

# Chapter

# 7

## Training Employees

**What Do I Need to Know?** After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Discuss how to link training programs to organizational needs.
2. Explain how to assess the need for training.
3. Explain how to assess employees' readiness for training.
4. Describe how to plan an effective training program.
5. Compare widely used training methods.
6. Summarize how to implement a successful training program.
7. Evaluate the success of a training program.
8. Describe training methods for employee orientation and diversity management.

### Introduction

The problem facing Espresso Connection was that sales were flat. The chain of drive-through coffee stands, based in Everett, Washington, used a variety of advertising media, but the customers attracted by the ads simply weren't coming back. Espresso Connection's owner, Christian Kar, identified the source of this problem as poor customer service. He decided he needed to teach employees how to impress customers.

Espresso Connection hired several part-time trainers and set up a practice facility. Newly hired employees no longer rely on their coworkers to teach them what to do. Instead, they spend a week in the practice facility, learning to use the equipment, followed by another week of on-the-job training at a store. The first week prepares employees to work fast, a goal that quickly affects Espresso Connection's bottom

**200 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources**training**

An organization's planned efforts to help employees acquire job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors, with the goal of applying these on the job.

line. Says Kar, "Our locations are really, really small. Unless our staff really focuses on getting customers through there more efficiently, we quickly would hit a brick wall in terms of revenues." Moving fast also cuts the waiting time for Espresso Connection's customers. The other major goal of the training is to teach employees specific skills related to customer service—for example, keeping the window open while serving customers. A few years after Espresso Connection started the training, the company saw its sales nearly double.<sup>1</sup>

**Training** consists of an organization's planned efforts to help employees acquire job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors, with the goal of applying these on the job. A training program may range from formal classes to one-on-one mentoring, and it may take place on the job or at remote locations. No matter what its form, training can benefit the organization when it is linked to organizational needs and when it motivates employees.

This chapter describes how to plan and carry out an effective training program. We begin by discussing how to develop effective training in the context of the organization's strategy. Next, we discuss how organizations assess employees' training needs. We then review training methods and the process of evaluating a training program. The chapter concludes by discussing some special applications of training: orientation of new employees and the management of diversity.

**LO1**

## Training Linked to Organizational Needs

The nature of the modern business environment makes training more important today than it ever has been. Rapid change, especially in the area of technology, requires that employees continually learn new skills, from the use of robots to collaboration on the Internet. The new psychological contract, described in Chapter 2, has created the expectation that employees invest in their own career development. Employees with this expectation will value employment at an organization that provides learning opportunities. Growing reliance on teamwork creates a demand for the ability to solve problems in teams, an ability that often requires formal training. Finally, the diversity of the U.S. population, coupled with the globalization of business, requires that employees be able to work well with people who are different from them. Successful organizations often take the lead in developing this ability.

With training so essential in modern organizations, it is important to provide training that is effective. An effective training program actually teaches what it is designed to teach, and it teaches skills and behaviors that will help the organization achieve its goals. Training programs may prepare employees for future positions in the organization, enable the organization to respond to change, reduce turnover, enhance worker safety, improve customer service and product design, and meet many other goals. To achieve those goals, HR professionals approach training through **instructional design**—a process of systematically developing training to meet specified needs.

**instructional design**

A process of systematically developing training to meet specified needs.

A complete instructional design process includes the steps shown in Figure 7.1. It begins with an assessment of the needs for training—what the organization requires that its people learn. Next, the organization ensures that employees are ready for training in terms of their attitudes, motivation, basic skills, and work environment. The third step is to plan the training program, including the program's objectives, instructors, and methods. The organization then implements the program. Finally, evaluating the results of the training provides feedback for planning future training programs.

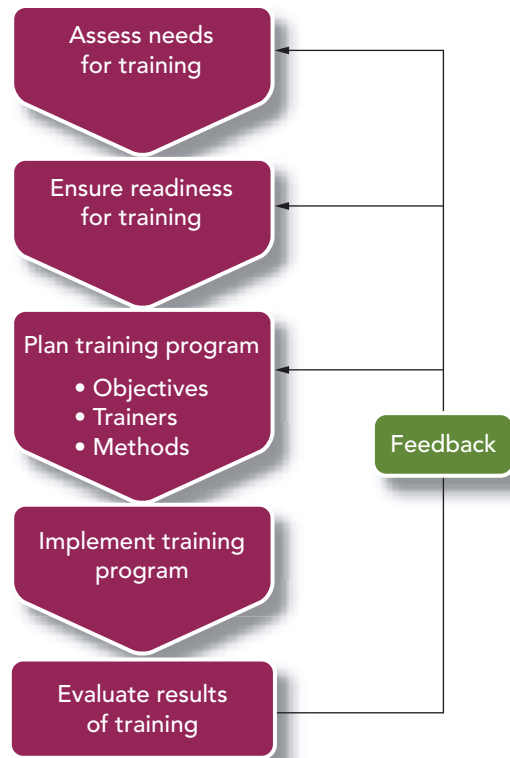


FIGURE 7.1

Stages of Instructional Design

## Needs Assessment

Instructional design logically should begin with a **needs assessment**, the process of evaluating the organization, individual employees, and employees' tasks to determine what kinds of training, if any, are necessary. As this definition indicates, the needs assessment answers questions in the three broad areas shown in Figure 7.2:<sup>2</sup>

1. *Organization*—What is the context in which training will occur?
2. *Person*—Who needs training?
3. *Task*—What subjects should the training cover?

### LO2

#### needs assessment

The process of evaluating the organization, individual employees, and employees' tasks to determine what kinds of training, if any, are necessary.



FIGURE 7.2

Needs Assessment

**202 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

The answers to these questions provide the basis for planning an effective training program.

A variety of conditions may prompt an organization to conduct a needs assessment. Management may observe that some employees lack basic skills or are performing poorly. Decisions to produce new products, apply new technology, or design new jobs should prompt a needs assessment, because these changes tend to require new skills. The decision to conduct a needs assessment also may be prompted by outside forces, such as customer requests or legal requirements.

The outcome of the needs assessment is a set of decisions about how to address the issues that prompted the needs assessment. These decisions do not necessarily include a training program, because some issues should be resolved through methods other than training. For example, suppose a company uses delivery trucks to transport anesthetic gases to medical facilities. A driver of one of these trucks mistakenly hooked up the supply line of a mild anesthetic from the truck to the hospital's oxygen system, contaminating the hospital's oxygen supply. This performance problem prompts a needs assessment. Whether or not the hospital decides to provide more training will depend partly on the reasons the driver erred. The driver may have hooked up the supply lines incorrectly because of a lack of knowledge about the appropriate line hookup, anger over a request for a pay raise being denied, or mislabeled valves for connecting the supply lines. Out of these three possibilities, only the lack of knowledge can be corrected through training. Other outcomes of a needs assessment might include plans for better rewards to improve motivation, better hiring decisions, and better safety precautions.

The remainder of this chapter discusses needs assessments and then what the organization should do when they indicate a need for training. The possibilities include offering existing training programs to more employees; buying or developing new training programs; and improving existing training programs. Before we consider the available training options, let's examine the elements of the needs assessment in more detail.

## Organization Analysis

### organization analysis

A process for determining the appropriateness of training by evaluating the characteristics of the organization.

Usually, the needs assessment begins with the **organization analysis**. This is a process for determining the appropriateness of training by evaluating the characteristics of the organization. The organization analysis looks at training needs in light of the organization's strategy, resources available for training, and management's support for training activities.

Training needs will vary depending on whether the organization's strategy is based on growing or shrinking its personnel, whether it is seeking to serve a broad customer base or focusing on the specific needs of a narrow market segment, and various other strategic scenarios. A company that is cutting costs with a downsizing strategy may need to train employees in job search skills. The employees who will remain following a downsizing may need cross-training so that they can handle a wider variety of responsibilities. An organization that concentrates on serving a niche market may need to continually update its workforce on a specialized skills set. Transocean Offshore, a contractor that drills offshore oil wells for oil companies such as BP Amoco, focuses exclusively on deep-water drilling. Contracts for these jobs last four or five years, longer than contracts for other types of well drilling. Deep-water drilling also requires modern technology and new ships, such as the high-tech *Discoverer Enterprise*, which boasts numerous workstations, computer systems, and automated drilling systems. In contrast to most drilling companies, which merely provide safety

## CHAPTER 7 Training Employees 203

training, Transocean must provide training for specialized job skills, as well as training for general rig safety.<sup>3</sup>

Even if training fits the organization's strategy, it can be viable only if the organization is willing to invest in this type of activity. Managers increase the success of training when they support it through such actions as helping trainees see how they can use their newly learned knowledge, skills, and behaviors on the job.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, the managers will be most likely to support training if the people planning it can show that it will solve a significant problem or result in a significant improvement, relative to its cost. Managers appreciate training proposals with specific goals, timetables, budgets, and methods for measuring success.

## Person Analysis

Following the organizational assessment, needs assessment turns to the remaining areas of analysis: person and task. The **person analysis** is a process for determining individuals' needs and readiness for training. It involves answering several questions:

- Do performance deficiencies result from a lack of knowledge, skill, or ability? (If so, training is appropriate; if not, other solutions are more relevant.)
- Who needs training?
- Are these employees ready for training?

The answers to these questions help the manager identify whether training is appropriate and which employees need training. In certain situations, such as the introduction of a new technology or service, all employees may need training. However, when needs assessment is conducted in response to a performance problem, training is not always the best solution.

The person analysis is therefore critical when training is considered in response to a performance problem. In assessing the need for training, the manager should identify all the variables that can influence performance. The primary variables are the person's ability and skills, his or her attitudes and motivation, the organization's input (including clear directions, necessary resources, and freedom from interference and distractions), performance feedback (including praise and performance standards), and positive consequences to motivate good performance. Of these variables, only ability and skills can be affected by training. Therefore, before planning a training program, it is important to be sure that any performance problem results from a deficiency in knowledge and skills. Otherwise, training dollars will be wasted, because the training is unlikely to have much effect on performance.

The person analysis also should determine whether employees are ready to undergo training. In other words, the employees to receive training not only should require additional knowledge and skill, but must be willing and able to learn. (After this discussion of the needs assessment, we will explore the topic of employee readiness in greater detail.)

## Task Analysis

The third area of needs assessment is **task analysis**, the process of identifying the tasks, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that training should emphasize. Usually, task analysis is conducted along with person analysis. Understanding shortcomings in performance usually requires knowledge about the tasks and work environment as well as the employee.

### person analysis

A process of determining individuals' needs and readiness for training.

### task analysis

The process of identifying and analyzing tasks to be trained for.

## 204 PART 2 Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

FIGURE 7.3

Sample Task Statement  
Questionnaire

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Position \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Please rate each of the task statements according to three factors: the **importance** of the task for effective performance, how **frequently** the task is performed, and the degree of **difficulty** required to become effective in the task.

Use the following scales in making your ratings.

<i>Importance</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
4 = Task is critical for effective performance.	4 = Task is performed once a day.
3 = Task is important but not critical for effective performance.	3 = Task is performed once a week.
2 = Task is of some importance for effective performance.	2 = Task is performed once every few months.
1 = Task is of no importance for effective performance.	1 = Task is performed once or twice a year.
0 = Task is not performed.	0 = Task is not performed.

*Difficulty*

4 = Effective performance of the task requires extensive prior experience and/or training (12–18 months or longer).

3 = Effective performance of the task requires minimal prior experience and training (6–12 months).

2 = Effective performance of the task requires a brief period of prior training and experience (1–6 months).

1 = Effective performance of the task does not require specific prior training and/or experience.

0 = Task is not performed.

