TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: A GUIDE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS
As organizations strive to remain competitive in today’s fast-paced, high-tech environment, the need for effective training and development personnel continues to grow. Training and development (T&D) professionals play a key role in shaping employee performance, both as individual contributors and as collaborators. They introduce new hires to company policies, help personnel manage their workloads and ensure employees are on a career path to success. Their important contributions are not lost on today’s business leaders. According to Deloitte’s Global Human Capital Trends 2016 report, 30 percent of executives identify “learning” as the top driver in employee development and organizational success, illustrating why effective T&D professionals are in high demand in the public and private sectors.

Explore why training and development professionals are highly valued by learning about:

- The responsibilities of T&D professionals.
- What services they offer to businesses, nonprofits and government agencies.
- How T&D professionals influence an organization by:
  - Creating a healthy and positive culture.
  - Advancing organizational and individual skill sets.
  - Providing career planning and leadership development for managers and executives.
- How T&D professionals affect a company’s operations and its values.
- The strong job outlook for training professionals and career paths to consider.
- How earning a master’s degree in organizational leadership can better position you to excel in this field.

Training and development is a rewarding career path, offering a variety of opportunities to professionally serve employees and executives in a multitude of ways.

How T&D Professionals Work with HR to Nurture Talent

As part of the job role, training and development professionals evaluate, identify and cultivate employee’s talents to enable opportunities for professional growth. An employee that continues to evolve can be a valuable contributor towards an organization’s overarching goals.

In addition, an organization may have T&D staff work closely with their internal Human Resources (HR) team in identifying candidates who will contribute to creating a positive culture and environment. As a result of these departments collaborating, T&D professionals can have a voice in recognizing employees who display leadership qualities that are worthy of merit and promotion.

Once new employees are hired, effective onboarding is crucial to ensure they have the tools to make a smooth transition into their roles. According to the Society for Human Resource Management’s Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success report, about half of hourly workers leave new jobs within four months, and half of the managers leave within 18 months, both for failing to fully grasp the organizational expectations. In other words, both segments were not successfully onboarded. To prevent employee retention issues, T&D professionals design and often oversee an onboarding process that helps workers buy-in to their organization’s core tenets and procedures.
Teaching Methods, Learning Styles and Technology

Like any teacher, a T&D professional should be connecting with his or her students, demonstrating empathy and utilizing different techniques to reach a variety of learning styles. Now more than ever, T&D professionals have a wealth of opportunities when it comes to training techniques, methods and platforms. In an organizational environment, efficient and cost-effective training techniques may have to transcend individual learning preferences. Some organizations may benefit from an online course environment, while others may prefer an off-site training session.

Going beyond traditional classroom environments, advancements in technology have opened up training methodologies—giving today’s T&D professionals an advantage over previous generations. Learning resources such as online modules, podcasts and education apps have made customized training for individual learning styles easier. For instance, if some employees are encountering difficulty in keeping pace with new organizational requirements, a cost-effective solution would be to have them complete webinars at their own pace.

The Importance of Retaining Employees

In addition to effective onboarding, an organization should also focus on retaining employees.

- A 2016 study on the effect of training on employee retention, published in the International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, found job training is central to retaining and engaging employees.

- The costs associated with employee turnover are significant. The Center for American Progress found for workers earning less than $50,000 each year, the typical turnover expense is 20 percent of the salary.

- A 2016 survey conducted by Deloitte found 66 percent of HR professionals said they were updating policies within their organizations to focus on retaining and engaging current staff.

- In that same study, Deloitte also determined that 12 percent of employees say they are motivated by “work passion” rather than “career ambition,” suggesting organizations must create environments that employees find “compelling.”

Training and development professionals are frequently responsible for recommending and prioritizing organizational training budgets. Training Magazine’s 2014 Training Industry Report found the average training budget for large companies was $17.4 million. Small companies had an average budget of about $338,000. Regardless of the size of the business, budgets must be designed and allocated carefully to provide a return on investment.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Training

As organizations evolve, training and development professionals need to remain agile to allow the training methods and curriculum to evolve as well. A trainer can evaluate the success of a program by collecting data using tactics such as anonymous employee surveys and benchmark tests.

Other approaches for assessing training effectiveness include:

- Comparing the retention levels of employees who went through training versus those who did not
- Collecting feedback from surveys
- Testing before and after training
- Conducting performance evaluations with manager feedback on skills learned during training
- Analyzing leads, sales and customer sentiment

The Importance of Identifying Values

Training practices across all departments should emphasize an organization’s core values. In his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey suggests organizations collaborate on values with input from every single employee. The values then become ingrained into company culture and help the organization maintain a central focus. Organizational leaders should pinpoint training opportunities after devising the business values, with each value inspiring separate training.

Cultivating Employee Engagement and Work-Life Balance

Businesses that want to improve their productivity should also maximize efforts to retain employees, especially millennials. According to the Pew Research Center, [millennials now account for the largest segment of today's U.S. workforce](https://www.pewresearch.org). A 2016 study by Gallup found [87 percent of millennials classify professional development as “very important”](https://www.gallup.com/poll/188184/millennials-professional-development.aspx). However, less than 30 percent of respondents consider themselves “engaged” while at work, which can seriously impact an organization. A 2014 study published in Smith Magazine found [each disengaged employee costs businesses an average of $10,000](https://www.smithmagazine.com). While a 2015 study revealed satisfied employees are 12 percent more productive.
Methodologies to Enhance Engagement

Employee satisfaction and work-life balance are components that should be fostered throughout an organization, from the CEO on down. T&D professionals can contribute to these efforts by helping employees feel more engaged at work. There are numerous methodologies T&D professionals can deploy to cultivate engagement across an organization.

