

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: EMERGING WAYS TOWARDS THE MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract Since the last decade, the shortage of highly skilled labour has put demand of smart manpower development practices on industry that should be based not only on perseverance of the existing human capital but also on value-addition in the industrial talent-pool. The recent recession hyped the critical conditions in such way that the existing training focus area, modes and methods concepts seemed insufficient in coping with the popped up challenges and at the same time employees are expected to move beyond their technical and functional skills. Therefore, the companies are in strive of well-equipped workforce exploring new facets of training to fit them out for dealing with the challenges. Employee development through mentoring and consultation is an enhanced role of higher management in the industry for providing guidance and emotional support to the employees. On-line training and other e-learning concepts are valued as cost saving tools. Hence, the emerging trends are reflecting in new concepts, modes and methods of training for minimizing the steepness of the learning curve targeting at employees' efficiency. Objective of the research paper is to present the recent changes and trends in the practices of manpower development and to point out the newly added aspects and methods of the same in the light of recession.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent slow down in economy has left greater impact on all possible fields of management. During the survival fight among the companies, HRM has earned greater value as a supporter and its role has been enhanced during the cost cutting phase in human capital. By redefining its way and framework of functioning, HRM has become well equipped with various new concepts and tools in a bid of keeping talent retained in the organisation.

The impact of recession can be traced in the concerns of the companies which are focusing on cost reduction and on efficiency improvement in learning and development of their employees and considering them as assets of the organization. For gaining competitive advantages during this transactional period, companies are revamping the whole management system of human resources and integrating it with the strategies of organisation.

The dynamic environment of acute competition, high expectation of performance and high pace of changing technologies has created demands on work-related training not only for information but also for maintaining the level of learning quest. One of the most difficult challenges an organisation faces with developing and retaining high potential talent is stringing together a range of meaningful experiences in a systematic way that will appropriately build character and skill while at the same time providing productive value to the business outcome. (Berger, Lance A. and Berger, Dorthy R. (Eds.) 2010) Under the various pressures, employees are

almost compelled to update themselves with high speed and high-powered skills and equipments for survival. The compulsion also creates stress and insecurity among them. Henceforth, worldwide companies had to rethink the way they develop their employees. The employees are required to understand the most effective ways of job performance and to be aware of the best practices of the most successful companies in the field.

When we look at the need and aspects of training, it is required in almost every field and at every stage of organisation life cycle. Keeping in mind, the dearth for skilled manpower, corporations are increasingly recognizing that learning and development is part of an integrated talent management process that includes recruiting, performance management, leadership development, and succession planning. Hence, they are investing significant resources in order to provide educational and developmental services to their employees. On one side, irrelevant training approaches are being discarded and on the other side, new approaches are being explored. In the UK for instance until a few decades ago apprenticeship was a widely used form of employee training, it has now been replaced by more formal courses. (Tayeb, Monir H. 2008) The emerged need for training can be identified in following terms:

- Due to the economic growth in many regions and in bid of meeting the greater demands, organisations are revamping the performance criteria for ensuring new skills and better understanding of the environment. Competencies are in the process of reconstruction and renovation.

- New job roles and organization structures have been emerged.
- In strategy plans training programmes are already being integrated at the planning level. The decision makers now recognize it well.
- Talent shortage, Skills mismatch and Knowledge-based economy have created demands prominently on hiring and training new personnel and training to the current employees for new roles.
- If we look at the employees' part, the trainings provide value addition in their performance and in their attractiveness of other employers, as per the reward policy they get hike in pay also. Thus in case of increased competition for good jobs, training increases their weightage.

Thus, this time training is considered essential for maintaining the skill flexibility and for developing multitasking competencies. If we look at the organisation managerial interest, training is important due to the way in which it has potential for facilitating: Organisational change, functional flexibility, attitudinal change and statutory compliance (Banfield, Paul and Kay, Rebecca. 2009). If we have a glance over the impact of recession the problems would be traced out such as during the turbulent time companies were taking training as a 'should be' component not as 'must be' one. The approach led towards the cost cutting in the training budget but during this time HR professionals expanded its facets within the constraints. Concentration was on relevancy and maximum output with minimum budget. In the new role training programme includes training, reference information, and performance support. High leverage training concept is introduced where training is linked with strategy of organization and an instructional design process is being focused. The following practices point out the expansion and new insights in the learning process in industry:

- A significant shift in **the role of a trainer** is visible during the recession to become faster and more responsive to the needs of the learners than ever before. Trainers need to stretch their imaginations, develop and amplify ideas and insights. The trainer's role has been expected to undergo profound change and expansion. In this context the recent trend is reported in the Training Magazine's 2007 *Industry Report* that the companies are outsourcing the content development and instructors for quickly meeting learning gaps because they don't have the expertise, bandwidth, or desire to do it themselves.
- In case of induction training, employees learn rule and regulations to get acquainted with the new environment. The added facet of the induction is **socialization** that befits the process of adjustment of employee in the company. Socialization is broader in its application, as

in Indian society many rites and rituals are performed on the birth of child till his first day at school in order to safeguard of some unwanted influence and for his holistic development, similarly a new employee is now treated by the organization so that he can understand the policies and working patterns of the organization. Socialization is an ongoing process that sometimes lasts for a year. It represents a sense-making process that helps new hires in adapting, forming work relationships and finding their place in the organization. Facilitating the employees through systematized training provides a sense of identification with the organization.

