his introductory speech on "Evaluation in Training Programme" said, "All managers, not just those of us in training, are concerned with their own and their department's credibility. I want to be accepted by my own company. I want to be trusted by my company. I want to be respected by my company. I want my company and my fellow managers to say 'We need you', but just how do we become accepted, trusted, respected and needed? We do so by evaluating and reporting on the worth of our training.

This states, in general terms, why we need to evaluate training. There are three specific reasons:

- To justify the existence and budget of the training department by showing how it contributes to the organizational objectives and goals.
- To decide whether to continue or discontinue training programmes
- To gain information on how to improve future training programmes

In some organizations, top management is of an opinion that training is an optional perspective and, as a result, its value to the organization depends on the top executives' views of its effectiveness.

The second reason for evaluating is to determine whether the training programme should continue or not. It may happen that the content of some programme may not be relevant to the present scenario and become obsolete. Hence such programmes should be evaluated to determine whether they should be continued. Even if the cost outweighs the benefits, the programmes should be discontinued or modified.

The most common reason for evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of a programme and the ways in which it can be improved. In looking for the answer to this question, you should consider each and every aspect of planning and implementation of a training programme.

### 3.0 Planning and Implementing

Each of the following factors should be carefully considered when planning and implementing an effective training programme:

- Determining needs
- Setting objectives
- Determining subject content
- Selecting participants
- Determining the best schedule
- Selecting appropriate facilities
- Selecting appropriate instructors
- Evaluating participants

#### 3.1 Determining Needs

Any programme can be effective if it satisfies the needs of its participants or the overall needs of the organization. The coordinator should ask the participants, bosses and SBU heads by means of a survey.

After tabulating their responses, the next step is to weight the sums to get a weighted score for each topic which should then be used to arrive at a rank order for individual needs. The rank order provides training professionals with data on which to determine the priorities.

A similar form can be used to determine the needs seen by the bosses of the supervisors. The bosses should indicate the subjects which would be of greatest benefit to supervisors to help improve their performance.

In order to make the final decision on the priority of the subjects offered, an advisory committee of managers can be formed and, based on the survey results, the training professional should make the final decision.

#### 3.2 Setting Objectives

Once the needs have been determined, it is necessary to set objectives for the following aspects:

- What results are we trying to accomplish? These results can be stated in terms of quality, sales, profits, return on investment (ROI), etc.
- What knowledge, skills and attitudes are necessary to achieve the results?

The training programme curriculum should then be designed to accomplish the last point. It may happen that in some programmes only upgrading knowledge

is needed, while in others new or improved skills are necessary. Sometimes, the management should also be keen to change the attitude of its employees / supervisors to get the maximum out of the trained manpower. Hence, diversity in training objectives is of utmost important to achieve the desired results.

### 3.3 Determining the Subject Content

The needs and objectives are prime factors when determining subject content. The question that should come up include what topics should be presented to meet the needs and accomplish the objectives. The replies will be the base and then some modifications may be necessary depending on the qualifications of the trainers and the training budget. The department head will take a call and finalize in consultation with the trainers of the programme.

### 3.4 Selecting Participants

While selecting participants for the programme, the decisions should be taken on the following aspects:

- Who can benefit from the training?
- Should the participants be segregated by levels in the organization or should two or more levels be included in the same class?

Though the training can be effective for any engineer in the organization, the organizer should focus on specific interests rather than in a general sense. For example, when training is focused in the areas of repair and rehabilitation on existing structures, then engineers working in new construction sites can be eliminated but maintenance engineers can be included for the benefit of the organization.

