

Checklist for Developing a Training Program

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This document is designed to help owner-managers of small manufacturing firms set up a systematic program for training their employees. The questions are designed to provide a step-by-step approach to the task of organizing and conducting a successful program of employee training.

Whether you are considering a continuous program or a one-shot course, the questions should stimulate your thinking. Many of them involve alternatives that you need to resolve in setting up the program.

Use this checklist as a guide. The experience of other companies in training can provide additional guides. However, in thinking about a training program for your company, consider each question and answer with a "yes" or "no" in light of the training needs of your particular situation.

What Is the Goal of Training?

The questions in this section are designed to help the owner-manager define the objective or goal to be achieved by a training program. Whether the objective is to conduct initial training, to provide for upgrading employees, or to retrain for changing job assignments, the goal should be spelled out before developing the plan for the training program.

- Do you want to improve the performance of your employees?
- Will you improve your employees by training them to perform their present tasks better?
- Do you need to prepare employees for newly developed or modified jobs?
- Is training needed to prepare employees for promotion?
- Is the goal to reduce accidents and increase safety practices?
- Should the goal be to improve employee attitudes especially about waste and spoilage practices?
- Do you need to improve the handling of materials in order to break production bottlenecks?
- Is the goal to orient new employees to their jobs?
- Will you need to teach new employees about overall operations?
- Do you need to train employees so they can help teach new workers in an expansion program?

What Does the Employee Need to Learn?

Once the objective or goal of the program is set, you will need to determine the subject matter. The following questions are designed to help you decide what the employee needs in terms of duties, responsibilities, and attitudes.

- Can the job be broken down into steps for training purposes?
- Are there standards of quality which trainees can be taught?
- Are there certain skills and techniques which trainees must learn?
- Are there hazards and safety practices which must be taught?
- Have you established the methods that employees must use to avoid or minimize waste and spoilage?
- Are there material handling techniques that must be taught?
- Have you determined the best way for the trainees to operate the equipment?
- Are there performance standards that employees must meet?
- Are there attitudes that need improvement or modifications?
- Will information on your products help employees to do a better job?
- Should the training include information about the location and use of tool cribs and so on?
- Will the employee need instruction about departments other than his or her own?

What Type of Training?

The type of training to be offered has an important bearing on the balance of the program. Some types lend themselves to achieving all of the objectives or goals, while others are limited. Therefore, you should review the advantages of each type in relation to your objective or goal.

- Can you train on-the-job so that employees can produce while they learn?
- Should you have classroom training conducted by a paid instructor?
- Will a combination of scheduled on-the-job training and vocational classroom instruction work best for you?
- Can your goal be achieved with a combination of on-the-job training and correspondence courses?

What Method of Instruction?

One or more methods of instruction may be used. Some are better for one type of training than another. For example, lectures are good for imparting knowledge, and demonstrations are good for teaching skills.

- Does the subject matter call for a lecture or series of lectures?
- Should the instructor follow up with discussion sessions?
- Does the subject matter lend itself to demonstrations?
- Can operating problems be simulated in a classroom?
- Can the instructor direct trainees while they perform the job?

What Audio Visual Aids Will You Use?

Audiovisual aids help the instructor to make points and enable the trainees to grasp and retain the instructions.

- Will a manual of instruction — including job instruction sheets — be used?

- Will trainees be given an outline of the training program?
- Can outside textbooks and other printed materials be used?
- If the training lends itself to the use of motion pictures, film strips or slides, can you get ones that show the basic operations?
- Have you drawings or photographs of the machinery, equipment or products which could be enlarged and used?
- Do you have miniatures or models of machinery and equipment that can be used to demonstrate the operation?

What Physical Facilities Will You Need?

The type of training, the method of instruction, and the audiovisuals will determine the physical facilities needed for the training.

In turn, the necessary physical facilities will determine the location of the training. For example, if a certain production machine is necessary, the training would be conducted in the shop. Also be aware, that for persons with physical or sensory limitations, a facility with the proper accessibility would be required.

- If the training cannot be conducted on the production floor, do you have a conference room or lunch room in which it can be conducted?
- Should the training be conducted off the premises, as in a nearby school, restaurant, hotel or motel?
- Will the instructor have the necessary tools, such as blackboard, lectern, film projector, and a microphone (if needed)?
- Will there be sufficient seating and writing surfaces (if needed) for training?
- If equipment is to be used, will each trainee be provided with his or her own?

What About Timing?

The length of the training program will vary according to the needs of your company, the material to be learned, the ability of the instructor, and the ability of the trainees to learn.

- Should the training be conducted part-time and during working hours?
- Should the sessions be held after working hours?
- Will the instruction cover a predetermined period of time? (for example, 4 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months.)
- Can the length of each session and the number of sessions per week be established?

Who Will Be Selected as Instructor?

The success of training depends to a great extent on the instructor. A qualified one could achieve good results even with limited resources. On the other hand, an untrained instructor may be unsuccessful even with the best program. You may want to use more than one person as instructor.

- Can you fill in as an instructor?
- Do you have a personnel manager who has the time and the ability to do the instructing?
- Can your supervisor or department heads handle the instructions?
- Should a skilled employee be used as the instructor?
- Will you have to train the instructor?
- Is there a qualified outside instructor available for employment on a part-time basis?

Who Should Be Selected?

Employees should be selected for training on the basis of goal of the program as well as their aptitudes, physical capabilities, previous experiences, and attitudes.

- Should new employees be hired for training?
- Should the training of new employees be a condition of employment?
- Would you prefer trainees with previous experience in the work?
- Are there present employees who need training?
- Would you consider employees presently in lower rated jobs who have the aptitude to learn?
- Is the training to be a condition for promotion?
- Will the training be made available to handicapped employees whose injury occurred while employed by the company?
- Will employees be permitted to volunteer for the training?
- Should employees displaced by job changes, departmental shutdowns, automation, and so on be given the opportunity to be trained in other jobs?

What Will the Program Cost?

It may be desirable to compute the costs of your training before starting the program. Thus, you can budget sufficient funds for the program and use the budget as a tool for keeping training costs in line.

- Should you change the program for the space, the machines, and materials used?
- Will the wages of trainees be included?
- If the instructor is an employee, will his or her pay be included in the costs?
- Will the time you and others spend in preparing and administrating the program be part of the costs?
- If usable production results from the sessions, should the results of it be deducted from costs of the program?

What Checks or Controls Will You Use?

- Can you check the results of the training against the goal or objective?
- Can standards of learning time be established against which to check the progress of the trainees?
- Can data on trainee performance be developed before, during, and after training?
- Will records be kept on the progress of each trainee?
- Will trainees be tested on the knowledge and skills acquired?
- Will the instructor rate each trainee during and at the end of the course?
- Will the training be followed up periodically by a supervisor or department head to determine the long-range effects of the training?
- Should you personally check and control the program?

How Should the Program Be Publicized?

Publicizing the company's training program in the community helps attract qualified job applicants. Publicity inside the company helps motivate employees to improve themselves.

- If the program is announced to employees, will the announcement be made before the program starts? During the program?

- Are pictures to be taken of the training sessions and used on bulletin boards and in local newspapers?
- Should employees who complete the training be awarded certificates?
- Should the certificates be presented at a special affair, such as a dinner?
- When the certificates are awarded, will you invite the family of the trainees?
- Should the local newspaper, radio, and TV people be invited to the "graduation" exercises?

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