UNIT 4

Developing a Training Needs Analysis

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:
✓ Understand the value of creating a training needs analysis ✓ Apply the ICE method to assess the situation and build your training needs analysis ✓ Create a simple yet thorough training needs analysis for your organization or client

A Closer Look at the Training Needs Analysis

What Is It?

Defining Training Needs Analysis

A training needs analysis is a process to identify where skill gaps exist in your organization. Sometimes it gets called a training needs assessment or a skills gap assessment, or something similar. For example, let's say that your customer service department is keeping customers waiting far too long, so you install a new software program to help them do their job better. However, instead of answering 100 calls an hour, their volume drops to 75 calls an hour. Customer complaints are also up by one third.

A training needs analysis can give you the tools to identify why a skill gap exists and help you identify ways to bridge it. When that analysis specifically reviews training, then it looks at how training can help address the gap. In this case, it seems like the new system was installed but no training was provided, so people are struggling to navigate the new software program and look after customers at the same time.

No matter what process you use, your training needs analysis will be developed with up-to-date knowledge of the organization's goals and priorities, as well as knowledge about the needs, skills, and circumstances that the training will address.

Therefore, before you start designing your training program, you need to consider how the program will fit into the organization's overall plan, how it can grow with the company, what role it will play in the organization, and what support it may receive.

Fitting Into the Plan and Future Growth

A training program and its supporting curriculum should be used as planning tools that help employees meet and exceed defined performance standards. As a planning tool, the program must remain flexible to meet the needs of the organization as it changes over time.

The Program's Role

Typically, courses offered as a part of a defined program are required or recommended for certain roles or functions within the organization. More recently, many companies also offer courses that are not directly related to a specific function, but that support the overall needs of the organization. For example, courses might be supported if they will help employees lead a healthier lifestyle (such as exercise, fitness, or achieving balance) or improve employee satisfaction through development courses related to image (such as appropriate business attire or business lunching tips).

Support From Within

Traditionally, training has taken the form of workshops or classroom learning inside the workplace. However, career counseling and tuition reimbursement plans (where you choose the course you would like, make your case to your employer, and they reimburse you upon successful completion of the course) may also be supported. Make sure you choose the method of training that is right for your program. If the training you plan to offer is needed only by a few employees and the program is offered by a local college, it may be best to consider something like tuition reimbursement rather than developing the program yourself.

Developing the Business Case

A business case is needed when you need to weigh out the benefits of training versus another approach to skill development. Your formal business case will be created in the form of a training needs analysis.

There are several essential elements related to creating a thorough needs analysis, which will lead to the development of a successful training program.

First, the training program needs to benefit the organization and employees in order to:

- Develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will enhance an employee's ability to perform the functions of their job
- Demonstrate an organization's commitment to employee development
- Receive support from management and executives
- Encourage advance planning by managers for budgeting and scheduling
- Provide employees in similar roles with the same language and skills to meet their objectives
- Have meaningful information that employees and their managers can refer to during performance and evaluation meetings
- Reflect the current business plan
- Have a mechanism for managers to provide feedback and suggestions for ongoing development needs of their staff

An organizational training program should provide the following learning opportunities:

- Enable individuals to learn about their current role and responsibilities
- Improve their effectiveness on the job
- Prepare for promotion or leadership opportunities

The curriculum may be divided into broad training categories in areas such as:

- Leadership (supervisory skills, coaching, performance feedback)
- Personal effectiveness (time management, goal achievement)
- Customer service (for internal and external customers)
- Equipment and technology

- Industry-specific courses

A training program often provides courses that are mandatory, recommended for certain roles, or optional. Mandatory courses are tied directly to performance standards, quality guidelines, and in some cases legal requirements (for example, having the required number of staff trained in first aid). The best way for you to determine what training is needed and why is by conducting a training needs analysis.

Process Overview – The ICE Method

The Purpose of the Training Needs Analysis

A **training needs analysis** will help you identify:

- The objectives of the organization
- Gaps between what employees currently know and what they need to learn
- Training that is required
- Training that would be nice to have
- When training may not be needed
- When training is not the right approach
- The benefits and negative aspects of providing training
- The type of training that is appropriate
- The best approaches to deliver effective training
- A method for collecting feedback and evaluating the program

When is Training Not Appropriate?

When there are problems within an organization, the first answer may be to offer training to staff. When staff are bickering and fighting, we may want to offer training in anger management or conflict resolution. When a new process or tool is introduced, we offer skills training.

