

ASSESSING THE ROLE OF PULL TRAINING STRATEGIES TO CREATE HI-IMPACT LEARNING CULTURE

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Abstract

Training is a technique that thrives to improve skills and enhance the existing level of knowledge, to make employee efficient to do his current and future job more effectively. It is a process of developing in oneself, requisite skills, knowledge and right attitude that directly contributes to one's competencies, personality and proficiency. The current paper attempts to dig an insight on the role of Pull Training strategies to build an Hi-impact Learning Cultures where organizations make learning a crucial element of their business success, empower employees to steer their own learning, to make knowledge sharing an organizational habit. In the situation of rapid change, only those organizations which are flexible and adaptive to the environment tend to excel. In a hyper-competitive, intricate and volatile business environment, organizations are constantly driving their employees to perform and deliver better so that they bring more to the table. Hence, it becomes completely imperative for the business leaders to involve and invest in creating a high-impact workplace learning culture by making continuous learning an essential ingredient for overall organizational development.

Keywords: *Hi-impact Learning Culture, Knowledge Sharing, Pull Training Strategies.*

Introduction

Beach analyzed in 1980 that training is an organized procedure by which people learn knowledge and/or skills for a definite purpose. Training works like a bridge between the requirement of job and the specification of the employees. Until the evaluation of this method is done, a training program is incomplete. To obtain success in a continuous way in measuring and evaluating, training programs, require a systematic approach. It is crucial to recognize the methods and measures of training for the success of training organizations (Kalemci, 2005).

According to UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, in a report by Deloitte published in 2016, there were 84 percent executives, who were surveyed, reported that learning is imperative and inevitable issue in their organization (Haims and Pelster, n.d.) and organizations that learn fast adapt well to changing environments and are able to perform better eventually. Organizations must be continuously acclimating to learning, finding their feet constantly for progression or they may risk their professional obsolescence. As per Linders (2014), Learning culture is a culture of inquiry. As quoted by Nabong, (2015), Organizations which focuses on learning cultures promote their employees to constantly append knowledge and develop competence.

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According to Hess, advancement in technologies have entirely eliminated some type of jobs and shaped their organizations in such a way to support quick thinking, creativeness with high order of social and emotional intelligence. Master Card is a live example to this fact migrating its focus to employee-centered learning. It managed to transform itself from traditional pay Process Company to hi-tech organization after realizing that any change in their business strategy would demand a shift from periodic conventional learning to a development and learning culture. They accepted self directed learning for their employees over traditional periodic training programmes.

For creating an unstoppable learning environment, organizations should stress prominently on developing a sound and reflective feedback system, without which digging on what to learn and how to learn, becomes difficult. Amazon, for instance has managed to create a learning culture that believes in unremitting peer feedback as its basis but this feedback system has to be handled very carefully as it can also become toxic for the organization. Self assessment and strong evaluation system is yet another component which leads to the forming of better organizational culture when it comes to learning and development. Feedback system if not aptly supported by the evaluation system, the whole idea of framing a learning cultures goes in vain. Evaluation system if properly implemented, can impart clarity to the organizational leaders to understand the gaps between and individual and their required competencies. Once the gaps are identified, pull training strategies which are majorly self directed by an individual, can be implemented to redirect the orientation of an individual for self enrichment to give an extra edge to the competencies.

To talk about Google, today one of the finest organizations to work with, has closely nurtured a learning culture initiative amongst its people. It has knitted learning threads in its culture to form a web of knowledge and Information by creating a pool of information and ensuring that employees have easy access to it. The Organization has also created a learning atmosphere where employees can raise questions and ventilate their ideas. Knowledge shared here is in 360 degree direction i.e. vertically, laterally, and among different groups or even organizations. The organization practice various ways of knowledge sharing includes asking for feedback, asking for help, and keeping people up-to-date on projects, etc.

(Gutierrez, 2016). The purpose of any business organization is to make profit, retain more customers, sustain them, meeting with what shareholders need, and for some, to make a difference in the community which is only possible with learning.

Methodology

Research methodology is a systematic way to solve the research related problems. It is a based on facts and reasoning which shows how research is done scientifically. This study is Exploratory and Analytical in nature and in its approach, such kind of research is mainly concerned with reasons, causes and 'why' factor in some phenomenon. The study focuses on the secondary data and has drawn inferences from other research papers.

Push and Pull Training Strategies

Recent research has found a strong inclination of employees towards the need for more informal learning. Employees today are concerned about training and development opportunities. Push training is more formal, mandatory and directive and can be effective when large number of employees learn together where the trainer is ready with accurate and up-to-date content. Such kind of push learning strategy is essential when it comes to compliance training, because the purpose at this point is to ensure that all employees have

completed required training. Such mandatory training have a short bearing for success, as the objective by and large, is just to answer the question if the training program has got completed. The hitch to a push strategy is that employees commonly associate compulsory training with a negative implication. On the other hand, pull training strategy, also known as informal, elective, or self-directed, has been focused more because it involves less investment, is more time efficient, is more personal, is less intimidating for employees and lesser resisted by trainees.