Task (circle the number from the scales above)	Importance	Frequency	Difficulty
1. Ensuring maintenance on equipment, tools, and safety controls	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
2. Monitoring employee performance	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
3. Scheduling employees	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
4. Using statistical software on the computer	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
5. Monitoring changes made in processes using statistical methods	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4

To carry out the task analysis, the HR professional looks at the conditions in which tasks are performed. These conditions include the equipment and environment of the job, time constraints (for example, deadlines), safety considerations, and performance standards. These observations form the basis for a description of work activities, or the tasks required by the person's job. For a selected job, the analyst interviews employees and their supervisors to prepare a list of tasks performed in that job. Then the analyst validates the list by showing it to employees, supervisors, and other subject-matter experts and asking them to complete a questionnaire about the importance, frequency, and difficulty of the tasks. Figure 7.3 is an example of a task statement questionnaire. In this example, the questionnaire begins by defining categories that specify a task's importance, frequency, and difficulty. Then, for a production supervisor's job, the questionnaire lists five tasks. For each task, the subject-matter expert uses the scales to rate the task's importance, frequency, and difficulty.

The information from these questionnaires is the basis for determining which tasks will be the focus of the training. The person or committee conducting the needs assessment must decide what levels of importance, frequency, and difficulty signal a need for training. Logically, training is most needed for tasks that are important, frequent, and at least moderately difficult. For each of these tasks, the analysts must identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the task. This information usually comes from interviews with subject-matter experts, such as employees who currently hold the job.



## Readiness for Training

LO3

Effective training requires not only a program that addresses real needs, but also a condition of employee readiness. **Readiness for training** is a combination of employee characteristics and positive work environment that permit training. The necessary employee characteristics include ability to learn the subject matter, favorable attitudes toward the training, and motivation to learn. A positive work environment is one that encourages learning and avoids interfering with the training program.

### readiness for training

A combination of employee characteristics and positive work environment that permit training.

## Employee Readiness Characteristics

Employees learn more from training programs when they are highly motivated to learn—that is, when they really want to learn the content of the training program.<sup>5</sup> Employees tend to feel this way if they believe they are able to learn, see potential benefits from the training program, are aware of their need to learn, see a fit between the training and their career goals, and have the basic skills needed for participating in the program. Managers can influence a ready attitude in a variety of ways. For example, they can provide feedback that encourages employees, establish rewards for learning, and communicate with employees about the organization's career paths and future needs.

## Work Environment

Readiness for training also depends on two broad characteristics of the work environment: situational constraints and social support.<sup>6</sup> *Situational constraints* are the limits on training's effectiveness that arise from the situation or the conditions within the organization. Constraints can include a lack of money for training, lack of time for training or practicing, and failure to provide proper tools and materials for learning or applying the lessons of training. Conversely, trainees are likely to apply what they learn if the organization gives them opportunities to use their new skills and if it rewards them for doing so.<sup>7</sup>

*Social support* refers to the ways the organization's people encourage training, including giving trainees praise and encouraging words, sharing information about participating in training programs, and expressing positive attitudes toward the organization's training programs. Managers play an especially important role in providing social support. Besides offering positive feedback, they can emphasize the importance of training, show how training programs relate to employees' jobs, and provide opportunities for employees to apply what they learn. Table 7.1 summarizes some ways in which managers can support training. At the minimum, they should allow trainees to participate in training programs. At the other extreme, managers who not only encourage training but conduct the training sessions themselves are most likely to back up training by reinforcing new skills, providing feedback on progress, and giving trainees opportunities to practice.

Support can come from employees' peers as well as from supervisors and managers. The organization can formally provide peer support by establishing groups of employees who meet regularly to discuss their progress. Such a group might hold face-to-face meetings or communicate by e-mail or over the organization's intranet, sharing ideas as well as encouragement. For example, group members can share how they coped with challenges related to what they have learned and how they obtained resources they needed for applying their training. Another way to encourage peer

**206 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources**TABLE 7.1**

What Managers  
Should Do to  
Support Training

Understand the content of the training.
Know how training relates to what you need employees to do.
In performance appraisals, evaluate employees on how they apply training to their jobs.
Support employees' use of training when they return to work.
Ensure that employees have the equipment and technology needed to use training.
Prior to training, discuss with employees how they plan to use training.
Recognize newly trained employees who use training content.
Give employees release time from their work to attend training.
Explain to employees why they have been asked to attend training.
Give employees feedback related to skills or behavior they are trying to develop.

SOURCE: Based on A. Rossett, "That Was a Great Class, but . . ." *Training and Development*, July 1997, p. 21.

support is for the human resource department or others in the organization to publish a newsletter with articles relevant to training. The newsletter might include interviews with employees who successfully applied new skills. Finally, the organization can assign experienced employees as mentors to trainees, providing advice and support related to the training.

**LO4**

## Planning the Training Program

When the needs assessment indicates a need for training and employees are ready to learn, the person responsible for training should plan a training program that directly relates to the needs identified. Planning begins with establishing objectives for the training program. Based on those objectives, the planner decides who will provide the training, what topics the training will cover, what training methods to use, and how to evaluate the training.

Companies such as Tires Plus provide intensive training and educational programs for their employees. This company supports training by making resources available. Management has a favorable attitude toward training, which motivates employees to stay with the company and work toward advancement.





## Objectives of the Program

Formally establishing objectives for the training program has several benefits. First, a training program based on clear objectives will be more focused and more likely to succeed. In addition, when trainers know the objectives, they can communicate them to the employees participating in the program. Employees learn best when they know what the training is supposed to accomplish. Finally, down the road, establishing objectives provides a basis for measuring whether the program succeeded, as we will discuss later in this chapter.

Effective training objectives have three components:

1. A statement of what the employee is expected to do (performance or outcome).
2. A statement of the quality or level of performance that is acceptable.
3. A statement of the conditions under which the trainee is expected to apply what he or she learned (for instance, physical conditions, mental stresses, or equipment failure).<sup>8</sup>

If possible, the objectives should include measurable performance standards. Suppose a training objective for a store's customer service training program is: "After training, the employee will be able to express concern to all irate customers with a brief (fewer than 10 words) apology, only after the customer has stopped talking, and no matter how upset the customer is." Here, measures include the length and timing of the apology.

Finally, training objectives should identify any resources required to carry out the desired performance or outcome. This helps the organization ensure that employees will be able to apply what they have learned.

A related issue at the outset is who will participate in the training program. Some training programs are developed for all employees of the organization or all members of a team. Other training programs identify individuals who lack desirable skills or have potential to be promoted, then provide training in the areas of need that are identified for the particular employees. When deciding whom to include in training, the organization has to avoid illegal discrimination. The organization should not—intentionally or unintentionally—exclude members of protected groups, such as women, minorities, and older employees. During the training, all participants should receive equal treatment, such as equal opportunities for practice. In addition, the training program should provide reasonable accommodation for trainees with disabilities. The kinds of accommodations that are appropriate will vary according to the type of training and type of disability. One employee might need an interpreter, whereas another might need to have classroom instruction provided in a location accessible to wheelchairs.

## In-House or Contracted Out?

An organization can provide an effective training program, even if it lacks expertise in training. Many companies and consultants provide training services to organizations. Community colleges often work with employers to train employees in a variety of skills. PepsiCo needs highly skilled maintenance workers to take care of the sophisticated machinery at the Gatorade factory in Tolleson, Arizona. So PepsiCo and a neighboring manufacturer arranged for Maricopa Community College to provide courses in topics such as math and electricity. The college provides the instructor, and PepsiCo company provides the equipment to practice on.<sup>9</sup>

**208 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

Businesses can outsource training services to organizations such as The American Society for Training and Development (an association of professional trainers). How can outsourcing training help businesses?



To select a training service, an organization can mail several vendors a *request for proposal (RFP)*, which is a document outlining the type of service needed, the type and number of references needed, the number of employees to be trained, the date by which the training is to be completed, and the date by which proposals should be received. A complete RFP also indicates funding for the project and the process by which the organization will determine its level of satisfaction. Putting together a request for proposal is time-consuming but worthwhile because it helps the organization clarify its objectives, compare vendors, and measure results.

Vendors that believe they are able to provide the services outlined in the RFP submit proposals that provide the types of information requested. The organization reviews the proposals to eliminate any vendors that do not meet requirements and to compare the vendors that do qualify. They check references and select a candidate, based on the proposal and the vendor's answers to questions such as those listed in Table 7.2.

The cost of purchasing training from a contractor can vary substantially. In general, it is much costlier to purchase specialized training that is tailored to the organization's unique requirements than to participate in a seminar or training course that teaches general skills or knowledge. According to estimates by consultants, preparing a training program can take 10 to 20 hours for each hour of instruction. Highly technical content that requires the developer to meet often with experts in the subject can take 50 percent longer.<sup>10</sup>

Even in organizations that send employees to outside training programs, someone in the organization may be responsible for coordinating the overall training program. Called *training administration*, this is typically the responsibility of a human resources

**TABLE 7.2**

Questions to Ask  
Vendors and  
Consultants

How much and what type of experience does your company have in designing and delivering training?
What are the qualifications and experiences of your staff?
Can you provide demonstrations or examples of training programs you have developed?
Would you provide references of clients for whom you worked?
What evidence do you have that your programs work?

SOURCE: Based on R. Zemke and J. Armstrong, "Evaluating Multimedia Developers," *Training*, November 1996, pp. 33–38. Adapted with permission. Lakewood Publications, Minneapolis, MN.



# HR HOW TO

## Administering a Training Program

For a training program to succeed, someone must be responsible for the nuts and bolts of the effort, from making sure there is an appropriate space to handling the paperwork. Usually, an organization's human resource department is responsible for this training administration. Carrying out that responsibility includes the following activities:

- *Communicate with employees.* The company newsletter, intranet, and postings on bulletin boards are possible ways to tell employees about the organization's overall training program and specific courses that are available. Messages should include the objectives as well as the topic of the training.
- *Enroll employees in courses and programs.* This may entail sending forms to schools, registering employees for in-house training sessions, or making sure employees have access to the Web if course enrollment is available online.
- *Prepare and process pretests to be administered or materials to be read before*

*class begins.* The training administrator may be also asked to prepare materials for handouts during the course. Training materials may include books, handouts, videotapes, and CD-ROMs.

- *Arrange the training facility.* The administrator may have to reserve a room, order refreshments, and make sure space is clean and ready for the training session. The administrator ensures that trainees and trainer are not distracted by an uncomfortable room or missing items. Visual aids should be easy to see. The setup should be appropriate for the course objectives. If the course objectives call for group interaction, the chairs should be arranged to encourage this.
- *Test equipment that will be used during the instruction.* In case of equipment failure, the administrator should be prepared with backup materials, such as replacement bulbs, a laptop computer, or photocopies of slides.
- *Provide support during instruction.* The administrator

should be nearby (physically or by phone), in case needs arise during a training session. Trainees should have full information about the schedule, including starting and finishing times and break times.

- *Distribute materials for evaluating the course—for example, surveys or tests.*
- *Provide for communication between the trainer and trainees.* For example, if the trainer will handle follow-up questions via e-mail, the administrator should ensure that trainees have the person's e-mail address.
- *Maintain records of course completion.* Usually, this information goes in employees' personnel files. The administrator should also keep records of the course evaluations. If the training is provided in-house, the records would include course materials such as handouts and videotapes.

SOURCE: Based on material in B. J. Smith and B. L. Delahaye, *How to Be an Effective Trainer*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1987); M. Van Wart, N. J. Cayer, and S. Cook, *Handbook of Training and Development for the Public Sector* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993).

professional. Training administration includes activities before, during, and after training sessions. The "HR How To" box describes what is involved in training administration.

**presentation  
methods**

Training methods in which trainees receive information provided by instructors or via computers or other media.

**hands-on methods**

Training methods which actively involve the trainee in trying out skills being taught.

**group-building  
methods**

Training methods in which trainees share ideas and experiences, build group identity, understand interpersonal relationships, and learn the strengths and weaknesses of themselves and their coworkers.

## Choice of Training Methods

Whether the organization prepares its own training programs or buys training from other organizations, it is important to verify that the content of the training relates directly to the training objectives. Such relevance to the organization's needs and objectives ensures that training money is well spent. Tying training content closely to objectives also improves trainees' learning, because it increases the likelihood that the training will be meaningful and helpful.

