



TPD Tips

The Human Resources Cycle





Introduction:

The Human Resources Cycle

While everyone is watching the bottom line these days, organizations cannot forget about their people. People are **the most important asset** to any organization. As we know, it is getting harder to find the right people. Whether you know it or not, human resources is very important to your business. This E-Book will help you learn how to source, attract, hire, retain, and manage ‘the right people.’

➤ **Being Proactive: Developing Your Human Resources Plan**

Have you proactively created an HR plan to support your business plan? What does your HR radar screen show that will effect your organization’s “people plan?” We’ll examine step-by-step considerations in building your HR plan.

➤ **Building Your Talent Bank**

With concerns about a skills shortage, the right employees will be tougher to find. How creative are you in sourcing and attracting candidates? Are applicants aware of career paths in your business? Do you have people partners to supplement your efforts where you lack the capability or capacity?

➤ **Selection Tools**

The cost of a poor hiring decision impacts your bottom line and often has an influence on the company morale, your reputation, or the provision of consistent customer service. Does your toolbox of selection aids include testing instruments, assessment tools, and reference checks, as well as resume screening and interviewing techniques?

➤ **Onboarding**

You’ve hired the ‘perfect’ candidate. How will you engage your new employee and make them feel comfortable? Does your new hire have a buddy or a mentor to rely on for those nagging little questions that come up when you’re ‘new’? Believe it or not, how the new employee is treated in their first few hours and days may determine how long they will stay with you.

➤ **Performance Measurement and Management**

Are you and your new employee aware of each other’s expectations and needs? Have you communicated the standards for the job and established goals for your employee to develop and progress in his/her role?

➤ **Discipline and Discharge**

We will look at discharge from a prevention perspective: can an ounce of discipline often prevent a dismissal? How important is formal and informal feedback?

➤ **Recognition and Awards**

Do your employees wake up in the morning eager to come to work? Do you, their peers, and/or your customers recognize them for their success? Can your front-line staff offer suggestions to streamline your operation?

➤ **Professional Development and Training**

Do you encourage life-long learning through on-the-job and external training, development, and education? Have you been grooming candidates to take over in case an unexpected staff change occurs? Is your succession plan guiding you in readying incumbents to progress when the opportunity arises?

➤ **Health and Safety**

How can you encourage a safety mentality at work to ensure everyone goes home safely? Do you know what your responsibilities are as an employer? Should you have a safety committee? What can you do to prevent accidents in the workplace?



Chapter 1:

Developing your Human Resources Plan

Your employees can account for up to 80% of the costs of doing business. How you hire, retain, and manage them directly impacts your bottom line. Just as you create a carefully devised financial plan, so should you be proactive and create a Human Resources (HR) Plan.

Your HR Plan should be a living document that continues to change as your business evolves – sometimes even daily. Your HR Plan should assist you in achieving the goals of your business plan, allow you to remain competitive in your market niche, be flexible enough so that you can adapt to changes, and allow you to manage your employees effectively and efficiently so that you earn a profit.

Through human resource planning, management prepares to have the right people in the right places at the right times to fulfill both organizational and individual objectives. The HR planning function involves three steps, which flow from one to the next.



Aligning your HR needs with your business goals

The bottom line questions you should ask yourself to align your HR needs with your business goals should be:

“How many people will be needed to staff my business effectively in the near and distant future and what skills, abilities, and personal attributes (technical and behavioral competencies) will they require?”

Determining your demand

An organization’s future demand for qualified people has a large impact on its HR Plan. The three principle factors that influence the demand for human resources are:

- External factors such as changes in the economy or legislation.
- Strategic factors such as changes in sales through expansion or closure.
- Labor factors such as resignations, terminations, and illness.