Whether the training focus is knowledge, skills, or attitude (collectively known as KSA's), training may be the best approach. However, there are other factors that can lead to sub-optimal performance on the job.

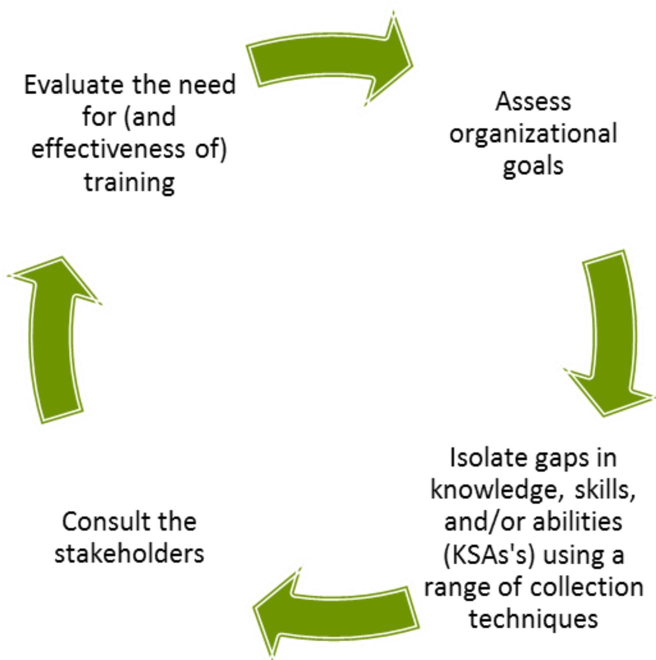
When these issues are present, training is not going to resolve the problem.

- Unclear feedback or unclear performance expectations. If people do not understand what they are required to do, how will they meet the objectives?
- Lack of resources (tools, materials, equipment) needed to do the job.
- A poor match between the employee's skills and the job requirements.
- Factors stemming from illness or injury, such as pain, depression, symptoms of stress, or decreased ability to cope.

Three Steps

When you are ready to undertake the training needs analysis, using the term ICE will ensure that you include all of the necessary steps.

- **Isolate** the problem.
- **Consult** with appropriate stakeholders to assess the effect the problem is having on the organization.
- **Evaluate** options and set up an action plan that meets organizational needs and assembles the support that you need.



Isolating

Isolating the problem effectively will help you to determine whether there is one main issue, or whether several smaller issues are having a significant impact. Several techniques are available in this process, and each has its own benefits and shortcomings. Sometimes a mixed approach is best if time and resources are available, in order for you to get the most comprehensive answer.

Techniques may include observation of people as they work; questionnaires; consultation and interviews; testing; reviewing work samples; and researching documentation included in employee evaluations, policy manuals, audits, program reports, and so on.

You are looking for **surface problems**, such as an obvious need for skill development, where employees need to learn new skills in order to perform their tasks effectively. You also have to be able to identify **underlying problems**. These underlying issues can be more difficult to define, but they are an important part of a thorough analysis.

An additional benefit of isolating the problem is that it can help you to obtain **background material** that you can draw on for training. Using real, concrete examples in your case studies and training examples makes the training much more meaningful for participants. In addition, trainees who do not enjoy training, or find it difficult to learn from artificial scenarios, are more successfully engaged in training that uses real examples.

Consulting

Sometimes employees would like training, but that training does not support the needs of the organization. You will find it very difficult to gain approval and resources for training that does not fulfill the strategic plans of the organization.

At the same time, if the company is not aware of gaps in an employee's knowledge, then part of your role can include reporting where the problems are and resolving them by designing an appropriate training plan. If you can identify the problem areas, relate them to the organizational strategic plan, and demonstrate the value of training to the organization (their return on investment, or ROI), then you are much more likely to receive support for the training initiative.

For example, an employee with excellent technical skills who gets promoted to a supervisory role needs to understand the dynamics of leadership, motivation, and performance management. Training can help solidly establish the person in their new role, which can often be challenging when a team is making a transition from having a co-worker become their new boss. Training will also help the new supervisor gain confidence and understanding of their leadership role. These key skills will help the new manager work more effectively, meaning the company gets more for their money.

Evaluating

Next, you will thoroughly examine the results of your interviews and investigation to **determine what training is required**. At this stage, you may discover that training is not the best option for some issues. This can be the case where, for example, staff are not meeting their goals because of performance issues, unclear expectations about their roles and priorities, or interference caused by medical issues.

