

## “A Literature Review on Training Need Analysis”

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**Abstract:** Training needs analysis is the first stage in the training process and involves a procedure to determine whether training will indeed address the problem which has been identified. Training can be described as “the acquisition of skills, concepts or attitudes that result in improved performance within the job environment”. Training needs analysis looks at each aspect of an operational domain so that the initial skills, concepts and attitudes of the human elements of a system can be effectively identified and appropriate training can be specified. This paper will focus on various aspects of Training need analysis.

**Keywords:** Training Need Analysis (TNA), McGhee and Thayer Approach, Literature Review, Training Programs, Organisation

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### I. Introduction

Effective training or development depends on knowing what is required - for the individual, the department and the organisation as a whole. With limited budgets and the need for cost-effective solutions, all organisations need to ensure that the resources invested in training are targeted at areas where training and development is needed and a positive return on the investment is guaranteed. Effective TNA is particularly vital in today's changing workplace as new technologies and flexible working practices are becoming widespread, leading to corresponding changes in the skills and abilities needed. Analysing what the training needs are is a vital prerequisite for any effective training programme or event. Simply throwing training at individuals may miss priority needs, or even cover areas that are not essential. TNA enables organisations to channel resources into the areas where they will contribute the most to employee development, enhancing morale and organisational performance. TNA is a natural function of appraisal systems and is key requirement for the award of Investors in People.

Effective TNA involves systematic planning, analysis and coordination across the organisation, to ensure that organisational priorities are taken into account, that duplication of effort is avoided and economies of scale are achieved. All potential trainees should be included in the process, rather than rely on the subjective evaluation of managers.

#### What are the various types of training needs?

The need is defined as the gap between the existing and the desired situation. In other words, it refers to what is indispensable or at least valuable, to the organization or to individuals for the purpose of achieving an evaluated, appropriate objective (Fernandez 1988, 57). Training needs may be individual or collective.

#### What is the purpose of Training Need Analysis?

The purpose of a training needs analysis is to close the gap between the actual and desired situations by determining discrepancies in outcomes, placing them in order of priority and selecting the most important for closure or reduction (Rothwell and Kazanas 1998, 55). “Therefore consists in collecting, analysing and comparing concrete (measurable) data representing, on the one hand the actual 'performance' of a system (objectives, outputs or variables in terms of actions) and, on the other hand, its desirable 'performance', whether wanted internally or externally, with the overall goal of identifying as accurately as possible the specific needs of the clientele affected by the activities of an educational or training system” (Lapointe 1992, 99). The training needs analysis must be carried out before training activities are organized, since it guarantees the success of those activities. It ensures synergy among individual learning needs and the quest for effectiveness, job performance, and strategic organizational development (Potter et al. 2003, 202).

To do so, the data analysis process must allow collection of the largest possible volume of information concerning the type of optimum skills required to perform a task, the actual level of skills among the population(s) under review, their opinion concerning their own terms of reference for training needs analysis.

Continuing education will improve the performance, potential causes of the gap between the actual and desired situations, and various possible solutions, from a number of perspectives (Rossett 1987, 15).

### **In what circumstances is it necessary to perform a Training Need Analysis?**

The training needs analysis is a vital phase in planning training that will successfully close the gap between the actual and desired situations. It ensures that the right remedy is applied to the right problem. Since limited budgets are available for training, the preferred areas of training must be those ensuring that the anticipated outcome will be achieved, as well as maximum gains for the professionals and their organization (Sims 1990, 36). In some contexts, as described below, needs analysis is crucial (McConnell 2003, 72-73).

#### **1. Changes in the system or in work**

When a work description is changed or operating methods are reviewed, or simply in the case of new expectations, training is often required. At that time, a training needs analysis allows identification of staff training needs, to enable them to adapt appropriately to the changes introduced.