Satisfying your supply

A vast array of forecasting techniques can be used to predict an organization's future demand for employees. Unfortunately, even sophisticated formal methods are not exact. The two key sources of supply, however, do not change; you either grow your own talent internally or source it externally. If you choose to develop talent from within, you will need a plan for grooming individuals to ready them for promotion or reclassification. Conducting a simple audit where you identify each employee's skills, abilities and personal attributes will assist you to "map out" your internal supply of human resources. At any given time, you should have a "snapshot picture" of the competencies of individuals within your current workforce and a timeframe for promotability.

For external hiring, you need to identify through which resources you have had the most success. Have you built a relationship with a local school or college that can supply reliable human resources? Does your website include a Career Opportunities section where candidates can apply directly? Do you use social media? Have you partnered with a recruitment firm who knows your business and can work with you to readily fulfill your recruitment needs? Some full service firms, such as TPD, offer a broad range of services for not only recruitment, but also workforce planning and HR strategizing.

Although HR Plans are often created annually to support the achievement of the fiscal year's goals, human resources is dynamic. Therefore, your HR Plan must be flexible and capable of changing with your business. We can provide some guidelines to assist you in ensuring your HR Plan supports your business goals to achieve the results you're striving for.



Chapter 2: Building Your Talent Bank

Whether you are recruiting because you have a vacancy or are being proactive and building your talent bank, you need to leverage the most efficient methods to find the right people. Some recruitment goals are:

- Identifying the talent needed to do the job.
- Attracting the candidates who best match your needs.
- Promoting your company as a dynamic place where people want to work, known as employer brand.

To begin, there are two pools from which to select employees: internal and external. Before you begin your external search, the most qualified person for your vacancy may already be working for you. A “promote-from-within” policy can serve to boost employee morale, attract recruits looking for advancement opportunities, and reduce training costs, since the employee is already oriented to the organization. However, if you have a limited number of current employees or you wish to seek new energy and ideas that come from hiring “new blood,” this may not be your method of choice.

External recruiting methods can be grouped into two general categories: short-term and long-term techniques.

Short-term techniques are designed to stimulate an immediate flow of applicants and can include:

- Advertising in newspapers, online, or social media
- Employee referrals
- Networking through your connections and professional associations
- Recruiting and employment agencies

Long-term techniques often involve developing relationships with the employment community and promoting your company as a desirable place to work. Consider working with:

- **Local Schools**
Try contacting the counselling departments of local schools for opportunities to talk to the students about your company and career paths offered, post your vacancies on their bulletin boards, or advertise through their newsletters.
- **Campus Recruitment**
On-campus recruitment days can be a win-win opportunity. You post jobs for which you are seeking candidates. The college or university sets up a screening day where you can briefly meet a variety of students. You then choose whom to invite back to continue the recruitment and screening process.
- **Career Fairs**
Either through an educational institution or your professional organization, a career fair is a vehicle where you can set up a booth, along with other companies, to promote your employer brand.
- **Open House**
Some companies set aside a regularly scheduled period of time when they invite candidates to drop off their resumes and briefly meet with a company representative. This technique ensures a constant flow of applicants and allows you to meet many prospective employees.
- **HR Partner Agency**
Partnered HR is designed to provide you with the HR you need when you need it. Partnered HR scales with you as your needs evolve and can include RPO, HR services, payroll processing, and benefits administration.

Whatever attracting and sourcing techniques you choose to employ, remember, a well-planned approach is essential for the success of your recruitment activity.



Chapter 3:

Selection Tools

The cost of a poor hiring decision impacts your bottom line and can often have an influence on company morale, your reputation or the provision of consistent customer service. Your toolbox of selection aids should include a number of tools to assist you in selecting the best candidate for your needs, recognizing that no one tool will provide you with as accurate a result as a combination of tools.

The process of making a hiring decision includes the following key steps:

- Resume Pre-Screening
- Interviewing
- Testing
- Reference Checking

Pre-screening

The purpose of pre-screening is to determine if the applicant has the basic knowledge and skills needed to do the job. You, as the recruiter, establish a list of absolute qualifications or knockout factors. If the applicant is lacking any of the fundamental skills (technical competencies) required to do the job, through the pre-screening they may be knocked out of the competition.

