

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS AND PLANNING

A training needs analysis tells you where there is a training need, and who needs to learn what, when and how in your factory or organisation. A training needs analysis also helps you to develop a training plan.

PROSPECTIVE USERS:

Any factory that wishes to provide ongoing skills improvement, retraining or an introduction to using new tools and techniques to its workers. The Human Resources Department is responsible for implementing this practice.

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

Training needs analysis and planning helps factories to bridge the gap between the current knowledge, skills and attitudes and the required knowledge, skills and attitudes in the organisation.

PROCESS

A training needs analysis is a process where you use a variety of techniques to collect information and then analyze the information to determine where there is a training need, who needs training to learn what skills, and when and how the training should be provided. This can be a lengthy process or a very short informal task depending on the context and resources available.

Steps in implementation

Once training has been requested, there are a variety of possible approaches you can take to conducting a needs analysis. The following is a basic five-step process that you can use or modify to fit your situation. At each step of the analysis you look at a different question:

1. Context: why is the training requested?

Often, training is requested for one of the following three reasons:

- A certain problem is affecting performance levels: Look carefully at the gap between the current and desired performance.
- Workers need to learn about new tools or techniques that are being introduced: Look for different needs amongst the workers to determine distinct training groups.
- Unrelated to a specific problem, there is a general request from management to improve skills across a unit or across the entire organization: Ensure that there is no miscommunication between what workers feel they need and what managers are looking for.



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2. Audience groups: who needs to be involved?

Start by finding out:

- Basic information on the numbers of employees involved and their roles/job titles.
- The various needs across the target audience. Are there different groups/needs?

- Involvement of managers and if they will participate in the same event.

3. Desired performance: what should learners do as a result of the training?

Once you know the context and your main audience group(s), you need to look at the desired performance for each group. What *should* people be doing so that the performance problem will be resolved, the new initiative will be a success, or the management request will be handled effectively?

By asking this question you will get the desired performance level for the different audience groups and highlight behaviours that need to be improved in any subsequent learning event. Remember, if you have different audience groups, you will need to gather specific information for each group.

4. Current performance: what are learners doing now?

Look at current performance and abilities by comparing the current performance with the desired performance to identify 'gaps'. Finally, you ask why these gaps exist. This is a crucial question for your

needs analysis. The reasons why employees are **not** doing certain things is fundamental to the response of any learning event.

5. How to use the information

In this final and most important step, you organise the data you have gathered in the first 4 steps to answer the following questions:

- **Is there a gap between the current and desired levels of performance?**
List all the things that people *should* do to ensure good performance and then list the things that people do not do. Areas that figure on both lists are areas where there is a training gap.
- **Why does this gap exist?**
The gap can be caused by a lack of knowledge, skills, attitudes or some other factor. If it is a lack of knowledge or skills, training is the obvious response. Attitudes are harder to change and often require more time and experience.

- **What is the appropriate response?**
Review all your data and draw conclusions from the results. What methods can be used to fill in the gaps between current and desired performance? Look for any factors that may influence the response, for example, can workers and managers attend the same training event? Can the event take place on-the-job to save time and money and situate the learning in the work context or does it have to take place at an external site? What are the overall goals for the learning event? Write up a summary of your conclusions so you can share it with management and move forward with planning the training.



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RESOURCES REQUIRED

Adequate time and effort to follow the steps as described above must be provided by human resources managers who have the primary

responsibility for training and identifying training needs in a factory. However worker-manager cooperation is also very important in this process.

POSITIVE IMPACT

Conducting a training needs analysis will help an organisation to determine what training needs it requires and enable it to plan a suitable training programme for its employees. Training has many benefits for an organisation, such as:

- Ensuring employees have the right skills to perform their job and prepares them for advancement.
- Demonstrating management’s commitment to retaining workers and contributing to the achievement of the company’s goals.

- Making multi-skilling possible, which increases worker commitment and allows for scheduling flexibility and knowledge sharing.
- Improving productivity and quality and overall competitiveness because workers are motivated and learn how to work better and more efficiently. When productivity improves, companies can afford to increase employees’ wages or benefits and thus are able to retain them.

CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS

It is both important and challenging to ensure that you have the full support and confidence from both workers and managers in the process of conducting a training needs analysis and planning exercise.

Without buy-in and understanding of the goals of the exercise from all levels, it is difficult to gather the necessary data to conduct a sound analysis of training needs.

INDICATORS FOR MONITORING

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Further Information Available:

FIP References:
Module 5 - Human Resources

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