After deciding on the goals and content of the training program, planners must decide how the training will be conducted. As we will describe in the next section, a wide variety of methods is available. Training methods fall into the broad categories of presentation methods, hands-on methods, and group-building methods.<sup>11</sup>

With **presentation methods**, trainees receive information provided by instructors or via computers or other media. Trainees may assemble in a classroom to hear a lecture, or the material may be presented on videotapes, CD-ROMs, websites, or in workbooks. Presentations are appropriate for conveying facts or comparing alternative processes. Computer-based training methods tend to be less expensive than bringing trainees together in a classroom.

In contrast to presentation methods, **hands-on methods** actively involve the trainee in learning by trying out the behaviors being taught. Someone may help the trainee learn skills while on the job. Hands-on methods away from the job include simulations, games, role-plays, and interactive learning on computers. Hands-on training is appropriate for teaching specific skills and helping trainees understand how skills and behaviors apply to their jobs. These methods also help trainees learn to handle interpersonal issues, such as handling problems with customers.

**Group-building methods** help trainees share ideas and experiences, build group or team identity, understand how interpersonal relationships work, and get to know their own strengths and weaknesses and those of their coworkers. The various techniques available involve examining feelings, perceptions, and beliefs about the trainees' group. Participants discuss how to apply what they learn in the training program to the group's performance at work. Group-building methods are appropriate for establishing teams or work groups, or for improving their performance.

Training programs may use these methods alone or in combination. The methods used should be suitable for the course content and the learning abilities of the participants. The following section explores the options in greater detail.

## LO5

## Training Methods

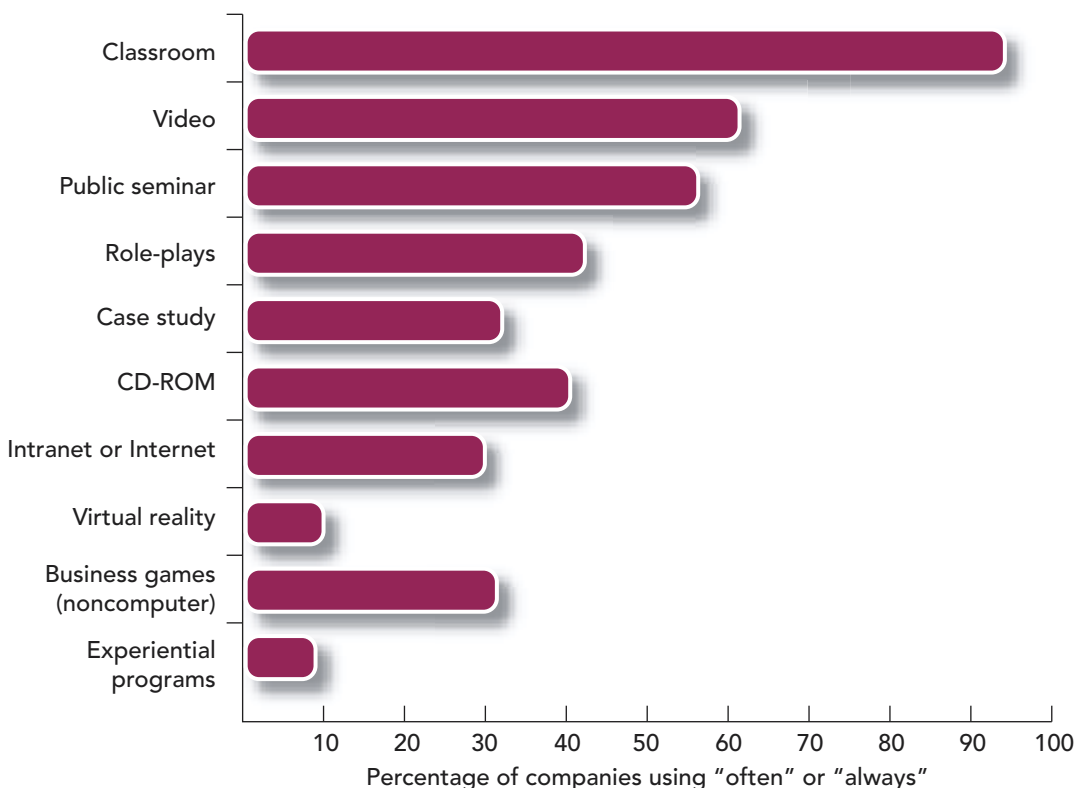
A wide variety of methods is available for conducting training. Figure 7.4 shows the percentages of companies using various training methods: classroom instruction, training videos, role-plays, case studies, several forms of computer-based training, learning games, and experiential programs. Of these methods, the most widely used are classroom training, videotapes, role-plays, and CD-ROMs.

### Classroom Instruction

At school, we tend to associate learning with classroom instruction, and that type of training is most widely used in the workplace, too. Classroom instruction typically involves a trainer lecturing a group. Trainers often supplement lectures with slides,

FIGURE 7.4

Overview of Use of Instructional Methods



SOURCE: Based on "Industry Report 2001," *Training*, October 2001, p. 56.

discussions, case studies, question-and-answer sessions, and role playing. Actively involving trainees enhances learning.

When the course objectives call for presenting information on a specific topic to many trainees, classroom instruction is one of the least expensive and least time-consuming ways to accomplish that goal. Learning will be more effective if trainers enhance lectures with job-related examples and opportunities for hands-on learning.

Modern technology has expanded the notion of the classroom to classes of trainees scattered in various locations. With *distance learning*, trainees at different locations attend programs over phone and computer lines. Through audio- and videoconferencing, they can hear and see lectures and participate in discussions. Computers can enable participants to share documents as well. Satellite networks allow companies to link up with industry-specific and educational courses for which employees receive college credit and job certification. IBM, Digital Equipment, and Eastman Kodak are among the many companies that subscribe to the National Technological University, which broadcasts courses throughout the United States. Technical employees take these courses to obtain advanced degrees in engineering.<sup>12</sup> Distance learning provides many of the benefits of classroom training without the cost and time of travel to a shared classroom. The major disadvantage of distance learning is that interaction

**212 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

between the trainer and audience may be limited. To overcome this hurdle, distance learning usually provides a communications link between trainees and trainer. Also, on-site instructors or facilitators should be available to answer questions and moderate question-and-answer sessions.

### Audiovisual Training

Presentation methods need not require that trainees attend a class. Trainees can also work independently, using course material prepared on audiotapes and videotapes or in workbooks. Audiovisual techniques such as overhead transparencies, slides, and videos can also supplement classroom instruction.

Training with videotapes has been used for improving communications skills, interviewing skills, and customer service skills. Videotapes can also be effective for demonstrating how to follow procedures, such as welding methods. Morse-Brothers provides training to the drivers of its ready-mix trucks with a series of videos. A mentor-driver selects a weekly video, schedules viewing sessions, keeps attendance records, and guides a wrap-up discussion. The short (10 minutes or less) videos cover topics such as safe driving, avoidance of excessive idling, and observing product tests at job sites. The mentor-drivers are trained in leading the discussion that follows the video, including how to call attention to key learning points and relate the topics to issues the drivers encounter on the job.<sup>13</sup>

Users of audiovisual training often have some control over the presentation. They can review material and may be able to slow down or speed up the lesson. Videotapes and video clips on CD-ROM can show situations and equipment that cannot be easily demonstrated in a classroom. Another advantage of audiovisual presentations is that they give trainees a consistent presentation, not affected by an individual trainer's goals and skills. The problems associated with these methods may include their trying to present too much material, poorly written dialogue, overuse of features such as humor or music, and drama that distracts from the key points. A well-written and carefully produced video can overcome these problems.

### Computer-Based Training

Although almost all organizations use classroom training, new technologies are gaining in popularity as technology improves and becomes cheaper. With computer-based training, participants receive course materials and instruction distributed over the Internet or on CD-ROM. Often, these materials are interactive, so participants can answer questions and try out techniques, with course materials adjusted according to participants' responses. Online training programs may allow trainees to submit questions via e-mail and to participate in online discussions. Multimedia capabilities enable computers to provide sounds, images, and video presentations, along with text.

Computer-based training is generally less expensive than putting an instructor in a classroom of trainees. The low cost to deliver information gives the company flexibility in scheduling training, so that it can fit around work requirements. Training can be delivered in smaller doses, so material is easier to remember.<sup>14</sup> Finally, it is easier to customize computer-based training for individual learners.

Federal Express uses a form of computer-based training called *interactive video*. With this format, a monitor presents a training program stored on videodisk or CD-



ROM. Trainees use the keyboard or touch the monitor to interact with the program. Federal Express's 25-disk curriculum includes courses on customer etiquette, defensive driving, and delivery procedures.<sup>15</sup> Employees decide what aspects of the training program they want to view. They can skip ahead when they feel competent or review topics when they believe they need to do so. The program gives trainees immediate feedback on their learning progress.

### Electronic Performance Support Systems

Computers can support trainees in applying training content to their jobs. *Electronic performance support systems (EPSSs)* are computer applications that provide access to skills training, information, and expert advice when a problem occurs on the job.<sup>16</sup> An EPSS gives trainees an electronic information source that they can refer to as they try applying new skills on the job. For example, Atlanta-based poultry processor Cagle's uses an EPSS for employees who maintain the chicken-processing machines.<sup>17</sup> The makers of machines that measure and cut chickens are continually improving this equipment, so that companies have no practical way to train technicians in the equipment's details. Instead, companies train technicians in the basic procedures for maintaining the machinery. When a problem occurs, the technicians combine the basic training with the EPSS to obtain enough information to fix the problem. On the EPSS, the technicians can look up detailed instructions for repairs, check parts availability, and find replacement parts in inventory.

### E-Learning

Receiving training via the Internet or the organization's intranet is called **e-learning** or online learning. E-learning may bring together Web-based training, distance learning, virtual classrooms, and the use of CD-ROMs. Course content is presented with a combination of text, video, graphics, and sound. E-learning has three important characteristics. First, it involves electronic networks that enable the delivery, sharing, and updating of information and instruction. Second, e-learning is delivered to the trainee via computers with Internet access. Finally, it goes beyond traditional training objectives to offer tools and information that will help trainees improve performance. The system also may handle course enrollment, testing and evaluation of participants, and monitoring of progress.

With e-learning, trainees have a great deal of control. They determine what they learn, how fast they progress through the program, how much time they practice, and when they learn. E-learners also may choose to collaborate or interact with other trainees and experts. They may use the training system's links to other learning resources such as reference materials, company websites, and other training programs.

Like other forms of computer-based learning, e-learning can reduce training costs and time. Trainees often appreciate the multimedia capabilities, which appeal to several senses, and the opportunity to actively participate in learning and apply it to situations on the job. The best e-learning combines the advantages of the Internet with the principles of a good learning environment. It takes advantage of the Web's dynamic nature and ability to use many positive learning features, including hyperlinks to other training sites and content, control by the trainee, and ability for trainees to collaborate. As described in the nearby "Best Practices" box, some of the most successful uses of e-learning combine online resources with face-to-face meetings.

#### **e-learning**

Receiving training via the Internet or the organization's intranet.

# BEST PRACTICES



## Humanizing e-Learning

Despite all the hoopla about e-learning, posting some training modules on the organization's website will barely make an impression on the organization's employees. However computer savvy they may be, most people still appreciate a personal touch. Among the organizations that are benefiting most from e-learning are those combining it with traditional face-to-face methods such as classroom instruction.

Cablevision, for example, uses online training to prepare employees for more satisfactory classroom instruction. Before Cablevision's call center employees head for a classroom, they complete online courses, working at their own pace and completing an online assessment when they have finished. This gives them the background they need for participating in Cablevision's classroom instruction, and it shrinks classroom time from three days to one.

Similarly, StorageTek's employees must complete online training before they go

to class. Each employee works independently and must successfully complete learning assessments before taking the class. This setup makes the classroom time more rewarding, because classroom instruction can assume that everyone shares certain basic knowledge. In the words of StorageTek's manager of e-learning, Julie Bisiar, the online learning means trainees are "not just coming for three weeks to headquarters to take endless classes, some of which they already know, and some of which have nothing to do with them."