For instance, if you are recruiting an accounts payable clerk, you might require previous accounting experience. This could be a knockout factor for your vacancy. Pre-screening involves examining the resume and may also involve a brief telephone screen with the candidate to attain additional information not evident on their resume. Often, this step can be facilitated by an applicant Tracking System (ATS) or through an RPO agreement with a recruiting agency such as TPD.

Interviewing

There are three critical elements that a candidate must possess in order to succeed within a job: knowledge, skills, and personal attributes. Together they form a “triangle of success.” From pre-screening, you can usually determine an applicant’s knowledge and skills. It takes an interview to determine the personal attributes. When interviewing, stick to the 80/20 rule: the candidate should be doing 80% of the talking; while you ask questions and guide the process for the other 20%. Most of your questions should be open-ended to encourage discussion. These questions usually begin with “who”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “tell me about” or “describe.” Closed questions are used only when you require a specific yes or no answer.

All of your questions must be related to the needs of your job and not discriminatory from a human rights perspective. For example if the job involves shift work, you could ask, “is there anything that would limit you from working certain shifts?” rather than “who will look after your children if you have to work shifts?” Later in this e-Book, we will discuss human rights in the workplace more in depth.

When interviewing, it is critical to probe the candidate’s experiences to substantiate their skill set. The best predictor of future behaviour is past performance. For example, if an element of your job is working under pressure for periods of time, you might ask your candidate, “describe a job where you’ve worked under pressure.” Remember, if you ask a hypothetical question (“what would you do if...”), you will get a hypothetical answer and some candidates have enough imagination to create some extraordinary answers. Your hiring decision should be based on facts and evidence, and not speculation.

Testing

Perhaps you are recruiting for the position of an accounting clerk. Try testing your candidates with a Microsoft Excel assessment to gauge their ability to produce a workable and understandable financial document. Many recruiting agencies or HR consultants provide access to a variety of assessments. Contact TPD to request a full list of available assessments.

Reference Checks

Finally, you should complete a minimum of two reference checks on each finalist. Research shows that up to one-third of applicants are “creative” with their employment history. By checking references, you are validating the information you have received to ensure your candidate has the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes they have presented. Again, ask open-ended questions and ask for supporting evidence where possible.

Alternatively, some employers choose to outsource their reference check process to ensure they receive unbiased honest feedback on the candidate. This also alleviates the final reference check bottleneck from the hiring process if time isn't available to make the required calls.

Using these selection tools combined will provide you with the information you need to make a comprehensive hiring decision. If you follow these steps, you will minimize the risk of making a poor hiring decision.



Chapter 4:

Onboarding

So you've hired the "perfect" candidate. Now what? It's imperative that the new employees onboarding experience leaves a positive impression. Did you know that employees who quit within the first 90 days usually do so because of the treatment they receive in the first two days?

Ideally you want new employees to quickly feel comfortable and engaged. Although onboarding and training does cost time and money, to most organizations these costs are sound investments when one considers the high cost of turnover.

There are several things that need to be done to make an employee's onboarding successful.

Putting the New Employee at Ease

Welcome your new employee and reaffirm the rapport that you built during the selection process. Once the new employee begins to relax, introduce existing staff to their new team member. Often, it's helpful to designate a "buddy" to assist your new hire with their questions and becoming comfortable in their new surroundings. A quick tour to point out washrooms and other facilities including where the employee can store their belongings and take their breaks is very helpful.

Who's Who

It's important for the new employee to understand how they fit into the "big picture." Show the new employee how their position relates to the others on the team; and possibly, how the team relates to other departments or areas of the operation.

Goals and Expectations

In order for the new employee to acclimatize and begin to be productive, your company's values and goals need to be shared. New employees must understand your expectations and the objectives of their position and team. This usually involves a discussion and preliminary training. It could start with a description as simple as, "we strive to serve each customer we deal with in a professional manner." To help employees understand and attain their goals, it may be appropriate to utilize one of your high performing employees as a mentor.

