

Powering Employee Training For Enterprise Augmentation: Reflections from a Small Scale Manufacturing Unit in Kolkata

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Abstract: *In The Modern Competitive Business Environment, Learning New Skills And Upgrading Oneself Are Very Fundamental. Learning Should Not Only Be Textual, But Should Be Practice-Oriented For The Betterment Of The Workplace. Learning And Training Should Rather Move Around Improving The Human-Mind To Make Employees Embrace The Spirit Of Organizational Change. This Paper Focuses On A Real-Life Analysis Of A Small Scale Manufacturing Unit In Kolkata, West Bengal, India On How Effective Training Can Be To Benefit The Employees At Large And Thereby Benefit The Organization As A Whole. The Objective Of The Study Is To Identify Whether Employee Training In The Work-Space Is Effective And Useful For The Organization In Terms Of Employee Performance, Work-Contribution And Augmentation Of The Overall Profitability Of The Business. The Elemental Point Here Is To Answer The Question As To Identify Whether Employee Training Is Relatable Enough In Enhancing Enterprise Augmentation By Way Of Building Competitive Edge. The Study Would Consider An Investigative Research On The Effectiveness Of Employee Training In This Context. The Methodology For The Study Would Be Based On A Primary Survey Research. The Paper Would Stand On The Domain Of The Kirkpatrick's Model Of Training Evaluation. The Concluding Remarks Of The Paper Would Focus On The Identification Of The Effectiveness Of Training In The Particular Enterprise In Question Considered For This Case-Based Research Study In This Paper.*

Keywords: *Training, Enterprise, Development, Kirkpatrick, Reaction, Learning, Transfer, Results*

I. Introduction

The Value Of Employee Training Is Growing In The Modern Business Context. Business Heads And Training Managers Are Under Pressure To Prove The Effectiveness Of Training At Every Juncture Of Their Work-Life. It Remains To Be Quite An Important Question To Determine How Far The Imparted Training Programs Have Been Successful In Reality. With The Help Of Evaluation, Results Of Training Program Are Determined I.E. With The Help Of Evaluation, One May Get To Know How The Training Has Improved The Trainees And In What Ways, Or Whether It Has Fetched The Desired Benefits For Positive Organizational Change. Moreover, Business Environment Is Always Dynamic And Is Never At A Stand-Still [12]. What Has Been Successful Yesterday May Not Be A Cost-Effective And Flourishing Project Tomorrow. Being Able To Measure Results Will Help To Adapt To Such Changing Circumstances.

II. Employee Training - The Concept As A Developmental Tool:

As Dale S. Beach Puts It, Training Is An Organised Procedure By Which People Can Learn Knowledge And Skills For A Definite Purpose." The Basics Of A Training Cycle Revolve Around Three Stages Viz.: Identifying The Need For Training, Delivery Of The Training Program And The Ultimate Evaluation Of The Effectiveness Of Training Delivered.

Training Is Necessary For The Following Reasons [4] -

- **Increased Productivity:-** Training Improves The Performance Of Trainees. Increased Skill And Efficiency Results In Better Quantity And Quality Of Production . A Trained Worker Will Handle Machines Carefully And Will Use The Materials In An Economical Way.
- **Higher Employee Morale:-** A Trained Worker Derives Happiness And Job Satisfaction From His Work . He Feels Happy When His Performance Is Up To The Mark. This Also Gives Him Job Security And Ego Satisfaction.
- **Less Supervision:-** The Degree Of Supervision Required For A Trained Worker Will Be Less Than That Of The Untrained Worker. A Trained Worker Will Be Most Disciplined And Independent. He Will Not Like Any Type Of Interference In His Work And May Not Give An Opportunity To The Supervisor For Complaint. Such Workers Can Take More Interest In Their Work And May Contribute Significantly In Reducing Managerial Problems Associated With The Act Of Employee And Work Supervision [11].
- **Less Wastage:-** Untrained Workers May Waste More Materials, Damage Machines And Equipment And May Cause Accidents Than Trained Workers. Better Training On Handling Equipments And Machines Would Curb Wastage
- **Avoidance Of Accidents:-** Accidents May Be Avoided With Proper Training To Employees. Accidents Often Occur Due To A Deficiency In The Operator And Not In The Machine. With Proper Training, Employees Would Generally Be Able To Handle Machines And Equipments In A Systematic Way [12].
- **Easy Adaptability:-** Technological Advancements Over Time Will Require New Approaches To Work With. The Methods Of Work Are Constantly Undergoing A Change In The Business Context. This Will Necessitate The Adaptability Of Workers To Changing Work Environment. A Trained Worker Can Be More Adaptable To Change Than An Untrained One. The Former Would Be Able To Easily Learn New Work Techniques And Would Be Adaptable To Changes With Little Or No Resistance [5], [12].

