

Training and Development

Unit

5

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Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Assess the benefits of trainings and its needs.
- ✓ Develop a Training Programme

In the hospitality setting, training and staff development play an important role in your work-setting. A large number of branded hospitality retailers understand that trainings of staff are the key business techniques which effect service quality, customer satisfaction, profitability, and sales growth.

It is the responsibility of all employers to make certain employees are given safe work environments with co-workers who comprehend safe working techniques. Likewise, employers are required to make sure that employees carry out their jobs in a hygienic way and handle food in a way that cuts down the risks to customers.

Trainings have to go beyond the basic legal requirements. Training every employee has direct effect on business functioning. New research for the Hospitality Training Foundation indicates that training yields:

- improvements in productivity;
- improved sales per transaction;
- reduced wastage;
- lower levels of staff turnover;
- improved service quality;
- improved customer satisfaction;
- improved employee satisfaction; and
- increased employee flexibility.

Other than the direct benefits of training, it is vital to understand that *failing to train employees has its own costs*. If you allow new workers to learn through trial and error, there will be a lot of errors. This will lead to problems in service quality, employee dissatisfaction, more wages, lower productivity, and less employee flexibility.

All training has to begin with clear comprehensions of the objectives and purposes of what is to be achieved from the training sessions. Use a systematic method that concentrates clearly on the requirements of the person being trained, the required material and the way in which the training is to be evaluated.

The Benefits of Training

Estimating training benefits- especially in the circumstance of potential contributions to the improved business performance – is obviously difficult to measure. This is not shocking considering the range of training types undertaken within the hospitality industry and since other variables affect the training activity, for instance, the quality of the duration of training programme.

Furthermore, it is obvious that a wide range of influences influence the business performance of an establishment, for example:

- economic climate;
- levels of investment; and
- marketing and promotional activities.

The major benefits of training are as follows:



Fig. 1

When thinking of the purposes and goals of the training program, it is vital to keep in mind that training:

- primarily changes individual behaviour. Through changes in behaviour direct benefits are about employee performance
- improves employee performance, which can lead to expected financial benefits, that is, less costs, more sales and better profitability.

Identifying Training Needs

The recognition of training requirements normally flows from staff appraisal process. Mainly you are trying to pinpoint the knowledge, work skills, and social skills, which the workers need for both current and future jobs.

A number of areas have to be thought about:

- where the individual performance is not up to the required standard;
- where the identified business goals require all staff to be trained to be more effective - say, to improve productivity or to increase up-selling;
- new staff requiring induction training;
- when planned changes need new skills or knowledge; and
- when individuals or teams will be changing jobs in the future and training will lead to personal development.

It is beneficial to think of the types of jobs. Make their list and then think of the relationships between them.

1. Consider flexibility, to what extent is it beneficial to have workers specialise in the various departments?
2. Does specialisation lead to rigidities in the workforce? Is it desirable to train staff to be functionally flexible and who can then be employed in different roles?

After completing the list of job types, produce a list of duties that have to be performed in each job. This procedure of making up job descriptions aids in clearing your thinking about the range of tasks that need to be carried out and flowing from this, the knowledge, skills, and social skills required to carry them out.

Now compare individual workers performance against the needs of the jobs as required now and in the future.

1. Think of the changes required now and in future due to expansion, new equipment, new products, or new services.
2. Consider the personal development of current employees and the consequence of training and development and further education.

Collect all the training requirements, you have acknowledged and place them in order of priority, keeping in mind their value, the unit's goals, and the easiness with which they can be implemented. In certain situations, short training sessions in a quiet period might help to focus on problems that can be very beneficial.

Compare and contrast training requirements and resources required against those which are available. Clearly, there may be surplus resources you may call on and a previous investment in building a base of staff or managers who have been 'trained – to – train.' This helps as they provide give a better resource base. Furthermore, the greater the number of

people, who are trained to provide training to others, the less restrictions there are on offering training.

The Training Plan

The plan of action is born out of the identifying training needs and priorities. You must decide if an identified need should be met right away and keep in mind the discussion about the cost incurred of not training workers; you have to think of the implications of putting off the delivery of an identified training requirement.