#### **2. Introduction of new technology**

Where a work environment adopts a specific new technology, this normally goes hand in hand with a method of use that must be the subject of training. In addition, this training must anticipate how use of this new technology will be adapted to the specific organizational context to which it is introduced. Accordingly, learning to operate a specific new technology requires acquisition of additional skills or knowledge, which may vary in the various staff groups likely to make differing use of the technology in question. It is therefore appropriate to perform a training needs analysis to specify the training needs of each of these groups as regards use of the new technology.

#### **3. Introduction of new government standards**

Revised or new government standards normally require training for professionals whose practice is affected by these changes. This is the best way to ensure compliance with the new standards. At that time, the training needs analysis will allow definition of the skills that must be developed for correct implementation of these new standards.

#### **4. Decline in quality of work or performance in department or organization**

Many factors contribute to a decline in quality of work or performance of a given department or area of activity. A training need analysis among the various professional groups involved will indicate whether training is one of the ways to improve attainment of preset objectives.

**5. Departmental meetings, opinion surveys, organizational studies and separation interviews of employees leaving their job, although conducted for other purposes, are often opportunities for disclosure of felt or demonstrated training needs. Training needs analysis will then provide the possibility of establishing whether these needs are common to all staff.**

#### **6. Lack of skills and knowledge**

Setting of specific objectives by an organization does not provide information as regards staff capacity to attain them. A training needs analysis will determine whether training needs exist associated with attainment of these objectives and, if so, which ones (Rossett 1987, 43).

#### **7. Absence or lack of motivation**

Absence or lack of motivation affects work performance. Two factors increase in proportion to work motivation: the value ascribed to work and the level of its performance. The greater value an individual ascribes to their work and the higher their performance, the greater will be their motivation. The inverse relationship also holds true. In such a situation, a training need analysis can help identify the causes of lower performance or bring to light undeveloped skills. Well-targeted training, by cultivating deficient skills, could quickly raise the level of self-confidence—a factor often intrinsically linked to motivation. Training can be beneficial for an individual lacking in motivation if it enables the person to achieve quick gains in their level of confidence.

### **What skills must the individual conducting the Training Need Analysis have?**

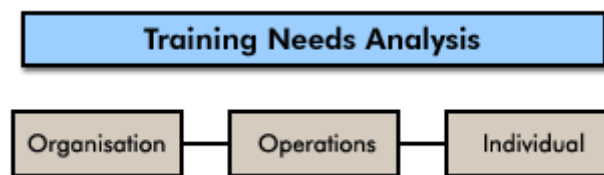
The individual responsible for carrying out the training needs analysis must be as objective as possible. Individuals questioned must feel comfortable with this individual; so that they do not skew the information provided in the training needs analysis process (McConnell 2003, 111). The individual responsible for the analysis must design, implement and carry out the entire analysis process. In addition to choosing the methods and indicators on which the analysis will be based, their tasks include selecting, implementing and managing the strategies designed to obtain the desired interactions with the various players in the environment in question. Establishment of a planning group is a valuable initial phase in this regard (Pineault 1986, 82).

### Ethical Issues

Training need analysis involves two major ethical challenges. The first of these relates to senior management support for the results of the needs analysis and direction of resources accordingly. Certain supervisors assume what the training needs of their staff are regardless of the investigation results. They place no value on the objective nature of the analysis process. The second ethical challenge for training needs analyses relates to the objective nature of the process, which is specifically ensured by the confidentiality of the results obtained. To resolve these ethical issues, the person responsible for carrying out the needs analysis must, at the outset of their initiative, promote to senior management the value of an objective training needs analysis based on use of standardized and impartial measurements of the knowledge and skills involved. In an ethical process, administration, analysis and interpretation of the data must be completely independent of the analyst's subjective judgments (McConnell 2003, 217). Therefore, the person carrying out the training needs analysis must provide mechanisms to ensure confidentiality of the data collected and advise respondents that such is the case before beginning data collection (Rothwell and Kazanas 1998, 78).

### Training Need Analysis Process (McGhee and Thayer Approach):

McGhee and Thayer (1961) provided a three-tiered approach in a needs analysis.