- **Reduced Turnover And Absenteeism:-** Labour Turnover And Absenteeism Are Mainly Due To Job Dissatisfaction. When A Worker Is Properly Trained He Will Take Keen Interest In His Job And Would Be Able To Derive Satisfaction From It. A Satisfied Person May Not Leave His Job And Try At A New Place. Training Helps In Reducing Labor Absenteeism By Increasing Job Satisfaction Among Them.
- **Employee Development:-** Training Also Helps In The Development Of Trainees. It First Helps In Locating Talent In Them And Then Developing It. The Adaptability Of The Worker Will Help Him In Working On New And Improved Jobs. If A Worker Learns Fast Then He Will Be Able To Develop His Talent And Improve His Performance. Training Ultimately Gives Him An Opportunity To Prove His Efficiency In The Long Run. Whether Or Not Training Has Been Imparted In The Correct Spirit With Ample Scope For Application Or Not, Needs To Be Critically Verified And Understood. As Put Forth In Management Literature, Training Evaluation Is An Attempt To Obtain Information On The Effects Of Training On Employee Performance To Assess The Value Of Training In The Real-Life Context [5], [6].

The Elemental Objectives Of Training Evaluation Are As Follows:-

- To Determine The Ability Of The Trainees To Perform Jobs For Which They Were Trained.
- To Determine The Specific Nature Of Training Deficiencies.
- To Determine Whether The Trainees Require Any Additional On The Job Training In Certain Situations.
- To Determine The Extent Of Training Needed By The Participants To Meet Their Job Requirements.
- To Determine The Cost Effectiveness Of The Program.

Effectiveness Of The Imparted Training Can Be Ultimately Judged In Terms Of [9] –

- a. Evidence Of Changed Behavior Or Performance Of Trainees.
- b. Capacity Of Trainees To Continuously Implement The Learning In Their Work Situations.
- c. Greater Willingness Of Trainees To Find Better Ways Of Doing Things.
- d. Improvement To The Cost Effectiveness Efficiency Of The Organization.
- e. Improved Productivity.

I. Objective Of The Study:

The Essential Objective Of The Study Is To Identify Whether Employee Training In The Work-Space Is Effective For An Organization In Terms Of Employee Performance And Contribution As Well As In Relation To The Overall Profitability Of The Business In Question. The Fundamental Point Here Is To Answer The Question As To Identify How Employee Training Is Relatable Enough In Fostering Enterprise Augmentation By Way Of Building Competitive Edge Of A Business. The Central Question Is To Find Whether Training Initiatives Are Actually Effective For Employee And Organizational Development For A Business.

II. Scope Of The Study:

The Study Considers An Investigative Research On The Effectiveness Of Employee Training In A Small Scale Manufacturing Unit Based In Kolkata, West Bengal, India. In General, The Paper Has A Case-Based Approach.

III. Research Methodology:

The Methodology For The Study Is Based On Primary Survey As Well As Through Support Of Secondary Sources. A Structured Survey Or Interview Approach Has Been Considered From Across A Stratified Sample Of Respondents, Viz.: Some Of The Employees And The Heads Of Departments Based On Their Exposure To Training Initiatives In The Organization In Question. The Development And Planning Of The Questionnaire For The Primary Research Have Followed From The Kirkpatrick's Model Of Training Evaluation.

