

Employee Development for Business Success

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Abstract

Employee Development is one of the most important functions of Human Resource Management. Employee development is a joint, on-going effort on the part of an employee and the organization for which he or she works to upgrade the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities. The concept of employee development refers to organized learning experiences provided by the employer to enhance performance and personal growth. Investment in employee development offers the organization a competitive advantage – by providing continuous learning for employees to develop current skills and gain new skills, which they can then adapt and, in turn, perform effectively and efficiently. Notion of employee development believes that when employee performance increases, it would lead to higher organization effectiveness. The present paper discusses various issues related to the concept of employee

development, along with a number of corporate illustrations, which exemplify the employee development initiatives in certain companies.

Key words: Employee development, skill development, organization effectiveness.

Introduction

Employee Development is one of the most important functions of Human Resource Management. Employee development is a joint, on-going effort on the part of an employee and the organization for which he or she works to upgrade the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities. The notion of 'investment in employee development' means equipping employees with new knowledge and skills, and it can be used to enable people to anticipate and be ready for new job requirements (Rothwell and Kazanas, 1989), which ultimately aims to develop employees to contribute optimally towards achieving organizational goals. The concept of employee development refers to organized learning experiences provided by the employer to enhance performance and personal growth (Nadler and Nadler, 1989). Investment in employee development offers the organization a competitive advantage – by providing continuous learning for employees to develop current skills and gain new ones, which they can then adapt and, in turn, perform effectively (London, 1989). Notion of employee development believes that when employee performance increases, it would lead to the organization effectiveness (Champathes, 2006).

Differentiating Training and Development

Researchers have argued that, investment in employee training and development has benefits for the organization and for its workforce (Salas and Cannon-Bowers 2001; Sloman, 2003). However, with the move from traditional formal training activities to on-going and future-oriented development, there has been a visible shift in how such activities are being conducted (e.g. Maurer et al., 2003). In today's volatile business environment, where today's acquired skills may get obsolete tomorrow, continuous and cyclical developmental activities may be necessary for all the organizations (Buckley and Caple, 2007).

Warr (2002, p. 154) argued that "job-specific training seeks to improve effectiveness in a current job role, whereas development activities take a longer-term perspective and may extend into career planning and reviews of personal progress". Laird (1985, p.11) opined that that training "permits employees to perform to a standard whilst development on the other hand refers to ongoing, long-term intervention to prepare people and groups for futures".

Supporting the above, various researchers have advocated that development is rather a continuous long term activity, through which employees and the organizations get benefitted in future. Responsibility of development activities lie with both the employees and organizations. Development initiatives may be informal in approach and

address a specific skill requirement of an individual employee (for example, Maurer et al. 2002b; Goldstein and Gilliam, 1994; McDowall and Mabey, 2008; Rowold and Kauffeld, 2009).

Training is more useful in stable and open-ended employment based on the prediction of job related performance, with quantitative measurement of performance parameters (Cook, 2009). The onus lies with the manager to match people to jobs and then to train their workforce, facilitating skill acquisition and linear career growth. In contrast, the onus in employee development lies on the employee to take responsibility for developing multiple careers and engaging in life-long learning (Senge, 2006; Hall and Mirvis, 1995).

Challenges in Employee Development

Employee development depends upon the organization culture, attitude of top management, and limited opportunities of promotion (Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald, 1996), which may become challenges in the time of implementing employee development initiatives. These factors are explained below.

Organization Culture: If organization culture supports employees, it will encourage employees to participate in decision making then employees would more develop and performance would increase.

Attitude of Top Management: Top Management attitude is another important factor that influences on employee developmental activities. It depends on the sincerity and commitment of the top management.

Limited Opportunities of Promotion: If opportunities of promotion are limited then employees would not participate in the employee developmental activities.

Importance of Employee Development

Employee development is important for employees to enhance their skills and upgrade their existing knowledge in order to perform better. Employee development is important for employees to enhance their skills and upgrade their existing knowledge in order to perform better. Employee development is important not only for professional but also personal growth of employees.

