TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT IN HOTELS : A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The goal and mission of the Training and Development function in an organization is to line up initiatives and activities to the overall organizational objectives. Organizations that implement new-age training and development practices are likely to report better financial & growth performance in comparison to their competitors. Training and development also help an organization develop human capital as assets. Training is more important internally than externally. The top-down approach, starting from the top management is the best. It doesn't work the other way round. Once the right environment is created with the system is put in place, it becomes the organizational culture. In-house training has many benefits; it is an excellent way to improve the skills and performance of the employees and management. It is economical, in fact, it can be free as the trainer is already employed with the company and no money goes out of the organization. It can be enhanced by the use of computer-based training and virtual reality. Computer-based training that stimulates realistic experience is a very good learning tool. Online learning platforms can be used that can customize training programs for the organization. For creating an innovative training environment within the organization it is important to devise incentives, develop departmental trainers, conduct incentive meetings, create a Learning and Development pool, use virtual classrooms, make use of recorded training sessions and award certifications. The focus is to stay relevant in the VUCA world.

1.1 Research Design :

1.1 a) **Purpose :** The purpose of this study is to explore the new developments and best practices in the training and development domain in hotels.

1.1 b) **Scope :** The scope is restricted only to the hotel industry and does not cover any other sectors.

1.1 c) **Methodology :**

The Primary Data is collected through observational and Experiential Method as the researchers conduct training programs to the Hospitality Industry on a regular basis. Best practices are studied in Hotels through Observation and interactions with the Training Managers.

The secondary data is collected through journals and other published sources.

1.1 d) **Limitations :**

The study is restricted only to Hotels and does not cover any other sectors of the industry.

Data collection is qualitative in nature and could not be quantified.

The study is based on observation and experiential methods and does not include any other data collection methods

1.2. Review of Literature

Training and Development has a positive impact on the performance of employees, their productivity and has benefits to the organization as a whole. (Salah, 2016). Training and Development practices on human capital have a positive and significant relationship. Training is considered as an investment rather than an expense and it

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leads to higher productivity. (Nieves & Quintana, 2018).The departmental managers have an important role to motivate their team members to acquire new knowledge and skills with different levels of training for different team members. (Ganesh, 2015). Training design, on the job training, delivery style and training and development has a significant effect on organizational performance and enhances the overall performance of the organization. (Khan, Khan, & Muhammad, 2011). Systematic training helps to enhance employee morale and satisfaction, the productivity of the organization and improvement in the service quality. Evaluation of training is essential to monitor the success of the training. (Prashanth, 2015).

Human Resources Department has a key role to play in disseminating information about the objectives and importance of training to the employees and the way to implement their new knowledge and skills in their workplace. (Ahammad, 2013). Training and development have become an important element in the hotels to attain competitive advantage for sustainability. (Hazra, Ghosh, & Sengupta, 2017). Training and Development in any organization have become an integral part of skill development. Hotels organize training on a regular basis for the hotel teams to offer good service to their guests by keeping in overall goals and objectives while designing the training programs. (Malik & Vivek, 2018).

Training and Development and Co-workers relationships have a significant relationship with employee engagement. This is based on these two independent variables and will enhance employee engagement in the hotel industry. (Lai, Lee, Lim, Yeoh, & Mohsin, 2015).

Training is an important tool to attract and retain talent. Technology has a great influence on training and needs areas of training are product knowledge, compliances, and processes in hotels. (Tapkir, 2018).

1.3. Innovations in Training and Development

The goal and mission of the Training and Development function in an organization is to line up initiatives and activities to the overall organizational objectives. Employees may have weaknesses in skills required at their workplaces; making it necessary for a training program to strengthen those skills. A development program, on the other hand, creates equity among employees. The purpose of training and development is to organize, facilitate and expedite the acquisition of the desired knowledge, skills, and attitudinal abilities required for effective job performance.

Good trainers are of the belief that training is not a department or a profession but a mindset. A trainer is a mentor, coach, counsellor or a person who likes empowering others. In the process is able to create more of his or her kinds. A person with that mindset would always want to be updated and relevant to the times by means of latest trends, techniques or technology. For instance, the Apeejay Institute of Hospitality Navi Mumbai, learning centre of the Apeejay Surrendra Parks Hotels Ltd that operate a collection of luxury boutique hotels in India. They have the advantage of being a hotel school; with access to training across The Park Hotels the faculty is constantly updated and students as well their employees are benefitted from this.

The organizations that use innovative training and development best practices often report better financial performance, customer satisfaction and develop it's human capital that can meet competitive challenges. It is also observed that organizations now recognize the impact of learning through training, development and knowledge management on employees strengthening their skills, job performance, job satisfaction and career advancement.

A trainer is responsible for making the participants attending the sessions to become the best versions of themselves. In addition to having good subject knowledge the trainer should make the training sessions interesting by addressing the WIIFM (What's In It for Me). While dealing with adult learners; the facilitation process used should be meant for them by adopting the basics of andragogy.

Trainers need to liven up their training sessions with the use of anecdotes, case studies and examples from their own experiences. Activities, games, and use of humour come in handy.