The Kirkpatrick's Model Of Training Evaluation:

The Model, As An Effective Tool Towards Understanding The Effectiveness Of Training, Holds Ground Based On Four Specific Levels Viz.: Reaction Level, Learning Level, Transfer Level And Results Level [8], [9].

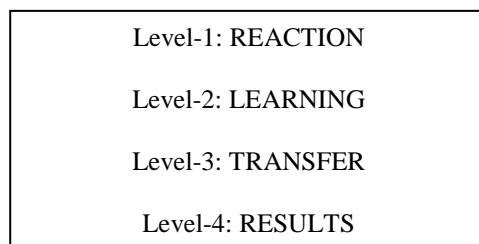


Fig-1: The Four Levels Of The Kirkpatrick Model Of Training Evaluation

Assessing Training Effectiveness Often Calls For The Use Of The Four-Level Model Developed By Donald Kirkpatrick (1994). According To This Model, Evaluation Should Always Begin With Level One, And Then, As Time And Budget Allows, Should Move Sequentially Through Levels Two, Three, And Four. Information From Each Prior Level Serves As A Base For The Next Level's Evaluation. Thus, Each Successive Level Represents A More Precise Measure Of The Effectiveness Of The Training Program, But At The Same Time Requires A More Rigorous And Time-Consuming Analysis.

Level-1: Evaluation – Reaction

Just As The Word Implies, Evaluation At This Level Measures How Participants In A Training Program React To It. It Attempts To Answer Questions Regarding The Participants' Perceptions - Did They Like It? Was The Material Relevant To Their Work? This Type Of Evaluation Is Often Called A "Smilesheet." According To Kirkpatrick, Every Program Should At Least Be Evaluated At This Level To Provide For The Improvement Of A Training Program. In Addition, The Participants' Reactions Have Important Consequences For Learning (Level Two). Although A Positive Reaction Does Not Guarantee Learning, A Negative Reaction Almost Certainly Reduces Its Possibility.

Level-2: Evaluation – Learning

Assessing At This Level Moves The Evaluation Beyond Learner Satisfaction And Attempts To Assess The Extent The Trainees Have Advanced In Skills, Knowledge, Or Attitude. Measurement At This Level Is More Difficult And Laborious Than Level One. Methods Range From Formal To Informal Testing To Team Assessment And Self-Assessment. If Possible, Participants Take The Test Or Assessment Before The Training (Pre Test) And After Training (Post Test) To Determine The Amount Of Learning That Has Occurred.

Level-3: Evaluation – Transfer

This Level Measures The Transfer That Has Occurred In Learners' Behavior Due To The Training Program. Evaluating At This Level Attempts To Answer The Question - Are The Newly Acquired Skills, Knowledge, Or Attitude Being Used In The Everyday Environment Of The Learner? For Many Trainers This Level Represents The Truest Assessment Of A Program's Effectiveness. However, Measuring At This Level Is Difficult As It Is Often Impossible To Predict When The Change In Behavior Will Occur, And Thus Requires Important Decisions In Terms Of When To Evaluate, How Often To Evaluate, And How To Evaluate.

Level-4: Evaluation – Results:

Frequently Thought Of As The Bottom Line, This Level Measures The Success Of The Program In Terms Of The Fact That Managers And Executives Can Understand Increased Production, Improved Quality, Decreased Costs, Reduced Frequency Of Accidents, Increased Sales, And Even Higher Profits Or Return On Investment. From A Business And Organizational Perspective, This Is The Overall Reason For A Training Program.

LEVEL	EVALUATION	BASIC QUESTION
Level-1	REACTION	How Learners Felt About The Training?
Level-2	LEARNING	Whether Training Helped In Increasing Knowledge?
Level-3	TRANSFER	How Applicable Have Been The New Knowledge?
Level-4	RESULTS	What Has Been The Effect On The Business Ultimately?