Policies and Procedures

The employee's initial questions are often fundamental and cover items such as hours of work, pay days, grooming and dress code, vacation time, sick leave, breaks, training, and performance expectations. Familiarize your new employee with the policies and procedures of your organization.

An employee handbook is a helpful handout for the new hire allowing them the opportunity to study the expectations and guidelines of their new workplace and refer back to as a resource document. Where appropriate, have the employee sign a document that acknowledges that company policies and procedures have been explained to them.

Workplace Behavior and Safety

You need to outline behavior expectations and practices in your workplace including acceptable treatment of tools, property, other employees, and customers as well as workplace safety and emergency procedures. Bullying and harassment must not be permitted or considered acceptable behavior.

Checklist

An employee's onboarding can be broken into multiple phases. You'll need to cover the fundamentals as described above as soon as possible. Create a simple checklist as a first day onboarding reminder so important items are not missed.

Further orientation components can be added at a later time and can contribute additional information in a fun and memorable way. Some engaging onboarding you could consider include:

- An introductory video of the workplace created by employees.
- Coffee with senior management and an opportunity to hear about the business from their perspective.
- A scavenger hunt based on finding the answers to frequently asked questions about the company through speaking to other employees and reading company information. Company marketing collateral, such as mugs or umbrellas, can be awarded as prizes for completion.

You only have one opportunity to make a first impression. For employers, the onboarding of new hires is that opportunity. Take the time to do it right and reap the rewards of another satisfied new hire!



Chapter 5:

Performance Measurement and Management

We have discussed how employees are selected and trained. Now we will examine how to measure and manage performance through a performance management system as well as some of the pitfalls you can encounter during the process.

Simply put, a performance appraisal measures an employee's performance on the job against the established standards of the job or pre-set goals. A standard refers to ongoing performance criteria that must be met time and time again (e.g., complete all invoices daily). A goal describes a particular objective that has been jointly established and agreed ahead of time (e.g., increase sales by 10% before an established date).

Generally, a performance appraisal form or online tool is used to record important facts from the discussion and to keep as a confirmation of commitments or goals agreed upon for the future. Some performance appraisals outline the criteria on which each employee is appraised and may even include a numerical rating system on which to rate each employee. Performance appraisals can be extremely simple or quite complex. Choose one that works for you and your organization. Remember, the template is only a guideline; it's the information you put into it that's important!

Many organizations conduct a new employee's first performance appraisal just prior to the expiration of their probation period and then annually thereafter. As a result of the evaluation, you create a plan to assist and manage your employee's ongoing performance.

There are many pitfalls you can encounter when appraising an employee's performance. Here are some to watch for.

➤ **Monologue**

Performance appraisals are meant to be a dialogue of two-way communication between the manager and the employee. This allows both parties the opportunity to offer feedback, ask questions, and state their opinions.

➤ **A Secret Report**

In order for an employee to progress, they need to hear solid information about their performance, areas for correction, and a plan of action for development. Indeed, the annual performance review should really be a composite of all the feedback given and received throughout the entire year. Performance appraisals are not a substitute for daily management. If you have been managing daily, then the employee should have an excellent understanding of where they've succeeded or need to improve.

➤ **A Discipline Interview**

Performance issues cannot wait and need to be addressed directly and immediately. The performance appraisal may include an update on progress through performance issues but it is not the venue for imposing discipline. Performance appraisals should support regular feedback, coaching, counselling, and should not be a substitute for disciplinary discussions.

➤ **An Attack**

Performance appraisals are not a popularity poll. The intent is to appraise performance objectively and professionally; and without threatening an employee's self-esteem. Appraisals can be frightening enough for new hires without having to "dodge bullets" at the same time.

Now that we know what not to do, let's look at some simple guidelines for conducting an effective performance appraisal.

