

# Team Training

Creating Effective Training at Work



## What you should learn from this article:

- What is training?
- Team and safety training research
- Preparing and assessing training

## What is training and why would an organization implement training initiatives?

Employee Training is a learning activity with the goal of instilling knowledge for teams or individuals at work (based on Robson et al. 2010). Training can be entire modules or a one-off. Research shows that team training is effective for increasing team performance (McEwan et al. 2017). Training can be used to learn a variety of skills – whether they be related to teamwork, tasks, or safety.

### Preparing for training

Before leading a team training, it is important to carry out a needs assessment (Arthur Jr, Bennett Jr, Edens, & Bell, 2003) as this significantly increases the chances of a creating successful training. When completing an assessment, consider:

#### Your goals and if training helps you to meet these goals:

- What are your training needs? Will training make improvements? (Arthur Jr et al. 2003)

#### Training for different levels (Arthur Jr et al. 2003)

- **Organizational** - Which departments/teams/etc. would benefit from this training?
- **Job** - What job skills does this training enhance?
- **Individual** - Who should attend training?

#### What skills will employees gain? (Arthur Jr et al. 2003)

- Cognitive (e.g. resilience training)
- Interpersonal (e.g. teamwork)
- Psychomotor (physical)

### Assessing training

Kirkpatrick's Model (1956, 1996) of training evaluation criteria is often used to measure the success of training (Hughes et al., 2016). Applying these criteria, training leaders should measure an employee's reactions, learning, behavior, and results to assess the effectiveness of training. Leaders should also use their judgment and measure any other training specific outcomes that are aligned with the goal and objectives of the training.

## A deep dive into two types of training in the literature

### Team Training

Team training focuses on developing an employee's skills and abilities specifically in relation to bettering the team. This training has the goal of increasing general positive team behaviors such as, team cohesion, communication, and performance. Hughes et al. (2016) found that team training in the healthcare profession is very effective in improving performance. Interestingly, researchers found that giving feedback during training can compromise its effectiveness (Hughes et al. 2016). Perhaps, this is because employees are still learning new skills and are not yet ready to accept feedback. Employees

need time to learn before receiving constructive feedback. In another meta-analysis investigating teamwork training across all different jobs and industries, researchers found that the type of training affected the success of training (McEwan, Ruissen, Eys, Zumbo, & Beauchamp, 2017). They discovered that basic lecture style training was the least effective in teamwork training. Training that is interactive and involves more participation from attendees through group activities, discussions, role playing, computer simulation, etc. was a better form of team training.

## **Safety Training**

Safety training differs from team training as it focuses more on psychomotor skills instead of interpersonal skills. Robson et al. (2010) studied the effectiveness of five different types of safety trainings. In previous studies, such as, Burke, Chan-Serafin, Salvador, Smith and Sarpy's (2008) research, the more "engaging" the training (i.e. training that is more interactive rather than lecture based), the more effective it is. This is similar to the findings in the above study (McEwan et al., 2017). However, Robson et al.'s (2010) research was inconclusive in terms of training style due to low sample size and insignificant results. It is important to note that overall, there was still some evidence that training in general had an impact on employees.

## **Creating an effective training at work**

Before deciding on training, managers should:

- Complete a needs assessment: Why do you need this? Who needs this?
- Identify how many training sessions you will be offering
- Create an interactive style of training
- Refrain from providing feedback; perhaps focus more on encouragement
- Measure if your training was a success

## References

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