### Organisation Analysis

The organisation analysis allows to view the performance of the organisation. It is interesting to note that whilst this analysis does not indicate a specific training need of an individual it can highlight performance problems in specific departments within the organisation.

The following areas assist in analysis:

- Profit and Loss statements by department
- Employee turnover
- Downtime
- Organisations Business Plan (Objectives and Goals)

### Operational Analysis

At the operational analysis we will be concerned with what Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are required to perform certain jobs/tasks.

This information can be gained through:

- Quality Assurance Procedures
- Interviewing Heads of Departments
- Obtaining Job Descriptions

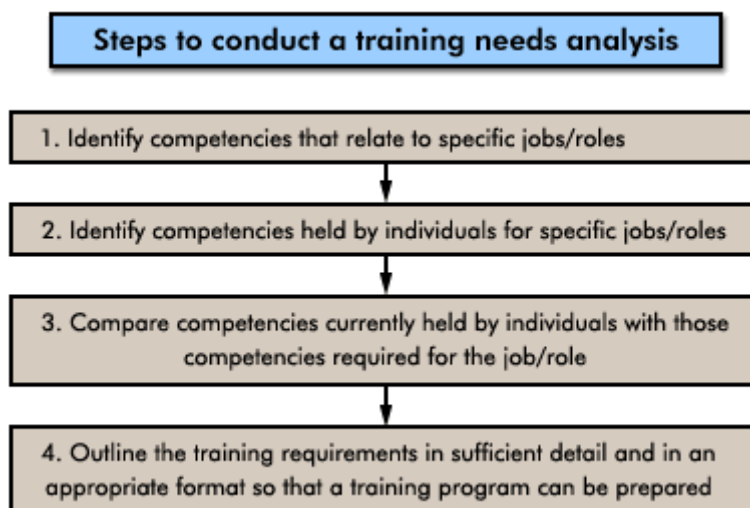
### Person Analysis

This is where you analyse how well the team or individual performs the task/job. Again a range of tools are available to evaluate the extent of teams and individuals skills, knowledge and abilities. These include:

- Interviewing staff (about the job)
- Observation 'On-the-job'
- Job Profile

### The Steps to Conduct a Training Needs Analysis

The Australian National Training Authority (1999), has provided a diagram that lists the steps needed to conduct a Training Needs Analysis.



## II. Literature Review

1. Arshad, Yusof, Mahmood, Ahmed & Akhtar “A Study on TNA Process among Manufacturing Companies Registered with Pembangunan SumberManusiaBerhad (PSMB) at Bayan Lepas Area, Penang, Malaysia” found that out of six, five organization contextual variable has a relationship with TNA factors. Even though it is not really an in-depth study, it is significant enough to agree upon that the recommendation made by TNA researchers are followed by organization in this study. The right adoption of TNA process will increase on its effectiveness without wasting time, energy and money in order to achieve the desired performance. Johnson (1993) clearly pointed out that performance improvement is achieved through skilled, knowledgeable and committed workers who want to make their organization successful. Training is becoming increasingly important to success. The organization’s investment in its people is the most important investment it makes. Exact needs to meet the goal must be ascertained in terms of each level of organization in order to provide training that contributes to the organization business results. Identifying training needs is not easy; it requires a good understanding of the business and of future developments of the organizations.

2. Aartichahal “Study of Training Need Analysis Based Training and Development: Effect of Training on Performance by Adopting Development Based Strategy” Training is necessity in the changing environment, planned and systematic training should be made compulsory in all private and public banks. It brings changes in behaviour, attitude at any age and helps in increasing the organizational performance. The organization should encourage more facilities during training and also off the job training, because it is one kind of encouragement to improve the interest towards the training and development program. By providing training, employers support the skill development of their employees. If the training is good then the employees will contribute their maximum for the achievement of the organizational objectives. The result of the present study shown that the training practices in the selected branches of PNB and HDFC are average and there is lot of scope for improvement. Researcher found that the training and effectiveness programs have a positive impact on the performance of both male and female employees but the results shows that it has a greater impact on the performance of male employees group .This can be due to the reason that mostly female employees bear additional responsibilities towards their families. The researchers found that most of the banks have their own training institute, management attitude is very positive for training support and budget, incentives are given for trainees, and overseas training opportunity. However, there is a lack of needs assessment before training. Corporation should take necessary steps in such a way that employees should feel training is essential to enhance the productivity and customer satisfaction to meet the present challenges in India.