While a written plan of action might appear to be formal, it is an investment in time that pays off:

1. Establish the time scale of the plan. You can develop a broad plan spread over twelve months, but there might also be short-term goals – say, to increase average sales per transaction. A realistic target helps in evaluating the training;
2. Chart the required resources and those that are available to meet you goals – budget for them – keep in mind that you have to make them work;
3. Being over-ambitious is pointless. Be matter-of-fact. Even if there are greater numbers of identified training activities than you are able to resource, do not try to do everything. Begin with what is achievable;
4. Work out the numbers that need to be trained and the varying targets to meet;
5. Do not forget to include induction training and training requirements of new staff. Places where staff turnover is high, or where new recruits are hired for an upcoming busy period, you have to allocate time for their training;
6. Next to every item on the training plan, ascertain where, when, how, and by whom the training will be conducted;
7. If possible set dates against the training events; and
8. Have a way of monitoring and evaluating the process – is the training effective?

Carry Out the Training Programme

It is possible that there is a variety of training needs identified in your unit. Some of them will be geared towards all or a specific group of the staff, in other situations, you may wish to just train individuals.

- In certain situations, the training sessions may be short, lasting only about 20 minutes;
- In other circumstances, there may be a need for a series of different sessions building on integrated set of skills – you might wish to train in completing a separate task in every session; and
- In still others, you may wish to train an individual in knowledge and social skills.

It is imperative that the sessions are planned with care as you are looking to achieve a specific result:

1. What is expected of the trainee after the session? This will most likely be expressed in verbs – make a Manhattan, wash the counter, and change the till roll, etc.;
2. Resolve where and when the session is to be conducted – at the job site before the service, during the service but in a low period, or in normal service. Keep in mind that acquiring knowledge say, recipes, or legal issues when away from the pressures of the service. Learning a skill needs practice, thus it might be best to do this during service, but you might have to work with the trainee, as a result things like time period and selecting the right sessions might become important;
3. Make a list of the training events, stages needed, and the amount of time each will require;
4. Identify the subjects that will be covered;
5. Determine the teaching and learning methods to be used – will materials be needed for example, when training to make a cocktail? Make a list of the required materials and highlight them. Will a video or an online service be employed?;
6. Specify who will conduct the session; and
7. Decide how the trainee's achievement of the objective will be assessed. Will it be through demonstration or observation during the job? Will it require tests?

Do not forget that the method through which the trainee is assessed is a by-product of the pre-established objectives.

Evaluating The Training Undertaken

Once the training program is finished, you have to assess its impact on the objectives established by you:

- Was the entire plan completed? What were the problems encountered? How can they be overcome in the future?
- Think over the facets of the program that worked the best and worst. What has this taught you?
- Go over the training conducted in detail. Which techniques were more successful which were not?
- What priorities should be established for future trainings? Can the identified points that could not be included before be concentrated upon now?
- Lastly, using the objectives outlined before, what benefits did the training activities bring to the business?

Developing a Training Programme

Training is a vital part of management function and is needed to develop and guarantee quality performance.

In the hospitality industry, a number of hotel establishments take training seriously, others discuss it at length but they have no real agenda in place. Those who develop, establish, and can continuously upgrade their training sessions think of them as great assets of Human Resources Management. They provide the management team a chance to build a team of qualified employees capable of performing duties according to preset standards. A good training program makes sure that mistakes are cut down since procedures are demonstrated and explained.

Planning and creating a training program for front office employees includes pinpointing the errands performed by the front office staff, setting up step-by-step procedures for every errand, choosing who will be doing the trainings, administering the program, and reviewing the steps in the process.