- Formally review performance at least once a year, preferably twice.
- Give the employee prior notice of the appraisal session and information in terms of what they can expect.
- Reassure each employee that the purpose of the performance appraisal session is to improve performance and foster better communication, not to discipline.
- Conduct the performance appraisal session in private with a minimum of interruptions.
- Recognize positive aspects of the employee's performance.
- Make criticisms specific. Don't be vague.
- Focus criticism on performance, not personality characteristics. Use only factual information; criticism should not be based on hearsay.
- Refuse to argue with the person you are evaluating.
- Emphasize your willingness to assist the employee's efforts to improve performance.
- Identify specific actions the employee can take to improve performance. Set some mutually acceptable goals for completion.
- End the session by reiterating the positive aspects of the employee's performance.
- Remember to complete written documentation of the appraisal. This record should become a permanent part of your employee's file.

Performance appraisals are an excellent means to open a productive dialogue with an employee and establish meaningful goals and action plans for ongoing performance development. As always, communication is the key!



Chapter 6:

Discipline and Discharge

To operate efficiently, most businesses follow workplace rules, policies and standards. In small businesses, enforcement of rules is often done on a casual basis by dropping a few well-placed hints in an employee's direction. However, there are situations when even open and frequent communication doesn't always work. A progressive discipline system can. Employees need to know the consequences of unacceptable behaviour or poor performance in advance, so don't wait until a crisis arises to set up your disciplinary program.

What is progressive discipline? It does not mean automatic termination. In fact, in all but the most serious cases, you'll want to avoid terminating employees. You do, however, need to respond quickly as your employee may assume his/her performance is satisfactory unless a concern is specifically identified.

Progressive discipline is an established system where the severity of the consequence increases with each infringement of the rules or standards. Typically, the progression is:



In deciding to implement a progressive discipline program, a system that is viewed as fair is more likely to receive employees' support. A fair policy means discipline must be applied consistently to all employees in an unbiased manner. Fair discipline is also easier to defend and justify in a legal setting, should the need arise.

A fair and lawful discipline system should include the following:

- 1 Ensuring all employees are aware of workplace policies and standards; and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour or performance deficiency.
- 2 Giving an employee written notice that there is an issue or deficiency and thoroughly explaining your expectations. This would include providing the employee an opportunity to explain his/her behaviour.
- 3 Providing an opportunity for the employee to change his/her behaviour, possibly through coaching. Including a method of measurement so all parties know when appropriate changes have been achieved.
- 4 Giving specific examples to assist in clarifying your expectations.
- 5 Agreeing on a time frame for achievement (i.e. with a follow-up date).
- 6 Ensuring the employee is aware of the consequences should he/she not achieve the prescribed changes.
- 7 Documenting progress each step of the way.

The purposes of progressive discipline are:

- Putting a stop to the unacceptable behavior or performance deficiency.
- Retaining the employee as a respected and productive member of your team.

Usually, after a specified time period (e.g., six months or a year) passes without another infraction, your employee earns a “clean slate.” Any later infractions will start the process again with an oral or written warning.

Some cases of misconduct are so severe that you may wish to skip some steps in the process. For example, assaults, stealing, gross insubordination, etc., might all justify immediate action. That said, don't fire anyone on the spot! Termination is a serious action and not to be done in haste. You need to investigate and confirm what happened and who was responsible. You might proceed to straight to suspension, and suspend the employee pending a thorough and immediate investigation. Your actions beyond that will be governed by the outcome of your investigation. It may justify termination; or a suspension may be deemed adequate, with the consequence for similar or repeated behavior being termination.

When implementing progressive discipline, remain consistent in your approach and thorough in your documentation. To maintain the integrity and value of your program, treat all employees fairly, respectfully, and equally. By following a pre-set process, both you and your employees will be fully aware of performance and behaviour expectations and the consequences should your workplace standards or rules not be met.



