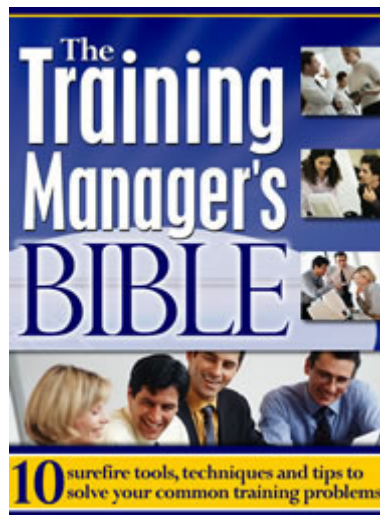


THE TRAINING MANAGER'S BIBLE

"10 surefire tools, techniques and tips to solve your
common training problems"



by

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Introduction

Welcome to the TRAINING MANAGER'S BIBLE!

Within this special report I hope to give you some valuable techniques and strategies that will help you with some of the common training problems that you face on a daily basis as a Training Manager.

I received the inspiration for this report from communicating and doing business with over 60 Training Managers during the past 2 years.

When delivering training and consultancy services I would often have a coffee and a personal chat with the training manager who had employed me and I would listen to their frustrations and challenges that they face in their role.

I have now built up a great network of training managers whom I class not only as business associates but also my friends as well.

Let me put your mind at rest right now!

I can assure you that no matter whether you are looking after a multi-national training department or whether you are a small, close knit team – all training managers face the same problems and challenges.

The most common I hear are:

- Doing more with less resource
- Building the credibility of your training department
- How to assess training requirements
- How to put a winning and credible training plan together
- Managing finances
- How can I measure the ROI and effectiveness of our training?
- "How do I pull a rabbit out of the hat?"

Ok, so the last one was a joke!

Or was it?

Invariably I hear how Training Managers are often asked to deliver the impossible!

So, armed with this knowledge I canvassed my 60 contacts with a short questionnaire of the main challenges that they face and in response to this I put together the top 10 challenges that a Training Manager comes across on a consistent basis.

I was overwhelmed with the response with 51 out of the 60 replying to my request.

The outcome?

Well, you are reading it right now!

I hope you enjoy **"THE TRAINING MANAGER'S BIBLE – 10 surefire tools, techniques and tips to solve your common training problems"**

If you have got any questions or feedback I'd love to hear them.

Take care and god bless

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About Us

Management Training & Development.Com are one of the UK's leading management training and leadership organisations.

Specialising in custom-made in-house training courses and open management training courses we provide a full range of training and consultancy solutions to exceed your expectations when it really counts.

Our Clients

From multi-nationals through to the small business, no matter what your industry, size or complexity is, we have delivered training to enterprises that include:

Coca-Cola	Ford Motor Co	BBFC	Waitrose
Unilever	John Lewis	BMW	Lloyds TSB
Kodak	Birds Eye	Jaguar	Nestle
Claire's Accessories	First group	Faccenda	Tropicana
BT	Renault	Peugeot	MoneyQuest
Lactalis	Burn Stewart	Emmetts	Danone Foods
Moy Park	Hygrade	Greencell	Geest
G Costa	WT Foods	Ford Asia	JP Morgan

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The Key Skills of the Professional Training Manager

Over the years, our work has brought us into contact with many training managers and we are often asked what skills and attitudes would contribute to excellence in the role.

Our list is not comprehensive, but offers a fine checklist to mark yourself against.

Managing a training department offers a variety of roles that uncovers natural abilities and potential, while offering specific areas for development.

Only you know how good you are in these areas!

Don't kid yourself by assuming you are good to excellent at every one of them.

All of us have opportunities to advance somewhere, and development as a training manager offers many opportunities.

Training Manager Skills Inventory

Below are 35 key skill areas.

Give yourself an honest score out of 10, for the items in the following list and determine where it would be most beneficial to improve. (10 means you have no improvement to do whatsoever)

Then ask yourself what benefits you would obtain by improving in that area.

Be specific. Be honest.

After that, draw up a plan that will improve your skills or knowledge in that key area.

Prioritise your list so that you spend quality time on areas that will show the best results.

And remember to revisit this list often to ensure you're up to date in developing your skills as a Professional Training Manager.

Many TM's have given this questionnaire to their line manager to complete on them as well – valuable feedback!

