

# Training

Training is an activity leading to skilled behavior, the process of teaching employees the basic skills they need to perform their jobs. The heart of a continuous effort designed to improve employee competency and organizational performance.

Training typically focuses on providing employees with specific skills or helping those correct deficiencies in their performance.

It is a short-term learning process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, sharpening of skills, concepts, rules, or changing of attitudes and behaviors to enhance the performance of employees.

After an employee is selected, placed and introduced in an organization he must be provided with training facilities so that he can perform his job efficiently and effectively.

So, Training is a social and continuous process of increasing skills, knowledge, attitudes and efficiency of employees for getting better performance in the organization.

## Training of Sales Force

Each sales organization has the option over the variety of methods and the tools of training the sales-force depending on the individual needs and the resource constraints of the organization.

**These training methods may be individual or group.**

### **A. Individual training methods:**

Individual sales methods are micro-level training methods designed from the angle of each salesman. These represent individualistic and highly personalized approach involving direct interaction between the trainer and the trainee.

Precisely, it is a rifle training approach. These methods are a must where sales-force to be trained is limited and needs individual intensive attention.

**There are two such methods namely, on the job training and programmed instruction:**

## **I. On the job training:**

It is that method under which salesman is given the opportunity of observing and performing the selling job of a typical salesman. Keen observation and active participation are the tenets of learning on the job.

The trainee is observed while he is performing the job. The trainer corrects the trainee in case he has any pitfalls. This method being on the job is also known as field training.

### **Advantages of On the Job Training**

#### **1. The simple method of learning:**

Are you confused once you join a project after classroom training?

Have they assigned you a different task or expectation to what you were trained to do?

It is easier to learn when you can see how a project is being executed.

Also, it is the most practical way to learn and even faster to understand the methodology adopted by the team and how they function. It ensures that you know in and out of the project by being the shadow of an experienced person for a while.

#### **2. An economical way of learning:**

Is your company spending a lot on classroom training?

Is the classroom training helping you achieve your goals with the new trainees joining your project?

If your answer is no then your solution is on the job training.

There are no training needs attached to the on the job training. You don't need lecturers from outside or a classroom to train your new trainers or staff. All you need to do is assign them a project and a colleague who can show them what they need to do and how.

#### **3. Get the feel right:**

You get to train in the actual set up of your work, giving you the feel of the working style right from day one. There are no surprises or changes from what you are trained to what you have to actually do. It is all the same and consistent giving you the confidence of performing the job well.

You don't have to get nervous on the fact that you are assigned for a task that you were not trained to do or your environment is completely different from what was explained to you. Whatever you see while training is what you get.

#### **4. Immediate productivity:**

Every company wants to get its new trainers on board as soon as possible rather than waste their resources on the bench. Be it on a project or not, they will have to pay them the salary.

You are going to work within the team as a team member ensuring that some of the responsibilities will be assigned to you from day one. This will give assurance to the company that their resources are being used right from the day that they are appointed and hence making sure that immediate productivity is achieved and there is no bench time.

#### **5. Quick learning:**

You get trained in a classroom using a mock-up workstation and when you arrive at the actual workplace, you find that it is nothing like you have been trained to do!

You are surprised and confused and hence, your productivity takes a hit as you would have to understand the whole process again. Whereas on the job training, helps you learn quickly by being part of the execution and hence no extra time is wasted in understanding how the system works.

#### **6. It is systematic:**

A systematic way of learning is far more effective than a random way of learning. You have a stepwise training program when it comes to on the job training as your superior will be performing the task and you will be his or her shadow. This way you would be clear on the stepwise execution of your task giving you the chance to learn systematically and helping you understand whether there can be any improvement in getting the work done faster and quicker.

## **Disadvantages of On the Job Training Methods**

### **1. Teaching is a skill that everyone does not possess:**

Teaching is a skill and there are trainers who are appointed to train for the same. You can't pick up anyone in your project and ask them to train the new trainee. Not everyone can explain the job better as you need to have clear communication, patience to hear the questions and skills to answer them. You need to have skilled trainers who can ensure that the training given is effective and is not a waste of time.

### **2. It is a rushed process:**

Every employer wants to have his or her new trainee on the job as soon as possible so that you can ensure the resources are utilized to the fullest. There is a higher probability of rushing through the process of training, creating a lot of doubts and confusion right from day one.

Rushing into the training process to complete it as soon as possible can lead to new mistakes and less efficient trainees. Every process has its own time and hence you should not rush into completing the training as soon as possible as it can lead to a bad outcome.

### **3. Low productivity:**

You are asking the trainees to join the project and learn the process while doing a project. This can cost you a lot of time to execute a task as it would be explaining each and every step of the task before hitting the green button.

You might end up wasting your time as well as the time of the trainee at the cost of your project. This will take a hit on the productivity of your ongoing project which can lead you too late delivery costing you a bad review on job satisfaction.

### **4. Creates Disturbance:**

With new trainees crawling into the actual workplace can lead to a lot of disturbances within the team. The discussions between the supervisors and trainees can lead to unnecessary disturbances for the co-workers hitting on their concentration at work.

You might end up poking them at the wrong time for giving information to the new trainees costing them their valuable time.

### **5. Accidents can happen:**

This happens very likely in the manufacturing industry where you are dealing with machinery. If the trainers are involved in the production process directly and have no experience then the probability of having an accident is very high.

You need to have the right knowledge of the machinery to avoid workplace accidents and the material used before you jump into the production environment.