At Unisys, individual online learning precedes training in a *virtual classroom*. For the company's Coaching in the Workplace class, trainees complete computer-based training ahead of time, then participate in online discussions. A facilitator or faculty member leads those discussions.

Another company using virtual classrooms is Centra Software. These online sessions offer greater flexibility as well as lower costs. With Centra's

system able to host classes of up to 250 students, discussions may require dividing the class into smaller groups. Centra's training system permits everyone to stay online while dividing into groups of any size from 1 person to 125.

Participants can voice-chat or use "whiteboard" software that lets them look at one another's written work. Instructors can move from one online group to another, answering questions and looking at work. After the discussion, the subgroups can reunite and look at the work on one another's whiteboards. Still, even with all these bells and whistles, Centra cannot provide hands-on practice in a virtual classroom. When training requires the handling of equipment, the company sends trainees to one of its training locations around the globe, where students can meet in person with instructors and mentors.

SOURCE: G. Yohe, "The Best of Both?" *Human Resource Executive*, March 6, 2002, pp. 35, 38–39.

### on-the-job training (OJT)

Training methods in which a person with job experience and skill guides trainees in practicing job skills at the workplace.

## On-the-Job Training

Although people often associate training with classrooms, much learning occurs while employees are performing their jobs. **On-the-job training (OJT)** refers to training methods in which a person with job experience and skill guides trainees in practicing job skills at the workplace. This type of training takes various forms, including apprenticeships and internships.

APPRENTICESHIP	INTERNSHIP
Bricklayer	Accountant
Carpenter	Doctor
Electrician	Journalist
Plumber	Lawyer
Printer	Nurse
Welder	

TABLE 7.3

Typical Jobs for  
Apprentices and  
Interns

An **apprenticeship** is a work-study training method that teaches job skills through a combination of on-the-job training and classroom training.<sup>18</sup> The OJT component of an apprenticeship involves the apprentice assisting a certified tradesperson (a journeyman) at the work site. Typically, the classroom training is provided by local trade schools, high schools, and community colleges. Under state and federal guidelines, apprenticeship programs must require at least 144 hours of classroom instruction plus 2,000 hours (one year) of one-the-job experience.<sup>19</sup> Some apprenticeship programs are sponsored by individual companies, others by employee unions. As shown in the left column of Table 7.3, most apprenticeship programs are in the skilled trades, such as plumbing, carpentry, and electrical work. Apprenticeship programs are more widely used in Western European countries (including Germany and Denmark) than in the United States.<sup>20</sup> For trainees, a major advantage of apprenticeship is the ability to earn an income while learning a trade. In addition, training through an apprenticeship is usually effective because it involves hands-on learning and extensive practice.

An **internship** is on-the-job learning sponsored by an educational institution as a component of an academic program. The sponsoring school works with local employers to place students in positions where they can gain experience related to their area of study. For example, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Kirkwood Community College participates in an organization called Workplace Learning Connection, which finds students internships at hundreds of local companies.<sup>21</sup> High school students who pass a screening by the Workplace Learning Connection participate in semester-long internships. Many interns hope the internship will not only teach them about a workplace, but also lead to a job offer. Brian Whitlatch interned at the Iowa 80 Truck Stop, where he helped mechanics work on trucks. He worked without pay as an intern, but he received course credit and, three weeks before graduation, a job offer. Many internships prepare students for professions such as those listed in the right column of Table 7.3.

To be effective, OJT programs should include several characteristics:

- The organization should issue a policy statement describing the purpose of OJT and emphasizing the organization's support for it.
- The organization should specify who is accountable for conducting OJT. This accountability should be included in the relevant job descriptions.
- The organization should review OJT practices at companies in similar industries.
- Managers and peers should be trained in OJT principles.
- Employees who conduct OJT should have access to lesson plans, checklists, procedure manuals, training manuals, learning contracts, and progress report forms.
- Before conducting OJT with an employee, the organization should assess the employees' level of basic skills.<sup>22</sup>

### apprenticeship

A work-study training method that teaches job skills through a combination of on-the-job training and classroom training.

### internship

On-the-job learning sponsored by an educational institution as a component of an academic program.

**216 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

The OJT program at Borden's North American Pasta Division has many of these characteristics.<sup>23</sup> Borden's carefully selects, trains, and rewards the managers and peers who act as trainers. The train-the-trainer course involves classroom training as well as time on the manufacturing floor to learn how to operate machinery such as pasta machines and correctly teach other employees how to use the equipment. Trainees in the OJT program complete a checklist in which they verify that the trainer helped them learn the skills needed and used effective teaching techniques.

## Simulations

**simulation**

A training method that represents a real-life situation, with trainees making decisions resulting in outcomes that mirror what would happen on the job.

A **simulation** is a training method that represents a real-life situation, with trainees making decisions resulting in outcomes that mirror what would happen on the job. Simulations enable trainees to see the impact of their decisions in an artificial, risk-free environment. They are used to teaching production and process skills as well as management and interpersonal skills. At Motorola's Programmable Automation Literacy Lab, employees who may never have worked with computers or robots learn to operate them.<sup>24</sup> After completing a two-hour introduction to factory automation, trainees use a simulator to become familiar with the equipment by designing a product (a personalized memo holder). Success in simple exercises with the simulator increases trainees' confidence about working in an automated manufacturing environment.

Simulators must have elements identical to those found in the work environment. The simulator needs to respond exactly as equipment would under the conditions and response given by the trainee. For this reason, simulators are expensive to develop and need constant updating as new information about the work environment becomes available. Still, they are an excellent training method when the risks of a mistake on the job are great. Trainees do not have to be afraid of the impact of wrong decisions when using the simulator, as they would be with on-the-job training.

**virtual reality**

A computer-based technology that provides an interactive, three-dimensional learning experience.

A recent development in simulations is the use of virtual reality technology. **Virtual reality** is a computer-based technology that provides an interactive, three-dimensional learning experience. Using specialized equipment or viewing the virtual model on a computer screen, trainees move through the simulated environment and interact with its components.<sup>25</sup> Devices relay information from the environment to the trainees' senses. For example, audio interfaces, gloves that provide a sense of touch, treadmills, or motion platforms create a realistic but artificial environment. Devices also communicate information about the trainee's movements to a computer. Virtual reality is a feature of the simulated environment of the advanced manufacturing courses in Motorola's Pager Robotic Assembly facility. Employees wear a head-mount display that lets them view a virtual world of lab space, robots, tools, and the assembly operation. The trainees hear the sounds of using the real equipment. The equipment responds as if trainees were actually using it in the factory.<sup>26</sup>

## Business Games and Case Studies

Training programs use business games and case studies to develop employees' management skills. A case study is a detailed description of a situation that trainees study and discuss. Cases are designed to develop higher-order thinking skills, such as the ability to analyze and evaluate information. They also can be a safe way to encourage trainees to take appropriate risks, by giving them practice in weighing and acting on uncertain outcomes. There are many sources of case studies, including Harvard Busi-

ness School, the Darden Business School at the University of Virginia, and McGraw-Hill publishing company.

With business games, trainees gather information, analyze it, and make decisions that influence the outcome of the game. For instance, Market Share, part of a marketing management course, requires participants to use strategic thinking (such as analyzing competitors) to increase their share of the market.<sup>27</sup> Games stimulate learning because they actively involve participants and mimic the competitive nature of business. A realistic game may be more meaningful to trainees than presentation techniques such as classroom instruction.

Training with case studies and games requires that participants come together to discuss the cases or the progress of the game. This requires face-to-face or electronic meetings. Also, participants must be willing to be actively involved in analyzing the situation and defending their decisions.

## Behavior Modeling

Research suggests that one of the most effective ways to teach interpersonal skills is through behavior modeling.<sup>28</sup> This involves training sessions in which participants observe other people demonstrating the desired behavior, then have opportunities to practice the behavior themselves. For example, a training program could involve four-hour sessions, each focusing on one interpersonal skill, such as communicating or coaching. At the beginning of each session, participants hear the reasons for using the key behaviors, then they watch a videotape of a model performing the key behaviors. They practice through role-playing and receive feedback about their performance. In addition, they evaluate the performance of the model in the videotape and discuss how they can apply the behavior on the job.

## Experiential Programs

To develop teamwork and leadership skills, some organizations enroll their employees in a form of training called **experiential programs**. This type of program uses challenging, structured outdoor activities, which may include difficult sports such as dogsledding or mountain climbing. Other activities may be structured tasks like climbing walls, completing rope courses, climbing ladders, or making “trust falls” (in which each trainee stands on a table and falls backward into the arms of other group members).

For example, a manager of a Chili’s restaurant was required to scale a wall that was three stories high. About two-thirds of the way from the top, the manager became very tired. Still, she succeeded in reaching the top by using the advice and encouragement shouted by team members on the ground. When asked what she had learned from the experience, the manager said the exercise made her realize that reaching personal success depends on other people. At her restaurant, everyone has to work together to make the customers happy.<sup>29</sup>

Do experiential programs work? The impact of these programs has not been rigorously tested, but participants report they gained a greater understanding of themselves and the ways they interact with their coworkers. One key to the success of such programs may be that the organization insist that entire work groups participate together. This encourages people to see, discuss, and correct the kinds of behavior that keep the group from performing well. Organizations should make sure that the exercises are related to the types of skills employees need to develop. Experiential programs should

### experiential programs

A teamwork and leadership training program based on the use of challenging, structured outdoor activities.

**218 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

end with a discussion of what happened during the exercise, what participants learned, and how they can apply what they learned to their work.<sup>30</sup>

Before requiring employees to participate in experiential programs, the organization should consider the possible drawbacks. Because these programs are usually physically demanding and often require participants to touch each other, companies face certain risks. Some employees may be injured or may feel that they were sexually harassed or that their privacy was invaded. Also, the Americans with Disabilities Act (discussed in Chapter 3) raises questions about requiring employees with disabilities to participate in physically demanding training experiences.

### Team Training

A possible alternative to experiential programs is team training, which coordinates the performance of individuals who work together to achieve a common goal. An organization may benefit from providing such training to groups when group members must share information and group performance depends on the performance of the individual group members. Examples include the military, nuclear power plants, and commercial airlines. In those work settings, much work is performed by crews, groups, or teams. Success depends on individuals' coordinating their activities to make decisions, perhaps in dangerous situations.

Ways to conduct team training include cross-training and coordination training.<sup>31</sup> In **cross-training**, team members understand and practice each other's skills so that they are prepared to step in and take another member's place. In a factory, for example, production workers could be cross-trained to handle all phases of assembly. This enables the company to move them to the positions where they are most needed to complete an order on time.

**Coordination training** trains the team in how to share information and decisions to obtain the best team performance. This type of training is especially important for commercial aviation and surgical teams. Both of these kinds of teams must monitor different aspects of equipment and the environment at the same time sharing information to make the most effective decisions regarding patient care or aircraft safety and performance.

For both kinds of team training, the training program usually brings together several training methods. To teach communication skills, training could begin with a lecture about communicating, followed by an opportunity for team members to role-play scenarios related to communication on the team. Boeing combined a number of methods in a team training program designed to improve the effectiveness of the 250 teams designing the Boeing 777.<sup>32</sup> Teams include members from a variety of specialties, from design engineers to marketing professionals. These team members had to understand how the process or product they were designing would fit with the rest of the finished jet. Boeing's training started with an extensive orientation emphasizing how team members were supposed to work together. Then the teams received their work assignments. Trainers helped the teams work through problems as needed, with assistance in communication skills, conflict resolution, and leadership.

### Action Learning

Another form of group building, widely used in Europe, is **action learning**. In this type of training, teams or work groups get an actual problem, work on solving it and

**cross-training**

Team training in which team members understand and practice each other's skills so that they are prepared to step in and take another member's place.

**coordination training**

Team training that teaches the team how to share information and make decisions to obtain the best team performance.

**action learning**

Training in which teams get an actual problem, work on solving it and commit to an action plan, and are accountable for carrying it out.