Key Skill Areas

	Knowledge of training, learning and the business as a whole
	Knowledge of the function of the training department, training options available, and differing learning and training styles,
	Having a systematic approach to training, an understanding of design, tailored training and an appreciation of the challenges trainers face
	Knowledge of HR and the strategic developments in the HR/T&D world
	Understanding of key techniques – TNA, evaluation, transfer of learning (putting learning in to practice in the workplace)
	Able to develop policy and strategy
	Aware of sources of advice, materials, suppliers and contacts
	An ambassador of training and development; able to promote new approaches to learning and development as appropriate
	Excellent consultancy skills; able to use training to change and organise organisational development
	Marketing skills; a good understanding of internal marketing and publicity, a good networker
	Responsible, reliable and accountable, ethical and able to instil a clear sense of purpose in others
	Able to develop a culture of high standards, excellent quality and customer responsiveness
	Good decision maker, able to recognise the impact of decisions, having good judgement
	A Problem solver, dealing with practical, people and 'political' problems
	Innovative, able to develop new concepts and to deliver creative solutions

	An understanding of technology and its role in T&D – from e-learning to training administration systems, being computer literate
	Having Financial acumen, discerning value and an ability to tackle ROI issues
	Procurement and contract management skills; able to get the best from training suppliers
	Able to manage and develop trainers and to manage administrators and administrative processes
	Approachable; someone who others seek out for advice
	Good communicator, able to present with credibility and authority
	Assertive; commanding respect
	Well organised; a 'knowledge manager'
	Able to plan, and then be flexible within that plan
	Competent negotiator, always able to see the win/win situation
	Is Proactive, having drive and commitment
	Effective at managing client and stakeholder relationships
	Willing to challenge and push boundaries
	Willing to listen and build rapport
	Able to give good and consistent advice
	Able to think strategically and at an individual level

	Able to influence upwards
	Able to influence sideways
	Able to influence downwards
	Able to influence outwards

Key strength areas:

Areas that need most improvement:

Action plan of next steps:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their action plan for the next steps.

Training and the organisation – where's the fit?

Too often, when the pressure is on, training is one of the first activities to be reviewed.

In budget terms, it rarely makes sense to hinder a process that contributes to the bottom line, and good training does exactly that.

In organisational terms, training links people development to business objectives and has to remain one of the most influential departments in any company.

So where does it fit in?

To add credibility to any company, the HR and training departments have to have an influence at board level. Without their support, the importance of people development is simply words and not action. The board decisions have to be made with the future in mind, and training and development simply **IS** the future.

The training department has to prove itself beneficial to the organisation. Viewed like a jigsaw, training is a big piece. The starting point has to be an understanding of the capability of the people in the business. Their abilities are the foundation of the business – no less.

To determine the assistance the training department can offer the company, you need to find out what the organisation's goals, values and beliefs of what is viewed as 'excellent' are.

What are the company objectives?

How can you create programmes that link in with the values of the company?

What beliefs does the training department need to have to contribute effectively to the business performance of the company?

When you place the needed capabilities of the people in the organisation onto the company's goals, values and beliefs, you identify the skills gap that exists.

By determining these gaps and creating the steps that are needed to fill them, you establish credibility in your training department at an important level.

Training and development do not require a huge investment - for example, pragmatic, on-the-job learning can be as or more effective than training courses in many instances.

As a training manager, you create a place in the organisation by creating value.

Some departments are viewed as cost centres, others as profit centres.

***If you make your services valuable to the business,
you can be seen as a worthwhile investment.***

It is essential that the effect of training and development be monitored thoroughly for effectiveness.

In many organisations, training spend is rather like the old adage regarding advertising spend - half is wasted, but the trouble is we don't know which half!

Continuous assessment and development of training programmes and mapping the outputs on to organisational gain is therefore critical to improving the success of the business as a whole.

- Ask your directors exactly what their expectations are for the next year, two years, and five years.
- Create a framework to work within that is built around the objectives that come from these expectations.
- Determine how the learning and development plans can contribute to these objectives.
- Plan effective learning interventions to support these objectives.
- Show how the organisation's goals will be achieved by the training department.
- Develop a consistent form of communication with the stakeholders to establish further credibility.
- Be proactive in your plans so that the department is seen as contributing to the business success.

By supporting all business objectives, your training department fits in as a logical contributor to the organisation and will get the support you deserve when you need it.

How to build the credibility of your training department

As training manager, what do you think is your key role?

Our thought is that you should be supplying solutions to the business challenges of your management team so that you can remain ahead of the game.

This means you need to provide training and development programmes to management and staff that are **meaningful, hard-hitting, relevant, practical and cost-effective.**

In other words, make the people they are aimed at successful!

It's as simple as that!

So how do you make sure the rest of the business knows what you do?

How can you raise your profile within your business?

Well, if **supplying solutions to business problems** is your role, and providing **participative and excellent learning programmes** is the means you use to achieve that aim, you need to communicate it effectively so your voice is heard loud and clear.