Identification of Tasks and Job Management Skills

The duties carried out by each employee are identified through the job description. Job descriptions are founded on the job analysis, which lists in chronological manner the day to day errands performed by the worker. For example, the front office clerk carries out the mentioned tasks below during the day shift:

- 6:00 a.m. Enters start time with PMS.
- 6:05 Talks with night auditor regarding occupations of the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shift; checks the front desk message book for latest operational notes.
- 6:10 Obtains **cash bank**, a specific amount of paper money and coins issued to a cashier to be used for making change, from controller; counts and verifies contents.
- 6:30 Reviews daily report concerning occupancy rate and daily room rate.
- 6:35 Obtains function sheet (list of activities and special events, receptions, and the like) for the day.
- 6:37 Obtains housekeeper's report for the previous day.
- 6:40 Calls housekeeping and maintenance departments to determine the communications list (a log of unusual occurrences or special messages that the front office personnel should know about) from the previous shift(s).
- 6:45 Calls restaurant to learn specials for lunch and dinner.
- 6:50 Reviews expected checkouts and reservations for the day.
- 6:55 Checks out guests until 9:30 a.m.

Each one of the pinpointed tasks can be further broken down into skills so that solid training programs can be created. This may appear to be a very painstaking procedure. It is! However, only the first step is tedious. Making use of each of the jobs in the front office guarantees including all jobs needed for delivering hospitality to the guest are contained in the training program.

Preparing Step-by-Step Procedures

Step-by-step instructions for each job aid the trainee in comprehending how to carry out the tasks correctly. This method also makes it easier for the trainer to prepare and convey the training sessions better.

If a PMS is available to the front office, the computer terminal operator has to learn to enter the commands and data sequentially. Documentation, instructions on operating computer software by writing them down have to accompany all property management systems. The documentation may be employed for putting together the step-by-step training methods for using the PMS and it can be used as a basis for creating step-by-step procedures for other jobs.

A step-by-step method to fulfil the job of guest checkout on the PMS can include the following:

1. Inquire about the guest's accommodations;
2. Enter the guest's room number;
3. Inquire about late charges;
4. Confirm method of payment;
5. Print a hard copy of the folio;
6. Allow the guest to review the folio;
7. Accept cash, credit card, or bill-to-account;
8. Enter amount of payment;
9. Enter method of payment;
10. Enter the department's code;
11. Check for a zero balance;
12. Give the guest a copy of the folio;
13. Inquire if additional reservations are needed; and
14. Make farewell comments.

Each of the above mentioned headings may be further divided as required. For instance, as a subdivision of step 6, a new desk clerk can be taught to single out the chief sections of the folio and the charged to the guest so the guest knows all the charges making up the total. The guest then can inquire regarding the charges during this time, instead of when the bill is created and eliminate the extra work the controller's department has to deal with.

Management Concepts

Beyond task performance additional, other less concrete skills have to be included in a training program for front office workers. Management of stress, time, and organisational skills are some of the issues that have to be covered. While these skills are gone over in a seminal format, they can't be segregated and covered in seclusion.

Such skills are better grasped when incorporated into the training session in totality, so they can be applied to task performance. For instance, the worker being taught to check out a guest should know that this process can take place under difficult circumstances: they could be in a position where there are long queues, several guests inquiring about charges,

and pressure from waiting guests to keep the line going. Staying collected under such a situation comes with experience, but the facets of stress management will help even the freshest employee handle a tense situation. Self-control and concern for the guest's wellbeing are dominant.

Managing time is another vital skill that allows employees to carry out given tasks in established times. For instance, the different departments rely on front office workers to pass messages to guests and other departments regularly; otherwise, a lot of confusion can result for everyone concerned. Organising skills aid employees to deal with the load of work in a systemic method rather than going from one task to another without finishing any of them. Finishing up the paperwork regularly, instead of letting it collect in a big pile, is one example of the way time management and organizational skills can enhance performance.

Steps in the Training Process

Preparation, delivery, trial and error, and follow-up are the recommended steps in the training procedure.

Preparation: "Get Ready"

The trainer has to plan all elements of the training session. The initial step is to get the behavioural objectives for trainees in order. Such objectives will pinpoint what every trainee needs to know once the session is completed and it will allow the trainees to attain the desired changes in behaviour. The objectives will help trainees in building their knowledge base as they develop skills. Behavioural objectives should outline what the trainee is required to know, how well they should be able to do it, and by when the task should be finished. For instance, one behavioural objective for a guest check-in may be: "The trainee will be able to perform the guest check-in procedure for a guest with a prior reservation on the PMS with 100 percent accuracy in five minutes."