One of the most important features of organizations today is teamwork. Experiential programs include team-building exercises like rope courses and wall climbing to help build trust and cooperation among employees.

commit to an action plan, and are accountable for carrying out the plan.<sup>33</sup> Typically, 6 to 30 employees participate in action learning; sometimes the participants include customers and vendors. For instance, a group might include a customer that buys the product involved in the problem to be solved. Another arrangement is to bring together employees from various functions affected by the problem. Whirlpool used action learning to solve a problem related to importing compressors from Brazil. The company had to pay duties (import taxes) on the compressors. It was overpaying and was trying to recover the overpayment. Members of the group responsible for obtaining the parts formed a team to implement Whirlpool's strategies for cost reduction and inventory control. Through action learning, they developed a process for recovering the overpayment, saving the company hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

The effectiveness of action learning has not been formally evaluated. This type of training seems to result in a great deal of learning, however, and employees are able to apply what they learn because action learning involves actual problems the organization is facing. The group approach also helps teams identify behaviors that interfere with problem solving.

## Implementing the Training Program: Principles of Learning

LO6

Learning permanently changes behavior. For employees to acquire knowledge and skills in the training program and apply what they have learned in their jobs, the training program must be implemented in a way that applies what we know about how people learn. Researchers have identified a number of ways employees learn best.<sup>34</sup> Table 7.4 summarizes ways that training can best encourage learning. In general, effective training communicates learning objectives clearly, presents information in distinctive and memorable ways, and helps trainees link the subject matter to their jobs.

TABLE 7.4  
Ways That Training  
Helps Employees  
Learn

TRAINING ACTIVITY	WAYS TO PROVIDE TRAINING ACTIVITY
Communicate the learning objective.	Demonstrate the performance to be expected. Give examples of questions to be answered.
Use distinctive, attention-getting messages.	Emphasize key points. Use pictures, not just words.
Limit the content of training.	Group lengthy material into chunks. Provide a visual image of the course material. Provide opportunities to repeat and practice material.
Guide trainees as they learn.	Use words as reminders about sequence of activities. Use words and pictures to relate concepts to one another and to their context.
Elaborate on the subject.	Present the material in different contexts and settings. Relate new ideas to previously learned concepts. Practice in a variety of contexts and settings.
Provide memory cues.	Suggest memory aids. Use familiar sounds or rhymes as memory cues.
Transfer course content to the workplace.	Design the learning environment so that it has elements in common with the workplace. Require learners to develop action plans that apply training content to their jobs. Use words that link the course to the workplace.
Provide feedback about performance.	Tell trainees how accurately and quickly they are performing their new skill. Show how trainees have met the objectives of the training.

SOURCE: Adapted from R. M. Gagne, "Learning Processes and Instruction," *Training Research Journal* 1 (1995/96), pp. 17–28.

Employees are most likely to learn when training is linked to their current job experiences and tasks.<sup>35</sup> There are a number of ways trainers can make this link. Training sessions should present material using familiar concepts, terms, and examples. As far as possible, the training context—such as the physical setting or the images presented on a computer—should mirror the work environment. Along with physical elements, the context should include emotional elements. In the earlier example of training store personnel to handle upset customers, the physical context is more relevant if it includes trainees acting out scenarios of personnel dealing with unhappy customers. The role-play interaction between trainees adds emotional realism and further enhances learning.

To fully understand and remember the content of the training, employees need a chance to demonstrate and practice what they have learned. Trainers should provide ways to actively involve the trainees, have them practice repeatedly, and have them complete tasks within a time that is appropriate in light of the learning objectives. Practice requires physically carrying out the desired behaviors, not just describing them. Practice sessions could include role-playing interactions, filling out relevant forms, or operating machinery or equipment to be used on the job. The more the trainee practices these activities, the more comfortable he or she will be in applying the skills on the job. People tend to benefit most from practice that occurs over several sessions, rather than one long practice session.<sup>36</sup> For complex tasks, it may be

most effective to practice a few skills or behaviors at a time, then combine them in later practice sessions.

Trainees need to understand whether or not they are succeeding. Therefore, training sessions should offer feedback. Effective feedback focuses on specific behaviors and is delivered as soon as possible after the trainees practice or demonstrate what they have learned.<sup>37</sup> One way to do this is to videotape trainees, then show the video while indicating specific behaviors that do or do not match the desired outcomes of the training. Feedback should include praise when trainees show they have learned material, as well as guidance on how to improve.

Well-designed training helps people remember the content. Training programs need to break information into chunks that people can remember. Research suggests that people can attend to no more than four to five items at a time. If a concept or procedure involves more than five items, the training program should deliver information in shorter sessions or chunks.<sup>38</sup> Other ways to make information more memorable include presenting it with visual images and practicing some tasks enough that they become automatic.

Written materials should have an appropriate reading level. A simple way to assess **readability**—the difficulty level of written materials—is to look at the words being used and at the length of sentences. In general, it is easiest to read short sentences and simple, standard words. If training materials are too difficult to understand, several adjustments can help. The basic approach is to rewrite the material looking for ways to simplify it.

**readability**

The difficulty level of written materials.

- Substitute simple, concrete words for unfamiliar or abstract words.
- Divide long sentences into two or more short sentences.
- Divide long paragraphs into two or more short paragraphs.
- Add checklists (like this one) and illustrations to clarify the text.

Another approach is to substitute videotapes, hands-on learning, or other nonwritten methods for some of the written material. A longer-term solution is to use tests to identify employees who need training to improve their reading levels and to provide that training first.

## Measuring Results of Training

LO7

After a training program ends, or at intervals during an ongoing training program, organizations should ensure that the training is meeting objectives. The stage to prepare for evaluating a training program is when the program is being developed. Along with designing course objectives and content, the planner should identify how to measure achievement of objectives. Depending on the objectives, the evaluation can use one or more of the measures shown in Figure 7.5—trainee satisfaction with the program, knowledge or abilities gained, use of new skills and behavior on the job (transfer of training), and improvements in individual and organizational performance. The usual way to measure whether participants have acquired information is to administer tests on paper or electronically. Trainers or supervisors can observe whether participants demonstrate the desired skills and behaviors. Surveys measure changes in attitude. Changes in company performance have a variety of measures, many of which organizations keep track of for preparing performance appraisals, annual reports, and other routine documents in order to demonstrate the final measure of success shown in Figure 7.5—return on investment.

**222 PART 2** Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources**FIGURE 7.5**Measures of Training  
Success**Evaluation Methods****transfer of training**On-the-job use of  
knowledge, skills,  
and behaviors  
learned in training.

Evaluation of training should look for **transfer of training**, or on-the-job use of knowledge, skills, and behaviors learned in training. Transfer of training requires that employees actually learn the content of the training program and that the necessary conditions are in place for employees to apply what they learned. Thus, the assessment can look at whether employees have an opportunity to perform the skills related to the training. The organization can measure this by asking employees three questions about specific training-related tasks:

1. Do you perform the task?
2. How many times do you perform the task?
3. To what extent do you perform difficult and challenging learned tasks?

Frequent performance of difficult training-related tasks would signal great opportunity to perform. If there is low opportunity to perform, the organization should conduct further needs assessment and reevaluate readiness to learn. Perhaps the organization does not fully support the training activities in general or the employee's supervisor does not provide opportunities to apply new skills. Lack of transfer can also mean that employees have not learned the course material. The organization might offer a refresher course to give trainees more practice. Another reason for poor transfer of training is that the content of the training may not be important for the employee's job.

Assessment of training also should evaluate training *outcomes*, that is, what (if anything) has changed as a result of the training. The relevant training outcomes are the ones related to the organization's goals for the training and its overall performance. Possible outcomes include the following:

- Information such as facts, techniques, and procedures that trainees can recall after the training.
- Skills that trainees can demonstrate in tests or on the job.
- Trainee and supervisor satisfaction with the training program.
- Changes in attitude related to the content of the training (for example, concern for safety or tolerance of diversity).
- Improvements in individual, group, or company performance (for example, greater customer satisfaction, more sales, fewer defects).

## CHAPTER 7 Training Employees 223

Training is a significant part of many organizations' budgets. Therefore, economic measures are an important way to evaluate the success of a training program. Businesses that invest in training want to achieve a high *return on investment*—the monetary benefits of the investment compared to the amount invested, expressed as a percentage. For example, IBM's e-learning program for new managers, Basic Blue, costs \$8,708 per manager.<sup>39</sup> The company has measured an improvement in each new manager's performance worth \$415,000. That gives IBM a benefit of  $\$415,000 - \$8,708 = \$406,292$  for each manager. This is an extremely large return on investment:  $\$406,292 / \$8,708 = 46.65$ , or 4,665 percent! In other words, for every \$1 IBM invests in Basic Blue, it receives almost \$47.

For any of these methods, the most accurate but most costly way to evaluate the training program is to measure performance, knowledge, or attitudes among all employees before the training, then to train only part of the employees. After the training is complete, the performance, knowledge, or attitudes are again measured, and the trained group is compared to the untrained group. A simpler but less accurate way to assess the training is to conduct the pretest and posttest on all trainees, comparing their performance, knowledge, or attitudes before and after the training. This form of measurement does not rule out the possibility that change resulted from something other than training (for example, a change in the compensation system). The simplest approach is to use only a posttest. Of course, this type of measurement does not enable accurate comparisons, but it may be sufficient, depending on the cost and purpose of the training.

### Applying the Evaluation

The purpose of evaluating training is to help with future decisions about the organization's training programs. Using the evaluation, the organization may identify a need to modify the training and gain information about the kinds of changes needed. The organization may decide to expand on successful areas of training and cut back on training that has not delivered significant benefits.

At Walgreens, evaluation of training for pharmacy technicians convinced the company that formal training was economically beneficial. The drugstore chain developed a training course as an alternative to on-the-job training from pharmacists. Some of the newly hired technicians participated in the test of the program, taking part in 20 hours of classroom training and 20 hours of supervision on the job. Other technicians relied on the old method of being informally trained by the pharmacists who had hired them. After the training had ended, pharmacists who supervised the technicians completed surveys about the technicians' performance. The surveys indicated that formally trained technicians were more efficient and wasted less of the



Walgreens measured the success of training their pharmacy technicians. The formally trained technicians did show higher sales. Do you think Walgreens should invest in an even higher rate of training?

## 224 PART 2 Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

pharmacists' time. Also, sales in pharmacies with formally trained technicians exceeded sales in pharmacies with technicians trained on the job by an average of \$9,500 each year.<sup>40</sup>

LO8

## Applications of Training

Two categories of training that have become widespread among U.S. companies are orientation of new employees and training in how to manage workforce diversity.

### Orientation of New Employees

#### orientation

Training designed to prepare employees to perform their jobs effectively, learn about their organization, and establish work relationships.

Many employees receive their first training during their first days on the job. This training is the organization's **orientation** program—its training designed to prepare employees to perform their job effectively, learn about the organization, and establish work relationships. Organizations provide for orientation because, no matter how realistic the information provided during employment interviews and site visits, people feel shock and surprise when they start a new job.<sup>41</sup> Also, employees need to become familiar with job tasks and learn the details of the organization's practices, policies, and procedures.

The objectives of orientation programs include making new employees familiar with the organization's rules, policies, and procedures. Table 7.5 summarizes the con-

**TABLE 7.5**

Content of a Typical  
Orientation Program

<b>Company-level information</b>	
Company overview (e.g., values, history, mission)	
Key policies and procedures	
Compensation	
Employee benefits and services	
Safety and accident prevention	
Employee and union relations	
Physical facilities	
Economic factors	
Customer relations	
<b>Department-level information</b>	
Department functions and philosophy	
Job duties and responsibilities	
Policies, procedures, rules, and regulations	
Performance expectations	
Tour of department	
Introduction to department employees	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Community	
Housing	
Family adjustment	

SOURCE: J. L. Schwarz and M. A. Weslowski, "Employee Orientation: What Employers Should Know," *Journal of Contemporary Business Issues*, Fall 1995, p. 48. Used with permission.



tent of a typical orientation program. Such a program provides information about the overall company and about the department in which the new employee will be working. The topics include social as well as technical aspects of the job. Miscellaneous information helps employees from out of town learn about the surrounding community.

