Training Practices in Indian Organizations: An Overview

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Today employees no longer are eager to join any new organization where their knowledge and skills do not get upgraded. Providing opportunities for learning is being used as a retention tool by large number of organizations. Attracting and retaining employees have become a challenging task in the competitive environment. Increase in training budget and providing proper training have become the strategies of the best companies to magnetize, retain and get highest quality output from the employees. This article explores the training practices used by the Indian organizations for effective utilization of its workforce.

Training is a planned and systematic attempt to alter or develop knowledge/skill, attitude through learning experience, so as to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. It is a very important aspect of any organization. According to Flippo, training is the act of increasing the knowledge and skill of an employee for doing a particular job. It provides employees with the knowledge and skills to perform more effectively. This allows them to meet present job requirements and also prepares them to meet the unavoidable changes that occur in their jobs. However, training is an opportunity to learn. What is learned depends on several factors, such as the design and execution of training, the inspiration and learning style of the trainees, and the learning environment of the organization?

Taylor (1961) conceptualized training as a means to bring about a continuous improvement in the quality of work performed, it would equip them with necessary knowledge, skill, abilities and attitude to perform their jobs. Chowdhry (1986) remarked: Training is a process, which enables the trainees to achieve the goals and objectives of his/her organizations.

Singh (1995) defined training as the process of changing attitudes, improving knowledge and developing skills of the persons/employees of an organization so as to enable them to perform their jobs effectively.

Role of Training in an Organization

Training is a short-term process utilizing a systematic and planned procedure by which non-managerial personnel learn technical knowledge and skills for a definite purpose. It is the most significant technique of human resource development. It plays quite an important role in achieving the individual and organizational objectives. It aims at an organized assessment of the business environment including the external as well as the internal environment, and accordingly ensures the management of available resource to improve the individual's knowledge, skill and capabilities in order to

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cope up with the business challenges and attain the competitive advantage for organizational excellence.

❖ **Organizational Characteristics that Influence Training:** The amount and type of training as well as the organization of training function in a company are influenced by employee and manager roles; by top management support for training; by the company's degree of integration of business unit; by its global presence; by its business conditions; by other human resource management practices, including staffing strategies and human resource planning; by the company's extent of unionization; and by the extent of involvement in training and development by managers, employees and human resource staff.

❖ **Modern Training Practices in Various Organization:** There are several kinds of training methods used by trainers in organizations. The designer of a training program needs to recognize each of these to determine the best method for meeting the training objectives. Some of the methods are lecture method, case study method, conference, in-basket method, T-group training, role play exercise, induction training, cross-functional training, creativity training, diversity training, refresher training, and safety training. Besides, there are various innovative and modern training techniques used by renowned Indian companies tabulated in Exhibit.

❖ **Corporate Training Initiatives in India:** In the last 10 years, business organizations in India have made outstanding progress in terms of their training initiatives. This is mainly due to the boost in competition and because of the entry of multinational companies in India, which has required them to look for various alternatives to develop organizational effectiveness.

Indian organizations have realized the significance of corporate training. Training is considered as more of a retention tool than as a cost to the organization. Not only have organizations increased their investment in training and development practices, but they have also systematized training policies and practices right from the training need analysis to training evaluation and feedback. Today, human resource is a foundation of competitive advantage for all organizations. Therefore, the training system in the Indian industry has been distorted to create a smarter workforce and yield the best results. The optimum utilization of human resource is the target of any company and training is a tool to increase business outcomes. It is required in each area of company like sales, marketing, human resource, relationship building, logistics, production, etc.

Since 2003, for using training function as a strategic business tool, American Society for Training and development (ASTD) gives honor to those organizations that show organization-wide achievement. It is proud for the nation that Indian organizations are participating and are awarded every year by ASTD for representing excellence in training function. In the year 2008, four organizations from India were able to get entry in the winner list of 40 best organizations. These organizations were: Reliance Industries Limited, Nagothane manufacturing division having strength of 2,157 employees, Infosys Technologies Limited having 79,016 employees, Wipro Limited having 60,000 employee strength, and ICICI Bank Limited with employee strength of 40,880. This is an optimistic sign which clearly shows that organizations operating in India are also very serious about their learning and development function. They are giving priority to this area and are