Chapter 7:

Recognition and Rewards

Motivated, dependable, productive, and engaged employees make business happen. Often a consumer will choose to purchase your product or service based on the employee who represents that product or service.

Employee engagement is one of the secrets to a productive workforce, and therefore a successful business. What is employee engagement? It usually refers to how engaged your employees are in their jobs. Are your employees engaged? That can directly impact your bottom line.

So the next question is: “what contributes to engagement in the workplace?”

It’s a myth that employees are only motivated by money. Monetary compensation is important, but there is a litany of items that contribute to an employee’s engagement. Interestingly, some are so fundamental that we miss them completely. For instance, do your employees feel:

- Fairly and respectfully treated?
- Valued and appreciated?
- Recognized and rewarded for their work?

It shouldn’t take you long as an employer to realize if you wish to attract, recruit and retain top employees, fair and respectful treatment is required. Employees who do not feel valued and appreciated will either contribute less effort as time goes on, or leave for greener pastures where they will be appreciated.

In addition, everyone likes to have his/her achievements and efforts recognized. Even though personal satisfaction is usually generated from within ourselves, it is always more meaningful if someone else notices and shares the success. Enter: *recognition and rewards*.

Rewards can motivate and encourage employees to contribute to their own success and the success of your business. Now, we’re not talking big-ticket items like a car or trip to an exotic locale. In reality, employees are often delighted with a range of rewards that can be provided at little or no cost. Most importantly, ensure your program fits the culture and image of your company. The most effective reward and recognition programs have five elements:



There are no firm rules about what to recognize. Here is a starting point for things you can recognize your employees for:

- Productivity/quality
- Customer service
- Peer recognition
- Superior performance or extraordinary achievement
- Safety
- Length of service
- Exceeding targets
- Saving time or costs
- Positive customer feedback

Typical rewards include: certificates, plaques, sporting or cultural event tickets, time off, or even a voucher for a free coffee and pastry. How about an informal thank you party with cake and cookies on a Friday afternoon? Alternatively, the senior management team could line the entrance mid-way through the busy season to greet each employee with coffee and donuts as they arrive. It is a sincere gesture to say “thanks” and “we know it is busy, but hang in there.”

Remember, recognition and rewards need to be offered with sincerity and thoughtfulness. Recognizing employees is about giving thanks and credit where credit is due and making those employees feel valued and appreciated for a job well done.



Chapter 8:

A Respectful Workplace

This chapter will address the issue of Bullying and Harassment (B&H) from a workplace perspective. When B&H exists in your workplace, it can lead to diminishing engagement, absenteeism, lower productivity, and may eventually inhibit your ability to attract candidates. In addition, with severe cases of B&H, legal implications may be faced.

The key to eliminating bullying, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace, and ensuring you provide a respectful workplace, is to ensure all employees are treated equally with respect and dignity. Educating yourself and your employees about human rights and occupational health and safety policies will lead you toward that goal.

Discrimination

As an employer, you are prohibited from discrimination in employment because of race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, and conviction of a criminal or summary conviction offence unrelated to employment.

Harassment based on one or more of the grounds of discrimination is a prohibited type of discrimination.

Generally, discrimination can be broken down into three types: racial, sexual, and disability. Discrimination can be defined as a deliberate action or decision to exclude a person or group from equal access to employment opportunities based on their race, gender, or disability. Discrimination targets people who could be seen as different because they belong to, for example, a particular race, gender, or have a disability. For example: making a hiring decision based on a person's ethnic origin, gender, or disability rather than the person's skills, abilities, and personal attributes to do the job would be discrimination. In addition, limiting a person's advancement or training opportunities based on their race, gender, or disability is considered to be discrimination.