Pull is known to make something move towards oneself. In context to pull learning, the process is just like individual moving towards a door of knowledge and information to open it, which could equip them to take better decisions for themselves and also for organizations they are working for. Here, the employees are encouraged to complete training courses opted by themselves which gives them extensive runway and sense of achievement since employees learn without deadlines. This ensures high employee engagement and hi-impact learning organizational culture. As compared to the classroom training, there is more felt need to improve more on soft skills which better comprehends through informal interaction. This has become all the more imperative with this generational change, where the accessibility to learn for them through online learning tools has created more prospects for informal training than ever before.

Some Learning and Development experts today think that both Push and Pull Strategies have their pros and cons but the organization who understands the need and importance of life-long learning organization culture, prefers continuous learning with pull training, to give employee an opportunity to learn where ever they are, giving them an extra cutting edge to be better than their competitors.

Learning Need Analysis

Training to be effective should be learner-centered, i.e., they should be designed on the basis of a clear understanding of the learner's demography, education, current placement and their needs. Learning needs analysis is a centrally important element of a training course design. Keeping in mind that each individual is different from other in experience, learning and cognition ability, personality, education, background, etc., the training should be carefully customized and tailored to cater to individual requirements. Identifying Training and Learning needs is a prerequisite for conducting or imparting any kind of training. Analyses of learning needs are taken on, to ascertain and bridge the gap between the current skills, knowledge and capabilities with that of the desired specification for an individual. Once this divergence is determined, laying out the training strategy to overcome such gap becomes simple and lends a vision to introduce right kind of training. The procedure for conducting such an analysis can be quite simple, but usually requires quite a bit of time before every training.

Culture Transformation – shift from 'Training Culture to Learning Culture'

The culture of an organization refers to who we are and what we stand for. It refers to a set of deeply embedded beliefs and rituals that act as glue between every employee with shared values and attitudes that motivates and inspire them to achieve common goals. In short, a learning culture is an assortment of organizational standards, principles, rules, conventions, values, practices and felt need to acquire new knowledge which encourage employees to hone their skills and provides professional enrichment. The learning organizations have the strength to transform the culture by infusing the rewards and recognition system with updated technologies. Such an organization believes in prioritizing for continual improvement over traditional evaluation and strives to optimize and align

rewards, results and feedback with their current culture. Organizations need to develop a culture that supports life-long learning.

Learning cultures are preferred over the training cultures because in training culture, responsibility for employee learning resides with instructors and training managers. In contrast, a learning culture is responsible for making employees learn themselves and are expected to seek knowledge and skills and apply that learning when and where it is needed in the organization. In a training culture, which is more planned and formal, it is assumed that the major chunk of learning happens in events such as workshops, lectures, e-learning programs, seminars and conferences. Where as in a learning culture, it is assumed that learning happens every time and all the time, not just only at formal events but also while on the job, socially, through coaching and mentoring, from other's accomplishments, self learning act, from smart gadgets and phones and from trying out with new processes. In a training culture, evaluation of learning and development function is done on factors like delivery of programs, how many trainees attended and the training material.

Typically, in a push learning culture, the focal point for the management are the training courses that were offered and number of people who have attended for the organizational record, but beyond doubt, what matters essentially is the knowledge and skills acquired and applied duly at the workplace considering the impact on realizing the organizational strategic goals. It's less about production and more about productivity, with anytime information and learning opportunity. This is the difference that such kind of training successfully induces a culture of continuous learning and opportunity for individuals, team and the entire organization to grow.

Conclusion

A learning build through pull training strategies, encourages employees and organizations to widen their scope of specialization and individual competency. This not only increases organization efficiency but also profit and productivity. When an employee is engaged with continuous learning, he grows in his knowledge and skills, develops sense of ownership, develops an ease in his professional transition or succession. It cultivates positive culture of knowledge, inquiry and sharing and augments for workers to adapt to change. For learning to be efficient and effective in an organization, the knowledge that is encouraged, imparted and supported, must be relevant to individual professional requirements and correlated to the business. Moreover, individuals in an organization should be working together rather than learning individually. Shared learning enable companies to increase their staff quicker and solve problems more efficiently and helps staff to gain a competitive edge over others.

Therefore, instead of adopting the push strategy for Learning and Development, i.e pushing trainees to learning environment, Pull Strategies should be more focused on like: Introducing the self managed clubs, Rewards and recognition to boost morale and keep trainees motivated to constantly learn, Micro learning to make learning remembered by Trainees, Distant Learning Modules, making learning an experience and favorable both for trainees and trainers. A blend between Push and Pull Learning should be focused.

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