3. ShulganaSarkar(2013) “Competency based Training Need Assessment – Approach in Indian companies” All organizations must focus on conducting training need assessment before deputing any employee for training. Though most of the organizations are aware of the fact of conducting a need assessment for training their employees; yet most of the organizations fail to practice it. In a large number of the smaller organizations, attending training is merely a luck factor where individuals are nominated for trainings only by the seniors. The individuals suffer from biased decision making. Thus the training of an employee fails to achieve the desired result. The described technique has been a solution to the sample organizations. As out of the seventeen sample organizations, only nine were following a systematic form of

training need assessment whereas others were fully concentrating on training as a tool for motivation and fulfilling the industrial norms of 48 hours training for each employee.

4. Jacqueline Reed(2003) “What a role can a TNA plays in Organization change?” Organizational culture and change issues had a very large role to play in the development of a needs analysis process for the organisation. The development of a needs analysis process was a struggle and in the end the determination of the specific methodologies to use was the easiest part of the whole process. By far the most difficult element was dealing with and understanding the cultural and change issues arising. It is interesting to reflect as noted earlier that the bulk of the training needs analysis literature focuses on methodology and gives only passing reference to culture or change issues (Boydell and Leary 1996, McClelland 1993, Leat and Lovell 1997, Schneier et al 1988).

5. Cecilia Nfila(2005) “Training Needs Analysis For Bachibanga Company in Botswana” It was revealed that training is not the only possible solution to improve performance in Bachibanga Company. In fact, analysis of this study indicates that training can only close the performance gap by 16.7%. Other performance improvement factors reviewed by the study include motivational factors such as, increase in rewards, recognition, appreciation, and availability of resources.

Even when training is the best possible intervention method, there is need to assess the type of training required and then see if the training material is practical. For training to work effectively, the performance problem must be identified and analyzed. Then needs assessment must be conducted to determine if training is the best approach to solve the problem. Training materials must also be developed (building stage), and implemented (delivering stage). Finally, there is need to evaluate the training. Here, feedback has to be collected from participants on whether they learned, and follow-up should be made to their work place to see if they are applying the knowledge and skills learned.

6. Angelina Messne (2009) “Needs Assessment and Analysis Method” many methods were found for conducting a needs assessment and analysis: task analysis, job analysis, performance improvement, competency-based needs assessment, strategic needs assessment, and knowledge and skill assessment. While performance analysis is used in literature to describe one possible needs assessment and analysis method, it more aptly describes needs assessment and analysis itself. In essence, performance analysis is another term for needs assessment. Understanding when and how to use these methods can be confusing for new practitioners. There is not one correct way to apply each method, but there are best uses for each that were outlined with the descriptions of the methods. While there is still a focus on training within the needs assessment and analysis literature, there is growing use of the term performance to describe more accurately the array of performance problems that a needs assessment and analysis solve. Since performance is such a broad term, practitioners need more information on how to evaluate performance problems and how to implement assessment and analysis methods.