Employee development creates a learning culture in the organization where every employee is motivated to learn new skills and acquire new learnings. Employee development helps an employee to do a self analysis of himself/herself. He knows where he is lacking and what all new skills and learnings will help him/her improve his performance and deliver better results. Employee development also goes a long way in strengthening the relationship among employees.

(www.managementstudyguide.com/employee-development.htm)

Employee Development Plan

Following are the most common steps for developing an employee development plan:

Prepare an Employee: The success of employee development plan to a large extent depends on the employee itself. No amount of trainings would help unless and until an employee realizes the value. An individual must understand as to why trainings are being organized. Organizations must encourage their employees to think about their growth chart in the organization and how would they achieve the same ? Each employee should be aware of his/her roles and responsibilities and how can he/she contribute more effectively towards the organization. It is always better, if employees come up with their own development plans, and what all new they would wish to learn for them to become versatile.

Plan Development Activities : Once a proposal for employee development is prepared, employees need to be communicated with the same. This will help th management to understand employees' perception about the plan, and also, their expectation from such activities. At this stage, it is preferred that each employees be treated as unique individuals with their various developmental requirements.

Organize the Activities: At this stage, various internal as well as external trainings may be organized, keeping in mind the employee's requirements and how the training program would benefit him/her. Design the training programs in line with the organization's needs and demands.

Employees need to have open mind and they should be encouraged to think out of the box.

Monitor the Performance: Proper feedbacks are essential in implementing employee development initiatives. The supervisors need to arrange for a performance review meeting at regular intervals with the employees to give them necessary suggestions as to how they can improve their performance. If they have not performed well once, do not shout on them or demotivate them.

Create Confidence : Make them feel that you are there with them. Don't always count their mistakes; rather appreciate them whenever they do something extraordinary. Support your employees to expect loyalty in return.

Common Employee Development Activities

Some of the most common employee development activities are stated below :-

Coaching: Coaching is an important activity for employee development. It involves treating employees as a personal partner in achieving both personal and organizational goals. Supervisors can solve personal problems of the employees by providing coaching (Agarwal, et al, 2006). When problems are resolved, this leads to increase in organizational performance, as employees would be able to achieve organizational goals.

Developmental Centres: Activities of development centres are based on prior defined assessment criteria, which need to be planned well in advance.

Developmental Appraisal : Developmental appraisal is an on-going process for employee development during the whole year, which is a component of the overall performance management system of an organization. This appraisal will determine the weak areas of employee, where employee development is required in order to improve the employee performance (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Potential Developmental Activities : The investment in potential (perceived) developmental activities of the employee are important in order to enhance employee performance in future to provide the organization as a competitive advantage (Lee & Bruvold, 2003).

Empowerment : Empowerment means to increase the capacity of the employee and also provide freedom of work which will build the confidence among the employees.

Participation : By letting employees participating in organizations policies or decision-making can lead the employee to enhance the performance. They will be able to make more smart decisions.

Delegation : If managers delegate authority to the employees to perform the task, what they want can also lead to enhance performance. Employees will do those activities which they can perform more easily. This will lead to achieve organizational goals and thus enhance organizational performance (effectiveness).

Barriers to Skills Development

Though employee development is a crucial strategy for

any organization to develop and retain its valuable and contributing employees, many times one may face certain barriers while implementing such plans. Some of the barriers are as follows:

McQuaid et, al., (2010) have identified the following intrinsic and extrinsic factors which may act as barriers to skill development :

Intrinsic Factors

1. Social barriers: learning perceived to go against social, gender or family norms; learning seen as territory of other age and social groups
2. Lack of knowledge: of what's available; or resulting in belief that learning is formal, classroom-based and involves formal assessment
3. Lack of awareness of need to/benefits in engaging in skills development
4. Lack of confidence and/or self efficacy (belief in own ability to learn/succeed)
5. Lack of expectancy that engaging will result in desired outcomes (due to doubts about the relevance and value of learning)
6. Fear of failure due to 'educational inheritance' from previous experiences
7. Perception that too old to learn
8. Perception that 'fully skilled'/no need for further skills development

9. Gaps in basic skills or other foundation skills facilitating learning
10. Lack of motivation due to other personal or family priorities

