Transfer of Training

Definition: Transfer of training is the ability of a participant in a training activity to introduce and use the knowledge, skills and/or attitudes imparted by the training in the work setting.

The problem: Transfer of training cannot automatically be assumed. Sometimes even very fine training makes no real impact on work performance. There are a number of possible reasons for this failure. These include: (1) failure to understand how to apply the new information to the work setting, (2) failure to systematically plan for implementation of new information, (3) resistance on the part of the trainee, (4) resistance on the part of the supervisor, (5) resistance on the part of co-workers.

Transfer of Training Interviews. Transfer of training can be greatly enhanced by a series of interviews before and after the employee attends the training. These interviews may be between the employee and the supervisor or with the whole work team.

Pre-training interview: Before the training, the employee and the supervisor or work team should discuss the following questions:

1. What work need(s) will this training address?
2. What specific knowledge, skills or attitudes do we hope the employee will get out of the training?
3. How do we hope that applying the new knowledge, skills, or attitude will change the work setting?
4. Are there problems that we might anticipate in applying this information to our workplace? Can we alleviate any of these problems in designing the training. (e.g. is this the right person to go to the workshop if we wish to implement the information gathered there.)
5. Are there questions the employee should ask the trainer about applying the new knowledge, skills, or attitudes in our work setting?

Notes should be kept on the answers to these questions. These notes will be useful in later interviews with the person who attended the training.

As part of the interview, the employee who will be attending the training should be reminded of methods through which they can enhance the training for themselves. These methods include:

- ✓ Reread the brochure about the training before attending the training.
- ✓ Read any material, which is received in advance of the training before attending the training.
- ✓ Listen carefully to the lectures, making notes of important points.
- ✓ Get involved in all activities in the training.
- ✓ Ask questions if you do not understand some of the information
- ✓ If you are not sure how to apply this information to your work setting, ask the trainers to give you some tips.
- ✓ During breaks enter into discussions about the training with other participants. Ask how they expect to use it in their work settings.
- ✓ Engage the trainers during breaks to ask questions about the material and how it can be applied.
- ✓ Bring home all handouts and review them a day or two after the training.
- ✓ Think of how this information can be disseminated to other team members

Post-training interview: These are questions that should be discussed immediately after the employee completes the training.

Did the employee get what we expected out of the training?

1. If the employee got what was expected

    a. Does the employee think that the new knowledge, skills or attitudes are applicable to our work setting? Why or why not?

        (1). If the knowledge, skills, or attitudes are applicable:

            (a) What steps will the employee take to begin to apply the new information?

            (b) What barriers will need to be overcome to apply the information?

            (c) How might we overcome these barriers?

            (d) When and how should we check our progress?

        (2). If the knowledge, skills or attitudes are not applicable, go to 2 below.

2. If the employee did not get what was expected, did s/he pick up any other information that might be useful to the organization? If yes, go back to 1(a)1.

Post-application interview: If, at the post-training interview, it was decided that the training would be applied to the work setting, a check-in interview should have been scheduled. Typically this would occur about six weeks after the new information was put into use. At this interview, the following questions should be answered:

- ✓ What changes have been made?
- ✓ How successful do we think these changes have been in meeting the original need(s) expressed in the pre-training interview
- ✓ What changes have we been unable to make? Why?
- ✓ Should we still try to make these changes? If so, what is our plan for making the changes?
- ✓ What unexpected problems have we come across in applying this training? How have we dealt with them?
- ✓ What unexpected benefits came from applying this training?
- ✓ Is there anything else that we need to do to apply this training more fully?

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