This concentrates the trainer's attention on training the clerk desk in fulfilling the check-in for a guest having a reservation but not for one without a reservation. The trainee should also already know the step-by-step method of operating the registration module on the PMS. The target of 100% accuracy in five minutes may not be attainable during the actual training session since practice is needed. Hence, the desk clerk will have to practice to attain the necessary speed.

After getting the behavioural objectives ready for every training session, the trainer has to know the way to present the new skill to the trainee, link the skill to other parts of the employee's job, go over the presentation area, session scheduling, and provide ancillary materials, such as, the audiovisual presentation equipment and printed material.

Skill presentation requires the trainer to show the step-by-step method with the needs of the trainee in mind. This is not an opportunity to show off how fast the trainer can check a guest in. The trainer needs to be patient and look at the task from a beginner's point of view. The trainer has to start by explaining what is expected of the trainee. Next, the main instructions have to be repeated, especially when showing complex equipment. The trainee

also has to be informed of where they can go if they need help (as printed instructions, along with user-friendly “help” program on the terminal, or from another employee). Trainers always have to explain slowly and check that the trainee comprehends everything said as he or she continues the session.

The trainer also has to make certain that the materials required to deliver the session are all ready. Have DVDs, CDs, and videotapes been ordered and received? Have they been previewed? Is the VCR operational? Is the room scheduled for satellite or **PictureTel** reception, the use of telephone lines to send and receive video and audio impressions? Have **telephone initiation and reception agreements**, contracts between senders and receivers of PictureTel regarding specifications of the call and who foots the bill for the call been set? Have the satellite dish reception coordinates been set? Have all the printed matter needed for the training and follow-up been duplicated? Are sufficient numbers of copies ready?

All these preparations are essential to making a professional presentation. They allow detailed training to take place without interruption and give the trainee a way to review once the session is completed.

Delivery: “Show Me”

When showing skills, the trainer has to think of the presentation from the trainee’s view point. For instance, present the skill with the trainee to your right or left so that the trainee can see as the presentation is done. The trainer has to speak clearly and distinctly. Fast talk or mumbling will only confuse the trainee. Not only does the trainer have to think of what he or she is saying but how it is said. If the trainer’s tone of voice indicates that the trainee is incompetent, they will push away the trainee. Hence, the trainer should promote the trainee’s efforts, give praise when a skill is learned, and forever be patient.

Every industry has its own terminology. Trainees need to become acquainted with this terminology during training. For instance, house count, reg. card, no-show, sleeper, full house, and late arrivals are all words used in the industry. Regardless of whether the trainee has prior experience from another lodging property, these terms should still be reviewed, to ensure that the newcomer understands how each is used at the current establishment. At a previous job, for example, the term late arrivals could indicate guests who arrive after 9:00 p.m.; whereas at the existing property, it could refer to anyone arriving after 4:00 p.m.

The session needs to be divided into logical steps proceeding in a sequence. The step-by-step procedure prepared previously will enable the front office manager to impart the material in a systematic way. Trainees will comprehend such forthright instructions like “Press this key on the keyboard to activate the registration menu” without trouble as compared to “Here is the registration menu...Oh, wait a minute. Let’s go back to the reservation menu to see something...” Printed matter that outlines the process will aid trainees to learn the skill while practicing it.

The trainer is encouraged to think out loud, explaining every step and its importance as the skill is established. The trainee can then logically follow the demonstration. If there are

questions, the trainee will be more confident inquiring about them. This process of communication encourages the trainer, who also sees if the trainee is acquiring the skill. The greater the involvement of the trainee in the process, the higher the chances of learning taking place.

Upon completion of training, the front office manager needs to observe how the employee carries out his duties. If the skills are carried out in an appropriate way, it means that the training was successful. Alternatively, if he is confused and keeps making mistakes, it could mean that the trainer was not ensuring that the trainee was following. As with all things, being a good trainer requires experience.

Methods of Presentation

The methodology used by a trainer to train an employee is determined by the specific topic being presented. Clerical and computer skills are typically taught through demonstration and on the job training. Role - play is used to demonstrate customer maintenance relations, videotaping and succeeding analysis of the role-plays, or watching and analyzing commercially arranged videos or cable network programs.