Training can be both personally and organisationally effective, but only if it is **part of a participative process.**

The more that people in your company can participate in this process, the more effective it will be.

To make sure everyone knows the value you offer, get them involved at each stage of the process.

You could use:

- Stakeholder analysis
- Balanced scorecard
- Performance scorecard
- Participative training plan

With the stakeholder analysis, you **add credibility** for your training department by achieving a **sense of purpose** and a **clarity of aims.**

You identify all departments who have an interest or 'stake' in the business and try to understand the key measures of success from **their** business perspective

Who do you have to deliver to?

Who do you have to co-operate with?

What will happen as a result of hitting a particular need?

Answering these questions will help you decide on actions that will support the business needs. **You build credibility by providing those actions.**

Other departments will wonder how they got by without you!

Have you used a **Business Scorecard** before?

It's a great way of proving your worth and getting people to support you.

Having done the stakeholder analysis, you can divide the necessary actions into manageable categories to create a balanced scorecard.

It covers all aspects of the business from the perspective of:

- **Financial**
- **Customers**
- **Internal needs**
- **People**

Identify the measures associated with each one.

For instance, for finance, you'll consider turnover, profit and costs.

For customers, you'll consider sales and market share.

Internally, you'll consider structures, systems and the management process.

The people perspective will cover HR measures, recruitment, retention and people development.

Can you see how such a process would increase your credibility within the business?

To define personal objectives so that every department can identify how you can help them, you can produce a **performance scorecard**, which concentrates on the following areas:

- **Actions** or specific behaviours that lead to results
- **Clarity** on objectives and goals
- **Environment** or the factors that need to be in place to get results
- **Skills/knowledge** required to achieve the results

You can make your department even more credible by assigning a cost or financial value to each improved behaviour affected by any planned training programme.

Finally, introducing a **participative training plan** will create extra value for the business, because it will show that you have been actively listening to their requirements.

This sets you up as a 'friend' of other departments and shows that you have been proactive in your assessment of their needs.

Other departments will be always asking the question: 'How can we get better?' Your job is to plan your training programmes so that that they will always come to you for the answer!

You need to show your credibility every time you have contact with other departments.

Give them reasons to choose you. Make them realise that you have skills and attributes that other companies don't have.

'Sell' your benefits.

Beef up your offerings.

Build your value.

Go the extra mile.

Under-promise, over-deliver. (Sorry, had to get that one in somewhere!)

That way, you will stand out as a department that is valuable and productive to your company.

[How to put a winning Training Plan together](#)

An architect wouldn't dream of getting a builder to start work on a building until he was sure his plans were robust and firm.

The same should be true for your training. Without a firm plan, you're risking building on sand, and the results will be more from luck than judgement.

Here are some ideas about putting the plan together:

Make the plan a guide, not the law

The key is to get started. Start simple, but start.

Remember that there is no perfect plan.

It's not important to stick to the plan for the sake of the plan. The plan will likely change as you go along. That's fine, as long as you have notice that it's been changed and why.

Remember that Training and Development is a Process

Things will change as you go along. There is no destination with people improvement; we are continually on the journey. Viewing development as a process will help you get into the right mindset and enjoy the journey. Remember, the plan is general guide.

When putting the plan together, assess the following...

1. Are there any time lines that you should consider in your plan?

Do your people have to accomplish any certain areas of knowledge or skills by a certain time? If so, this may influence your choice of learning objectives and learning activities to achieve the objectives.

2. Are you pursuing training and development in order to address a performance gap?

A performance gap is usually indicated from the performance appraisal process. The performance appraisal document should already include careful description of the areas of knowledge and skills that must be learned in order to improve performance.

3. Or, is your plan to address a growth gap?

If so, carefully identify what areas of knowledge and skills are needed to reach the goals.

Consider checking job descriptions, lists of competencies or even networking with others already in the positions where you wish to develop the person's skills

4. Or, is your plan to address an opportunity gap?

If so, carefully identify what areas of knowledge and skills are needed to perform the job or role.

Again, consider job descriptions, lists of competencies or even interviewing someone already in the job or role.

5. Carry out an analysis

For example, conduct a SWOT analysis, including identifying the **strengths** needed to do the job, **weaknesses** that may have to be overcome, **opportunities** within the position and any **threats** to reaching the desired goals.

6. What budget is available to fund your plan?

You'll need to assess what resources you have to achieve your goals, e.g., to pay trainers, obtain facilities and materials for training methods, salaries for employees during attendance to training events, travelling and accommodation expenses, etc.

7. Identify your training goals.

By now, you should have a strong sense of what your training goals are, after having considered each of the above steps.

It's important that goals be designed and worded to be "SMARTER", that is, **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ceptable to you, **r**ealistic to achieve, **t**ime-bound with a deadline, **e**xtending your capabilities and **r**ewarding to you.