Extrinsic Factors

1. Lack of time due to work/family pressures (and lack of training at appropriate times/locations and other services, e.g. childcare, to address these barriers)
2. Cost/lack of financial support from employers or other sources
3. Lack of provision of appropriate quality, relevance and content
4. Employer unwilling/unable to resource training or time off to train
5. Lack of physical/virtual space or resources for work-related training
6. Lack of work culture that encourages skills development and deployment
7. Lack of job autonomy/ownership so that skills can be effectively deployed
8. Lack of formal systems for progression/rewarding skills development
9. Inappropriate allocation of skills development opportunities by management
10. Lack of support/advocacy from: trade unions; peers; management

Steps of Planning Individual Development Initiatives

Individual development plan plays a crucial role in employee development. Individual development plan is generally prepared with the help from both the employee and the employer, to maintain a healthy balance between the individual's and organization's objectives towards achieving an employee's personal and professional growth.

Individual development plan is designed and implemented in the following steps:

- 1. Setting up Benchmark :** Employees ought to analyze their strengths and weaknesses to know the gaps between their current and desired skill and performance level. The new incumbent need to be informed with a benchmark needs to be set up by the concerned employee with well defined key responsibility areas and job responsibilities. The performance should be reviewed at regular basis with the feedback for further improvement. The employees need to refer to the benchmark vis a vis the feedback to improve their performance.
- 2. Assessment of Current Position :** It is also essential for employees to evaluate their current position in the organization and how they can improve their performance which would not only help in their career development but also benefit the organization. They need to identify the expectation the management has out of them. It is essential for the employees to take

accountability for their responsibility and utilize the full potential for the benefit of the organization. Above all, the employees need to accept the fact that, organizational skill priority needs to be put before their personal development.

3. ***Identify Development Activities*** : Employees need to identify their career development goals. And discuss the same with management. This also involves identifying the steps one needs to take to upgrade his/her knowledge and enhance skills.
4. ***Implement Your Plan*** : A rough draft of the development plan needs to be prepared. At this stage, the line managers need to work with the employees in drafting the immediate and future skill requirements. Once the plan is ready, both the manager and the employee need to agree to it mutually and put the plan in action. Evaluation of the plan is also needed at a regular basis.

Implementing Effective Employee Development Plan

Once an Employee Development Plan is created, the next challenge is to implement it successfully. While implementing the employee development plans, one needs to be absolutely clear and convinced about the reasons for the same plan, both from the organizational as well as individual employee's perspective. If felt necessary, Human Resource personnel need to conduct sessions with the employees to help them in analysing their present skill level and the expected ones. Following are the steps in doing the same:

Convincing the Employees in the Proposed Employee Development Plans :

Highlight the benefits of trainings, conferences, forums, online courses or any other employee development initiatives. Employees ought to get benefitted out of training programs for them to understand the importance and also motivate others to attend the same. Give some kind of special benefits to employees who regularly attend training programs and strive hard to acquire new learnings and knowledge to benefit themselves as well as the organization.

Developing Tailor-Made Plans : Employee development process does not always mean inviting employees for formal trainings, conferences, sessions, seminars, Webex sessions or formal discussions. Informal meetings where every employee has the liberty to express his/her opinions also help in employee development. Instead of creating a classroom approach all the time, it may be helpful, if the employees are heard of about their ideas, concepts, and opinions. Also, organizations should respect an employee's need for personal career growth. Whenever possible, managers need to revisit the development plans to investigate, whether it is possible to make amendments in the plans to accommodate the individual development needs, along with the organizational requirement.

Motivating the Employees to Learn : Motivation plays an essential role in employee development. Employees should be encouraged to participate in trainings, seminars, conferences or any other initiatives which would help them acquire new skill sets. Human resource professionals or

team managers need to convince employees as to how various training programs would help them develop their skills and benefit them in the long run.

Monitoring the Development : Organisations must have a well-thought out and tested appraisal mechanism, which would facilitate the managers to evaluate the degree of enhancement of their employees' performance. The method and other mechanism of appraisals should be communicated to the employees well in advance. Also, feedback needs to be provided to the employees to facilitate them to improve their performance further.