Harassment based on discrimination refers to any behaviour or comments of a racial or sexual nature or to do with a person's disability, which are *unwelcome* or *unwanted*. An example of discrimination would be making unwelcome comments, jokes, hints, or teasing about a person's race, ethnic background, colour, ancestry or citizenship; gender or a person's disability. Further examples include displaying pictures or materials that are offensive or ridicule a race, gender, or disability group, or refusing to work or talk to someone at work because of their race, gender, or disability. A final example would be playing practical jokes or making insulting gestures towards someone because of their race, gender, or disability. Please note the importance of the words *unwelcome* and *unwanted*.

Bullying and Harassment

Many State and Provincial governments are now legally requiring companies to have a B&H policy in place. These policies provide a consistent legal framework that identifies the reasonable steps for workplace parties to take to meet their legal obligations to prevent and address workplace bullying and harassment.

Not every unpleasant interaction, instance of disrespectful behavior, or workplace conflict is classified as bullying or harassment. “Bullying and harassment” is often used as a single term which:

- Includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but
- Excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers in the place of employment

Examples of behavior or comments that might constitute bullying and harassment include verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names, harmful hazing or initiation practices, vandalizing personal belongings, and spreading malicious rumors.

Businesses concerned with maintaining a trusting, respectful workplace create a Discrimination, Bullying, and Harassment Policy to which they subscribe. The policy should include: its purpose; both employees’ and managers’ rights and responsibilities; a statement on confidentiality; a thorough complaint and investigation procedure; penalties for retaliation; and a method for monitoring the policy to ensure effectiveness.

Creating and maintaining a positive and respectful work environment rests with everyone who shares that workplace:

- Management has an ongoing responsibility to respond to any activity in the workplace which undermines the company’s policy regarding B&H whether or not there has been a complaint. This may include conducting thorough investigations and imposing consequences.
- All employees have a responsibility to report any demonstration or perceived demonstration of discrimination, bullying or harassment to their employer and also to recognize an equal responsibility not to be frivolous or vindictive in making accusations.

When everyone is aware of the impact discrimination, bullying, and harassment has in the workplace, they can play an important and vital role in ensuring it doesn’t occur. Treating each other with courtesy, respect and common sense will go a long way toward creating an environment in which everyone is proud to work.



Chapter 9:

Training and Development

As competition increases and trends develop, we evolve to keep our businesses vital and current. When our businesses evolve, so must the employees we trust to make our operations successful. Often that requires training and developing our employees to ensure they are in step with new requirements dictating enhanced or additional skill sets.

By being proactive and supporting training and development, you will have employees with upgraded skills working to their full potential and equipped to deal with the changing demands of your workplace. Your employees will be engaged and experience increased career satisfaction and motivation. And their productivity may increase as they find it easier to meet the goals of the business.

To begin, you will want to assess the need for training.

Changes in Business

Has your business changed? You've put in an automated delivery system, a new accounting program, or upgraded your computer system. Employees are more accepting of change if they receive adequate training. It can make the transition easier for staff and customers alike.

Feedback

Have you asked customers, managers, and employees for feedback? You may discover some hidden training needs which translate into opportunities to improve service delivery.

Self-assessment

Your performance appraisal program should cover the immediate training and development needs required to groom your employee for a long-term career goal. Career development can include assigning a special project where your employee learns a new skill, taking on acting responsibilities during another's absence or cross-training. All of these areas of training and development can promote greater job satisfaction while lessening the likelihood of unwanted turnover.

Errors, Complaints, and Frequent Problems

Receiving complaints from customers or staff doesn't necessarily indicate an employee is a lost cause and "must go." Perhaps, there is a deficiency that could be easily rectified with training. When errors or complaints are brought to your attention, systematically analyze the problem area to see if training is a viable solution.

Developing a Training Plan

Once you have assessed and prioritized the need for training, the next step is to plan and deliver the training. Consider:

- Your budget
- Training delivery

Internally:

- On-the-job
- Coaching
- Mentoring/a buddy system

Externally:

- Professional seminars
- Private trainers
- Conference attendance

Types of Training

Training covers a wide spectrum and can be anything from learning how to use a piece of equipment to managing change. Training falls into four broad categories.