What tools can you use to actually put the plan together?

Activities	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the trainee's job. Identify the essential and desirable job skills that affect performance and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job description • Job profile • Knowledge, skills and attitudes required to do the job
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the trainee's skills, attributes, experience, situations and learning styles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews, discussions, listening skills, learning styles questionnaire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and agree development priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop TNA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess skill needed to do job. Agree current abilities of people to be trained in each skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manuals, standards, company policies • Skills assessment sheets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and agree tasks, activities, exercises to train each element to the required standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task delegation form • Other trainers, courses, external resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement, follow up and review. Measure, record and support. Adjust, prioritise and review again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback sheets • Appraisals • Interviews • Job assessments

How will you know if the plan is on track or needs to be changed?

1. Consider having a local training expert review the plan.

The expert can review, in particular, whether:

- your training goals will provide the results desired by you and the organisation
- learning objectives are specific and aligned with your overall training goals
- the best methods are selected for reaching your learning objectives
- your approach to evaluation is valid and practical.

2. Are approaches to evaluation included in all phases of your plan?

Ask yourself:

- Are your methods pre-tested before being applied?
- Do you understand the methods as they're being applied?
- Are you regularly providing feedback about how well you understand the materials?
- How will you know if implementation of the plan achieves the training goals identified in the plan?
- Are there any plans for follow-up evaluation, including assessing your results several months after you completed your plan?

[How to put a training budget together with limited funds](#)

This year you've got a training budget. Lucky you!

But it's only enough to make you tear your hair out!

How can you make a big impact with a limited budget for developing your staff?

Well, here are some thought-starters:

Firstly, make sure that the budget you've been set is REALLY all that's available.

There's always something else that is more important to management than how much you can spend – the trouble is, they don't know the implications of being stingy on the money front. It's not as important to them as it is to you.

However, work with them on this issue. Empathise with the budget-setter about his budget dilemma and reassure him that you are both working toward the same end goal – a productive team that is trying to achieve business objectives.

You can then explain the consequences and long-term side effects of the implications of cutting the training budget.

Make sure you've got all your ducks in a row here. You can quote figures to determine the effects, but do your homework first. **It will sound like you're just whinging if you complain without essential back-up information.**

If that still fails, discuss the situation with your training team and plan how you might be able to achieve a higher figure. Others may have ideas that you hadn't considered.

Let's assume that there's no change, and you've got to live with it.

Then, just as when running a home with a limited budget, you've got to become creative and determine priorities.

One area you can look at is how communication with staff occurs at the moment.

Maybe, through a co-ordinated corporate communications plan, you can all come up with ideas that would be of benefit to the training receivers.

You could decide to train a small number of 'key users' of information to be mentors to others and have them cascade their knowledge.

This means a change of process for many, and a different training approach – mentoring needs a whole host of different skills. However, it could provide you with assistance from unlikely sources.

Aligned with this, consider using more one-to-one coaching with personnel who really need it.

Link with line managers to pinpoint specific people who would benefit from receiving such coaching and develop their skills quickly.

This might provide specific impetus to back up your request for more funds as managers see the benefits for each member of their staff.

Try distributing the training and reference materials that have already been printed to departmental managers or designated expert coaches with a short "managers as leaders guide" to support management in their departmental tasks of implementing training.

Middle managers could distribute self-help materials at the staff meetings. For instance, user manuals, check lists, job aids, FAQs etc. could be analysed and adapted to provide on-the-job learning as necessary. It's not ideal, but may assist in developing skills on a short-term basis.

Focus on training options that don't involve a traditional classroom setup (e.g. virtual classroom) and therefore don't require the usual logistical expenses.

Get together with the IT department in your business to discuss the feasibility of electronic learning as an addition to any planned training.

Putting learning materials on the intranet or by using desktop learning might help some who either don't have time for training away from the job or don't see the benefit of it.

Check out the new methods of training that can provide excellent learning opportunities in much shorter time periods.

For example, many companies have incorporated accelerated learning techniques, along with NLP technologies, to drastically reduce training times.

We have been able to take 3 or 4-day courses and seen radical improvements by incorporating new strategies into one or even half-day programmes.

Feedback from these types of workshops has been excellent.

Delegates save time while learning more in their own learning style, and you save money by reducing the amount of time everything takes.

Ideally the budget should be set against the achievement of business objectives.

The cost to the company of replacing employees unable to adapt to new processes or ideas because of lack of training can be extremely high.

Analyse your priorities. Become creative in what you run. Re-think what methods you can use in people development.

A limited budget makes you become more creative by necessity. But it doesn't mean you have to lower your standards.