Fig-2: The Four Basic Questions Of The Kirkpatrick Model

IV. Development Of The Scaled Questionnaire For The Primary Survey:

The Questionnaire For The Primary Survey In This Study Has Been Prepared On The Basis Of The Different Levels Of The Kirkpatrick Model Viz.: Reaction, Learning, Transfer And Result. The Questions Of The Questionnaire Have Been Classified Under Four Broad Sections In Line With The Four Levels Of The Kirkpatrick Model. The First Section Of Questions Aim At Measuring The Reactions [R] Of Trainees; The Second Section Focuses On Identifying The Level Of Learning [L] That The Trainees Receive; The Third Section Of Questions Aim At Studying The Behavioural Changes [B] Of Trainees After Attending Training Sessions; And Finally The Fourth Set Of Questions Aim At Studying The Effect Of Training In Changing The Extent Of Knowledge, Skills And Abilities (Ksas) Of The Trainees Post Training I.E. The Ultimate Results [RE].

The Questionnaire Has Been Finally Fine-Tuned In Line With The Opinions Of Experts To Whom The Initial Draft Of The Scale Was Sent For Review. The Experts Comprised Of Academicians And Industry Professional In The Area Of Human Resource Management In General And Training And Development In Particular. The Final Questionnaire Thereafter Was Used For The Primary Survey Of This Study. A Sample Of 21 Respondents In The Organization Were Selected To Provide Their Feedback On The Questions In The Questionnaire Based On The Degree And Extent Of Their Involvement And Participation In Training Programs Most Generally Provided In The Organization. These 21 Respondents Comprised Of Few Employees Selected At Random, And The Departmental Heads In The Business. The Sample Size Could Not Be Extended Further In Terms Of Numbers Due To Limitations Of The Organization In Question.

V. The Study And Analysis:

The Primary Research By Way Of The Questionnaire Framed In Line With The Kirkpatrick Model Of Evaluation Of Training, Revealed The Following Identifications. However, It Needs To Be Mentioned That The Opinions Are Restricted Within The Responses Of The Sample Units And So May Have Varied Had The Entire Enterprise Was Considered In The Study.

Reaction Based

R-1. Do You Think The Course Objectives Are Generally Achieved?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Great Extent	10
Adequate Extent	6
Limited Extent	4
No	1

Maximum Number Of Respondents Has Replied That The Course Objectives Are Generally Achieved To A Great Extent.

R-2. To What Extent Are Topics Relevant To The Training Objectives?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Great Extent	13
Adequate Extent	5
Limited Extent	2
No	1

Maximum Number Of The Respondents Has Replied That Topics Are Generally Relevant To The Training Objectives To A Great Extent.

R-3. Are Training Programs Of Use In Work And In The Trainees' Development?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Great Extent	12
Adequate Extent	4
Limited Extent	4
No	1

Maximum Number Of The Respondents Proposed That The Training Programs Are Generally Of Great Use In Their Work And Also In Their Development.

R-4. Do Trainees Find Interest In Reading The Training Materials?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Yes	18
No	3

Most Respondents Have Replied On The Affirmative In Their Interest To Read The Training Materials Provided To Them During Training Sessions.

R-5. Are Topics Often Redundant Within A Specific Training Program?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Yes	6
No	15

Respondents Feel That Topics Are Generally Never Redundant In Training Program Imparted.

R-6 Do You Feel Existing Training Programs Need To Be Grossly Restructured?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Yes	4
No	17

Most Respondents Have Been On The Negative On This.

Learning Based

All Of The Responses In This Section Were Gathered On A 5-Point Scale Where 1 Represents Least And 5 Represents Most.

L-1. To What Extent Are The Training In Human Values And Organizational Culture Relevant To Trainees At Work?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	3
3	3
4	9
5	5

Most Respondents Have Found The Training In Human Values And Organizational Culture Quite Relevant At The Work Place.

L-2. Does Training Help Learn And Be Aware Of The Human Values In Work Life?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	2
2	1
3	12
4	3
5	3

Maximum Number Of The Trainees Felt That Training Somewhat Helps Them To Be Aware Of Human Values In Work Life, But Not Highly.

L-3. To What Extent You Want To Follow The Ethics Of Your Organization?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	3
2	2
3	4
4	10
5	2

Most Respondents Have Indicated That They Want To Very Much Follow The Ethics Of The Organization.