Depending on the needs identified, you will also determine the best **methods of training** to use and include that in your training needs analysis. Adults learn in different ways, and using a variety of training methods keeps learners engaged and interested.

On-the-job training, mentoring, workshops, seminars, conferences, peer training groups, cross-functional experiences, teleconferencing, and webinars are just some of the ways to enhance traditional classroom experiences. In addition, varying the time allocated or location can also enhance training.

Summary

As you undertake your training needs analysis, it's entirely possible that you will find some complex issues. A typical analysis works best with straightforward, quantitative issues. Don't be surprised if you find that multiple analyses may need to be done if the issue is multi-faceted.

Be sure to include members of your human resources and management team as you move ahead. This will help you to feel out the amount of support they are willing or able to provide training initiatives, and also helps lessen any surprises for them if your results are a bit hard for them to accept. This might occur, for example, when training is not identified as the necessary remedy, but giving employees clear expectations about their job role is.

Collecting Data

Step One: Identify the Future State

Recording the Data

There are a wide variety of templates and tools available to help you track the information gathered during the training analysis process. The tool that you choose will depend on the complexity of your analysis.

Here is a simple template that we will work through in the following sessions.

Future State	Current State	Gap	Action Plan

The First Step

The first step in your analysis process is to identify your future state. What do you want the results to look like when the skills gap has been bridged and training is complete? An easy place to find the ideal future state is to look for competency statements in a job description or job analysis conducted by your HR department. A good future state summary is objective, realistic, and quantitative, just like a competency statement.

Case Studies

Sample future state/competency statements for someone working in a contact center, for example, could include a general competency statement that is further broken into individual competencies. Let's look at some examples.

Competency Group: Contribute to an environment that focuses on customer value.
Competencies required:

- Manage knowledge of the customer and the market
- Create value with every sales opportunity
- Communicate the value to customers
- Create and manage a customer retention plan
- Measure the value of the transaction

Competency Group: Maintain up-to-date product and technical knowledge.
Competencies required:

- Take learning and professional development opportunities to keep up to date
- Acquire up-to-date technical skills and demonstrate proficiency every four to six months
- Be a lifelong learner
- Conduct product and marketplace research to stay current

Competency Group: Strong communication skills.
Competencies required:

- Able to speak clearly
- Capable problem solver
- Complete training on communication for difficult situations

Defining the Future State

You may also choose to use industry benchmarks, best practices, or standardized guidelines to help set your future state. For example, if you are performing a training needs analysis on your organization's project management processes (a helpful tool when your workforce is being grouped into project teams but has never done any project management training), you might use a project management framework as your target.

In either case, here are some questions that can be used to narrow down the characteristics of the desired future state.

- What would the ideal outcome of this training be?
- What metrics and results will help us measure the success of this future state?
- How will activities, processes, and employee tasks look in this state?
- What will business results look like in this state?

Sample Project: Improve Response Times to Customer Inquiries

Future State	Current State	Gap	Action Plan
Customer e-mail inquiries will be replied to within 24 hours on average			
Customer telephone inquiries will be answered within 5 minutes on average			

Identify the Current State

Gathering Data

Next, identify how things currently look. This involves gathering data from as many sources as possible, such as statistics, reports, interviews with stakeholders, surveys, etc. Focus on quantitative measures that are equivalent to the desired future state. For example, if your future state focuses on response time to customer inquiries via e-mail, the data that you gather for the current state should focus on that as well.

Here are some questions that you can use to identify the current state.

- What is happening that makes us want to improve this situation?
- What metrics can we gather about this situation?
- What steps take place in this process?

You will need to access several data sets, including performance data (who does what, when they do it, and how much they do). These numbers are often captured in annual or periodic performance reviews, and may be called key performance indicators (KPI's). You may also be able to gather team statistics and electronic reporting (such as phone call volume and duration, clicks on a keyboard, number of steps taken to complete a task, etc.).

Sample Project: Improve Response Times to Customer Inquiries

Future State	Current State	Gap	Action Plan
Customer e-mail inquiries will be replied to within 24 hours on average	Average response time is 32 hours		

Customer telephone inquiries will be answered within 5 minutes on average	Average hold time is 8 minutes		

Note

These first two steps can be reversed depending upon the situation at hand. For example, if you have been tasked with something vague like "improving customer service" and you are not familiar with that department, you may need to first identify where things currently stand before looking at the future state.

