

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Importance of training in today's world

The training function in today's world has assumed critical importance. The shortage of technical skills has placed massive pressure on organisations to create training functions, which can provide people with the expertise to fill the vacancies that have already arisen and will continue to arise in the future. For organisations to achieve competitive advantage or just maintain their existing position in the market, the training function has to be able to meet the demands placed on it and that very often requires re-assessment and re-engineering of all the various functions within the department which include an overall assessment of training needs, the intervention procedures which might be required, the course design and delivery mechanisms and performance assessment techniques.

The critical success factors will include the following:

2. Areas requiring upgrading and improvement.

This will involve an analysis of the successes and failures of the training function with full involvement of the senior management group. It will also include an analysis of the implications of the recent developments in technology and its dramatic effect on the future of the training function.

3. Training plan

A key issue will be the initiation of a comprehensive training plan which will evolve from the various analyses which will have taken place i.e. the history of the training function, user needs, SWOT analysis, developments in technology, costs and benefits, long-term development needs. It will include an action plan with full agreement between the training department and the user groups.

4. Cost / benefit analysis

The current training budget will be analysed against achievements and the cost / benefits analysis for future needs will detail the cost of all programs and modules, materials and overheads. A prediction of expected benefits will include user performance improvement, measurement of success in the upgrading of technical skills, improvement in employee motivation, approach and attitude, and resultant effect on sales, revenues and profitability.

5. SWOT analysis

A complete analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will add a further dimension to the development exercise and the analysis will take into consideration the social, demographic, political and economic implications of the environment surrounding the business in question.

6. Administration function

The administration function will provide the necessary support in completing training schedules, time-tables commensurate with the level of urgency for each aspect of the training plan and a detailed account of an analysis of each step in the implementation process.

7. User requirements

No action can be taken until the comprehensive short-term and long-term needs and requirements of the user groups have been agreed and established. The importance of the word agreed will be known to all training professionals, in particular those who have participated in developing training strategies.

8. Preparation, design and delivery mechanisms

Before any strong commitment, either strategic or practical, can be established, there has to be an agreed plan which will include the preparation of a strategy which details the design and delivery mechanisms. Design involves the formulation of an agreed plan of training modules that meet the requirements of the user groups. Delivery represents the means of presenting and making available to the user of all the various forms of training featured in the plan.

9. Evaluation and feedback

Constant improvement in the quality of training will be one of the key objectives and this can only be achieved if there is a reliable and effective means of evaluating all courses delivered and then providing feedback to both the line functions and the training department management.

10. Maintenance of high quality performance

An agreed performance measurement procedure should be in existence for all staff employed in the training function to ensure high quality design, delivery and administration of all training products. There will be an accepted level of turnover of staff and a recruitment mechanism should be in place to ensure quality staff are available when required.

11. Implementation of action plan.

A timetable should be designed to cover the discussion, preparation, design and final implementation of the action plan. Each stage should be agreed by all parties involved and the final document formally signed off to ensure long-term commitment. Any changes in the original plan should also be formally signed off.

The principle behind all training is the firm agreement at every stage between the training function and the user groups.

TOTAL TRAINING SOLUTION



An extract from RGBB member Paul Hawkins' book "Career Management in the 21st.Century."