L-4. Are Employees Made Aware Of The Organization’s Code Of Ethics Through The Training Programs On Ethics At Work?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	2
2	1
3	2
4	13
5	3

Most Respondents Felt Positive On This That Training Programs On Ethics Help Them Know Their Organizational Ethical Code Properly.

L-5. To What Extent Are You Made Aware Of The Work Culture In The Organization Through Training Programs?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	2
3	2
4	4
5	12

Respondents Strongly Showed An Affirmative Response That Training Greatly Makes Them Aware Of The Work Culture In The Organization Than Prior To Participation In Training Programs.

L-6. To What Extent Are You Now Aware Of Your Negative Behaviour After Attending The Training Programs?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	2
2	3
3	1
4	5
5	10

Most Of The Respondents Have Been In The Opinion That Training Helps Them Be Aware Of Their Negative Behaviour, If Any.

L-7. To What Extent The Training Skills Provided By The Organization Have Helped You To Improve Your Job Performance?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	2
3	2
4	3
5	13

Replies Have Indicated That Training Skills Imparted Are Most Generally Helpful In Improving Job Performance.

L-8. In Your Opinion To What Extent The Last Training Program You Had Attended Was Practical And Problem Oriented?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	2
2	2
3	2
4	10
5	5

Majority Of The Respondents Have A Positive Take On This, But However They Did Not Speak Very Strongly On It.

L-9. To What Extent You Have Been Able To Apply What You Learnt?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	3
3	3
4	4
5	10

Maximum Number Of The Respondents Replied That Training Has Always Been Application-Oriented.

L-10. Does Training, That Are Generally Imparted, Help You Increase Your Level Of Confidence?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	2
2	1
3	2
4	6
5	10

Most Respondents, However Not All Of Them, Are Of The Opinion That Training Imparted Generally Increases Their Confidence Levels.

Behaviour Based

Responses In This Section Were Essentially Gathered On A 5-Point Scale Where 1 Represents Least And 5 Represents Most.

B-1. To What Extent Did Training Programs Help Your Department In Terms Of Lowering Absenteeism?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	1
3	3
4	11
5	5

There Has Been A Most General Opinion From Superiors That The Training Programs Have Helped Their Departments In Terms Of Lowering Absenteeism In Most Cases.

B-2. To What Extent The Training Benefits Your Department In Terms Of Reduction Of Loss Of Working Hours?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	1
3	5
4	10
5	4

Most Of The Respondents Replied That The Training Have Benefitted Their Department In Terms Of Reduction Of Loss Of Working Hours Very Much.

B-3. To What Extent The Training Programs Benefit Your Department In Terms Of Reduction Of Cost?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	1
3	2
4	13
5	4

Most Of The Opinions Were Quite Affirmative On This.

B-4. To What Extent The Trainees Are Aware Of The Human Values In Work-Life After Attending The Programs?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	1
3	7
4	11
5	1

The Superiors Have Generally Felt That The Trainees Are Quite Much Aware Of The Human Values In Work-Life After Attending Related Training Programs.

B-5. To What Extent The Trainees Are Aware Of The Ethics In The Organization After Attending The Training Programs?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	2
3	2
4	14
5	2

Most Of The Respondents Have Spoken Well That Employees Are Much Aware Of The Ethics In Their Organization After Attending The Training Program .

B-6. To What Extent Are The Trainees Aware Of The Work Culture In The Organization Through The Training Programs?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	13
5	5

Most Responses Here Have Been On The Affirmative.

B-7. To What Extent There Is Change In Behavior Of The Trainees After Attending The Programs?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	1
3	6
4	11
5	2

The Responses Revealed That The Superiors Of Most Of The Employees Feel That Training Programs Imparted Do Change Employee Behavior In The Long Run.

B-8. To What Extent Are The Trainees Being Able To Reduce Their Negative Behaviour?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	2
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	10

Responses Showed That Respondents Feel That Training Imparted Does Help Them In Reducing Negative Behaviour At Work To Quite A Great Extent.

B-9. Is There Any Change In The Social Awareness Of The Trainees After The Training?

Response	No. Of Trainees
Yes	17
No	4

Most Responses Have Been In The Affirmative On This Matter, However The Matter Remains To Be Very Much Trainee Specific.

