

Sharpen Your Tools

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Successful Employee BOOSTERS

Investing in your people with effective training

In any company, the most valuable resource is its people. The people are the heart and soul of the organization, the ones who strive to meet customer needs and exceed customer expectations. In order to retain people, training must be built into the company culture—not bolted on.

Training is key to fostering individual success and long-term organizational growth. There are five types of employee training programs: new employee training, ongoing training, re-training, cross-training and self-training.

The following are a few tips to consider when developing training programs.

New Employee Training

This could be considered the most important training. New hires who are effectively trained are poised for long-term success, increasing the likelihood of retention. Remember to start off slowly with training. As James Parson's mentions in his Entrepreneur.com article, "How to Train a New Employee to Be an All Star," when a new employee feels overwhelmed, it actually makes it harder for them to retain information.

Top Tips:

- Train new hires for a minimum of two weeks. Offer weekly check-ins for up to three months.
- Schedule the new hire to shadow a member of each department, encouraging an understanding of how all departments contribute to the company.
- Focus at least one day of training on discussing the company's culture. Include a dive into the mission, vision, values and purpose.

Ongoing Training

With ongoing training, your company should develop employees for internal promotions and offer professional growth opportunities. Additionally, ongoing training should promote an in-depth understanding of the company's industry. For example, if your company provides handyman services, consider a "trades' training," which helps employees more fully appreciate the nuances of each trade.

Top Tips:

- Plan to consistently offer professional development opportunities, such as monthly webinar trainings.
- Offer training that supports a better understanding of the company's service offerings and industry.
- If you see growth potential in an employee, seek out custom training to support their specific area of expertise.

RE-TRAINING

The purpose of a re-training program is to support an employee who may be facing challenges. Re-training should be based upon a formal assessment and then customized directly to the employee's needs. Within six months, a new hire should be considerably adjusted to their role. But if they are consistently making mistakes, then take the time to re-train them. A few hours of direct help may be just what the employee needs.

Top Tips:

- Assess each new employee within six months, and provide customized re-training as needed.
- Upon re-training, schedule weekly check-ins to ensure the employee is progressing.
- Consider an incentive program to bolster employee performance.

Cross-Training

Why does the customer service department need to learn about the responsibilities of the accounting department and vice versa? It is important for employees to know not only their roles, but also the roles of each department so they can provide support and input as needed. Inc.com contributor Janine Popick agrees that cross-training helps the team understand each other's role in the company. In her article "5 Critical Reasons to Cross-Train Employees," she also notes cross-training helps when team members go on vacation, bridges the gap when someone leaves, helps the team grow and brings new ideas to business operations.

Top Tips:

- Cross-train between and within departments. There is value in cross-training account coordinators so they have a high-level overview of each customer account in the event they need to provide assistance.
- Set up a schedule for cross-training so all employees are not cross-trained at the same time. Consider cross-training at the beginning of each quarter.
- Be open-minded and welcome business ideas that may arise when employees are cross-trained.

Self-training

Regardless of whether you are a team of one or you lead a company of 100, you must continue to seek self-training, more commonly known as personal and professional development. This training should focus on skills that you want to strengthen or the skills necessary to bring your career to the next level.

Top Tips:

- Register for a course with Lynda.com, the online community that offers nearly 6,000 courses in business, technology and creative skills. Take the courses you want in the time that you have.
- Be inspired with TED Talks. Visit ted.com, where you will find more than 2,400 talks that will stir your curiosity, expand your thinking and garner new ideas to bring back to the workplace.
- Discover your strengths. Are you strengthening your strengths or weaknesses? Uncover your true strengths with an online assessment through Strengths Finder 2.0.

As you develop your training programs, remember to train both your organization's talent and yourself. Training will help you attract and retain your greatest assets and will also lead to a more cohesive and productive organization.

Kiira Esposito, Vice President of Business Development for Branded Group, focuses on internal business development, fostering the growth of the company's greatest asset—its team. Striving to understand each customer's business model and procedures, Esposito helps to ensure that her team exceeds the customer's expectations to #BeBetter. She has helped Branded Group grow from infancy to a 26-person team.