Orientation of new engineers at Pillsbury addresses these issues. Before being assigned to a production facility, engineers work for one year at headquarters. To provide orientation, Pillsbury assigns a senior engineer to serve as a mentor, showing the new engineer the technical resources available within the company. The mentor also helps the new engineer become familiar with the community and handle issues related to relocation. The new employees attend seminars at which engineers from various product divisions explain the role of engineering. New employees also meet key managers.<sup>42</sup>

At The Container Store, orientation is about more than job skills.<sup>43</sup> The company also wants employees to care about what they are doing and to be committed to the organization. New employees at The Container Store participate in a one-week training program called Foundation Week. During the first day of Foundation Week, employees learn the company's philosophy, and they spend most of the day with the store manager. On the following days, they learn about the way merchandise is arranged in the stores, various selling techniques, roles of employees in different positions, and ways to provide customer service. Only after completing the entire week of training do employees receive the apron they wear while at work. The manager presents the apron during a ceremony intended to encourage the new hires. According to Barbara Anderson, The Container Store's director of community services and staff development, "The psychological effect of having to wait for that apron is incredible." Anderson says that since the company started its Foundation Week program, newly hired employees are more self-confident and productive, and they tend to stay with the company longer.

Orientation programs may combine various training methods such as printed and audiovisual materials, classroom instruction, on-the-job training, and e-learning. Decisions about how to conduct the orientation depend on the type of material to be covered and the number of new employees, among other factors. The "e-HRM" box describes how some organizations are applying e-learning to orientation programs.

## Diversity Training

In response to Equal Employment Opportunity laws and market forces, many organizations today are concerned about managing diversity—creating an environment that allows all employees to contribute to organizational goals and experience personal growth. This kind of environment includes access to jobs as well as fair and positive treatment of all employees. Chapter 3 described how organizations manage diversity by complying with the law. Besides these efforts, many organizations provide training designed to teach employees attitudes and behaviors that support the management of diversity. Such training may have some or all of the following goals:

- Employees should understand how their values and stereotypes influence their behavior toward others of different gender and ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds.
- Employees should gain an appreciation of cultural differences among themselves.
- Employees should avoid and correct behaviors that isolate and intimidate minority group members.

# E- HRM



## Getting Oriented Online

If you take a job with ChemConnect, don't expect to be greeted on your first day with a dry lecture from human resource personnel. Rather, the San Francisco-based online seller of chemicals and plastics offers an orientation via its intranet. The online orientation, titled "Tour de Chem," is a takeoff on the Tour de France bicycle race. Trainees use a computer mouse to manipulate the image of a bicycle to travel online through various scenarios. Clicking on the front wheel to move forward and on the rear wheel to move backward, trainees take a tour through company jargon, a menu of employee services and benefits, and background about ChemConnect's leaders. For each stage of the tour, one of those executives rides along—shown as a stick figure with a photo of the executive's head patched on top. The whole tour takes about 90 minutes.

The entertaining presentation keeps new hires engaged long after they might have nodded off in front of a benefits manual or lecture. The format also tells employees something about the company,

says ChemConnect's vice president of operations, Peter Navin. Navin, who is responsible for HRM, says, "If you look into a screen and see no creativity, you certainly get a sense of what you're joining."

No doubt, Jane Paradiso would applaud the Tour de Chem. Paradiso, leader of the recruiting solutions practice at the Watson Wyatt Worldwide consulting firm, says online orientations should be more than a video about the company plus a signup sheet for benefits. According to Paradiso, an online orientation should take advantage of the Internet's potential for communication. The orientation program should assign the new employee an e-mail address and a password to the intranet, let the employee schedule lunch with his or her boss, set up a connection between the new employee and his or her mentor, and describe the organization's ethics policy, among other features. In fact, such a system could begin building the organization's relationship with new employees even before their first day on the job, assuming

the organization gives out a password for the system.

That's what Pinnacle Decision Systems does. The consulting and software development company, located in Middletown, Connecticut, sends new hires to a website it calls "HQ." There, the newly hired individuals can read policies and procedures, view the company's organization chart, or order business cards and company T-shirts. Thanks to these online services, employees are already acquainted with the company on their first day. During their first day at work, they meet with department heads to deepen their knowledge of the organization. Pinnacle believes that in-depth employee orientation and development require more than a virtual touch, however. Says Joanne Keller, Pinnacle's HR director, "We wouldn't want to lose the personal touch, where you pick up the clues of how the company really works and what's expected of you."

SOURCE: Tom Starner, "Welcome E-Board," *Human Resource Executive*, March 6, 2002, pp. 40-43.

### diversity training

Training designed to change employee attitudes about diversity and/or develop skills needed to work with a diverse workforce.

Training designed to change employee attitudes about diversity and/or develop skills needed to work with a diverse workforce is called **diversity training**. These programs generally emphasize either attitude awareness and change or behavior change.

Programs that focus on attitudes have objectives to increase participants' awareness of cultural and ethnic differences, as well as differences in personal characteris-

## CHAPTER 7 Training Employees 227

tics and physical characteristics (such as disabilities). These programs are based on the assumption that people who become aware of differences and their stereotypes about those differences will be able to avoid letting stereotypes influence their interactions with people. Many of these programs use videotapes and experiential exercises to increase employees' awareness of the negative emotional and performance effects of stereotypes and resulting behaviors on members of minority groups. A risk of these programs is that they may actually reinforce stereotypes by focusing on differences rather than similarities among coworkers.<sup>44</sup> But it is generally held that greater awareness has a positive effect.

Programs that focus on behavior aim at changing the organizational policies and individual behaviors that inhibit employees' personal growth and productivity. Sometimes these programs identify incidents that discourage employees from working up to their potential. Employees work in groups to discuss specific promotion opportunities or management practices that they believe were handled unfairly. Another approach is to teach managers and employees basic rules of behavior in the workplace.<sup>45</sup> Trainees may be more positive about receiving this type of training than other kinds of diversity training. Finally, some organizations provide diversity training in the form of *cultural immersion*, sending employees directly into communities where they have to interact with persons from different cultures, races, and nationalities. Participants might talk with community members, work in community organizations, or learn about events that are significant to the community they visit. For example, AT&T sent several managers on a scavenger hunt in New York City's Harlem. In this eclectic community of Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Puerto Rican Americans, the managers had to look for a variety of items, including a bilingual community directory, a Jamaican meat patty, and soul food. The hunt required the team to interact with a variety of people.<sup>46</sup>

Although many organizations have used diversity training, few have provided programs lasting more than a day, and few have researched their long-term effectiveness.<sup>47</sup> The existing evidence regarding diversity training does, however, suggest that some characteristics make diversity training more effective.<sup>48</sup> Most important, the training should be tied to business objectives, such as understanding customers. The support and involvement of top management, and the involvement of managers at all levels, also are important. Diversity training should emphasize learning behaviors and skills, not blaming employees. Finally, the program should be well structured, connected to the organization's rewards for performance, and include a way to measure the success of the training.

## Summary

1. Discuss how to link training programs to organizational needs.  
Organizations need to establish training programs that are effective. In other words, they teach what they are designed to teach, and they teach skills and behaviors that will help the organization achieve its goals. Organizations create such programs through instructional design. This process begins with a needs assessment. The organization then ensures readiness for training, includ-

ing employee characteristics and organizational support. Next, the organization plans a training program, implements the program, and evaluates the results.

2. Explain how to assess the need for training.  
Needs assessment consists of an organization analysis, person analysis, and task analysis. The organization analysis determines the appropriateness of training by evaluating the characteristics of the organization,

## 228 PART 2 Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

including its strategy, resources, and management support. The person analysis determines individuals' needs and readiness for training. The task analysis identifies the tasks, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that training should emphasize. It is based on examination of the conditions in which tasks are performed, including equipment and environment of the job, time constraints, safety considerations, and performance standards.

3. Explain how to assess employees' readiness for training. Readiness for training is a combination of employee characteristics and positive work environment that permit training. The necessary employee characteristics include ability to learn the subject matter, favorable attitudes toward the training, and motivation to learn. A positive work environment avoids situational constraints such as lack of money and time. In a positive environment, both peers and management support training.
4. Describe how to plan an effective training program. Planning begins with establishing objectives for the training program. These should define an expected performance or outcome, the desired level of performance, and the conditions under which the performance should occur. Based on the objectives, the planner decides who will provide the training, what topics the training will cover, what training methods to use, and how to evaluate the training. Even when organizations purchase outside training, someone in the organization, usually a member of the HR department, often is responsible for training administration. The training methods selected should be related to the objectives and content of the training program. Training methods may include presentation methods, hands-on methods, or group-building methods.
5. Compare widely used training methods. Classroom instruction is most widely used and is one of the least expensive and least time-consuming ways to present information on a specific topic to many trainees. It also allows for group interaction and may include hands-on practice. Audiovisual and computer-based training need not require that trainees attend a class, so they can reduce time and money spent on training. Computer-based training may be interactive and may provide for group interaction. On-the-job training methods such as apprenticeships and internships give trainees first-hand experiences. A simulation represents a real-life situation, enabling trainees to see the effects of their decisions without dangerous or expensive consequences. Business games and case studies are other methods for practicing decision-making skills. Participants need to come together in one location or

collaborate online. Behavior modeling gives trainees a chance to observe desired behaviors, so this technique can be effective for teaching interpersonal skills. Experiential programs provide an opportunity for group members to interact in challenging circumstances but may exclude members with disabilities. Team training focuses a team on achievement of a common goal. Action learning offers relevance, because the training focuses on an actual work-related problem.

6. Summarize how to implement a successful training program. Implementation should apply principles of learning. In general, effective training communicates learning objectives, presents information in distinctive and memorable ways, and helps trainees link the subject matter to their jobs. Employees are most likely to learn when training is linked to job experiences and tasks. Employees learn best when they demonstrate or practice what they have learned and when they receive feedback that helps them improve. Trainees remember information better when it is broken into small chunks, presented with visual images, and practiced many times. Written materials should be easily readable by trainees.
7. Evaluate the success of a training program. Evaluation of training should look for transfer of training by measuring whether employees are performing the tasks taught in the training program. Assessment of training also should evaluate training outcomes, such as change in attitude, ability to perform a new skill, and recall of facts or behaviors taught in the training program. Training should result in improvement in the group's or organization's outcomes, such as customer satisfaction or sales. An economic measure of training success is return on investment.
8. Describe training methods for employee orientation and diversity management. Employee orientation is training designed to prepare employees to perform their job effectively, learn about the organization, and establish work relationships. Organizations provide for orientation because, no matter how realistic the information provided during employment interviews and site visits, people feel shock and surprise when they start a new job, and they need to learn the details of how to perform the job. A typical orientation program includes information about the overall company and the department in which the new employee will be working, covering social as well as technical aspects of the job. Orientation programs may combine several training methods, from printed materials to on-the-job training to e-learning. Diversity training is designed to change employee attitudes

CHAPTER 7 Training Employees 229

about diversity and/or develop skills needed to work with a diverse workforce. Evidence regarding these programs suggests that diversity training is most effective

if it is tied to business objectives, has management support, emphasizes behaviors and skills, and is well structured with a way to measure success.