Exhibit: Modern Training Techniques	
Modern Training Techniques	**Hallmarks**
1. Ice Breakers	Games to get team members know each other.
2. Leadership Games	Exercise to teach different styles of leadership.
3. Skill Games	Tests to develop analytical skills.
4. Communication Games	Exercises to build bias-free listening and talking skills.
5. Strategic Planners	Games to test the ability to plan ahead.
6. Team Building Games	Exercises requiring collaborative efforts.
7. Role Reversal Games	Brings out ideas that are not often expressed.
8. Doubling	Brings out ideas that are not often expressed.
9. Tag Teams	One role played alternately by two participants.
10. Mirroring	Training with an external perspective.
11. Monodrama	Insight into a given situation.
12. Shifting Physical Positions	Highlighting communication problems.
13. Structured Role Playing	Role play with predetermined objectives.
14. Multiple Role Playing	Providing a conman focus of discussion.
15. Built-in-tension	Teaching the importance of resolving matters.
16. Shadowing	Working under a senior to watch and learn.
17. Outward Bound Training	Adventure sports for teams.
18. 9+1+23	Self-assessment by a leader of leadership skills.
19. Lateral Thinking	Thinking randomly to come up with new ideas.
20. Morphological Analysis	Listing of alternative solutions to problems.
21. Gordon Technique	Steering a discussion to crystallize solution.
22. Attribute Listening	Isolation, selection and evaluation of a problem.
23. Cross-cultural Training	Programs to teach specifes of varied cultures.
Source: Business Today*, January 7-21; 96*	

able to integrate it their organizational goals. In fact, the top management is taking interest in mentoring and leadership. For example, Narayana Murthy of Infosys is now acting as Chairman of the board as well as Chief Mentor. In this way, they prepare the next generation leaders for the company.

Aditya Birla Group

In all multinational companies of India, Aditya Birla Group is the most renowned. It is truly a value-based company and its vision and mission are rooted in Indian values. The group is driven by performance ethic pegged on value creation for its multiple stakeholders. Its core values are integrity, leading change, excellence, respect for individual learning and sharing. This is one of the companies that believes in the trusteeship concept of management.

To increase the knowledge and skills of employees, this group has established a center in Navi Mumbai known by the name Gyanodaya. Gyanodaya has been envisioned as a hub, the backbone of a process that sharpens the group's competitive edge. Closely linked to the vision of the group is the Gyanodaya vision: To be at the core of

an effective learning network that, as a strategic business partner, harnesses knowledge and intellectual capital, to contribute to Aditya Birla Group's vision of being a premium conglomerate.

There are two ways of learning at this center:

1. G-learning which takes place at Gyanodaya. The training calendar is accessible to employees via Aditya Disha, the group-wide intranet. Participants can choose the program that they would like to participate in.

2. E-learning where learning is just a click away. The training program of Gyanodaya is classified as:

❖ **Multi-tier Program:** In this program, the need of individual is fulfilled at different aspects. Training is provided in the aspect of leadership for young and general managers.

❖ **Functional Program:** Sales and customer satisfaction are the ultimate goal of any profit-making organization. To fulfill this goal, Gyanodaya organizes this program. In this program, skills are developed for better sales and marketing. Besides this, the program focuses on the supply chain management.

❖ **Role-specific Program:** The role of an individual is very important for the success of any team. In this aspect, Gyanodaya organizes program to develop the competencies for individuals like marketing-head, unit-head, HR-head.

❖ **Business-focused Program:** This training program is designed for generating awareness regarding the current practices, needs, and issues to a particular business.

The Gyanodaya Scorecard

Since its inception in January 2000, Gyanodaya has notched up many achievements: 190 learning events; 3,920 participants; 215 external trainers; 50 internal managers as faculty; and a customer rating of 3.73 on a 4-point scale.

Infosys

Infosys Technologies Ltd. headquartered in Bangalore, provides Information Technology (IT) consulting and software services to clients globally—as partners to conceptualize and realize technology-driven business transformation initiatives. It is very essential for the company to upgrade its workforce regularly to compete in the global market. Retention of employees is the biggest challenge for every company. To overcome this challenge, Infosys provides training and development opportunities to its employees right from the start. The company has bagged many awards from ASTD as the world's best company for providing best training and development opportunities to the employees. The company is known best for its Global Business Foundation School which runs the program for all fresh engineering graduates who join Infosys and prepare them for the technical and environmental opportunities present in the market. The Global Business Foundation School has various centers all over the world.