On the job training helps the company to save costs on training by saving on time, space and trainers but it also comes with a price. There are pros and cons of on the job training process and you need to analyze what fits your organization or project best.

## **II. Programmed instruction:**

Programmed instruction or learning is a linear programme of instruction in which the total subject matter of training is broken down into certain chunks called 'frames' the numbered instructional units.

Each frame explains specific points, questions, problems and solutions. The trainee is expected to learn through these frames by solving the problems and then verifying them with the model answers or solutions. He repeats the frame till he gets correct solution or the answer.

### **Advantages of Programmed Instruction**

Following are the advantages of this teaching strategy

1. The main emphasis is on individual differences and employees' involvement.
2. There is not fixed time interval for learning. Employees may learn at their own pace.
3. Learning by doing maxim of teaching is followed to involve learners in the learning process.
4. Employees are exposed only to correct responses, therefore, possibility to commit errors is reduced.

5. Immediate confirmation of the results provides reinforcement to the learners and encourages the learners to proceed further. Feedback is provided to wrong answers, so that learner is able to develop mastery over the content.

### **Disadvantages of Programmed Instruction**

1. It is very difficult to develop an instructional programme
2. Only cognitive objectives can be achieved
3. Due to tight schedule of time table, employees cannot be left to learn at their own pace. It would be very difficult to learn the content the subject matter in a limited period of time.
4. There is no chance for employees' creativity, their responses are highly structured.
5. Development of programme is not economical in terms of cost and time
6. In absence of the teacher, employees may spoil the disciplinary tone of the class, or they will be helpless when any problem arises.

### **B. Group training methods:**

Group training methods are those that are employed in training the salesmen in group. Here, the trainees may be passive observers or listeners or can be active participants.

**The most commonly used group training methods are:**

#### **I. Vestibule Training:**

Here training takes place away from the work place but uses all the equipments, materials and methods that resembles the actually ones used in job performance. In this method the actual work conditions are simulated in classroom. A special space is set aside from the actual production area and is equipped with furnishings similar to the actual work place.

The advantages of this method are training process that takes place without disrupting the ongoing operations. The trainees are not pressurized by expecting them to produce while learning.

The disadvantages are—the cost involved in this method is high. Further it will not be possible to replicate the actual pressure that an employee faces during the job into this artificially created environment.

## **II. Role Playing:**

It is defined as a method of human interaction that involves realistic behaviour in imaginary situation. This method involves creation of realistic situation in which the participants assumes and plays the role of a specific personality in the situation.

This method involves action, during and practice. The main intention in this method is the development of interpersonal relations and thereby promotes better inter-personal interaction and attitudinal changes.

## **III. Lecture Method:**

It is a direct method of instruction that involves a verbal presentation of information by an instructor to a large audience. The instructor organises the material and gives it to a group of trainees in the form of talk. By motivating and creating interest among the trainees this method can be made effective.

However, when this method is used in combination with other training methods it can be very effective.

## **IV. Conference or Group Discussions:**

In this method of training, a group of people freely discuss and pose ideas, share and examine the information or idea, test and evaluate them and finally draws conclusions on various aspects that contributes towards the improvement of job performance.

The main advantage of this method is that there is the involvement of all the participants and there is two-way communication but the success of this method depends on the leadership qualities of the person leading the group.

## **V. Audio-Visuals:**

Audio-visual training methods are used widely in these days. This method makes use of slides, overhead projectors, television, video-tapes, audio-tapes and films. The main advantage of this method is that the quality of the presentation will remain equal for all training groups.

Further, the impact is better compared to the other methods like lectures, seminars. But this method constitutes a one-way communication and hence there is no scope for doubt clarification for the participants. Since the presentations are standardized, it may not cater to the specific requirements of the individual audience.

## **VI. Discussions:**

Discussions are possible in sales training conferences. These work best in training the experienced salesmen. These can be group discussions and panel discussions. In case of group discussions 15 to 25 persons come together who are to exchange their ideas, pool experiences and work out solutions to the common problems.

The discussion matters include current selling problems such meeting price competition, meeting objections, closing sales handling claims, and adjustments and the like.

Group training discussions should be thoroughly planned to ensure due success. As far as possible allow only experienced salesmen and keep attendance voluntary.

On the other hand, in case of panel discussion, there will be a leader and four to six salesmen on the panel who follow planned discussion of a sales problem in response to questions set by the leader.

The leader presents and explains the sales problem, calls upon each member of the panel by rotation to comment. He closes the discussion and summarizes the views of the panel.

## **Advantages of Group Training**

Group training has also many benefits to offer. Here are some of them:

### **1. Group training is more fun than training solo.**

Training solo can be quite boring, especially if you are new to the gym or fitness studio.



## **2. Group training lessens the likelihood of skipping workout sessions.**

When there are friends to accompany you in the workout, it lessens the likelihood of missing a session because you would not want to let them down.

## **3. Group training offers more motivation.**

Working out in a group makes it easier to go through difficult workouts because you know there are other people going through something similar with you.

### **Disadvantages of Group Training**

If there are advantages to training in groups, there are also downsides to group workouts. Here are some of them:

#### **1. Individual needs cannot be addressed.**

A group training is created for a general audience. Therefore, the needs of each individual may not be addressed as the program is not customized.

#### **2. Incorrect form cannot be spotted easily.**

Due to a large number, your instructor may not be able to spot if you are assuming an incorrect form. Your form may not immediately be corrected.

#### **3. Runs the risk of overtraining.**

Since the instructor need to attend to several members, individual progress is difficult to monitor. Your instructor may push some of the group members, including you, to overstrain.