## Review and Discussion Questions

1. “Melinda!” bellowed Toran to the company’s HR specialist, “I’ve got a problem, and you’ve got to solve it. I can’t get people in this plant to work together as a team. As if I don’t have enough trouble with our competitors and our past-due accounts, now I have to put up with running a zoo. You’re responsible for seeing that the staff gets along. I want a training proposal on my desk by Monday.” Assume you are Melinda.
  - a. Is training the solution to this problem? How can you determine the need for training?
  - b. Summarize how you would conduct a needs assessment.
2. How should an organization assess readiness for learning? In question 1, how do Toran’s comments suggest readiness (or lack of readiness) for learning?
3. Assume you are the human resource manager of a small seafood company. The general manager has told you that customers have begun complaining about the quality of your company’s fresh fish. Currently, training consists of senior fish cleaners showing new employees how to perform the job. Assuming your needs assessment indicates a need for training, how would you plan a training program? What steps should you take in planning the program?
4. Many organizations turn to e-learning as a less expensive alternative to classroom training. What are some other advantages of substituting e-learning for classroom training? What are some disadvantages?
5. Suppose the managers in your organization tend to avoid delegating projects to the people in their groups. As a result, they rarely meet their goals. A training needs analysis indicates that an appropriate solution is training in management skills. You have identified two outside training programs that are consistent with your goals. One program involves experiential programs, and the other is an interactive computer program. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each technique? Which would you choose? Why?
6. Consider your current job or a job you recently held. What types of training did you receive for the job? What types of training would you like to receive? Why?
7. A manufacturing company employs several maintenance employees. When a problem occurs with the equipment, a maintenance employee receives a description of the symptoms and is supposed to locate and fix the source of the problem. The company recently installed a new, complex electronics system. To prepare its maintenance workers, the company provided classroom training. The trainer displayed electrical drawings of system components and posed problems about the system. The trainer would point to a component in a drawing and ask, “What would happen if this component were faulty?” Trainees would study the diagrams, describe the likely symptoms, and discuss how to repair the problem. If you were responsible for this company’s training, how would you evaluate the success of this training program?
8. In question 7, suppose the maintenance supervisor has complained that trainees are having difficulty troubleshooting problems with the new electronics system. They are spending a great deal of time on problems with the system and coming to the supervisor with frequent questions that show a lack of understanding. The supervisor is convinced that the employees are motivated to learn the system, and they are well qualified. What do you think might be the problems with the current training program? What recommendations can you make for improving the program?
9. Who should be involved in orientation of new employees? Why would it not be appropriate to provide employee orientation purely online?
10. Why do organizations provide diversity training? What kinds of goals are most suitable for such training?

## What’s Your HR IQ?

The Student CD-ROM offers two more ways to check what you’ve learned so far. Use the Self-Assessment exercise to test your knowledge of training programs. Go on-

line with the Web Exercise to see how well your knowledge works in cyberspace.



## BusinessWeek Case

### BusinessWeek Look Who's Building Online Classrooms

Corporations have quickly embraced e-learning, spawning a multimillion-dollar industry. The trend isn't limited to tech courses. Online programs also teach "soft" skills, such as leadership, coaching, and global teamwork.

Learning online has the potential to make education a high priority on the job. After all, analysts write volumes on the value of having an educated, skilled, and speedy workforce. When a lesson can be transmitted quickly to managers and sales teams worldwide through an e-learning program, it begins to show on the bottom line. Says James Moore, Sun Microsystems' director of workforce, "If you look at product development at Sun, by the time I got everyone trained [the traditional way, the product] would be obsolete."

"Our customers want learning strategies to integrate all the learning that goes on in their organization with the corporate strategy," says John W. Humphrey, chairman of Forum Corporation, a 30-year-old provider of leadership training. FT Knowledge, an e-learning company spun off from British publishing giant Pearson, announced earlier in July that it will acquire Forum for \$90 million. The move points to a race among old-economy training groups to use the Web to meet company needs. The idea is to mix e-learning with some classroom sessions, using content from varied sources—executives, university professors, or private training companies.

Online learning companies are struggling to stay on top of demand. General manager Robert Brodo of 15-year-old SMG Net, the online business unit of SMG Strategic Management Group in Philadelphia, says each of the company's 40 top clients—Boeing is its largest—has had a conversation about bringing courses online. Eighty percent are implementing courses such as SMG's "simulated company." In the two-day simulation, execs can play out five to six years of business experience. "We can't keep up with the demand, and it's scary when you have to tell a customer that you can't start a project for them until October and November."

Cushing Anderson, program manager for learning-services research at International Data Corporation, is in the process of researching how companies are using e-learning for everyone from managers to sales teams and programmers. In 1999, 6 percent of all corporate training was done online, he says. Anderson's preliminary findings show that doubling in 2001, then doubling again in 2001. "Large companies tend to be more adventurous and have larger budgets to put courses online," he says, though most buy programs from outside vendors.

That isn't the case at IBM. Nancy J. Lewis, IBM's director of management development worldwide, says Big

Blue will move its training programs online for 5,000 new managers, saving the company \$16 million in 2000. She adds that producing five times the content at a third of the cost has helped convince all of IBM's training units to adopt the model. Her unit alone has reduced its staff from about 500 trainers worldwide to 70 this year.

IBM is so confident about its training that the company has packaged its programs to sell to customers—a side business that is already bringing in "small amounts of revenue" says Lewis's second in command, Robert MacGregor. If IBM's model for e-corporate universities works, it could become a profitable new business.

Heads of training and development have grander plans than simply offering a course online. They expect to change adults' learning habits. Pippa Wicks, CEO of FT Knowledge, says in January 2001 the company will launch a new learning program called Insight Forum. "You do your job through the training program," she says. For instance, a customer service manager would use the program to perform her daily tasks and then receive feedback about her decisions. Employees could take the training individually, or entire departments can share information in open sessions.

Los Altos, California-based Pensare, a four-year-old e-learning company, has a different vision. The company uses a model that lets employees, not trainers, decide what they need to learn, and when. "Tell [employees] what they need to do to help [execute] company strategy, then say, 'What do you think you need to know to help us?'" says Pensare cofounder Dean Hovey.

Online learning, delivered quickly and in a setting where the information can be commonly shared, will make the training process more engaging and less of a chore, experts say. And it'll give companies an advantage over competitors. 3Com, for one, places a high value on e-learning. "I've got senior people saying that they want more [online training]," says Geoff Roberts, 3Com's director of education. 3Com's agility with technology makes it imperative to train not only internal employees but also its customers. "We're selling into a market where 80 percent of the people don't understand the industry," he says.

As companies convert lessons to be delivered over intranets, one massive obstacle remains: Unless it's mandatory, most employees drop out of training. "Getting 2 percent to 3 percent [of a workforce to sign on] can't happen," says Forum's Humphrey. "There have to be more breakthroughs to make learning less intrusive to the worker." His suggestion to clients: Make lessons relevant.

The good news is that Generation Y workers—recent college grads—are more comfortable using the Web. In 2003, analysts expect 95 percent of college students to use



## CHAPTER 7 Training Employees 231

the Internet; only 41.7 percent did in 1996. This means college grads entering the workforce in 2003, and beyond, may be more receptive to e-learning. In fact, they may expect it.

SOURCE: M. Schneider, "Look Who's Building Online Classrooms," *BusinessWeek*, July 25, 2000.

**Questions**

1. What features are necessary for e-learning to be effective? Explain.
2. At many organizations, online learning blurs the boundaries between training and work, because the organizations expect trainees to complete e-learning during breaks or outside of work hours. Is this expectation realistic? Why or why not?
3. What measures can an organization take to improve employees' motivation to participate in e-learning?

**Case: Training Helps the Rubber Hit the Road at Tires Plus**

Customers visiting an old-fashioned tire shop often encounter dirty service areas and personnel who know plenty about installing tires on cars but little about providing courteous service. Car owners used to such experiences are pleasantly surprised when they visit one of Tires Plus's 150 stores, located in the Midwestern United States. Showrooms are clean and organized, each including a customer lounge with television sets, tables, and play areas for children. Salespeople wear white shirts and ties, and they immediately greet customers as they enter. Fast, friendly service is the norm. Customers are encouraged to walk into the shop to watch the mechanics at work. No wonder, then, that Tires Plus has recently been experiencing growth of more than 20 percent a year. With sales at \$200 million a year, Tires Plus has become the sixth-largest independent tire retailer and has ambitious plans for expansion nationwide.

Cofounder Tom Gegax insists that growth will not come at the expense of employees or customers. One of the company's most important goals is to ensure that Tires Plus's business strategy promotes employee growth and loyalty, as well as fairness in economic and social terms. Rapid expansion will require Tires Plus to recruit, hire, and develop a fast-growing workforce in spite of the nation's tight labor market.

To help reach its goals, the company is investing in training. As one of Tires Plus's trainers notes, "The more information and education we can give people, the better equipped they'll be to advance within the company. And if they're moving up, hopefully they'll see opportunities to expand with us." In other words, the company's intensive training and policy of internal promotion motivate employees who want to advance in their careers. This supports Tires Plus's efforts to reduce employee turnover and improve customer relations.

About 1,700 Tires Plus employees spend about 60,000 hours a year in formal training programs offered by Tires Plus University at a cost of \$3 million. The company's training facility includes a 250-seat auditorium, replicas of store showrooms and service shops, a computer lab, a

media center, and four full-time trainers. New hires receive a week of product, sales, or mechanical training, depending on their positions. Employees spend hours in classrooms and in the simulated tire shops, learning how to create a service environment that encourages customers to return and recommend the company to their friends.

The Tires Plus training program also supports its policy of promoting from within. Tires Plus career tracks help employees develop into mechanics and store managers. This effort has helped the company recruit new employees, retain current employees, and fill leadership positions. Tires Plus also devotes time and money to giving employees opportunities to advance, which helps recruitment and retention. For example, a tire technician who wants to become a mechanic can take an 11-week course at Tires Plus University, learning the basics of the mechanic's job. After completing this formal training, the technician works with an on-the-job mentor until ready to work alone as a mechanic. The course is free, and the prospective mechanic gets paid a full salary while participating in training. Similarly, employees who show potential to be managers receive 80 hours of leadership training.

The company's investment in training shows up in its business performance. Store surveys show a 96 percent customer satisfaction rate. Employee turnover is 8 percent—high for businesses in general, but much lower than the 20 percent average for companies in the automotive service industry. And the company's impressive growth suggests that investing in training is a winning strategy.

SOURCE: K. Dobbs, "Tires Plus Takes the Training High Road," *Training*, April 2000, pp. 57–63.

**Questions**

1. How does training support Tires Plus's business objectives?
2. How might the company measure the effectiveness of its training?
3. How might Tires Plus apply e-learning to its training program and training objectives?