Infosys U

Infosys has achieved awards for its Global Education Center which was set up in 2005. This center provides training not only in technical skills but also in soft skills. It also provides leadership program to new entrants to develop leadership qualities. New engineering recruits undergo a 14.5 weeks 'Initial Learning Program' operated by the company. This aims to transform engineers from diverse disciplines into software professionals and initiates them into the Infosys way of life.

Training Activities at Infosys

After joining Infosys, induction is given to the employees, addressed by NR Narayana

Murthy by an audio visual presentation. During the program, the new hires are groomed to shed their 'campus frivolousness' and assume their new roles as professionals and corporate citizens. In the induction program, the core values of company are presented before the employees. In the company, technical as well as soft skills have its own significance. The main focus of the company is always on developing technical skills but they also give emphasis on various skills like leadership qualities, global business etiquette, interpersonal skills, communication skills, management skills, analytical skills, decision making, etc.

Syndicate Bank

Training is one of the most important interventions for developing human resource. For this, Syndicate Bank's first step is to analyze the training needs of the employees. For the analysis of training needs they adopt scientific methods. The second step is to make a tailored training program for senior officials of the bank. In this two institutes play a major role—Syndicate Institute of Bank Management (SIBM) and Apex Training Institute of the Bank of Manipal.

The training centers of the bank are present in the major cities of India like Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ernakulum, Hyderabad, and Kolkata. These centers are well-equipped with all the latest technology and facilities, and are responsible for providing training to the junior level officers and workmen employees. (Syndicate Bank Annual Report, 2007-2008, p: 32)

❖ **Essar Corporate University (ECU):** Essar is a very prestigious and renowned group, awarded by ISTD in 2009 for its innovative training practices. It is famous for its ECU which is a virtual learning organization and takes various steps for the training and development of the employees. The main goals of the program are to emphasize working in teams, develop networking and bonding, develop trust and explore risk-taking. The company has also established Essar learning center at Hazira which organizes around 400 formal training program's per year on subjects ranging from industrialized operations, general management, and logistics management. The company runs different types of learning program's for employees, like they have individual learning program in which an individual is responsible for his own learning. E-modules are provided by Learning Management System (LMS) regarding technical and management aspects to employees to make them aware about latest management and technical skills.

❖ **Accenture:** An organization has to be a 'learning organization' for survival in the present era of liberalization, privatization, and globalization. Therefore, knowledge is the only core competence of organizations for coping with changes. In this line with the above philosophy, among other like institutionalizing learning centers in divisions, Accenture has also introduced the program 'Leaders teaching leaders'. In this program, Accenture leaders share their past experiences for the betterment of the working styles of the present employees. Its education programs have been well-known and appreciative around the business world. For the bright future of the employees, Accenture provides its global portal 'My learning' in which 20,000 online courses are available. For this kind of activities, Accenture won prestigious awards such as the *CLO Magazine* Gold Award for Leading Business Change. When a new entrant joins the company, the candidate is guided and

mentored by leaders and colleagues under a well-defined mentoring program.

IBM

IBM is a company that gives value to the learning and development of its employees since 1915. It has a separate and distinct IBM education department which was established to train and develop employees. IBM is known for the use of e-learning programs to address its learning solutions. The learning approaches used in IBM programs are learning from interaction, simulation or games, collaborative learning, etc. IBM is also well-known for its program 'IBM Connections'. The goal of this learning empowerment program is to bring new hires to classroom for collaboration and networking, rather than having them gather for a less-than-engaging lecture.

Conclusion

As seen from the industrial examples discussed above, the new trend in the corporate world is to emphasize more on applying systematic approach to training and development in order to achieve higher level of organizational effectiveness. It is found that training function is predominantly structured as an integral part of human resource department though some organizations have separate training departments. Organizations attempt to link business strategy and training. Corporate India too has predictable training initiatives as strategic priority rather than reactive approach, and it is used as a means to transform in order to survive in the competitive world.►◄

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