By ensuring you still contribute to business objectives, you provide a foundation for increased funds when they become available.

How to select external training suppliers

The ultimate measure of effectiveness of any training programme is the trainees' performance after it has finished.

The quality of their performance co-relates to the quality of the course design. So you need to evaluate courses prior to them being run.

If you are going to use an outside supplier, firstly establish the criteria you will use in evaluating them.

For example:

- Are objectives stated as outcomes relating to workplace behaviour?
- Is the message at a level appropriate to the audience?
- Are course materials effective? User-friendly? Current?
- Is there sufficient interaction, enough stimulus and response for the delegates?
- Are exercises well-designed, appropriate and time-effective?
- Is the cost reasonable and affordable relative to the benefits?
- Are processes to maximise transfer of training built in?
- Have evaluation tools been provided? Do they measure the desired behaviour?
- Has the course been run before and validated?
- Can the supplier provide customer feedback and results?

Benefits of using an outside supplier

- The contents and objectives of the course fit your needs
- The quality of the materials are superior to what you can produce yourself
- You cannot afford the professional talent of the kind used to produce the packaged course

- The training provider has a proven track record in the area they are training in
- The course objectives are more likely to be achieved with a packaged course
- By using outside companies, it frees up your time to create courses only you can design – specific for your business
- The course has already been developed, so the cost is usually less than developing a course yourself
- You receive support from the designers and tutors of the course
- The quality of delivery is maintained through the continual development of the trainers delivering the programme
- It's more cost effective to buy a course that fits your needs

A quick internet search will reveal hundreds of companies very willing to provide you with training programmes that promise near-instant results.

The proof often is not forthcoming until way after the event. So determine whether the outside supplier can meet your needs with a series of thought-starters:

- How much does the training company know about the subject you wish them to train?
- Have they worked with your industry/business before?
- How will they measure the success of any programme they run with you?
- Can you work with them during the preparation stages to determine the learning points are relevant to your trainees?
- How much of the material is off-the-shelf and how much of it is bespoke?
- Do you need a generic programme or does it need to be specific to your needs?

- What guarantees do the companies offer in respects to the quality of the materials?
- Will you be charged for design work, or is it a complete package price?
- Will you require follow-up work after the programme? Can they offer coaching and telephone support to the trainees after the events?
- What contingency plans do they offer if the programme doesn't hit the mark?

The answers to such questions will guide you toward the right external training suppliers.

Remember – every one of them will say they can deliver; go with your gut feeling as well as common-sense to tell you how effective they will be.

[How to gather and determine training needs quickly and effectively](#)

Questionnaires are the most usual approach for determining training needs, but this is not the only way, by any means.

Other ways include:

Organisational data

Your company will no doubt have data on sales figures, customer complaints, productivity, call rates, lost customers, etc.

These figures are useful in that they provide an objective figure that can be specifically measured. However, you might assume that deteriorating figures indicate training needs, when this might not be the case.

Key competencies and job descriptions

These can be used to ascertain training needs. The JD might point you in the direction of needed skill adjustments in certain key areas.

Guidelines, like Health and Safety measures, might identify areas that require mandatory training. Competencies will always give you a picture of the gap that exists between required levels and existing levels.

Focus Groups

These are useful when an in-depth analysis of an area is required. Normally consisting of between 6-10 persons, they create the catalyst for a wide-scale TNA survey.

The group can quickly give you feedback on major issues and the synergies created can be worth the time taken to hold such a meeting.

Interviews

Face to face and phone interviews can give you more background to situations.

You may know of challenges that the organisation is facing, but require more in-depth feedback before ascertaining whether there is a need for training and development. It might be a different root

cause that is creating the poor figures. Interviews will help you explore the current working practices and skill gaps.

Workplace observation

This is valuable as it captures what is happening in the real world.

Depending on your expertise and skill levels, you can pick up a lot of information in a short time by watching people perform their roles in a 'normal' environment.

Tests

Sometimes used in specific TNA processes, tests help you to ascertain the current skill levels and can compare them with the norm or required performance. Quick to administer, the test can sometimes put undue pressure on people and may not equate to normal performance levels.

Questionnaires

These are usually the quickest way of ascertaining needs, although the quality of feedback depends on the value that the participants put on filling it in. It's ideal if you require a large-scale feedback, because you can send it out instantly via email.

Questionnaires can help you prioritise among competing training needs and are relatively easy to administer, especially if they are handled on-line

To make sure you achieve results from your analysis quickly and effectively, ensure you do the following:

- Explain the purpose for the TNA clearly and carefully
- Explain how you intend to use the information gained
- Focus specifically on needs and don't get drawn into long wish-lists
- Make sure the questionnaires are based on real world situations, to stop people becoming sarcastic and cynical
- Do something with the finished product – distribute the main findings and your action plans
- Don't forget to thank all participants

By doing the above, you will find you have a much better chance of getting necessary training needs information quickly and effectively.