232 PART 2 Acquiring and Preparing Human Resources

## Notes

1. E. Barker, "High-Test Education," *Inc.*, July 2001, pp. 81–82.
2. I. L. Goldstein, E. P. Braverman, and H. Goldstein, "Needs Assessment," in *Developing Human Resources*, ed. K. N. Wexley (Washington, DC: Bureau of National Affairs, 1991), pp. 5-35–5-75.
3. D. Stamps, "Deep Blue Sea," *Training*, July 1999, pp. 39–43.
4. J. Z. Rouillier and I. L. Goldstein, "Determinants of the Climate for Transfer of Training" (presented at Society of Industrial/Organizational Psychology meetings, St. Louis, MO, 1991); J. S. Russell, J. R. Terborg, and M. L. Powers, "Organizational Performance and Organizational Level Training and Support," *Personnel Psychology* 38 (1985), pp. 849–63; H. Baumgartel, G. J. Sullivan, and L. E. Dunn, "How Organizational Climate and Personality Affect the Payoff from Advanced Management Training Sessions," *Kansas Business Review* 5 (1978), pp. 1–10.
5. R. A. Noe, "Trainees' Attributes and Attitudes: Neglected Influences on Training Effectiveness," *Academy of Management Review* 11 (1986), pp. 736–49; T. T. Baldwin, R. T. Magjuka, and B. T. Lohr, "The Perils of Participation: Effects of Choice on Trainee Motivation and Learning," *Personnel Psychology* 44 (1991), pp. 51–66; S. I. Tannenbaum, J. E. Mathieu, E. Salas, and J. A. Cannon-Bowers, "Meeting Trainees' Expectations: The Influence of Training Fulfillment on the Development of Commitment, Self-Efficacy, and Motivation," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 76 (1991), pp. 759–69.
6. L. H. Peters, E. J. O'Connor, and J. R. Eulberg, "Situational Constraints: Sources, Consequences, and Future Considerations," in *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management*, ed. K. M. Rowland and G. R. Ferris (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1985), vol. 3, pp. 79–114; E. J. O'Connor, L. H. Peters, A. Pooyan, J. Weekley, B. Frank, and B. Erenkranz, "Situational Constraints' Effects on Performance, Affective Reactions, and Turnover: A Field Replication and Extension," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 69 (1984), pp. 663–72; D. J. Cohen, "What Motivates Trainees?" *Training and Development Journal*, November 1990, pp. 91–93; Russell, Terborg, and Powers, "Organizational Performance."
7. J. B. Tracey, S. I. Trannenbaum, and M. J. Kavanaugh, "Applying Trade Skills on the Job: The Importance of the Work Environment," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 80 (1995), pp. 239–52; P. E. Tesluk, J. L. Farr, J. E. Mathieu, and R. J. Vance, "Generalization of Employee Involvement Training to the Job Setting: Individuals and Situational Effects," *Personnel Psychology* 48 (1995), pp. 607–32; J. K. Ford, M. A. Quinones, D. J. Sego, and J. S. Sorra, "Factors Affecting the Opportunity to Perform Trained Tasks on the Job," *Personnel Psychology* 45 (1992), pp. 511–27.
8. B. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Lake Publishing, 1984); B. J. Smith and B. L. Delahaye, *How to Be an Effective Trainer*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1987).
9. J. Bailey, "Community Colleges Can Help Small Firms with Job Training," *The Wall Street Journal Online*, <http://online.wsj.com>, February 19, 2002.
10. R. Zemke and J. Armstrong, "How Long Does It Take? (The Sequel)," *Training*, May 1997, pp. 69–79.
11. C. Lee, "Who Gets Trained in What?" *Training*, October 1991, pp. 47–59; W. Hannum, *The Application of Emerging Training Technology* (San Diego, CA: University Associates, 1990); B. Filipczak, "Make Room for Training," *Training*, October 1991, pp. 76–82; A. P. Carnevale, L. J. Gainer, and A. S. Meltzer, *Workplace Basics Training Manual* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990).
12. J. M. Rosow and R. Zager, *Training: The Competitive Edge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988).
13. T. Skylar, "When Training Collides with a 35-Ton Truck," *Training*, March 1996, pp. 32–38.
14. G. Yohe, "The Best of Both?" *Human Resource Executive*, March 6, 2002, pp. 35, 38–39.
15. D. Filipowski, "How Federal Express Makes Your Package Its Most Important," *Personnel Journal*, February 1992, pp. 40–46.
16. G. Stevens and E. Stevens, "The Truth about EPSS," *Training and Development* 50 (1996), pp. 59–61.
17. "In Your Face EPSSs," *Training*, April 1996, pp. 101–2.
18. R. W. Glover, *Apprenticeship Lessons from Abroad* (Columbus, OH: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1986).
19. Commerce Clearing House, *Orientation-Training* (Chicago: Personnel Practices Communications, Commerce Clearing House, 1981), pp. 501–905.
20. M. McCain, "Apprenticeship Lessons from Europe," *Training and Development*, November 1994, pp. 38–41.
21. Bailey, "Community College Can Help Small Firms with Job Training."
22. W. J. Rothwell and H. C. Kanzas, "Planned OJT Is Productive OJT," *Training and Development Journal*, October 1990, pp. 53–56.
23. B. Filipczak, "Who Owns Your OJT?" *Training*, December 1996, pp. 44–49.
24. A. F. Cheng, "Hands-on Learning at Motorola,"

CHAPTER 7 Training Employees 233

- Training and Development Journal*, October 1990, pp. 34–35.
25. N. Adams, "Lessons from the Virtual World," *Training*, June 1995, pp. 45–48.
26. Ibid.
27. A. Richter, "Board Games for Managers," *Training and Development Journal*, July 1990, pp. 95–97.
28. G. P. Latham and L. M. Saari, "Application of Social Learning Theory to Training Supervisors through Behavior Modeling," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 64 (1979), pp. 239–46.
29. C. Steinfeld, "Challenge Courses Can Build Strong Teams," *Training and Development*, April 1997, pp. 12–13.
30. P. F. Buller, J. R. Cragun, and G. M. McEvoy, "Getting the Most out of Outdoor Training," *Training and Development Journal*, March 1991, pp. 58–61.
31. C. Clements, R. J. Wagner, C. C. Roland, "The Ins and Outs of Experiential Training," *Training and Development*, February 1995, pp. 52–56.
32. P. Froiland, "Action Learning," *Training*, January 1994, pp. 27–34.
33. Ibid.
34. C. E. Schneier, "Training and Development Programs: What Learning Theory and Research Have to Offer," *Personnel Journal*, April 1974, pp. 288–93; M. Knowles, "Adult Learning," in *Training and Development Handbook*, 3rd ed., ed. R. L. Craig (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), pp. 168–79; R. Zemke and S. Zemke, "30 Things We Know for Sure about Adult Learning," *Training*, June 1981, pp. 45–52; B. J. Smith and B. L. Delahaye, *How to Be an Effective Trainer*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1987).
35. K. A. Smith-Jentsch, F. G. Jentsch, S. C. Payne, and E. Salas, "Can Pretraining Experiences Explain Individual Differences in Learning?" *Journal of Applied Psychology* 81 (1996), pp. 110–16.
36. W. McGehee and P. W. Thayer, *Training in Business and Industry* (New York: Wiley, 1961).
37. R. M. Gagne and K. L. Medsker, *The Condition of Learning* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt-Brace, 1996).
38. J. C. Naylor and G. D. Briggs, "The Effects of Task Complexity and Task Organization on the Relative Efficiency of Part and Whole Training Methods," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 65 (1963), pp. 217–24.
39. K. Mantyla, *Blended E-Learning* (Alexandria, VA: ASTD, 2001).
40. B. Gerber, "Does Your Training Make a Difference? Prove It!" *Training*, March 1995, pp. 27–34.
41. M. R. Louis, "Surprise and Sense Making: What Newcomers Experience in Entering Unfamiliar Organizational Settings," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 25 (1980), pp. 226–51.
42. Pillsbury engineering orientation program.
43. C. Joinson, "Hit the Floor Running, Start the Cart . . . and Other Neat Ways to Train New Employees," *HR Magazine* 6, no. 1 (Winter 2001), downloaded from the Society for Human Resource Management website, [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org).
44. S. M. Paskoff, "Ending the Workplace Diversity Wars," *Training*, August 1996, pp. 43–47; H. B. Karp and N. Sutton, "Where Diversity Training Goes Wrong," *Training*, July 1993, pp. 30–34.
45. Paskoff, "Ending the Workplace Diversity Wars."
46. A. Brown, "Cultural Immersion Part of Diversity Exercise," *Columbus Dispatch*, January 17, 2000, "Business Today" section, p. 3.
47. S. Rynes and B. Rosen, "A Field Study of Factors Affecting the Adoption and Perceived Success of Diversity Training," *Personnel Psychology* 48 (1995), pp. 247–70.
48. S. Rynes and B. Rosen, "What Makes Diversity Programs Work?" *HR Magazine*, October 1994, pp. 67–73; Rynes and Rosen, "A Field Survey of Factors Affecting the Adoption and Perceived Success of Diversity Training"; J. Gordon, "Different from What? Diversity as a Performance Issue," *Training*, May 1995, pp. 25–33.

## VIDEO CASE

### Developing a Diverse Workforce



Most jobs start with an interview, whether it's conducted in person, by phone, or even online. Interpersonal dynamics can affect those interviews, so a human resource manager who is looking to develop a diverse workforce to meet company needs must be able to ask the right questions of a candidate and listen to the answers in an objective, controlled manner. The ultimate goal is to evaluate the candidate fairly and accurately so that he or she fits well with job requirements. As you'll see in the video, two managers for the Beck 'n' Call company are interviewing two job applicants, and the way they conduct the interviews and evaluate the applicants will affect both the organization and the individuals—in the composition of the company's workforce and the way those employees later develop in their positions. Both racial and gender issues enter into play in this scenario.

The U.S. workforce is becoming increasingly diverse. Experts estimate that by the year 2006, the American workforce will be 72 percent Caucasian, 11 percent African American, 12 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent Asian and other ethnic or cultural groups. Companies that want to grow and remain competitive need to utilize the talents, experiences, and knowledge of workers from different backgrounds and cultures. If they do not, they may miss a golden opportunity to reach a larger customer base. The customer base for Beck 'n' Call is growing more and more diverse, with African American and Hispanic communities increasing in population in the area where Beck 'n' Call is

located. So, it makes sense to recruit, develop, and retain employees who can relate to this broadening customer base and meet their needs in specific ways.

Managers at all companies, whether product or service oriented, can reap the rewards of diversity for their organizations if they practice ethnorelativism—the idea that groups and subcultures are inherently equal. The first step toward this practice may be consciously recognizing their own tendencies toward ethnocentrism—the idea that their own cultures are superior. Once a person recognizes and acknowledges his or her own ethnocentric attitudes and stereotypical beliefs, he or she can open up to new ideas and begin to change. For instance, conducting a structured employment interview with questions that are standardized and focused on accomplishing defined goals will help promote ethnorelativism as opposed to ethnocentrism. In addition, the interview should contain questions that allow the job applicant to respond and demonstrate his or her competencies in ways that are job related, not personal. Hunches and gut feelings should play but a tiny part in such an interview, because once a job applicant becomes an employee, it's the concrete evidence of performance that counts, not whether the interviewer and employee went to the same college or like the same sports teams.

Once employees are hired, it is important to give them opportunities to develop their skills and to advance. This practice not only enhances the

employee–employer relationship but also boosts overall productivity of the company. Managers must be aware of the possibility of a glass ceiling in their organization, an invisible barrier that separates female employees or those of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds from top levels of the organization. One way to guard against such barriers to advancement is to examine workforce composition and statistics. Do certain groups of employees top out at middle management positions? Is there a cluster of women and minorities near the bottom of the employment ladder? Is upper management made up entirely of Caucasian males? If so, why? Do all employees receive equal training and opportunities for advancement, or do some receive preferential treatment, even if it isn't obvious? Some studies indicate that companies may also have “glass walls,” which are invisible barriers to important lateral moves within the company. These barriers are just as important as the glass ceilings, because a glass wall can prevent an employee from receiving training or experience in certain areas that would enable him or her to move up eventually. Studies confirm the existence of glass ceilings and glass walls; one showed recently that 97 percent of the top U.S. managers are Caucasian and 95 percent of them are male. Limiting career advancement for certain groups undermines morale at a company and reduces productivity and competitiveness. If employees believe that no matter how well they perform they will never advance, they will not try their hardest for the organization. Since a company's most

important asset is its employees, it makes sense to be sure they have the opportunities to perform at the highest level of creativity and productivity possible.

A firm like Beck 'n' Call can do plenty to develop its workforce to its fullest potential: If the company hires one of the candidates in the videotaped interview, it can assign a mentor to the new hire to help her learn the ropes and identify ways to further her career within the organization. It can also offer specific training and opportunities for general education. It can make sure that its approach to assessment is fair and accurate, and it can introduce benchmarking to help the employee mark her own progress. Down the road, it could consider ways to enlarge her job. Of course,

the company must review its organizational culture to be sure no glass ceiling or glass walls exist.

Thus, an interview is much more important than a casual conversation about a job. It is the first step toward shaping an organization's future workforce. If it is conducted well, both parties win.

SOURCES: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "BLS Releases New 1996–2006 Employment Projections," [www.bls.gov/new.release/ecopro.nws.htm](http://www.bls.gov/new.release/ecopro.nws.htm); Sharon Nelton, "Nurturing Diversity," *Nation's Business*, June 1995, pp. 25–27.

### Questions

1. Evaluate the interviewers in terms of their interviewing techniques and follow-up. Did either of the managers conduct their interviews with unfair or discriminating practices? Did they evaluate the best person for the job fairly and accurately? What could/should they have done differently?
2. Imagine that you were interviewing either of these candidates. How would you conduct your interview? Write four or five questions that you think should be asked to find the best applicant. Which candidate do you think you would hire, and why? (Be sure to think about long-term implications for both the employee and the organization.)
3. Think of your own experience in job interviews. Based on what you now know about interviewing, in what ways might you be able to improve your own techniques for participating in an interview as a job applicant?