Steps Three, Four, and Five

Step Three: Measure the Gap

Now that you have two points of comparison, it should be easy to measure the gap. This will help you prioritize action items and focus on high-value items.

Sample Project: Improve Response Times to Customer Inquiries

Future State	Current State	Gap	Action Plan
Customer e-mail inquiries will be replied to within 24 hours on average	Average response time is 32 hours	8 hours	
Customer telephone inquiries will be answered within 5 minutes on average	Average hold time is 8 minutes	3 minutes	

Once you have identified the gap, you can perform additional interviews and analysis to identify causes of the gap. You can use the five whys technique, SWOT analysis, and other problem-solving tools to help you in your investigation. (See Session Four for more information.)

Continuing with our customer service example, you might gather the following information.

- Review e-mail response statistics, which show that e-mail inquiries are responded to within 15 hours on the weekdays and within 40 hours on the weekend.
- Review e-mail response team staffing levels: 15 members on weekdays, 5 members on the weekend.

- Review telephone response statistics, which show that the average hold time skyrockets to about 12 minutes during the lunch and shift changeover periods. The average hold time outside of these periods is about 4 minutes.

Step Four: Create an Action Plan

It is now time to create an action plan to bridge the gap. Ensure that you have a clear idea of what resources are available so that your action plan is realistic. A multi-phased action plan may be appropriate depending on your project.

Sample Project: Improve Response Times to Customer Inquiries

Future State	Current State	Gap	Action Plan
Customer e-mail inquiries will be replied to within 24 hours on average	Average response time is 32 hours	8 hours	Create e-mail templates about the most frequent inquiries Conduct training on using and customizing these templates Conduct problem-solving training
Customer telephone inquiries will be answered within 5 minutes on average	Average hold time is 8 minutes	3 minutes	Create electronic templates to replace paper templates Conduct training on the new templates Provide customer service reps with more clearly defined authorization and spending levels Stagger lunch and shift changeover times

Step Five: Implement and Follow Up

The final stage of the process is to implement the action plan. After the gap-reducing measures are in place, gather data and evaluate the new metrics. It may also be appropriate to repeat the training needs analysis to ensure that the gap has been successfully bridged.

Making Connections

Case Study

Congratulations on your promotion! You are now the VP of Learning at AbleConnect, a fast-growing call center operation that provides both inbound (customers calling with questions) and outbound (call center agents placing calls to individuals and business) services.

AbleConnect was founded five years ago from the head office in Toronto, Canada, which is where your office is located. The company is poised to do some work on their internal strengths and infrastructure so that they can support future growth, including allowing for some offshore operations.

Technology consulting firm CCMetrics has just released a definitive list of ten best training practices for outbound and inbound contact center businesses:

1. Talent management plan in place to cover growth and training needs for the next 12 months.
2. Individually-based knowledge, skills, and attitude development plans created and reviewed annually.
3. Team-based knowledge, skills, and attitude development plans created and reviewed annually.
4. Classroom training on systems, processes, and procedures should be an integral part of training.
5. Listening and observation of live calls should be part of the first week of training.
6. First week of being on the phones includes guided live calls with a team leader or trainer (also called on-the-job training).
7. Communication skills training is completed in the first week of employment. This should include active listening, asking questions, and dealing with difficult calls.
8. Contact center agents understand that call monitoring (recording actual calls) is done for training purposes (e.g. to identify training gaps), to ensure call quality, and to facilitate exceptional customer service.
9. Contact center agents who receive a performance score of 80 percent and higher on skills exams receive an incremental pay increase.
10. Contact center agents who consistently score above the standard for call quality (80 or 90 percent, depending on the complexity of calls they take) receive bonuses including pay increases, time off, or rewards of their choosing.

AbleConnect is presently performing the following activities:

- Talent management plan in place
- Team-based knowledge, skills, and attitude development plans are created annually
- Classroom training is provided to all new agents
- First week of being on the phones includes guided live calls
- Communication skills training is offered every six months on a voluntary basis
- Expectations for behavior and limits to authority are communicated in training
- Incremental pay increases are issued annually, at the discretion of the manager

Note: If an item is not listed above, that means AbleConnect does not have that element in place.

Task

Use the template below to perform a gap analysis in order to bring AbleConnect in line with the best practices outlined by CCMetrics.