- **Mentoring** has been seen as a method that could retain the trust of employee in the organization and could create a sense of commitment in such turbulent time. Mentoring is experienced as a best way for transformation of learning to others by veteran and seasoned employees. It provides a unique combination of on-the-job training mode and personal touch with the employee-mentee. The key elements of mentoring have been identified in CIPD(2004) as:
 - Entailing broader-ranging, long term conversations
 - Dictated more by mentee's needs for future career development than specific issues in the present job
 - Mentor using their industry/sector experience to guide mentees' professional developments.

In a survey conducted by Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, ninety-nine per cent agreed that 'coaching can deliver tangible benefits both to individuals and organisations.' Ninety-three per cent agreed that 'coaching and mentoring are key mechanisms for transferring learning from training courses back to the workplace.' Some companies like GE are providing opportunities to share their experiences with their peers of similar racial and ethnic backgrounds. (Berger, Lance A. and Berger, Dorthy R. (Eds.) 2010)

- By **relying on technology** instead of human beings, companies are increasing their productivity and trying to be more competitive. Technology is constantly changing, henceforth job responsibilities are constantly being changed and require many workers to update their skills on a regular basis. In 2006, e-learning continued its evolution into a mainstream approach to corporate training. Almost every organization has applied some form of e-learning. Martyn Solman in his book on e-learning considers it as the arrival of new platform for delivery of training. (Banfield, Paul and Kay, Rebecca. 2009)
- Since the down turn phase, the new technologies based training methods are getting popularity and companies are conducting experiments due to its utility in terms of cost, flexibility and effectiveness. Technology-based instruction includes computer-based training

(CBT), multimedia CBT, televised distance learning, video training, and use of the Internet. The term e-learning also includes virtual classrooms, Web-based courses, “Webinars,” and digital collaboration. MsDonald’s developed about 11 different courses for its franchisees’ employees, and put the programmes on DVDs. The programmes consist of graphics-supported lessons, and require trainees to make choices to show their understanding.(Dessler, Gary and Varkkey, Biju. 2009). As e-learning technology continues to grow and develop, more corporations are also finding that it is a cost-effective and efficient way to provide training to their employees. For instance, IBM has realized several measurable benefits through its e-learning programmes. It saved US\$ 166 million and achieved an ROI of 2284% from its basic Blue e-learning programme. It has emerged as the company with the largest number of employees enrolled into e-learning courses in 2002 (Tapomoy, Deb. 2010). The companies are developing specific **technology-based training programs** for

large corporations. Furthermore, by making training programs interesting and fun to work with, companies are providing interesting and interactive content. They are adding simulations and other high-fidelity activities and exercises to learning programs.

- **On-line training** is another mode that is being developed by the companies due to the advantages of easy reach to more trainees across the globe, reduced travel costs, tests and materials available online and integrated audio conferencing (via computer and telephone). Delta Airlines customer service personnel adopted the mode because of least movement and man hours requirement. (Dessler, Gary and Varkkey, Biju. 2009)