The categorization of levels before the training depends on the topic and the extent of coverage of the programme. The organizer should build up a batch depending on similar levels of acceptance, experience and knowledge criteria and accordingly the depth of the training should be decided. The mixing of levels can be possible if the training focuses on general areas of interest without going in depth beyond the understanding of junior staff. But again, this depends on the climate and on the rapport existing among different levels of management within the organization. The basic question is whether the subordinates will speak freely in a training class if their bosses are present. If the answer is yes, then it is a good idea to have different levels, even if in the same programme. They all get the same training at the same time. But if the answer is no, then bosses should not be included in the programme for junior engineers or supervisors. In such a case, perhaps it will be better to organize a similar programme for upper-level managers first, followed by junior staff.

### 3.5 Determining the Best Schedule

The scheduling should consider three things - the trainees, their bosses and the best conditions for learning. Many times, it is seen that the training professionals of the corporate organization consider only their own preferences and schedules. This may not be the right approach because another important scheduling decision lies in whether to offer the programme on a concentrated basis or to spread it out over days, weeks or months. Preferably or more expectedly, department heads should take the decision when their engineers or staff can be sent for training, after analyzing the work load or prevailing requirements.

Ultimately, the schedule should be set and communicated well in advance. The day of the programme and the specific time should be established to meet the needs and desires of both the trainees and their bosses.

### 3.6 Selecting Appropriate Facilities

The selection of facilities is another important decision. Facilities should be both comfortable and convenient. Negative factors like very small rooms, uncomfortable furniture, noise or other distractions, inconvenience, long distances to the training area, uncomfortable temperature conditions are to be avoided, even if a related consideration has to be given with refreshments and breaks provided within the training schedule. Failing these factors causes negative attitudes among the employees, and these attitudes affect their motivation to learn as well as their feelings toward the organization.

### 3.7 Selecting Appropriate Instructors/ Training Organizations

The selection of trainers or faculty in a training programme is critical to the success of a programme. The qualifications of the trainers should include knowledge of the subject or topic in particular, a desire to teach, the ability to communicate and the skill at getting people to participate. They should also be "learner-oriented" - have a strong desire to meet the learner needs.

The budget sometimes limits the possibilities of getting the right trainers for the right topics. Hence, the selection of the training instructors requires proper care. Many organizations feel that they have been burnt as the selected outside instructors did a poor job. Hence, in order to be sure that a potential instructor will be effective, the best approach is to observe his or her performance in a similar situation or to rely on the recommendations of other training professionals about the same instructor. Such a process not only illustrates, but also emphasizes the importance of orienting an outside leader to the needs and desires of the specific

organization. Otherwise, the industry specific training organization would be the best choice to be consulted for choosing the right faculty.

### 3.8 Evaluating Participants

The evaluation of participants immediately after the training programme can be executed in different ways:

- Allowing group discussions among the participants in an issue taught in the programme
- Conducting a written examination on specific aspects
- Organizing question and answer sessions followed by technical presentations
- Providing ratings on how the technical inputs are applied to ensure effective results

Such activities keep the participants alert in the training programme and its applications with regard to day-to-day aspects.

In most organizations, whether large and small, there is very little pressure from the top management to prove that the benefits of training outweigh the cost. Generally, most managers at high levels are too busy worrying about profits, return on investment, stock prices and other matters of concern to the board of directors, stockholders and customers. They pay little

or no attention to training unless bad news reaches them about the programme. Such attitudes of the top management should be addressed to get the best benefit from any training programme. There should be an immediate interaction of the top bosses with the participants of the training programme to ensure that the needs and objectives of the training are fulfilled. Even department heads should ensure that feedback is received from trainers or the training organization about the interest levels of its engineers during the programme.

Such interactions and open-ended discussions ensure the effectiveness of a training schedule or agenda and make the training to provide tangible and positive results.

### 4.0 Conclusion

Evaluation of training Programms will help to take corrective actions in training methods while selecting contents and trainers. Training should be a regular activity in construction industry of corporate houses for improving the quality and durability of the construction.

### Reference

“Evaluating Training Programms” by Donald L. Kirkpatrick and James D. Kirkpatrick of Berrett - Koehler (2006) Publication