Future State	Current State	Gap	Action Plan

Session Four: Diving Deeper Into the Data So

Many Questions

Setting the Stage

Is there such a thing as too much data when it comes to developing a training needs analysis? The answer is – it depends! It depends on who has requested the analysis and how much data they want to sift through before making training decisions; it also depends on who is paying for the analysis and how far they want you to go.

That being said, you must always collect and review data prior to making training recommendations so that you know that you are looking for training in the right areas. None of your stakeholders wants employees to say that their training was a waste of time, missed what was important, or an unnecessary repeat of something they did before. Also, even though the data you collect prior to training may seem like a lot of work, it's a very important step when you analyze that same training to make sure it was exactly what was needed, and that it was retained by the participants.

In Session Three we discussed collecting data in a way that reflects the current state of things and considers the future (desired) outcomes. To do this, you need to design a data collection plan. Your plan should incorporate two key steps: designing the data collection process and gathering the required information.

Data Collection Design

Think strategically as you decide who you need as part of the process. You will need to include your client (naturally), because the more involved they are, the more likely they are to stay committed to the outcome. The only downside to a high level of participation is that it can also invite a lot more advice than you need/want, and it can raise expectations about what you can deliver. However, some of this advice can create opportunities for you to do even more effective data gathering.

While you work with your client, decide how the data gathering will be achieved. Determine criteria for participants, and stay aware of any issues with candidate selection. If you aren't getting a valid cross-section of the organization, the results will be invalid. You'll need a selection that reflects the number of men and women and the diversity of the organization. If you aren't getting balanced input, you'll have to request a broader sampling of participants.

Gathering Information

When you conduct a training needs analysis, you can use any or all of the five primary data collection methods:

- Interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Document and statistical analysis
- Observation

To get the information you need, you might be able to select a "vertical slice" of the organization (top management, middle managers, and front line workers), or a representative sampling (full-time, part-time, and casual employees). Or, you might interview everyone. You might also use a blended kind of approach, which might involve interviews for top management, focus groups for middle management, and questionnaires for front line workers.

As you consider your questions and your approach to data collection, make sure you use words that your participants will be familiar with, and stay away from your own training-related jargon. You'll build better rapport and have a higher level of credibility with everyone.

Training Needs Analysis Questions

Here are some sample questions that can be adapted for frontline workers, middle management, and executive team members.

- What are the key goals and targets for your group in the next six to twelve months?
- What are the challenges/barriers that you face in meeting these goals?
- Describe the type of person who can contribute the most in meeting these goals.
- Think of your own knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA's). Do you have what you need to meet these goals?
- What are your weaknesses for meeting these goals?
- What additional KSA's would help you to be successful?
- When someone new starts working in your area, what information and training would be most helpful to them?
- Beyond training, what else could be done to help you and your fellow team members to be successful?
- Identify training needs that will assist employees in developing KSA's to perform better and meet goals more effectively.
- Is there anything you would like to add about your own personal training needs, or that you think would be important for us to consider?

Note that as you progress higher up the organization, the time frames get longer: frontline staff can usually consider the next six to twelve months based on what they know about their job. Middle management looks 12-24 months ahead, and the executive team looks up to five years ahead through strategic planning.

Designing Valid Questions

If you know your client and their organization well, there's a reasonable chance that you will inadvertently "help" participants with their answers. In order to get the best information possible, create questions that are objective. Avoid asking questions that are hard to understand or answer. While you are interviewing, don't finish people's sentences for them, or use body language or verbal language that is sympathetic. You want to take in their answers, and not have them tainted by your own insights. You can add your perceptions to your report afterward.

Adding Value to the Process

If you do your data collection well, and use a variety of sources, you can provide a very accurate picture of the current state. You will also likely uncover important, crucial issues for the client that they had not expressed or recognized. This is just some of the value that you can add through the training needs analysis.

In some circumstances, you can also add more value to the process by reporting back critical information as you uncover it, such as misperceptions, miscommunication, and other issues. For example, one health care provider was performing a review to make sure that their staff completed their annual mandatory training. During the process, they found out that one entire team of employees was accidentally excluded from a notification about voluntary training that was also available. They only found out about this course that they missed after the rest of the company attended and reported what a great experience it had been. Being missed was devastating to the team, who spoke about it openly in their first focus group. They thought they were being punished by not receiving the invitation, and therefore felt uncomfortable about reporting it to their own director. The analyst reported the information to the client almost immediately, and of course the problem was fixed.