Nurturing a Learning Culture at Workplace: Employees need to be encouraged in expressing their thoughts and sharing their ideas. They need to be appreciated for their performance. This way an employee not only feels motivated to participate in various events and trainings, but also develops a sense of loyalty and attachment towards the organization.

Providing Tangible Benefits: The employees may be provided with various tangible benefits for learning and enhancing new skill set and in turn, effective implementation of employee development plan. The benefits may be in the form of promotions, added responsibilities, monetary benefits, and so on.

Role of HR Managers and Line Managers in Employee Development Activities

Human resource professionals play an essential role in creating a culture in organization where every employee

takes trainings and employee development activities seriously. They require to find out the areas for improvement for an employee. Doing so, one has to appreciate the fact that every individual employee is unique and, naturally, their developmental requirements may vary as well. Therefore, relevant training programs should be designed for employees which would be useful to them and the company.

It is the responsibility of a human resource professional to motivate the employees to participate in employee development activities. The HR department, therefore, should make an attempt to encourage the employees to upgrade their existing knowledge from time to time to become valuable resources for the organization.

It is also a pertinent job of HR Department to felicitate employees who perform well. This can be done by offering awards, certificates, and do on. This will also create a sense of eagerness among the other employees to showcase their talent, who initially resist the training sessions.

While planning for any training module, HR Manager needs consult with the line managers and the employees to balance between individual and organizational skill requirements. The list of participants should be carefully chosen to ensure minimal dislocation of the regular work at the worksite. Also, the content of the training module should be thoroughly reviewed to ensure relevance of the same.

The line managers also play significant role in employee development by motivating employees to enhance their skills with time and acquire new learning. Line managers need to discuss with their team members to mutually agree on the required skillset to satisfy the immediate and future performance target. Regular performance monitoring is another responsibility of the line managers. In order to do so, line managers need to have an updated knowledge about the performance of the employees, provide the appropriate feedback with positive criticism, along with appreciation for the work done.

Employee Development Initiatives: Company Examples

Fuji Xerox

Fuji Xerox and its affiliates operate an education system based on the type of work (R&D, production, systems engineers, customer engineers, and sales) and employee level (new graduates, young employees, leaders, and management). In employee level-based education, the focus is on enhancing manager training in order to reinforce their abilities to develop their subordinates and improve problem-solving capabilities.

In type-based education programs for sales personnel and Sales Engineers, business-specific professional HR training through practical, hands-on curriculums are conducted. In order to develop personnel that are capable of responding to globalization of the customers, initiatives, such as, overseas training programs and training programs are in place, to strengthen practical global skills.

Fuji Xerox conducts focused and proactive personnel development by having their employees accumulate diverse experiences. Employees use not only their experience gained in their current positions, but also experience gained in their previous positions to discover their strengths and weaknesses to proactively and voluntarily plan for their next career move. Managers repeat the cycle of creating development plans derived from annual career interviews with their subordinates and conducting on-the-job training and off-the-job training.

Employees create their career development sheet once a year, review their career plans within their work and their future career plans, and fill-in their objectives for the following fiscal year and for medium-to-long term. This sheet is then used in a one-to-one meeting with their manager to share career plan objectives and plans.

As support for individual career development, career consultations are held. Two types of career consultations are offered: individual voluntary consultations; and consultations held at the time of career development training courses for employees at ages of roughly 30, 40 and 54.

Fuji Xerox has established an internal recruitment system that provides employees with the opportunity to choose the career challenges they wish to tackle. It recruits not only for departments related to business enhancement domains of service and global promotion, but also for Fujifilm roles, with the aim is to enhance synergy throughout the Fujifilm

Group by strengthening functions through personnel exchange and broadening career path options for employees.

(Source: http://www.fujixerox.com/eng/company/person/personnel_training/)

Tata Steel Processing and Distribution Limited

Tata Steel believes in the philosophy of Continuous Learning, for all employees. The framework for Continuous learning is built around a number of focused programs for the employees. These range from major initiatives, such as, various on-going management development and personal improvement programs. They complement a host of technology advancement and on-going training options. The employees undergo training in institutes, such as, CII, BCCI, ISB, IIMs, XLRI, XIMB, TMTC, and so on. The employees are also encouraged to take up higher qualifications from foreign universities, like Cambridge, Motorola, etc. The learning framework includes technology, management, leadership, cultural and communication skills, and soft skills.

