



TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHENING YOUR PEOPLE

Center for Human Capital Innovation

44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite G1, Alexandria, VA 22314



Understanding Training & Development Programs

Training and professional development programs are two critical areas of human capital management. Organizations see the value of both, especially given the willingness of some organizations to spend company money and allow employees to spend company time on development activities. Indeed, among those surveyed, “organizations spent \$1,273 per employee... on direct learning [expenditures],” and employees spent an average of 34.1 hours on these activities in 2016.¹ But why should organizations invest in training and development programs to begin with? Because training and development programs help to strengthen, retain, and engage the workforce. While the end result of training programs and development programs is an “improved workforce,” training programs and development programs achieve this goal in different ways, with a different focus.



In practice, training programs usually refer to formalized classes, trainings, workshops, or seminars designed to teach or enhance employees’ knowledge, skills, or capabilities “required for a particular job or task.”² Your organization just hired a new HR Associate, but they are not familiar with your company’s HR management system. Investing in a training course, on the specific system your organization uses, will help bring this employee up to speed.

Professional development programs are different from training programs, in that they refer to a much broader spectrum of continuous, sometimes overlapping, activities, including but not limited to mentoring, coaching, rotations, and stretch-activities, focused on “long-term growth and career advancement.”³ Due to the nature of the kinds of activities that fall under “training” versus “professional development,” organizations may have a harder time seeing the return-on-investment of professional development programs. As a result, some employers shy away from investing in professional development programs, feeling the programs may not be worth their expense.⁴ This is unfortunate, given the high value of such programs over the long term.

¹ <https://www.td.org/research-reports/2017-state-of-the-industry>

² <https://www.sols.org/index.php/develop-your-library-staff/competencies2/about-competencies-based-staff-development/training-v-development>

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/~media/Files/documents/executive-development/unc-white-paper-the-ROI-of-talent-development.pdf>



Training & Development Best Practices

There are several ways that organizations can make their training and professional development programs work for them. At the highest level, according to the Society for Human Resources Management,⁵ to have a successful development program, it needs to:

- “gain executive support,
- involve management,
- relate to performance management,
- understand what the employee values,” and
- “know the desired outcome” of the program.

Once we get past the overarching necessities of any effective training or development program, it is necessary to consider what the organization hopes to achieve out of a specific training or development program. Having *employee buy-in* is one big way you can put the odds in your favor that the training or development program will be effective. Some ways you can do this include:

- Surveying employees to see the sorts of training and development opportunities they would find valuable,
- Encourage participation, but make participation optional, and
- Create individual development plans, working with employees and tailored to their individual career goals, rather than their current job requirements.

Building effective and rewarding training and development programs is within your organization’s reach. At CHCI, we help organizations create and implement formal training and development programs that are tailored to clients’ needs.

About CHCI

CHCI provides business solutions through “best and next” practices in strategic human capital management. CHCI provides measurable, real-world strategies that support your organization to attract and retain high-performing people, build a diverse and inclusive workplace, and leverage individual and team performance throughout the enterprise. For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Anne Loehr, Executive Vice President: anneloehr@centerforhci.org or (571) 970-4250, Ext. 113.

⁵ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/developingemployees.aspx>