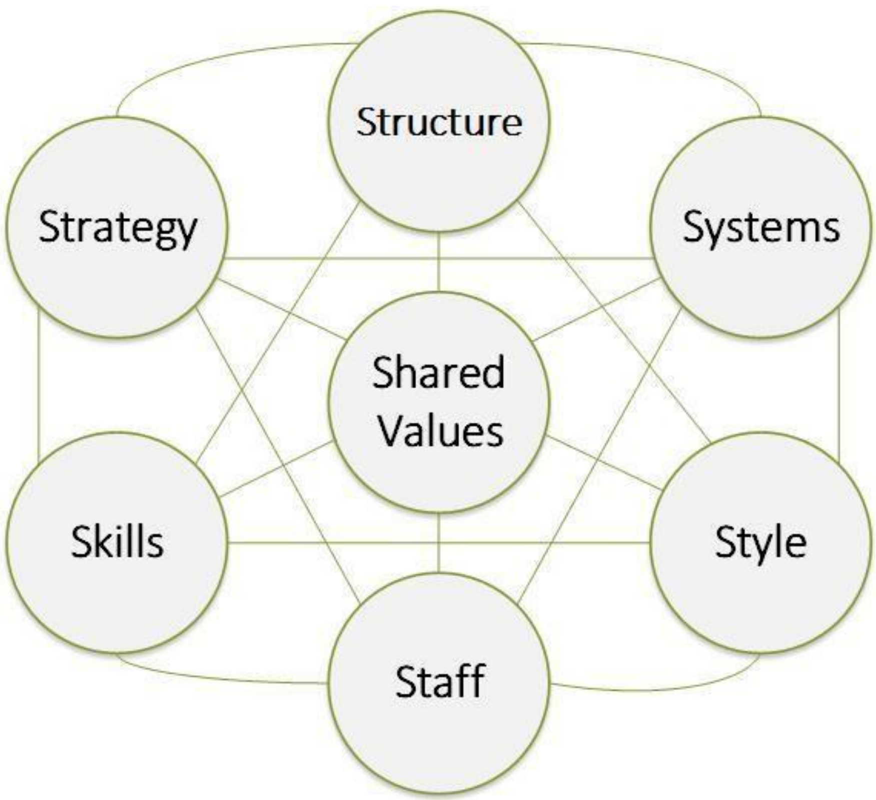
The McKinsey 7S Model About

the Framework

There are many moving parts in an organization that must align in order for it to be successful. Many of these parts need to be examined and addressed in your training needs analysis to ensure that a long-term solution can be put in place.

The McKinsey 7S model can help us identify all of these elements and make sure that we have addressed all possible issues. It presents seven elements of an organization as interdependent entities, where one change affects all systems.

The 7S Framework



About the Elements

Let’s break down each of the elements in the diagram.

Shared Values
A shared set of values and focused goals are at the heart of any successful organization. These are typically laid out in the mission statement and brought to life through the strategic plan.

Strategy
This element outlines how all other elements will bring the shared values to life. This includes overall business strategy as well as the strategy of specific teams and departments.

Structure
This encompasses how the organization is laid out, including reporting hierarchy.

Systems
This refers to the processes and procedures used by the organization’s members to get work done and achieve the goals laid out in the strategy to fulfill the shared values.

Style
What is the general attitude and feel of the organization, in particular its leadership style and work ethic?

Staff
Of course, the specific people working for the organization are a key part of its success.

Skills
Last but not least, the skills of the staff are also an important part of organizational alignment. In most positions, people need a particular set of core skills in order to be successful. Training is an essential component of this structural element.

SWOT Analysis

What is SWOT Analysis?

SWOT stands for:

- The strengths of the target of the analysis
- The weaknesses of the target of the analysis
- The external opportunities that could strengthen the target of the analysis
- The threats facing the target of the analysis that could weaken it

A SWOT analysis is often organized using this type of matrix:

	INTERNAL	*EXTERNAL*
POSITIVE	**Strengths**	**Opportunities**
NEGATIVE	**Weaknesses**	**Threats**

SWOT analysis is a valuable tool that you can use during a training needs analysis to map out the current state as well as the possible future state.

Sample SWOT

You are the training director for a small accounting firm. You are about to develop the company's training roadmap for the next year in order to align with the local regulatory body. To begin, you use SWOT analysis.