The HR Department prepares quarterly as well as yearly Training Calendars for all the officers, and Weekly Training Plans for the non-officers. It is a compulsory practice for all trainees in TSPDL, to share the knowledge acquired from the training program, either through presentations in a common forum, or posting knowledge pieces.

For new recruits, Tata Steel Processing and Distribution Limited has a practice of providing Induction Training, which includes the following modules:

- Basic Orientation Training
- Safety Training
- ISO 9000 / TS 16949 Training
- SAP Training
- Structured On-the-job training
- TPM Training
- Inter unit learning visits
- Visits to customers' sites

Other mechanisms for developing Employees include, Job Rotation, Kaizen certification test, Ryerson USA visit, Study Leave, Performance Counseling, 360 degree feedback and follow up, CFT participation, continuous improvement teams, and, membership to professional bodies, and libraries.

(Source :<http://www.tspd1.com/employee-development.asp>)

Infosys

Infosys begins its formal employee education process as soon as it hires a new graduate. Each new engineer is enrolled in the company's 23-week residential program (there is a separate, shorter program for new BPO recruits) at the company's Mysore Development Center. Roughly 95% of those who successfully complete the Mysore program are then assigned to specific groups where they begin to learn how to apply these skills to the needs of Infosys' clients. Each employee gets regular reviews and options

for different career paths. They are also required to take continuing education courses and meet defined certification criteria.

While most initial training focuses on technology and soft skills, they become increasingly exposed to areas, such as, business value and specific functional and industry processes, in their later years with the company.

Each employee must meet all the milestones and complete all of the certifications required for their current roles before they can be considered eligible for a promotion. These promotions can be either vertical (more responsible positions in their current role) or lateral (such as, from software engineering into consulting or technology architecture).

Infosys provides selected fast-track employees with special attention. Identified leaders are enrolled in the Infosys Leadership Institute, which provides highly customized assessment, personal development and mentoring programs. This program, however, covers only about 850 of the company's 130,000 employees and is limited to three tiers of employees:

- Tier One, who currently lead departments;
- Tier Two, who are likely to lead departments in three to five years; and
- Tier Three, who are likely to become Tier 2 employees in three to five years.

(Source :<http://beyond-it-inc.com/GKEblog/lessons-from-infosys-employee-development-program.html>)

British Airways

British Airways is committed to achieving a High Performance Leadership culture that engages colleagues at all levels and promote world-class levels of productivity. It runs a number of development programmes for its employees. Each is tailored to the requirements of the individual, in terms of their position and career aspirations. Front Line Leaders and Outstanding Leaders are two such programmes. They are aimed at empowering those leading teams in customer facing roles to make decisions, develop leadership capabilities and provide support to their colleagues. Both programmes exemplify the blended learning approach that is embedded across the business, using traditional classroom-based workshops, coaching and accessing an online learning portal holding video- based scenarios, exercises and further tools to support the learning.

The programmes run by the company offer a broad range of experiences across the airline or within one more specialist function, but all with a strong customer focus and the objective of developing and nurturing talent for the future. The employees undertake real roles and responsibilities from the very beginning, bringing new ideas and approaches whilst learning key skills, capabilities and experience from the colleagues around them. The programmes offer additional development through external leadership and personal development, professional qualifications and opportunities to go ‘beyond the day job’.

BA's apprenticeship programmes play a key role in allowing us to bring new, emerging talent into our organisation. On all the BA's schemes, the apprentices will complete a structured programme, designed with their development in mind, which gives them the opportunity to undertake 'real', relevant work while undertaking nationally recognised qualifications. They also have the opportunity to become involved in other activities, such as 'community days'. The aim of the apprenticeship schemes is to ensure that, apprentices develop the skills, and gains the experience, necessary to successfully continue their careers.