1.4. Training is more important internally than externally

The writers are strong believers of having an environment conducive to training, within the organization. The top-down approach, starting from the top management is the best. It doesn't work the other way round.

Training is like a mother at home. If she is there she may not be given the due importance or recognition for her efforts but the moment she is not around, everything goes haywire and she is missed immensely. Similarly, an organization may not be applauded for the right things that it does but mistakes are noticed with a hawk's eye. There's no discounting at all. Processes are successful only with ongoing training, and training is an ongoing process! Trainers need to constantly innovate, find better systems and programs that are effective.

1.5. Benefits of in-house training

In house training is an effective way to improve the skills as well as performance of the employees and the management. It can be free as the trainer is already employed with the company and no money goes out of the organization; proving it to be a highly economical model. Moreover, it is being delivered by the person who knows the organization and the systems well. It has many benefits such as :

- Better job satisfaction and morale among employees
- Increased employee motivation
- Reduced employee turnover
- Enhanced company image
- Efficient Risk management (by means of diversity training and gender sensitization).
- Increased efficiencies in processes ultimately leading to financial gains
- Increased capacity to adopt new technologies, methods, and systems.
- Increased innovation in terms of strategies, products, and services.

1.6. Use of computer-based training and virtual reality

Computer-based training that stimulates realistic experience is a very good learning tool. Mobile-based learning is an extension of virtual reality. It enables organizations to promote the concept of lifelong learning among people; to learn anytime, anywhere and at the comfort of one's own home, office or any other place.

Big Data is finding it's usage in training and development as more learning activities take place digitally now as we collect more data that can unveil more insights into training and learning. This will give us better insights of our learning processes, learner's behaviours and understanding. Also assess the effectiveness of the organization's training programs.

Video-based learning, virtual training coach; chatbots, etc. can be used effectively to impart interactive learning. Virtual training avatars can be used in meetings, interviews as well as imparting training on various subjects and disciplines. (Harper, 2019)

1.7. Some thoughts on creating innovative training environment within the organization

1.7 a) Devising incentives

It's a fact that monetary incentives are short-lived and they rarely work whereas empowerments as well as opportunities for learning and development do. For instance, the trainer can be given the freedom to plan sessions and modules that'll have the highest impact and acceptability among the participants. A good trainer enjoys training others and likes the process of developing others; not everyone is wired to do so.

1.7 b) Developing departmental trainers

Employees from the operational departments who have a passion to train others can be used to create a focus group. Brainstorm to formulate ideas on the best incentives for them; recognition itself may play a big role in this regard. Involving them in developing training audits, training need analysis and designating them as 'subject matter experts' would be encouraging. The departmental trainers can further be groomed into Training or Learning and Development Managers. Lapel pins can also be awarded to the trainers; it can do wonders just like the service medal does for the armed forces personnel or a mention in the official email signature which acknowledges the trainer's role or contribution.

1.7 c) Conducting incentive meetings

A 'yearly incentive meet' or trainer's conference at

the organizational level at a good location works well. The trainers can be acknowledged for their efforts and share their individual best practices. Having a trainer's conference call every quarter can be a great platform for exchanging ideas, feedback on the training model/ modules as well as addressing issues. Also, yearly training calendars can be chalked out.

1.7 d) Creating a Learning and Development pool

The organization can create a Learning and Development pool where trainers list their expertise and modules that they can deliver. This will help in grooming in house talent and the organization will have a great resource in place.

Training is the essence of any transformation. It is said that no man can teach others but he can help him find the answers within. When the organization uses innovative and advanced training solutions made with a perfect combination of features to address it's training needs a great training model can be created. The organization can achieve a better return on investment; benefits it will bring to the organization are worth investing in such innovative methods. (Furstner, 2019)

1.7 e) Use of virtual classrooms

These are especially useful for organizations that have their offices at multiple locations. The trainer can conduct sessions from his or her location and the trainees can be at theirs sitting in a classroom set up. The advantage is that it is interactive and can be conducted at the convenience of the both parties. Virtual classrooms can help reduce the number of trips thereby addressing convenience and cost management.

1.7 f) Use of recorded training sessions

Training sessions can be recorded while the trainer is conducting them. The videos can be later used for refresher training. Quizzes and activities can be created to make the sessions engaging. It has a big cost saving implication and comes very handy as videos can be watched as many times as one desires.

1.7 g) Awarding certifications

Employees undergoing training programs, using refresher modules and fulfilling notional hours can be awarded certifications. These motivate them and are great incentives that enable employee retention in the organization.

1.8. Conclusion :

There goes a saying, "Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and feed him for life". Training is to enhance individuals' capabilities and competencies to deliver to his or her potential. In the VUCA world (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity), there is a massive disruption taking place in the employment world. Exponential technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Automation, and Robotics are replacing jobs and thousands are being laid off across organizations. Relearning and Re-skilling has become the norm to exist. Constant learning and up gradation using technology and other tools, make training imperative for any organization as well as for the individual. Massive open online courses (MOOC) are excellent platforms for online learning as it suits the needs and requirements of the working professionals. Investment in Training and Learning with precise execution and certifications is the way forward to stay relevant.

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