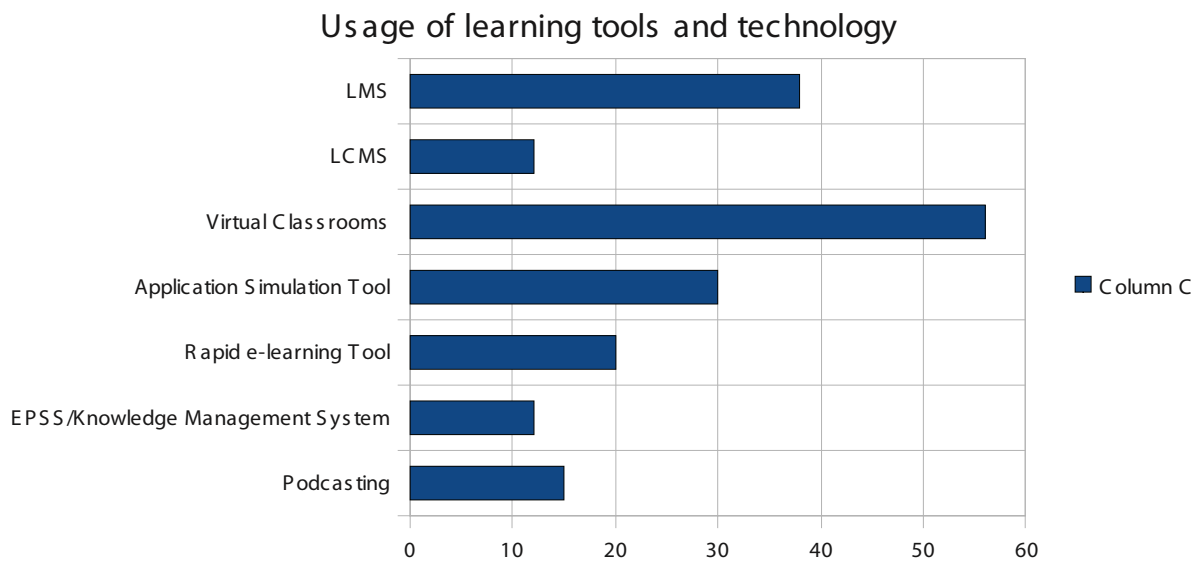


Figure: 1.1

Source: Training Magazine’s 2007 Industry Report

According to the Training Magazine’s 2007 Industry Report (Fig. 1.1), virtual classroom was the most used learning tool and technology. It is mentioned that nearly 40 per cent of organizations are using a learning management system (LMS); more than half are using a virtual class- room tool; and between 20 and 30 percent are using application simulation and rapid e-learning tools. Among large companies, these numbers nearly double.

- Keeping in view the quickly changing markets; companies are developing adaptivity among its workforce. In the wake of the dynamism, companies are promoting **multi-skill training**. Whereas earlier employees were imparted training only in one job, in this model, employees are trained in a wide range of skills with an ability to perform multiple tasks. If an employee’s job becomes obsolete or if there is an

overwhelming need somewhere in the corporation, the employee can easily transfer to another position and immediately begin to work productively. (Sandy, Dutkowsky)

- In the context of getting high profit and for avoiding severe financial consequences, the concept of **cross cultural training** has become need of the day; and during the recession the concept was one of the popular terms in learning and development. A survey by Kelly Services reported that with employable candidates becoming scarce, skill shortage is making the global markets more accessible. The growing international market and ample growth prospects inclining companies to prepare their employees to be fit for global assignments and enable the assignees to adjust to unfamiliar cultures and ways of doing things. The training provides the expatriates formal methods for more effective interpersonal relations and quality performance. In this context, companies having abroad assignments, have begun to spend good amount on training with different approaches; like General Motors still spends nearly \$500,000 a year on cross cutting for about 150 Americans and their families headed abroad. Some companies are imparting training for skills in dealing with a wide range of people with different values, like Motorola has instituted a center for cultural training at its headquarters with the goal of making its managers “trans-culturally competent”. (Gomez-Mejia, Luis R., Balkin, David B. and Cardy Robert L.2003)
- The increased stress level and cut throat competition dragging down the employees’ efficiency. The high demand pressures on human assets are adversely affecting top and bottom-line growth, unnecessarily driving down productivity. This is now having been accepted part of company’s responsibility to help their employees in coping with the accelerated on and off-the-job stresses and expectations. Keeping this in mind some companies are giving **training on lifestyle** also. The training is all about encouraging, and inspiring a healthy change in lifestyle through manageable training. As in Wipro more than 110 highly qualified trainers are imparting training on 10 state-of-the-art learning facilities. For Six years in a row, Wipro has been conferred the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) BEST award for its learning and development practices.
- Companies are realising effectiveness and efficiency of team performance, therefore **team development training** is getting wide attention among companies. In search of innovative way to develop team spirit and enhance the cooperative attitude among the workforce,

the companies like IBM, General Electric and DuPont periodically take hundreds of employees out of the office and into the woods in hope of building teamwork, increasing communication skills, and boosting self-esteem (Gomez-Mejia, Luis R., Balkin, David B. and Cardy Robert L.2003).

2. CONCLUSION

This is quite obvious that recession had a prolonged impact on the component that is part of the strategy for learning and personal development. Training is still considered as the most powerful lever that managers can use to hone its manpower. Now it has been more consistent with the business objectives of the organization and it has proved its value by enhancing and exploring new avenues in terms of modes and methods. The focus is on low budget and tangible output during the learning process and employees are required to gain, apply and share the knowledge through training programmes. Companies are trying and applying various combinations as per their need, out of the traditional concepts of paper-based workshop, class or just on job. In the context of methods and modes, technology based training has attracted major attention and these experiments are contributing to the employee development that has a positive impact on the attitude, morale, productivity, and customer-service levels of all the employees.

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