(Source : http://www.britishairways.com/careers/learning_anddevelopment.shtml)

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)

HPCL has a full-fledged Corporate Training Department, to augment the learning and development requirements of its officers. The specific training needs of individual employees are identified through Competency Mapping Exercises. The Training Policy at HPCL provides broad directions to guide the learning solutions and initiatives. For example, 'Samavesh' acts as Induction/ orientation Training for the entry level management staff, which facilitates a new employee to build a sense of belongingness; 'Project Akshay' is another HPCL initiative which aims for development of leadership pipeline.

HPCL has a full-fledged, well - equipped Training Institute at Nigdi, Pune, known as HPMDI. It is equipped with the best infrastructure conducive for effective learning.

The training plan for the year for each Business Unit / Function is finalized after mutual discussions with them. Then suitable Consultants/ practitioners are identified and customized programs are designed in consultation with line functions.

HPCL nominates officers for external seminars and conferences in connection with their functional requirements. Advanced Management Programs are also organized for officers of levels DGM and above, by reputed Business Schools. HPCL also sponsors Study Tour for employee groups to enrich their knowledge and skills, a few employee groups for select foreign training to enrich their knowledge and skills, in the form of select foreign training. Various e-learning programs on defined competencies, including online certification courses on Project Management, Supply Chain Management, different e-learning resources on various behavioral areas are also facilitated by HPCL.

Based on the post-training evaluation, the Training department continuously monitors the effectiveness of the facilitator and relevance of the content. Alterations / modifications take place on this basis. Similarly Participant assimilation of training is also recorded.

Education Refund Plan (ERP) enables the employees to undertake academic courses to further their self-development process, in relation to Corporation's requirement. For employees interested in higher studies, to further on their own, Corporation has a detailed Study leave policy.

(Source : <http://www.hindustanpetroleum.com/En/ui/HR-Training-and-Development.aspx>)

Walmart

Development of employees is an integral and on-going part of Walmart. Each associate begins with an in-depth personal orientation to introduce the new incumbent to the company's history and culture and paint a picture of the roles and responsibilities to be taken.

After orientation, each division has its own specific and detailed Training and Development programs that give the employee the knowledge and tools to succeed in the company, chart his/her own career path and accomplish his/her most ambitious goals.

Walmart offers many training opportunities to help managers sharpen their leadership skills, advance through the company and keep their teams' morale and passion for fulfilling its mission running strong. Some of the training opportunities are as follows:

- Assistant Management Training (AMT) is a management-training program open to all salaried Walmart Stores U.S. field associates. One must apply and be selected to take advantage of this program.
- The Walton Institute provides an educational environment for Walmart leaders from around the world to stretch themselves and explore our unique company culture and how to foster that culture.

- The 12-week Manager in Training (MIT) program at Sam's Club is designed to expose trainees to the various operations within, allowing them to rotate through the company. Upon completion, trainees may apply for an Assistant Manager position

(Source : <http://careers.walmart.com/training-and-development/>)

McDonald's

McDonald's believes in life-long learning. It provides training and development at all levels to help an employee to refine his / her skills, grow in the current position or transition to a new role in the company. At McDonald's, every employee is expected to live McDonald's Values and demonstrate leadership, no matter what level or position, the employee works.

It is the first restaurant company to develop a global training center, Hamburger University. Since its inception, training at Hamburger University has emphasized consistent restaurant operations procedures, service, quality and cleanliness. It has become the company's global center of excellence for McDonald's operations training and leadership development.

Career Development at McDonald's combines a focus on personal growth and development with talent management objectives in order to help employees to perform at their very best – while experiencing personal career satisfaction. Career Development is grounded in talent management and encompasses: career planning, Individual

Development plans, career maps, succession planning, learning activities, etc.

McDonald's Global Mobility Program is designed to enhance the development of the leaders - it gives unparalleled insight into McDonald's global operations and the impact McDonald's has on a global scale. A global assignment offers the opportunity to experience working and living in a new global location and we encourage our employees to get the most of out the experience on both a professional and personal level

(Source : http://www.aboutmcdonalds.com/mcd/corporate_careers/training_and_development.html)

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