How to measure the effectiveness and ROI of your training

Your organisation needs a well-developed plan or roadmap for its workforce from the management team through to the people on the front line.

All training and development will need to be extended to all employees based on competency determined roadmaps and business needs.

Hence, identifying and developing a sound framework that can measure returns on this investment becomes of vital importance.

To help ensure a good return, your training must be focused on its needs and must result in measurable changes in knowledge, skills and abilities.

The investment must also result in behavioural change, make a difference to business results as well as meet the needs of the learner.

At the end of the day, it will be the learner's ROI that is most valuable.

Achieving good returns

A poor return on investment does not mean that the training is inherently ineffective. The learning may be poorly planned and badly implemented, if it is implemented at all. Employees who are involved in training without assessing needs, either theirs or the organisations', may find their newly acquired skills not effectively integrated into the workplace.

At a minimum an organisation needs to consider five basic questions with respect to learning and a healthy return on investment. These are:

What to train: what skills are needed to meet current and future business goals?

Who to train: who needs to be trained in the role that contributes best to meet business needs?

Where to train: where is training most effectively best carried out: on-the-job, in a face-to-face environment or does a mixture of these need to be put in place?

When to train: when is the best time to schedule training so it meets the dynamic demands of the workplace?

How to train: which delivery options are available to aid in the learning process and how should these options be combined to be most effective?

Measuring the results

Return on investment is determined by taking the actual cost of the training from the total value of the benefits.

This sum is then divided by the cost of the training.

The first step in measuring ROI is to itemise costs. Once costs are determined the various benefits can be counted. By doing this, you can prove to your managers that the work you do is vital and effective:

Try these steps:

- Defining your objectives
- Application
- Cost assessment
- Benefit assessment
- Doing the sums
- Evaluation

1. Defining your objectives

Here you define the reasons and goals for the training. Typically, objectives for training projects are diverse and can include increased productivity, reduction of errors and improved employee retention.

With or without defined objectives, many organisations barely get through the first stage of evaluation - relying on 'happy' sheets to let them know if the course went well and leaving it at that. A delegate who achieves a high score immediately following a training session may well be the kind of person who finds it difficult to convert what they learned to the real workplace, or may just forget everything after a weekend away from their desk. So what did their delegates actually gain from the course? How much of what was said by the instructor, or read and practised through the learning mechanism, was understood?

2. Application

Tests taken after a longer interval (perhaps 3 months after the course) can prove that certain topics have truly been taken on board.

On the other hand, it's the application of these topics within a business context which is what you really need to gauge. If goals have been set from the start, this will be achievable - Is there, for example, a reduction in errors on the system? Are there fewer calls to the help desk? Are more people sending emails and easing off internal memos?

Traps have to be placed in advance to capture this type of information and relate it back to the training course. Did a user always perform a task in one way and subsequently, after training, demonstrate a skill that was covered on the course? If the answer is yes, the course achieved a degree of success - but was it worth the cost?

3. Cost assessment

Itemising the costs of a training programme is a detailed job and requires commitment to the task - breaking down the share of a cost even if it could easily be lost in overheads.

What was the total cost of the course? And trainer development, programme materials, instructor/facilitator, facilities, travel/lodging/meals and administration?

Can you place a value on your delegate's time; even calculate a potential loss of earnings from a sales person who's been taken away from their customers for a day? If you can, and therefore obtain a well-researched figure that can be attributed to the cost of the programme, then display it against the list of benefits achieved (reduced errors, improved morale etc) to complete the cost assessment.

4. Benefit assessment

All benefits must be converted to a monetary value, which is easy enough for hard facts such as time savings, but difficult for soft data such as customer satisfaction.

Time savings can be figured by multiplying the number of hours saved by the workers' average hourly salary. Production gains are computed at the monetary value of the extra goods produced. If

such a number does not exist internally, external studies and expert opinion can be sources for the data.

Typical benefits you should consider include time savings, improved productivity, labour savings (less supervision, overtime or temporary help required), improved quality, and better morale.

If the measures have been taken before the project began these can be more than just estimates.

5. Doing the sums

Once you've taken into consideration the above, the calculation looks simple enough:

ROI = (value of benefits – cost of training) / cost of training

Return on Investment is usually expressed as a percentage, but what scale is it measured against? What is a good ROI?

Achieving a minimum of 25 per cent is a respectable goal, but some organisations are satisfied as long as they break even.