7. Syed, Irfan, Muhammad Zubair, Muhammad Umar & Kashif () “Training needs assessment practices in corporate sector of Pakistan”, The results of this study provide some disparate findings in terms of effective outcomes of training. The reason is that the organizations in Pakistan only focus on conducting the personal analysis TNA before starting training program. As a result of not engaging in comprehensive TNA approach, the result of the training program is poor and considered a subjective nature. The result showed that lack of comprehensive TNA approach gives less result and does not meet objectivity criteria of training program. No single respondent have perception that the organization achieved the training objectivity in a real scene. Through the conversation with managers, most organizations in Pakistan are not well aware of the Kirkpatrick model which is used for the evaluation of training. Most organizations achieve the subjectivity of the training instead of forcing on the objectivity of the training. Many managers respond that training is a long term investment. Thorough analysis of TNA or comprehensive TNA approach leads to better result of training outcomes; because comprehensive TNA starts from micro level to macro level or TNA scanning start from organizational level and come to personal level. If the problem is not at organization level, then it is a possibility that the problem may be at operational or task level and again, if the problem is not at task level, the training manager comes up at personal level. Through this comprehensive approach, organization can appropriately assess the actual need of the training at managerial level and obviously, it has a good impact on the outcomes of the training. Simply, when the TNA comprehensiveness increases, the last two levels of Kirkpatrick model objectivity will also increase and a lack in TNA comprehensiveness results in a low achievement of training objectivity.

8. Jen, Tseng & Chen “The Systematic Construction and Influential Factors of Training Needs Assessment” TNA are one type of management systems, and they are also the first procedure of training systems. TNA are a technique, in which analysis tools should be well applied, so HRD personnel should be

capable to analyze needs. Whether starting from the establishment of needs assessment procedures or proceeding needs analysis steps, it is necessary to construct TNA dimensions in order for HRD personnel to conduct systematic needs analyses according to the dimensions. The TNA dimensions include strategy, performance, and competency. If the three dimensions correspond to McGehee and Thayer's three-fold analysis, organization-level analysis indicates strategy, task-level analysis indicates performance, and individual-level analysis indicates competency. Training is not panacea. It is just one of the methods to solve organizational problems. If problems are caused by employees lacking capability, training can be used as an intervention, so TNA are a critical assessment procedure to decide if training should be employed to solve the problems. On the other hand, the premise is that training should be able to solve organizational problems. That is, training must be of benefit, and training needs should be properly evaluated from the perspective of either solving problems or investment. Among the possible obstacles of promoting the ROI of training, Phillips (2007), aiming at TNA drawbacks, addressed that proper needs assessments were not conducted in a great number of training courses, and many training courses were based on management requirements or for catering to industrial fashion. However, if training courses are not really necessary for organizations, the effectiveness of the courses will reduce, and the ROI of the courses which are not needed will be negative. Real obstacles are caused in a lot of courses since needs assessments are not properly done.

9. Rodrigo & Gardenia “Training needs assessment: where we are and where we should go” It seems that TNA practice and research still have an almost exclusively diagnostic/procedural and reactive focus, concerning how to do it in the present. Apparently, prospective TNA approaches, based on literature on competence and competences management (Boyatzis, 1982; Cockerill, 1989; McClelland, 1973; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Sparrow & Bognanno, 1994), are still rare. Research are mainly applied, investigating methodological or practical problems and solutions related to TNA systems. This is of great value, but there is still a critical lack of theory development and/or evaluation. Still, there is no apparent concern with developing organizational policies on TNA. Some important theoretical issues that are almost absent in the studies are: the relationships between the TNA concepts, work needs, and competence or competences management based on future scenarios (Sparrow & Bognanno, 1994); the missed conceptual link between individual and organizational needs; and to propose new kinds of needs, as learning needs, educational needs, development needs, avoiding practices and research to be dependent on only one kind of possible instructional solution to meet competence gaps (training).

10. Ali & Ghufli “*Training Needs Analysis: An empirical study of the Abu Dhabi Police*” Brunel Business School - Doctoral Symposium 27th & 28th March 2012,

### **III. Conclusion**

The fact is that analysis of training needs is a step often skipped in the process of developing training activities (Pérusse 2001, 31). However, the needs analysis process is essential in order to maximize attainment of the objectives of this type of activity.

The final product of a training needs analysis is an accurate description of exactly what type of training is required, which is adapted to the real situation of the professionals in and of the environment in which they operate. Thus, the training needs analysis makes it possible to transform the identified needs into learning objectives, which can then be achieved through appropriate training activities (McConnell 2003).

Training needs analyses ensure the relevance of training activities for the target populations, consisting of professionals or types of professionals concerned to increase work quality and performance.

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