Fig. 2

Skill Demonstration

Skill demonstration of particular task is done by the trainer to show to carry out certain jobs. The trainer will carry out the skill in an orderly way and then, allow the trainee to practice, with the advantage of the trainer's presence to provide constructive feedback on the spot.

On-the-Job Training

On-the- Job Training is when the employee gets to see and practice a task while carrying out their job. This technique has been the stronghold of training in the hospitality industry. Planning and development of a training program followed by setting up the training sessions have to be integrated into on-the- Job Training for successful results. This technique trains the new employee to conduct the tasks on an “as-needed” basis: the employee only learns the task when required on the job. With this technique, though, the job demands come first and training takes second place.

A result of failing to follow through, leads to the employee never learning the proper procedures for carrying out the tasks. When this happens, it means that the foundations on which good training is based - planning, development, organisation, delivery, and follow-up procedures - are compromised. This leads to the employee not gaining all the necessary skills required to do an efficient job.

Role-Playing

Role- playing allows the trainee a chance to practice customer service situation by acting the part prior to doing the job in reality. The front office staff will have to frequently be the sounding board for grievances and act as problem solver, even in situations where the problem is not related to front office. Through experience, we know that a time will definitely come when a customer with guaranteed reservation will show up and there are no vacancies, or a customer will get a key before the room has been cleaned, or the customer ends up waiting exceptionally long time before being allotted a guest room.

The alternatives to deal with such situations are frequently not communicated to new workers. It is only through trial and error that they find other accommodations at a different hotel when yours is overbooked, to apologize sincerely and provide a different room to the guest sent to a dirty room, or to suggest a snack, or the patio lounge to the guest who has to wait for an hour before his room is ready. Role- playing gives the new worker the chance to confront such situations before they take place. The aim is to make sure that the employee will be able to deal professionally and provide the service with a smile when the situation actually happens.

If videotaping equipment is available, trainees can be taped in role-playing sessions. This can be reviewed later with the employee to give feedback on their performance. The trainer can make an analysis of the worker’s eye contact, diction clarity, speed of speech, poise, dress, and posture. This method is invaluable in getting new employees ready to deal with stresses of the busy front desk or an irate telephone caller.

Commercial Videos

Many commercially produced videotapes are made available by the Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, which front office managers may utilise when they train front office workers. These tapes depict customer service situations, allowing new workers to see how different customer relations are handled by other front office workers.

The tapes should be previewed by the trainer and a list of discussion questions prepared to make sure that the employee comprehends the aim of the tape and is able to apply what is seen to the job.

Distance Learning

There are new advances in **distance learning** offering educational and training options anytime, anywhere and at any location through Hospitality Television (HTV), a for profit hospitality educational business situated in Louisville, Kentucky that offers satellite broadcasts to hotels, restaurants, and food vending facilities. HTV provides training segments on issues, such as, team building, marketing strategies, customer service, and sales building in food and beverage sectors that let hospitality managers to train their workers while working. They also have similar applications for front office setups. For example, a manager may select a specific training session for a number of different shifts of workers to watch at different times during the week. Later, the manager can utilize the information as the foundation of a training session.

Trial and Error: “Let Me Do It”

At this point in the process of training, the new worker provides a demonstration of the skill to the trainer, who after observing the initial attempt, provides quality criticism of their performance. The behavioural object is beneficial at this stage as the trainer can use it to establish if the employee is carrying out the skill in accordance with the desired standards.

The trainee has to be encouraged to repeat a procedure as often as needed to master the skill and reach the desired goals. The trainer can also provide pointers on how much practice other workers required to learn a skill similar to this one. Also, by saying things like, “Many employees must practice five to six times before they catch on and reach the desired speed.” Lastly, it will let the trainee to know that the instant mastery of the skill is not expected. The trainer needs to clarify how long the trial-and-error period lasts. Some added training may be necessary.

The step-by-step technique will be very beneficial to the trainee in carrying out the skill. The portions of the skill demonstration that are unclear or confusing can be clarified with individual effort.