Among the steps T&Ds can take:

- Meet with internal leaders and introduce them to techniques that foster employee engagement and work-life balance
- Work with employees to cultivate skills and competencies for long-term growth
- Train employees on techniques to better balance work and life

In some organizations, improving and strengthening internal relations is often the responsibility of the HR department. However, T&D professionals may also focus aspects of their training sessions on the importance of productive internal interactions. Below we discuss four proven methodologies that a T&D leader can use to strengthen morale and create a culture of inclusion among employees.

1. Situational Role Playing

T&D leaders can deploy role-playing and team-building exercises into staff training sessions for the betterment of the organization.

Role playing exposes managers and employees to a variety of challenging hypothetical situations and forces them to consider solutions to situations involving conflict and disgruntled colleagues. As employees complete new training regimes, role playing can be built into the training to better prepare employees on how to handle difficult dialog and work together more collaboratively and productively.

2. Fostering Better Communication

Communication is key to any organization’s success and team building exercises can serve as a method of bringing supervisors and employees together in non-work environments. Off-site activities serve as opportunities for staffers from across the organization to hone their communication skills in a more neutral and comfortable setting. T&D professionals can play an important component in this process by acting as the catalyst to making these team building exercises beneficial for everyone that participates.

Effective communication among employees, front-line supervisors, and top management is vital to time management. According to a poll by HR Magazine, nearly half of employees said receiving confusing work instructions can cost them 40 minutes of productivity each day.
3. Group Training for Organizational Productivity

Another method that helps maintain harmony and cooperation within a department is group training. Actions from a single team member have the potential to impact the entire team’s productivity. Trainers who leverage group training, keep team members accountable and increase self-awareness to better identify and eliminate non-productive behavior.

To keep employees involved, training and development professionals can arrange organizational tours, which are planned outings where one department observes another. Ideally, the visitors will gain a better appreciation and understanding of the intricacies of different roles and how everyone contributes to the overall organizational goals.

4. Ensuring Executive Engagement

T&D professionals are not limited to training only new employees. They also focus their efforts on engaging managers. A 2015 study by Vanderbilt University found that keeping middle managers happy and engaged at work directly correlates to retaining employees across an organization. The study determined that dissatisfied middle managers can often be the result of poor working relationships with senior managers. In order to keep an organization running efficiently, T&D professionals should engage with senior leaders, to enhance their ability to effectively collaborate with their subordinates.

T&D professionals should introduce training programs that enable company leaders to feel engaged and committed to their organization. Many training programs can directly benefit an organization such as:

**Leadership**
Recently Gallup conducted a poll that determined most large organizations employ about 1 manager per 10 people, but unfortunately only 1 out of 10 people naturally possess leadership skills. Regardless whether or not employees currently demonstrate the skills to manage within an organization, everyone can benefit from learning how to lead. T&D professionals should work with executives and HR professionals to select and implement the ideal leadership training program.

**Team Building**
T&D managers can help lead the initiative by working with internal managers to identify “sustainability-minded” team projects that instill a sense of unity and purpose throughout the company. Team-building activities are a trending organizational approach that enables staff members to come together and participate in socially responsible activities such as conducting food drives, participating in charity races or assisting a local Habitat for Humanity project.

**Executive Coaching**
In a 2016 survey, more than half of management-level professionals believe completing executive coaching training is the single most important factor in helping them stay relevant in the job market, even surpassing the cutting-edge areas of digital and social media. Therefore, organizations seeking a method to keep middle managers engaged should consider introducing an executive coaching program.
Training and development professionals contribute to an organization in a multitude of ways. They interact directly with staff and management. They develop curricula that shape training and business practices across an enterprise. Furthermore, they help keep employees engaged and satisfied.

T&D professional’s diverse skillset translates into strong earning potential and high industry demand. As of 2015, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly 33,000 training and development managers were employed nationwide.

The 2015 median annual salaries for industries employing the most T&D professionals were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGES</th>
<th>EMPLOYMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, and technical services</td>
<td>$113,680</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of companies and enterprises</td>
<td>$110,140</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance services sector</td>
<td>$104,710</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare and social assistance sector</td>
<td>$97,470</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State, local, and private educational service providers</td>
<td>$96,760</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The trend shows no sign of wavering anytime soon. The BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook projects job opportunities will continue to grow by 7 percent through 2024, with 2,300 new positions expected to be added in the United States.
Take Steps Now to Pursue a Training and Development Career

Motivated, passionate individuals who are skilled in decision-making, communication and leadership should take note. If you have a desire to help others advance, improve internal processes and establish a positive work environment, a career in training and development may be a perfect fit.

Lewis University’s on ground or online Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership will enable you to move forward in a training and development career path. The online program offers a comprehensive curriculum taught by dedicated instructors with relevant, professional experience to set students up for success. Students can choose from five targeted concentrations: Training and Development, Organizational Management, Professional and Executive Coaching, Nonprofit Management or Higher Education - Student Services.

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