

Purposeful Training

For many countries, a recent spike in economic activity has contributed towards a severe shortage in the workforce, resulting in the need to import foreign workers from various countries including India, China and Phillipines.

In their home countries, many of these individuals are wooed by recruitment agents who promise a 'bed of roses'. It is not uncommon to find that within days of signing up with a particular agency, these individuals find themselves in foreign land, and are now at the mercy of their employer.

Upon arriving, most of these individuals will be given a brief overview of the organisation by their new employers. In addition, they will be introduced to the task that they are required to fullfill before being put on the sales floor to serve customers.

It does not take a genius to figure out what happens next. Since these individuals are given very little training, they find themselves performing tasks that do not meet the expectations of their 'bosses'. Within a short period of time, and after countless feedback sessions, these individuals start wondering if they made the right decision by going to that country marking the beginnings of employee disengagement.

Research has proven over and over again that the core drivers for employee dissatisfaction relate to two key things:

1. Performing tasks in a way that meet the expectations of superiors.
2. Making contributions that influence the outcome of key decisions that are made in an organisation.

Since most of these individuals are given little or no training or coaching at the onset, it is not surprising that these individuals are unable to see the connection between the work that they do and key outcomes for the organisation.

Training and coaching for new employees play a critical role in ensuring that that both the employee and employer engage in a mutually beneficial relationship. So what should organisations do? Listed are a few steps that organisations may wish to consider:

1. Ensure that the induction is timely

Many organisations will have an induction training programme that lasts no more than an hour or two. Worst still, some organisations hold back the induction until there is a sufficient critical mass before conducting the induction and training.

Although conducting an induction programme for a handful of staff may seem inefficient, the benefits are manifold especially when we start thinking about time and effort required to hire a new staff.





2. Observe the developmental stages

Just as babies need to learn how to walk before they run, the development of a new staff needs to be nurtured. Ensure that structured competency enhancement and review mechanisms are in place so that the staff knows his or her blind spots. By doing so, the staff will look forward to “growing” with the organisation and explore ways of making meaningful contributions to the organisation.



3. Go beyond technical skills

Most organizations will stop short at equipping individuals with technical skills and know-how. Not many realize that people skills such as personal effectiveness, interpersonal skills, presentation skills, etc are just as important as technical skills. Very often, it is “people factors” that drive employee loyalty.

4. Ensure transfer of learning takes place

Training staff is the easy part. Ensuring that the learning are transferred back at the workplace requires a little more effort. While most organizations expend very little effort towards ensuring that this is done, this becomes key for ensuring that a permanent and visible change has taken place. A possible approach is by employing a structured coaching and monitoring mechanism where coaches are required to coach their staff in those areas where they have been trained.

Although it is not easy to roll-out, in a concerted manner, a structured training and development methodology, it is key contributor towards employee satisfaction. Start by identifying and addressing those areas where obvious gaps are present. Go for the low hanging fruits so that your employees feel the impact, while you and your team see quick wins. This can be followed by areas which require attention in the medium term.

When employees see that the management is committed towards their development, they will not only be more “engaged”, but motivated towards excelling in the work that they do.