Management/leadership training programmes typically yield returns of 150% to 400% because the training affects not only the delegate's performance but also the performance of the delegate's team members or colleagues.

6. Evaluation

To maintain the credibility of your ROI findings, it's important to try to isolate the effects of training, rather than taking credit for improvements caused by other variables.

Ask the users, ask their managers, and ask the technical team. And if enough people tell you the training made the difference and allowed them to hit a business target they've never hit before, take pride in what the training has achieved and report it.

Other activities to complete to measure the effectiveness of your training

Some of the outputs may not be quantifiable in terms of direct monetary gains.

If we are asked to help a company measure the effectiveness of a training course here is something like what we would do.

For example, when we deliver Customer Service Training we always make sure that we have got some data as far as customer

satisfaction scores are concerned over a period of time before the training occurs.

We also ask the trainees opinion of where they see their strengths and weaknesses before the training and what they find most difficult to do.

We also ask their managers for some 360-degree feedback.

Then the training event occurs.

Immediately after the course we ask for the trainees perception of how better or worse prepared they are to deliver superior levels of customer satisfaction than they were before

3 months down the line we ask for this perception again plus we get feedback on them from their line manager with regards to specific behaviours associated with delivering customer service excellence.

We take a look at their individual performance statistics as well the overall customer satisfaction scores.

Conclusion

ROI builds a compelling financial case for funding any future training programmes. It can enable sound decision-making on which learning programmes to progress, and which to discontinue.

The more detailed the evaluation, the more information you will have on whether the training is working well and if not, why not? This will help you make informed decisions on which programmes to continue, and give you a better idea of the potential of future programs.

However, evaluations do take planning, time, and money. You may not be able to perform a full ROI on every skills development activity you undertake, but it's worth choosing to do it on the big ones.

In the final analysis, in an era of budget-cutting, training managers who can talk to their directors about ROI will stand a better chance of maintaining a skills and learning development strategy.

Self-development for the training manager – who trains the trainer?

You're expected to motivate, develop and train others; but how do you keep *yourself* up and motivated?

Remember what motivation is all about – having goals that inspire a person to achieve more and more. It's all about the 'motive' to take 'action'.

If you want to motivate yourself, **keep yourself up-to-date** in the career you have chosen. This will not only help in developing your own skills and knowledge, but also in achieving the right attitude to inspire yourself for improvement

There are lots of web-sites that support the training field – many offer free subscriptions to newsletters that keep you in touch with new training developments. When you come across a new idea, investigate it. See if it offers new opportunities to adapt your current training offerings. Keep an open mind and determine if it would be worth finding out more about new training ideas or processes. Become curious. Ask what you personally can learn from finding out new information. So **subscribe to as many web-sites as possible** – just go through your favourite search engines and you'll be amazed how much depth there is out there

Read good books and magazines. You cannot be successful without reading! I have over 500 books in my library and many more magazines, but not all of them are on training. Read a breadth of information so as to develop yourself on a wide variety of topics. Keep reading them on a regular basis throughout the month and not just in reading binges.

Listen to good information. Brian Tracy talks about turning your car into a University. Let's say you have a half-hour commute to work. If you buy, rent or borrow personal and professional tapes or CDs for your journeys to and from work, you will hear at least 20 hours a month of fabulous information. That's over 200 hours a year – more than you'd get at university! Get serious about your development. Get yourself into some good tapes and CDs. Give yourself a budget to spend on materials that will make you into a motivated, positive junkie! Above all, as you listen, apply the ideas when you get to work – share the thoughts with others in your department. Start a library in the office and get others to contribute what they learn at team meetings.

Maintain a positive group of friends and colleagues. Surround yourself with people who will challenge you, encourage you, build you up, be honest with you and be positive with you. You know it makes sense to develop yourself and these people will help you without effort.

You know what will happen if you do the opposite – there's no doubt that negative people's attitude will rub off on you – don't let others control how you will create a legacy for yourself.

Focus clearly on your goals. By setting goals and objectives for yourself and your department, you are in an attitude of motivation all the time. If you put your energies into your goals, you'll drive yourself towards a performance to be proud of.

Discipline yourself to live your priorities. With this discipline we find ourselves becoming more and more motivated. Becoming more disciplined, we achieve more wins, which makes us feel good, which motivates us even more, which makes us achieve more, which makes us more disciplined, which makes us feel even better, etc.

- Do you regularly read good books and magazines?
- Do you regularly listen to good material?
- Do you surround yourself with positive and supportive people?
- Do you know and focus on your goals?
- Do you discipline yourself to action even when you don't feel like it?

For your own self-development, you owe it to yourself to create a plan for designing your own future. View yourself as your own consultant to your career and you will become a life-long learner.

