

Defining the Role and Purpose of Training in Your Organization - By Terrence Donahue, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation

2007-09-12

Here is a scary statistic: 85 percent of training department heads have never read a copy of their own company's strategic plan or annual report.

It's not surprising, then, that many training departments have trouble aligning their objectives with those of their organizations-and that most training activities continue to hit the expense side of the ledger, rather than the investment side. The solution? Develop a training mission statement that both defines the role of training and establishes its worth to the organization.

If a senior executive in your organization asked you about the role and purpose of training in your company, what would you say? If you find yourself struggling for an answer, you might be in trouble. When an organization's leadership is confused about the purpose of training, there won't be a commitment to training in that organization's day-to-day activities-and your initiatives will have little chance of success. But that confusion doesn't always begin at the leadership level, it's often the result of a training department that is uncertain about itself.

Through the process of creating a training mission statement, you can erase that uncertainty and increase your value as a strategic business partner within your organization.

Step 1: Ask Role Definition Questions. Clarifying questions-like 'Why is training important to our company?' and 'What would happen over the next year if the training department were eliminated?' (see the end of this article for a complete list)-will provide the basis for the training department's mission statement. Ask these questions of as many key stakeholders-both inside and outside of the training department-as you can. The answers will help you define the scope of training objectives and provide a framework to ensure business decisions are informed, consistent and non-political.

Step 2: Summarize the Role Definition Answers. Based upon the answers to your role definition questions, write a one-paragraph description of the role of training in your company. While this won't be your final mission statement, it will help you narrow your focus to include only the objectives most important to your organization.

Step 3: Develop a Training Mission Statement. This statement describes the reason your company has a training department, and it must be aligned with the corporate mission. Your mission statement will have three components: Product (what you do), Market (whom you do it for) and Function (why you do it). For example: 'The mission of training at ABC Restaurant Corp. is to provide measurable performance improvement that leads to an improved dining experience and increased sales and profits in our restaurants. Our internal customers include all corporate departments and restaurant employees and managers. Our external customers are vendors, distributors and restaurant guests.'

Once you've developed your mission statement, you're ready to establish and prioritize training objectives, create departmental policies and implement a training strategic plan. But you're not quite finished, if you really want to keep the support of C- and V-level stakeholders (e.g. CFOs and Vice Presidents), there are four conversations you should have with them every year. They each start with the following questions:

1. What makes you pound the steering wheel on your way home from work?
2. What is your biggest concern, and how do you think I can help?
3. What does training do today that you would like it to continue doing two years from now?
4. What do you see as training's biggest miss over the last two years?

When you give these stakeholders a chance to voice their honest opinions about training, you gain political equity in the organization-without having to be political.

Role Definition Questions

1. Why is training important to our company?
2. What is the purpose of training in our company?
3. Why should we conduct training programs?
4. What are the internal and external markets (clients, customers and consumers) that we support?
5. Who should be trained?
6. When should training be provided?

7. To what level should they be trained?
8. What do we expect training to accomplish?
9. How should training programs be designed?
10. What are the limitations of training?
11. What would happen over the next year if the training department were eliminated?
12. What would happen over the next year if the training department doubled in size?
13. What responsibility do employees have for their own learning?
14. What responsibility do supervisors and managers have for learning?
15. What responsibility does senior executive leadership have for supporting a learning culture?
16. What responsibility does the training department have to its clients, customers and consumers?
17. What responsibility does the training department have to other departments in the company?
18. Is training considered an investment or an expense?
19. How will the effectiveness of training be measured?
20. How should continuous learning be viewed?
21. What must training do with regard to innovation to support the organizational mission?
22. What is [insert your name here]'s role as the one who leads the training function?

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article29212.html>

© 1998 - 2007 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

Distribute your news on our Network

See what all the buzz is about at:

http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html