B-10. To What Extent The Trainees Sent For The Training Have Become Aware Of The Organizational Values And Are Able To Show That In Their Behaviour, Post Training?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	2
3	5
4	11
5	2

Superiors, By And Large, Have Felt That The Behavioural Dispositions Of Employees, In The Post Training Phase, Are Generally Value-Based.

Result Based

RE-1. To What Extent Did Training Help The Trainees In Becoming More Competent To Deal With The Day-To-Day Problem Of The Organization?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	2
3	2
4	3
5	13

Generally, The Training Programs Imparted Have Helped Most Of The Trainees In Becoming More Competent To Deal With The Day To Day Problem Of The Organization.

RE-2. Are The Training Programs Recommendable To Your Peers?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Yes	17
No	4

Most Replies Have Been On The Affirmative On This.

RE-3. To What Extent Do You Think That The Training Has A Direct Correlation With Your Individual Performance?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	6
5	12

Employees Are Mostly Of The Opinion That Training Initiatives Have A Direct Correlation With Their Individual Performance And Productivity, However Employees Need To Have A Proactive Attitude For This Matter To Work.

RE-4. To What Extent Do You Think That Training Programs Have A Direct Correlation With Gross Productivity And Profitability Of Your Organization?

Response	No. Of Respondents
1	1
2	3
3	4
4	5
5	8

Responses Show That Respondents Are Of The Opinion, In Most Cases, That The Training Programs In Their Organisation Are Well In Tune With Increasing The Gross Profitability And Productivity Of The Business.

RE-5. Whether The Training Programs Ultimately Scale Up The Level Of Conscientiousness Of Trainees After The Training Program In Actual Practice?

Response	No. Of Respondents
Yes	16
No	5

The Replies Are Mostly Affirmative On This.

VI. Discussion Of Findings:

The Survey Research Findings Essentially Indicate That –

- This Enterprise Is To Make An Effort To Expose Employees Of Different Cadres For Various Training Programs Conducted By The Organization From Time To Time As A Routine Measure. This Would Help To Eliminate The Negative Attitudes From The Employees' Minds, If Any.
- On Completion Of Each Training Program, Feedback Report Has To Be Obtained From Each Trainee So As To Examine Both Positive And Negative Impacts Of The Training Program On The Trainees.
- The Feedback Should Be Judged Properly, On The Spot, Just After The Training In Order To Make The Employees Understand The Lessons Rightly. They Should Not Perceive Any Wrong Ideas Or Concepts.
- The Enterprise Should See That Each And Every Person Of The Same Level Should Be Given An Equal Opportunity For Training, If They Need It.
- The Enterprise Should Also Make A Point To See That The Training Program Should Be Such That It Attracts The Attention Of The Trainees, Otherwise Trainees Become Inattentive.
- The Enterprise Should Also Design The Programs Keeping In Mind That Employees Are Able To Learn From The Training As Well As Implement Their Learning Through Their Behavioural Projections In Actual Practice.
- Training Programs Can Create More Conscientious And Accountable Workers. So, Such Training Programs Need To Be Introduced At Regular Intervals At Work.
- Overall Success Of The Training Programs Lies In The Fact That It Has Been Able To Make Employees Positive, Valued Oriented, Confident And Competent In Their Day-To-Day Businesses.
- Value And Culture-Centric Training Programs Need To Be At The Heart Of Training Initiatives.

VII. Conclusion:

It Can Be Well Said That Effective Training And Development Is An Essential Element For All Enterprises To Harness The Competitive Edge Of Business. It Is Through Such Initiatives That Existing And New Employees Get A Strong Foundation For Growth And Establishment. Evaluation Of Whether Training Has Been Effective Goes Quite A Long Way In Justifying Such Initiatives In Future (Brockbank, 1999). As In The Case Of This Small Scale Manufacturing Unit In Kolkata, Much Has Been Revealed As To How Effective The Training Mechanism Is To Achieve Its Desired Objectives For Business Development And Enterprise Rejuvenation. Effectiveness Of Training Thus Remains To Be One Of The Elemental Points For Enterprise Augmentation In The True Sense.

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