	INTERNAL	*EXTERNAL*
POSITIVE	**Strengths** • Existing training materials cover a wide range of topics • Team has two full-time trainers with accounting background	**Opportunities** • May be able to leverage new eLearning system purchased by the IT department • Possible partnership with local community college to update training materials
NEGATIVE	**Weaknesses** • Training materials need to be updated to reflect new regulations • One of our trainers may retire next year	**Threats** • New regulatory standards are coming into place at the end of next year • Possible company budget cuts may reduce training staff

From here, we can easily identify the future state that has top priority (bringing training materials into line with the new standards) and develop an action plan. Related items (such as budget and resources) can be addressed as part of the implementation phase.

Five Whys

The Five Whys Technique

Another helpful technique that can be used during analysis is the five whys. This technique is simple: keep asking "why" to get to the root cause of a problem or gap. (Five is a good number of "why" questions to ask, but you may need more or fewer questions than this.) Each answer should be factual and precise to ensure that you get to the true cause.

Example

Here is a simple example of the five whys technique.

Why were you late for work today?
I was late for work because my car ran out of gas.

Why did your car run out of gas?
My car ran out of gas because I didn't put gas in it.

Why didn't you put gas in your car?
I didn't put gas in my car because I didn't have any money.

Why didn't you have any money?
I don't have any money because I spent it all on the weekend.

Creating the Report

After the training needs analysis has been completed, you may be asked to present your findings in a report. Although the contents and length of this report will vary depending on the complexity of the analysis, there are some essential elements that should be included.

Executive Summary

Although this will be the first part of your report, it should be written last. This section will summarize the current and future state, gaps, and the action plan. It should be no longer than one page. You may also want to include the overarching goal of the training analysis project.

Reason for Analysis

If the goal for the training analysis is complex or requires background information, you can present that data in this section. If the reasons are simple, this information can be included in the executive summary.

Description of Future State

In this section, describe the desired future state. Remember, good future state summaries are objective, realistic, and quantitative. Competency statements, industry benchmarks, best practices, and/or standardized guidelines can help you craft these statements.

Description of Current State

Next, describe the current state. Back up statistics and data with sources and let the reader know where to find this information. (If your source list is lengthy, use footnotes and add a bibliography to your report.)

Description of Gaps

Now you can compare the current state to the future state. Make sure that you are comparing similar metrics with similar samples when drawing conclusions. State each gap in neutral terms that do not imply a solution or make an assumption. Use facts and data rather than opinions.

For example, rather than saying, “Customers wait on hold longer when employees are at lunch,” state, “On average, customer hold times are eight minutes longer between noon and 1 p.m.”

Recommendations and Action Plan

If appropriate, include your recommendations and action plan for bridging the gap. This is also the place to identify possible risks and barriers (although if this list is lengthy it can be included as a separate section.) Be clear about what is realistic and what additional resources will be required. You may want to list your recommended actions in priority order.

This is also where you can suggest follow-up measures and metrics to track that will evaluate how successful the company has been in bridging the skills gap.

Conclusion

Wrap up the report with a conclusion that sums up the gaps, recommended actions, and next steps. Include the date you are going to follow up with the reader, so they know you are an action taker, and they are encouraged to do the same.

Extra Elements

As with any other business report, a title page and table of contents at the beginning of the report will make it more attractive to readers. You may also want to include a bibliography, glossary, and/or index at the back of the report.

