



ADDING VALUE TO YOUR TRANSFORMATION

"Training & Development"

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Overview

Many companies face a challenge that is crucial for survival—implementing major organizational change. Your management teams are going through the process of an organizational transformation; however, a training expert is not involved during the transformation planning stage. Many executives often do not understand the value of training, nor do they realize that training can be a critical factor in the success of a transformation initiative. As a result, organization transformation initiatives are being planned without incorporating employee training—the prime component that transforms the organization.

The general perception is that training is not required during the planning stages. “It’s too soon to involve training,” is often repeated. Ironically, when the need for training is realized, it’s so late in the process that the transformation initiative is in a dire state. In many cases, training requests are made with unreasonable delivery dates and unrealistic expectations.

Employee training is one of the most important components of any business transformation. It equips the workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge required to integrate change into the organization. Tina Sung, key note speaker for the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) 2003 International Conference and EXPO, a leading association of workplace learning and performance professionals, stated that learning must occur within a very definite context. Learning must be linked to business strategy. Pat Crull, 2004 Chair, ASTD Board of Directors, stated in her speech at the ASTD 2004 International Conference and EXPO, that this link is what gives training experts a seat at the table.

Without training expertise to identify the training and development requirements throughout the transformation process, the best transformation will fail to meet business objectives.

Empowering transformation initiatives

Business transformation initiatives are designed to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of a company’s operations. Employee training should be considered during the entire transformation process—from pre-planning to post integration.

A training expert—often titled chief learning officer or training director—can empower the transformation process by adding value to key measures for success:

Cost

A training expert can increase cost efficiencies by assisting in the design of core processes that optimize existing competencies of employees. Additionally he/she can incorporate training tasks and activities in the project plan, to allow sufficient time to explore and select the appropriate training development and delivery systems.

Speed

The speed of response between the request for training and actual delivery to the end user is increased when training is included in the planning process. Being aware of new strategic direction enables the training function to commence the training analysis, design, and delivery process early enough to produce the training on time and within budget.

Quantity

The training expert can identify key areas to be addressed and determine requirements to adequately prepare employees. Training programs designed to support transformation initiatives equip the organization with knowledge by answering the following questions:

- What competencies are required to successfully implement the new strategic goals and objectives?
- How much will employees be required to learn, unlearn, and relearn?
- What skills does the greater organization need to meet the objectives?
- What is the difference between employees' current skills and the needed skills?
- How effective are the opportunities available to employees for building their skills?
- How do these skill-building opportunities integrate into employees' career plans and performance reviews?

Quality

Participation will enable the alignment of learning objectives with company objectives. The training department can deliver high-quality training programs that support the business objectives and have a direct impact on business drivers: revenue, quality, customer satisfaction, employee retention, productivity, cycle time, cost and risk.

Learning and business strategy not only should be aligned, but an ongoing, repeatable process. A training expert can guide the commensurate high-level changes to the organization's training initiatives that occur, when strategy changes to meet the needs of the business. Training can become a strategic tool if its use is applied against an organization's ever-changing business environment, and that application is translated into planning and execution.

As a strategic tool, a training expert can help companies striving to compete in a world where change is a constant. To ensure a smooth transition and acceptance of organizational changes, a training expert should be an integral part of the transformation team from pre-planning to post integration.