Onboarding	Business Skills	People Skills	Technical and Professional Skills
Onboarding needs to be done for new employees and newly-transferred or promoted employees. Goals of the operation or job, performance expectations, and team dynamics are all important items that new employees need to learn.	If you've hired or promoted someone into a management or supervisory role, he/she may need to learn/enhance his/her skills in sales and marketing, presentation, written communication, or other business/management skills.	Whether you are a front-line team member or the leader, you need effective people skills. Employees with effective people skills assist in maintaining a positive work environment. People skills training can include: supervisory skills, communication, teamwork, and project management.	This type of training is specific and directly relates to a particular line of work or business. If you are a trucking company and need to remain current with business trends, it would be essential for your team to refresh and upgrade their knowledge base of where the economy is moving and where it is not.

Impact on Business

Training is costly, so you will want to assess its impact. You may need to review why you sought training to begin with and whether your concerns have been remedied. Changes may not occur overnight; be patient. Training can provide tremendous advantages for your business, like improving customer service or productivity, motivating your staff, and keeping your operation current. Analyze your needs at the outset and choose the right type of training for your requirement.



Chapter 10:

Health and Safety

The value of employee safety cannot be overstated. If your employees don't feel safe at work, they will not be fully focused on the jobs they are responsible for. This will negatively impact employee productivity, engagement, retention, and ultimately the company's reputation and bottom line.

Employee Productivity

If employees feel safe in their workplace, they will be more productive than employees who do not feel safe or who, in fact, become injured on the job. If anyone sees unsafe working conditions, they should either fix the issues themselves, or have them fixed by a professional. If employees feel safe, there are fewer absences, less turnover, and an improved quality of work overall.

Engagement

A safe work environment boosts employee engagement. If employees feel their employer does not care about their safety, they may feel undervalued or unappreciated. If they feel undervalued at their place of work, they will look for another employer who does value their safety and health. As mentioned previously, the cost of recruiting new employees can be very high. Turnover as a result of poor Health and Safety standards can always be avoided.

Company Reputation

If a company develops a reputation where it is perceived as an employer who doesn't care about its employees, it puts itself at risk to lose not only employees, but customers. If employees are absent, it could lead to poor service quality, which leads to customer dissatisfaction and loss of future business. The company brand which may have taken years to develop, could become tarnished. As more and more suppliers and customers take their social responsibility lens to those with whom they do business, unsafe employers will suffer.

Company Bottom Line

Premiums are established for every employer. Within the employer's subclass, there is a provision where employers with higher frequency and severity of accidents will pay more than those with favorable safety records. This is called experience rating. One factor where employers can gain an edge is to ensure their safety record entitles them to a higher discount than their competitors. In some industries this can be quite large and will make a difference as to whether or not they will win a contract.

What Can Employers Do?

A culture of safety does not happen overnight. You can't just wave a magic wand and expect employees to act safely. Employees and employers must know their rights and responsibilities under the relevant legislation. Simply knowing their responsibilities is not enough – following the "rules" will not encourage a sense of individual responsibility, teamwork or cooperation. Employees must feel they are an active part of the company safety program and that their input is valued. Employees must be "empowered."

To empower employees, employers must:

- Commit and support their efforts
- Ensure there are no misunderstandings of what empowerment means (the ability to make decisions, not just input)
- Let employees know what the boundaries are
- Don't micromanage
- Don't second guess

One study suggests that employers who implement an effective health and safety program can expect to see their injury and illness rates reduce by 20% (or more) and a return of \$4 to \$6 for every dollar spent on the prevention program.

The question that we should all ask is: “would I want my son, daughter, wife, husband, father, mother (or anyone else) performing that activity?” If the answer is “no,” then have them stop immediately.

Every employee has the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. No employee, or their families, should have to suffer because of an avoidable workplace accident or injury. A positive health and safety culture will not only protect your employees, but will protect your company.



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