

Introducing: Worker Training & Development

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Common reasons to implement Worker Training & Development

[video]

- The company is under new legislation that requires changes in work procedures, products, or other outcomes.
- The company has a lack of essential skills among its workers.
- Company workers' performance and/or outcomes are not at good-enough levels.
- The company has good-enough performance and/or outcomes, but wants to increase them (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness, etc.).
- There is some new technology that the company's workers want or need to learn.
- The customers are requesting something that requires that the company workers be trained.
- The company wants to change the products/services it offers, and those things require training.
- Customers are dissatisfied, and the company can address that via training.

What really is T&D?

In this video, I provide complementary insight and elaborations beyond the lecture notes. The video is not redundant with the lecture notes.

[video]

- Fundamentally, there is little difference (sometimes no difference) in the meaning of these terms:
 - training
 - learning
 - development

- influence
- conformity
- compliance
- obedience
- control
- conditioning
- leadership
- teaching
- instruction
- intervention
- **Training** typically connotes a specific type of learning context: typically something that is imposed or required by some person or entity, rather than being self-directed.
- **Learning:**
 - Modern organizations have been using the term **learning & development** instead of training & development. This shift reflects this modern trend in how people interpret these words:
 - * *training*: teaching people to do a task, vs. *learning*: fostering a culture of continuous growth.
 - * *training*: control/compliance/obedience, vs *learning*: autonomy & engagement.
 - Modern organizations increasingly emphasize self-directed learning, social learning, and developmental feedback.
- **Development** is the *broader* process of growth over time, often including learning but also involving maturation, role expansion, and identity formation
- The word **instruction** is often used by persons who use the expression *instructional systems design*. An instructional system is part of a T&D system. The instructional system is the part that focuses on the learning process/activities.

Synonyms of *worker T&D*

- In this course, we use the term **worker** in *worker training & development* because it broadly refers to any type of worker, including employees, owners, partners, volunteers, and any other working contributor and/or stakeholder.
- Common synonyms include:
 - workforce T&D
 - talent development (common in HR)
 - human capital development (common in HR)
 - personnel T&D (common in HR and military)
- Keep in mind: *personnel* connotes *paid employees*, it doesn't usually include volunteer workers, owners, partners, nor other working contributors and/or stakeholders.

Talent Development

- In everyday English, the word *talent* can mean *an ability to do something well*. In organizations, the word *talent* is often used to mean *a worker* or *a specific type of worker* (e.g., “She is our top talent”). In that context, the word *talent* can refer to at least two types of workers:
 1. **Inclusive definition (broad):**
 - Using the inclusive definition, *talent* refers to *anyone* and *everyone* in the organization, with the assumption that every employee has valuable skills, abilities, and potential that can and should be managed and developed. In this view, *talent management* is essentially **comprehensive human-resource management** with a special emphasis on growth and optimization.
 2. **Exclusive definition (narrow):**
 - Using the exclusive definition, *talent* refers specifically to **high-potential (HiPo)** or **high-performing** individuals—those whose abilities, achievements, and growth potential are critical to the organization’s strategic success. Here, *talent management* is about **identifying, nurturing, retaining, and deploying** these key individuals—sometimes called the **leadership pipeline** or **critical roles**.

Evidence about the usefulness of worker T&D

- For scholarly peer-reviewed empirical studies about the usefulness of worker T&D, please see our [Zotero Group Library](#) for this course (you must be added as a member of that Zotero library).
- Worker T&D is associated with these benefits:
- changes in worker **behaviors** (including but not limited to: **cognition, affect, and overt behaviors**):
 - innovation and tacit skills
 - adaptive expertise
 - technical skills
 - self-management skills
 - cross-cultural adjustment
 - feeling empowered
 - communication, planning, and task coordination in teams
- Changes in **outcomes** at the organizational level of analysis (aka: company level of analysis):
 - profitability
 - effectiveness
 - productivity
 - operating revenue per employee
 - reduced costs
 - improved quality and quantity
 - employee turnover

- organization’s reputation
- social capital

When T&D is vs. isn’t the right solution

- T&D is a great solution if the problems at hand can be meaningfully improved via a change in the worker’s skills/competencies. However, sometimes the performance of workers is strongly influenced by:
 - the structure of the work tasks/jobs
 - the behaviors of their *supervisors*
 - the climate/culture of the organization
 - low rewards (e.g., low pay; low chances for a pay raise)
 - the worker’s personality, which can be difficult to change
- Consider these examples:
 - Worker’s **tasks or duties are unclear or conflicting** (e.g., workers receive mixed messages about what to do or how to do it)
 - * In this case, the T&D system would need to focus on training the *managers* on how to design the tasks/duties of the other workers.
 - Managers don’t thoughtfully plan the workload of other workers. This can create **overwhelming workloads** for some workers. Also, if only some workers are receiving overwhelming workloads, they may perceive it unfair if other workers have much lighter workloads.
 - * In this case, the T&D system would likely need to focus on training the *managers* on how to thoughtfully plan the workload of other workers.
 - Workers don’t receive **feedback** about their performance/outcomes.
 - * In this case, the T&D system would need to focus on training the *managers* on how to give feedback.
 - Workers **lack the tools, resources, or technology** (equipment, software, etc.)
 - The **consequences for good performance are negative** (e.g., takes up more time, which isn’t rewarded)
 - The compensation, bonuses, or **incentives are too low** or are designed in a **counterproductive** manner.
 - There is a **toxic culture** or there is **interpersonal conflict**.
 - Hiring the wrong people:
 - * The workers have relatively enduring **personality features** that have some amount of incompatibility with the work demands (e.g., a sales worker who is shy).
 - * The workers have **physical features** that have some amount of incompatibility with the work demands (e.g., low physical strength in a job that requires much physical strength).
 - * In this case, the T&D system could focus on training the *selections personnel* on how to hire the right workers.