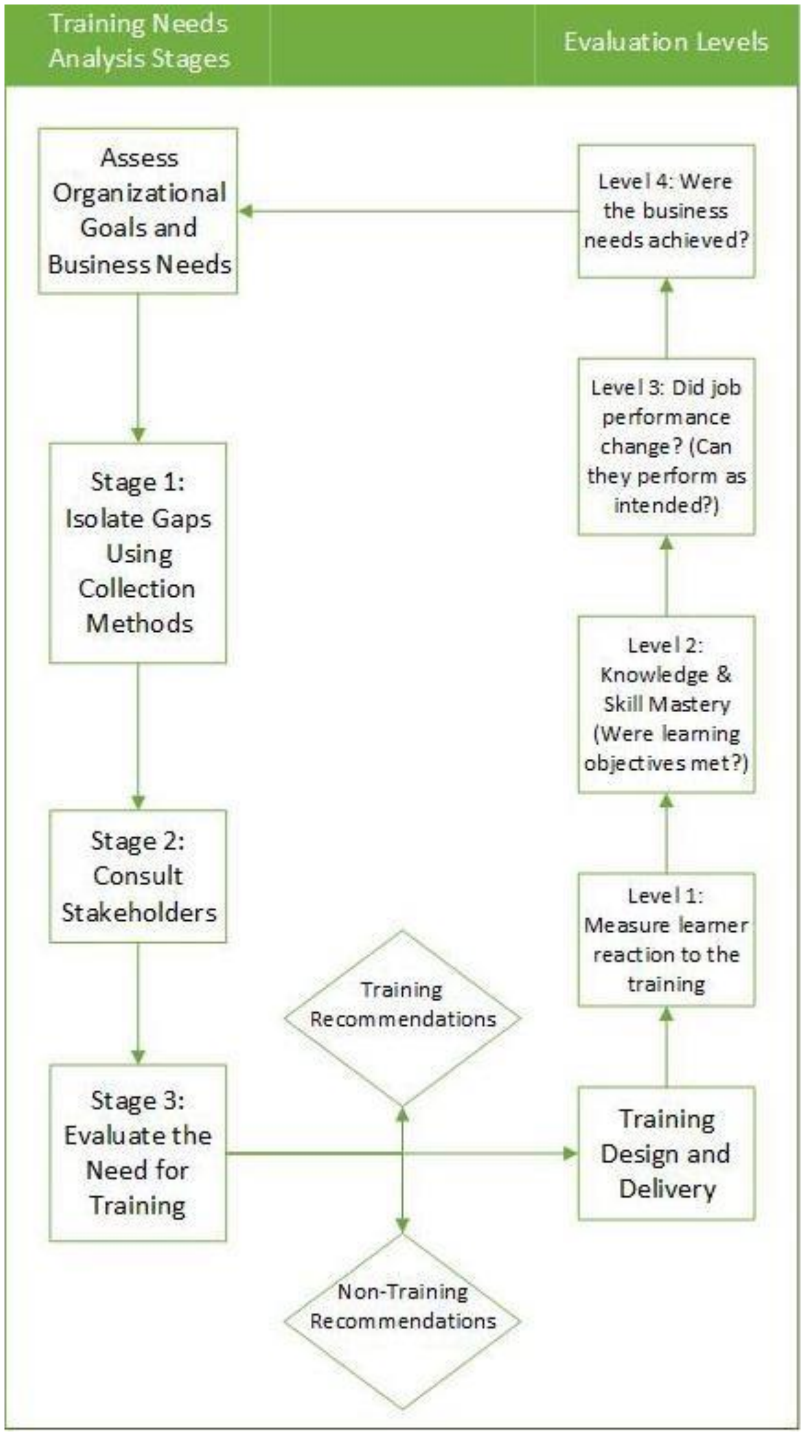
Designing Evaluations

Why Evaluation is Important

Performing evaluations at the end of training is quite standard, and usually takes place to ensure that the concepts and new behaviors taught in training have been fully adopted in the workplace. Your evaluation of the training needs analysis process is similar. It gives you an opportunity to determine whether the organization has accepted your recommendations, why they made the decisions they did, and whether the business needs were achieved as a result of those decisions.

Evaluation Levels

Many trainers use Donald Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation to assess the results of training. These levels correspond to the stages of training needs analysis that we discussed earlier. Be sure to design an evaluation strategy that takes in all of these elements.



Personal Action Plan

I am already doing these things well:

I want to improve these areas:

I have these resources to help me:

As a result of what I have learned in this workshop, I am going to…	My target date is…	I will know I have succeeded when…	I will follow up with myself on…

Recommended Reading List

Biech, Elaine. *ASTD's Ultimate Train the Trainer.* ASTD Press, 2009.
Charney, Cy, and Kathy Conway. *The Trainer's Tool Kit.* AMACOM, 2005.
Gupta, Kavita, Darlene Russ-Eft, and Catherine M. Sleezer. *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment (3rd Edition).* Wiley/ASTD, 2013.
Leigh, David. *The Group Trainer's Handbook (Third Edition).* Kogan Page, 2006.
Sparhawk, Sally. *Strategic Needs Analysis: Instructional Systems Development.* ASTD, 2002.
Tobey, Deborah. *Needs Assessment Basics.* ASTD, 2006.
Vaughn, Robert H. *The Professional Trainer: A Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Delivering, and Evaluating Training Programs.* Berrett-Koehler, 2005.
West, Edie. *The Big Book of Icebreakers: 50 Quick, Fun Activities for Energizing Meetings and Workshops.* McGraw-Hill, 1999.