Follow-up: “Check My Progress”

The trainer has to follow up after the program has run its course. It is an essential final element in any solid training program. The trainer can create a **training tickler file**, a database that maintains a record of the training sessions and alerts trainers to vital upcoming dates for every new worker, listing the name of the training session, its date, comments, and follow-up date.

Administering a Training Programme

The training program has to include provisions for administering it. A lot of the details have to be coordinated. Precise but, flexible schedules for making training sessions available have to be set-up and maintained. An employee training progress chart has to be produced and displayed. Content preparation and copying of the training materials have to be done in a timely fashion.

The obligation of administering the training program is on the front office manager. If this duty is passed on to an assistant in the front office or human resources department, administering details must be discussed with that individual. Useful training of front office positions is not easily applied in the hospitality industry. The nonstop flow of people at the front desk, special events, registrations, telephone calls, vendor calls, emergencies, and other needs mean the front office manager has to balance the immediate requirements and those of the future. But for quality hospitality products and services to be made available, training procedures of new employees have to be established and planned well.

Cross- Training

Even the most fundamental training programs have to include provisions for developing worker skills that will prove to be useful to the establishment. The arbitrary nature of business volume and uncertain employee availability of hospitality industry requires staff to be versatile. Cross - training, means training workers to carry out multiple jobs and duties is essential.

Front office staff personnel capable of carrying out more than one job can rescue the front office manager in a crisis situation. Cross - training will help to manoeuvre the front office manager out of sticky situations if they are planned for. Training and maintaining precise records showing which employees can carry out other job responsibilities, cross-training can play a critical part in the lodging business. If cross-training is to be offered, then, it should be a part of the job description and pay rate. Prior to making plans for cross-training, it should be noted that certain labour unions forbid the practice of not assigning contractual duties, and in those situations, cross-training would not be a valid option.

Developing a Trainer

Careful thought should go into selection of the person who will be training the new employees. This individual needs to have professional attitude and be able to instil positive attitudes and enthusiasm in trainees for their jobs. The selected individual has to be in management or hold senior staff position. Additionally, the trainer must be familiar with all aspects of the employee's job and know training methods.

Expertise of performing tasks comes with practice following the formal training. In training session, experience has no substitute. The trainee will most definitely have precise questions regarding tasks, and the trainer has to be able to provide the accurate answers as

fully as possible. Such answers are not always available in policy manuals or training handbooks – frequently, they are only learned by hands-on experience.

The aptitude to teach is vital. The trainer must be able to plan a session in a systematic, incremental way. It is also equally vital that the trainer has good communication skills. The training session can include discussions, demonstrations, and workshops. The trainer also needs to have knowledge of all of the equipment in the front office and be able to prepare printed instructions and be able to run the audiovisual equipment. They should know the fundamental steps of the training procedure. Lastly, trainers need to sympathise with the new employee, maybe by recalling how helpless they felt when they were new to the job. Patience is vital, along with cautious explanation. Trainers, who provide rushed explanations, avert questions and end up with trainees who don't feel ready to carry out their jobs.

The trainer needs to hold professional and positive view that is supportive of the company's goals of making high-quality services and products, maximising profits, and limiting costs.

Experienced managers are familiar with skilled senior employees, who have mastered the tasks that are required for the job, but harbours a negative attitude for the company or management that is representative of the company. It is not advisable to get the help of such workers in training new employees. Moulding attitudes, teaching skills, and passing on knowledge are the responsibility of managers. Allowing new hires to be in the presence of unprofessional people, or those with negative attitudes, during the process of training, undercuts the aim of the session. The trainer must represent the company and show good employer and employee relations.

Suggested Further Reading:

- ✓ *Debra F. Cannon, Catherine M. Gustafson, (2013), Training and Development for the Hospitality Industry (EI)*
- ✓ *Michael J. O'Fallon, Denney G. Rutherford, (2011), Hotel Management and Operations*
- ✓ *Kaye (Kye-Sung) Chon, Thomas Maier, (2010), Welcome to Hospitality: An Introduction*
- ✓ *Malcolm Warner, Keith Goodall, Management Training and Development in China*