



Enterprising Rural FamiliesTM

This newsletter is an instrument of the *Enterprising Rural Families: Making It Work* program of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. For further information concerning the Enterprising Rural Families program or on-line course contact information@eRuralFamilies.org or go to <http://eRuralFamilies.org/>.

TIP OF THE MONTH:

Possible harmful outcomes of authoritarian (dictator) type leadership:

- Team members may try to get on the good side of their leader or become “leaders pets.”
- Excessive competitiveness and rivalry among the members results in tattling, backbiting, cheating, covering up, and gossiping; these power struggles arise out of the need for individuals to avoid punishment and to look good in the leader’s eyes.
- Team members cope by becoming submissive and conforming to the team leader’s demands; they may become weak in initiative and creativity and, therefore, be ineffective at problem solving and risk taking.
- Those who do not submit and conform may become rebellious and defiant, thereby frustrating other team members and weakening the work of the team.
- Others may choose to withdraw from the team relationship, either physically or psychologically; they may refuse to speak up or get involved for fear of punishing consequences.

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Well Trained Employees are the Key to Small Business Success

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Why are employees in some companies happy to stick with the company while others look for a change? The reason is that some businesses know how to take good care of their employees and provide a working environment that helps them retain their identity, while proving themselves and growing along with the company.

Well-trained employees are the key to your small business success. Studies have shown that the most successful, productive employees are those who have received extensive training. They’re the cream of the crop, often having the strongest stake in the company’s future.

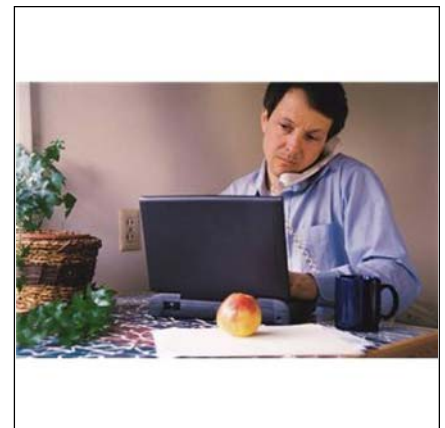
In an ideal world, you would be able to hire people who already possess the exact skills your business needs. But in today’s competitive labor market, demand for skilled workers far exceeds supply. That’s where training comes in. Not only does instruction arm your employees with needed professional or technical skills, but it also shows that you are invested in them and interested in bringing them with you into the company’s future. This helps keep workers motivated and involved.

The quality of employees and their development through training and education are major factors in determining long-term profitability of a small business. If you hire and keep good employees, it is good policy to invest in the development of their skills, so they can increase their productivity.

Training often is considered for new employees only. This is a mistake because ongoing training for current employees helps them adjust to rapidly changing job requirements.

Research has shown specific benefits that a small business receives from training and developing its workers, including:

- Increased productivity.
- Reduced employee turnover.
- Increased efficiency resulting in financial gains.
- Decreased need for supervision.



Employees frequently develop a greater sense of self-worth, dignity and well-being as they become more valuable to the firm and to society. Generally they will receive a greater share of the material gains that result from their increased productivity. These factors give them a sense of satisfaction through the achievement of personal and company goals.

Your business should have a clearly defined strategy and set of objectives that direct and drive all the decisions made especially for training decisions. Firms that plan their training process are more successful than those that do not.

The purpose of formulating a training strategy is to answer two relatively simple but vitally important questions: (1) what is our business? and (2) what should our business be? Armed with the answers to these questions and a clear vision of its mission, strategy and objectives, a company can identify its training needs.

Identifying Training Needs

Training needs can be assessed by analyzing three major human resource areas: the organization as a whole, the job characteristics and the needs of the individuals. This analysis will provide answers to the following questions:

- Where is training needed?
- What specifically must an employee learn in order to be more productive?
- Who needs to be trained?



Begin by assessing the current status of the company how it does what it does best and the abilities of your employees to do these tasks. Second, consider whether the organization is financially committed to supporting the training efforts. If not, any attempt to develop a solid training program will fail.

Next, determine exactly where training is needed. It is foolish to implement a training effort without concentrating resources where they are needed most. A skills inventory can help determine the skills possessed by the employees in general. This inventory will help the organization determine what skills are available now and what skills are needed for future development. Prior to the training process, determine the skill level of the new employee. Through interviewing, observing the employee's skills and abilities, paying careful attention to questions asked and not asked, and inquiring of previous employers and references, the employer can develop a good idea of the skill level of the employee.