Take responsibility. Be proactive. Never stop learning. Then your effectiveness will grow in proportion to your self-development.

[How to make your training department run like clockwork!](#)

"If only there was an owner's manual to help us run our training team!"

The above is a statement that we often here from Training Managers with regards to managing the resources that they have in their team!

The situation becomes worse when you have just started your role!

Sometimes you just do not know where to turn!

So, let's see if we can give you a TOP 5 list of what to do to make your life a lot easier and make your team more effective.

1. It's all about credibility

We have covered this already in an earlier section but I have to say it is the most important factor by far.

Unless you have got the "business" and the "managers" on your side you will find it difficult to run an effective team.

Instead you will be too busy worrying about whether your ideas will be accepted by the business rather than just focusing on what you need to do to make a difference to the business.

You need to build support from the business by getting key stakeholders on your side. Communicate and update like you have never done before, sing your departments praises and, better still, prove your worth by action.

I have seen so many TM's talk a good game but sadly they are missing the most important element – ACTION!

Your hit list should include:

- Forming strong alliances with the key decision makers
- Informing the business what your role is in helping them
- Create a workable plan and tell everyone what it is
- Market yourself and your team to the business
- Clearly define your team's role and tell others what it is
- Ensure that you can evaluate what you are doing so that the powers that be can measure the ROI of your department

2. What to focus on?

It might be asking Granny to suck eggs but are you really focusing on the essential training requirements of the business or are you skirting around what really needs to be done because:

- Your team does not have the right skills to deliver
- You do not know the essential requirements
- You do not have enough resource
- You are not getting the backing of key people
- All of the above!

Your main area of focus is to concentrate on what will give the business the most benefit.

You need to determine what is most important to the business at this moment in time and also what it will be in 12 months time so whatever you put in place now has a continuance in a year's time.

Your hit list should include:

- Determine the training requirements of the business
- Determine the priority training requirements of the business from that list
- Determine what areas will have the highest impact and "bang for the buck"
- Determine the business challenges that each department is facing and work out how your team can help each one
- Focus your training on where it can do the most good

3. Making the plan a reality!

There is more to training than just running training courses (oh my god, I am talking myself out of potential business here!)

But seriously though; you should be thinking about the various resources that you have at your disposal when it comes to fulfilling training requirements.

In my experience you should be utilising a whole range of training aids and methods to get the desired result for it not only provides variety but some methods are more effective with certain types of training requirement.

For example I have seen Computer Based Training work really well when you have got some basic knowledge and skills that you need

to train the workforce on. This works especially well when you have got multiple sites. The content may not be the most "sexiest" to teach in a classroom environment - for example, such topics could include WORD and Excel.

Other approaches to fulfilling your training requirements could include:

- Training courses – In-house
- Training courses – open, external courses on specialist subjects
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Job rotation
- CBT (Computer based training)
- Action learning sets
- Distance learning courses
- Shadowing
- On the job training
- Resource centres
- CD/DVD/VIDEO TAPE sets
- Ecourses

4. Develop your skills!

One vital area that I see neglected in 90% of the Training Managers that I know is your own self-development!

You seem to be too busy with everyone else's training requirements that you neglect your own!

This needs attention!

You not only have to manage the business but you also have to manage your team as well as yourself and hence you need a wide variety of specialist skills to do yourself justice.

We have already covered some of the main skills required in order for you to be effective in your role but here is a short hit list of skills that you need to target:

- Interpersonal and influencing skills
- Relationship-building skills
- Resource planning
- Management and leadership
- Performance improvement
- Business knowledge

- Understanding your own business
- Determination and will to succeed
- Organisation skills

5. Is the glass half empty or half full?

Being a Training Manager can be one of the most rewarding careers in the world because you know as well as I do that you make a HUGE DIFFERENCE to the business.

However, not all people have this opinion and sometimes it can get you down.

Sometimes you can feel a little overwhelmed with everything; you might have too much on your plate with not enough resources; you are constantly battling with finance for budget; you are always sticking up for your team in meetings and you might at times feel very lonely with no support.

This is understandable!

But just remember why you actually doing this...

Remember that the good times outweigh the bad by a factor of 10 to 1. I know I speak from personal experience when I have delivered a course and one of the delegates have remarked about what a difference that made to them.

And that is the business that we are in – MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Not everyone has the ability to shape and help someone with their own skills and development. At the end of the day you are having an impact not only on the business but on a lot of lives in general as well and it is easy to forget that fact.

What you do for a living has more far reaching affects than the 95% of other professions and for that I salute you!

I hope you enjoyed this special report and if you ever need any help with any of your training requirements or are looking for an external training supplier, why not give us a try.

All the very best

Sean McPheat

<http://www.management-training-development.com>