Training Needs Analysis

Introduction

Effective training or development depends on knowing what is required - for the individual, the department and the organisation as a whole. With limited budgets and the need for cost-effective solutions, all organisations need to ensure that the resources invested in training are targeted at areas where training and development is needed and a positive return on the investment is guaranteed. Effective TNA is particularly vital in today's changing workplace as new technologies and flexible working practices are becoming widespread, leading to corresponding changes in the skills and abilities needed.

Analysing what the training needs are is a vital prerequisite for any effective training programme or event. Simply throwing training at individuals may miss priority needs, or even cover areas that are not essential. TNA enables organisations to channel resources into the areas where they will contribute the most to employee development, enhancing morale and organisational performance. TNA is a natural function of appraisal systems and is key requirement for the award of Investors in People.

The analysis of training needs is not a task for specialists alone. Managers today are often responsible for many forms of people management, including the training and development of their team, and should therefore have an understanding of training needs analysis and be able to implement it successfully.

Effective TNA involves systematic planning, analysis and coordination across the organisation, to ensure that organisational priorities are taken into account, that duplication of effort is avoided and economies of scale are achieved. All potential trainees should be included in the process, rather than rely on the subjective evaluation of managers. Ideally, managers should also receive training in the process of TNA itself, to clarify what they are trying to achieve and what their approach should be.