Next, identify specifically what the learners should be able to perform after training. Include factors such as how fast, how accurately, or at what standards various tasks should be performed. Make sure the steps or procedures are logical and in correct order. Have all needed materials and equipment available and ready for operation.

Once you have determined where training is needed, concentrate on the content of the program. Analyze the characteristics of the job based on its job description, the written description of what the employee actually does. Training based on job descriptions should go into detail about how the job is performed on a task-by-task basis. Actually doing the job will enable you to get a better feel for what is done.

Training programs should be designed to consider the ability of the employee to learn the material and to use it effectively, and to make the most efficient use of resources possible. It is also important that employees be motivated by the training experience.

Steps in Training

The teaching process can be broken down into five steps - Prepare, Tell, Show, Do, and Review. A closer look at each of these steps will assist the employer (trainer) in understanding this process.

1. Prepare: The first step in this process is to prepare the learner. The trainer should put the learner at ease and explain why the skill to be learned is important. Explain any hazards or problems that may be involved and how to deal with them. Answer any questions that the learner may have about the task.

2. Tell: Explain the task thoroughly. Break it down into key parts or steps. Most employees will find that learning several smaller tasks and putting those together is easier than trying to learn one large skill all at once.

3. Show: Demonstrate exactly how the task or skill is to be done for the employee. Involve the employee by asking questions and getting feedback. Have the learner explain the process or skill back to the trainer.

4. Do: The learner now has the opportunity to perform or do the task. The trainer needs to help the learner develop confidence by carefully monitoring the learner at first, then allowing him or her to work without supervision. The employer needs to make sure that the employee does each step correctly and avoids developing any bad habits.

5. Review: Provide honest feedback to the learner in terms of encouragement, constructive criticism, and additional comments. This is a great opportunity to praise the employee or correct their progress.

One means of providing feedback to the employee is to develop a check sheet with all of the job tasks listed. On a regular basis, the employer and employee should go over the sheet. Recognize the good points and explain what points need to be improved. This method keeps new employees up-to-date and involved with the review process.

Orientations are for new employees. The first several days on the job are crucial in the success of new employees. This point is illustrated by the fact that 60 percent of all employees who quit do so in the first ten days. Orientation training should emphasize the following topics:

This information will change from business to business, but a basic core of material should be discussed with the new employee. This includes the specific characteristics of the business (layout of facilities, other employees, history, mission, goals, and role of employee). This kind of information provides the "big picture" of the business to the new employee. Personnel policies including probationary period, disciplinary actions, work schedule, safety rules, and use of equipment also need to be covered. New employees are always interested in their benefits. Cover items such as pay, payday, vacation, sick leave, and other benefits. Discuss specific job responsibilities the new employee will be assigned, how the job relates to other work performed in the business, and safety rules. Finally, be sure to introduce the new employee to other employees within the business. It is helpful to put the orientation information on paper in the form of a written employee handbook so policies and benefits can be accessible and clear to both employer and employee.

Answer all of the immediate questions that the new employee might have. It is important to develop open, two-way lines of communication between the employer and employee right from the beginning. Consider the time spent for orientation as an investment for both you and the employee. Clear, well-defined expectations will pay dividends in the future and reduce possible misunderstandings between employer and employee. By orientating the new employee properly, a smooth transition can be made to the next step - training.

Some companies use verbal presentations while others have written orientation guides. Many small businesses convey these topics in one-on-one orientations. No matter what method is used, it is important that the newcomer understand his or her new place of employment



Proper orientation and training of employees is one part of human resource management for the small business. Providing a thorough orientation sets the stage for a satisfying experience for both the employer and employee. The employer should assess the employee's skill level, identify what the learner should be able to do, and develop strategies in training the employee. The employer assumes the role of a teacher when training employees, using a systematic approach (prepare, tell, show, do, and review). Well planned and conducted orientation and training takes time and effort by both the employer and employee; however, the far-reaching benefits result in positive, productive, and motivated individuals.

Resources:

Mechling, Mark. *Orientation and Training of Employees*. Ohio State University Fact Sheet, CDFS-1380-96.

Ten Employee Training Tips. *D&B Small Business Solutions*. <http://smallbusiness.dnb.com/human-resources/careers-job-training/1465-1.html>

