

Training has been reported as the single best way to cure and prevent possible injury causing accidents. Yet with all the hype and focus that the subject of training has received, many are still not convinced.

With the idea of training being so popular, many programs have been created and many claims are made. So many programs have been created that it makes it difficult for the supervisor who is required to provide training for his employees, to make the right decision. Supervisors must wade through language created by the marketing group that is designed to persuade.

Don't get caught spending your money and time on training that you simply don't need, or training that won't deliver the desired results. Before you decide which training to provide your employees, evaluate what needs exist.

Training Needs

Each group of employees may need different types of training. A person in the accounts payable department generally does not need training related to confined space access and safety, though some might argue this. Consider the duties of the group that you want trained before choosing the program.

Mechanics are more accurately called service technicians today because their duties require more than just turning wrenches. They require training that builds on their acquired skills. Technicians are required to provide safe products to customers in a timely manner. When their skills are less than that necessary to perform their required duties, safety and timeliness can suffer. These are some reasons that make training necessary.

Training in this instance should build upon a technician's skills to improve their safety during the process of service, safety of the finished product and the timeliness of their completion. In order to see this as a result of training, the program selected must first have these goals as part of its stated mission. The program must be staffed with trainers that know, understand and are able to communicate these goals effectively.

Before selecting a program evaluate several things:

1. What are the needs of the employees that will be asked to attend?
2. Does the program being evaluated have a stated mission that is consistent with the identified needs of the employees?
3. Does the training program have effective trainers to accomplish its stated goals?
4. Does the training program have a proven track record? Get references.

The simplest way to treat the topic of training is to think of it like hiring a new employee. When you interview a potential employee you require a job application where certain claims are made. After the application is made, the interview is conducted to gather and confirm information provided. Many follow the interview up with the process of checking out the references. If all goes well and the claims prove to be accurate, you hire a valuable employee.

Selecting the right training is just like hiring the right employee. Training tends to reinforce and build on skills, make sure it builds those that you desire. Just like an employee, training will be with your company for a while.

Lost Production or Investment?

The choice you make in the selection of a training program determines the answer to the above question. Even without making a selection about a training program, some have already answered this question. Here are some of the answers:

Lost Production

- Employees in training are not doing the work I hired them for.
- I can't afford to pay someone in my company who is not doing any work.
- My employee has been doing this for twenty years - they could teach.

Investment

- Employees in training are doing the work you hired them for; they are learning more about your products and services.
- Effective training builds their skills and knowledge that gives you, increased confidence in those products and services you offer to your customers.
- Employees are like tools and need periodic sharpening.
- When employees take vacation they come back to work rested with an improved morale.
- Employees that can teach, do! They are given more responsibilities like the overseeing of others.
- Employees with years of experience and knowledge are some of your best business partners. Building them and their skills will build your business.

Did You Know?

- Employers cannot afford NOT to offer periodic training. Lack of training in certain areas has been linked to increased absences from work due to injury and illness.
- Many trades and work tasks require mandatory training either by union rules or OSHA regulation.
- Employee morale can have a tremendous financial impact.

Tips and Tricks

- Keep a log of service calls to help determine what type of training you require.
- Interview your employees directly after they have attended training for their valuable insights.
- If your employee has recently returned from training that has a stated goal of increased production, check to see if production has increased within six months after the training.

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