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Chapter 1
Introduction to Employee Training & Development

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This introductory chapter discusses why training is important to help companies successfully compete in today's business environment. The chapter provides an overview of training practices, the training profession, forces impacting training, and how to design effective training. The chapter begins with a discussion of how a variety of companies use training to improve their competitive advantage. The chapter proceeds to define a number of terms relating to training, followed by an overview of the basic Instructional System Design (ISD) model, the foundation for effective training. Next, forces influencing working and learning are presented, concluding with an overview of current training practices.

Objectives

1. Discuss the forces influencing the workplace and learning and explain how training can help companies deal with these forces.
2. Draw a figure or diagram and explain how training, development, informal learning, and knowledge management contribute to business success.
3. Discuss various aspects of the training design process.
4. Describe the amount and types of training occurring in U.S. companies.
5. Discuss the key roles for training professionals.
6. Identify appropriate resources (e.g., journals and websites) for learning about training research and practice.

Introduction

Companies are experiencing great change due to new technologies, rapid development of new knowledge, globalization, and e-commerce. To help with such change, companies need to devote significant resources to attract, retain, and motivate their workforces. Human resource management (HRM) refers to the policies, practices, and systems that influence employee behavior, attitudes, and performance. Training is one of the key components of the HRM function. The overarching theme of this text is that training, development, and related learning activities are central to organizations being successful in the marketplace.

Training and Development: Key Components of Learning

It is important to understand what training means in the broader business context. The overall goal of training is learning. Learning refers to employees acquiring knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, or behaviors. When employees learn, it leads to the development of human capital. Human capital refers to knowledge, advanced skills, system understanding and creativity, and motivation to deliver high-quality products and services. Human capital may be more important than other types of capital in helping a

company achieve competitive advantage. Below are a number of key terms related to training, development, and learning.

1. Training refers to a planned effort by a company to facilitate learning of job-related competencies, knowledge, skills, and behaviors. The goal of training is for employees to master the knowledge, skills, and behaviors and then apply them on the job.

2. Development refers to training, formal education, job experiences, relationships, and assessments of personality, skills, and abilities that help employees prepare for future jobs or positions.

3. Formal training and development refers to training and development programs, courses, and events that are developed and organized by the company.

4. Informal learning refers to learning that is learner initiated, involves action and doing, is motivated by an intent to develop, and does not occur in a formal learning setting. Informal learning may be particularly important because it leads to the development of tacit knowledge.

5. Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that is well documented, easily articulated, and easily transferred from person-to-person. Examples of explicit knowledge include processes, checklists, flowcharts, formulas, and definitions.

6. Tacit knowledge refers to personal knowledge based on individual experiences that is difficult to codify.

7. Knowledge management refers to the process of enhancing company performance by designing and implementing tools, processes, systems, structures, and cultures to improve the creation, sharing, and use of knowledge.

Designing Effective Training

Training must be systematically designed to help ensure maximum impact. The training design process should follow the principles of Instructional System Design (ISD), a step-by-step process for designing and developing training programs. Following a systematic approach helps ensure that training targets the most important learning needs, adopts the most appropriate methods, and has a meaningful on-the-job impact.

The ISD process involves seven interrelated steps:
1. Conduct a needs assessment—determine who and what needs to be trained
2. Ensure employee readiness for training—ensure employees are prepared and motivated to attend training
3. Create a learning environment—create an environment that has the features for learning to occur
4. Ensure transfer of training—ensure support is in place to facilitate the transfer of trained skills
5. Develop an evaluation plan—determine how the effectiveness of training will be assessed
6. Design and conduct training —select training methods and deliver training
7. Monitor and evaluate—assess the effectiveness of training

The training design process sometimes is referred to as the *ADDIE* model because it includes analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation.

Regardless of the specific ISD approach used, all share the following assumptions:
- o Training design is effective only if it helps employees reach instructional goals and objectives.
- o Measurable learning objectives should be identified before training program begins.
- o Evaluation plays an important part in planning and choosing a training method, monitoring the training program, and suggesting changes to the training design process.

Overcoming Flaws of the ISD Model

Some training professionals argue that the ISD model is flawed for several reasons. First, in organizations, the training design process rarely follows the neat, orderly, step-by-step approach of activities. Second, in trying to standardize their own ISD method used in the training function, some organizations require trainers to provide detailed documents of each activity found in the model. Third, the ISD implies an end point: evaluation. Fourth, many companies claim to use an instructional design approach but dilute its application. The ISD model certainly has value. Yet, the training design process should flexible enough to adapt to changing business needs.

To overcome the limitations of the ISD model, companies are starting to use agile learning design. Agile learning or agile instructional design refers to any approach to training development that focuses on speed, flexibility, collaboration, repeated review, and reuse of existing content, if appropriate. Course development occurs in what are known as "short bursts" or "sprints." There are likely several of these sprints involved for each part of a course. Each "sprint" includes planning, designing, developing, testing, deploying, reviewing, and launching. The process starts again for each element of the course and ends when the entire course is complete.

The Forces Influencing Working and Learning

Economic Cycles
Irrespective of the current economic cycle, training has been shown to positively contribute to an organization's performance. The global pandemic caused by COVID-19 caused the creation of a "new normal." The "new normal" meant businesses had to quickly adapt their business models, supply chains, and ways to engage consumers or risk going out of business. Many companies retooled to provide products and services needed during the pandemic. closing daycares and forcing school aged children to attend classes online from home. The U.S. government, workers themselves, and companies all took actions to lessen the impact of the pandemic and prepare for post-pandemic employment. The government passed several pieces of legislation designed to aid workers and businesses.

Globalization
Many companies are involved in international markets by exporting their products overseas, building manufacturing facilities or service centers in other countries, entering into alliances with foreign companies, and engaging in e-commerce.

Global trade and investment have slowed due to the pandemic, an increase in nationalistic policies around the world such as "Buy American" or "Made in India," concerns about national security threats from purchasing and selling technology, and countries' dependence on others for essential products and resources. Globalization is not going to disappear. But the rate of globalization in the future is likely to depend on how soon the world can resolve the pandemic and the types of trade policies and practices enacted by countries around the world.

The pandemic, costs, and changes in countries' employment policies have caused companies to reconsider whether sending employees to work in other countries on a long-term basis is worthwhile.

Globalization also means that employees working in the United States will come from other countries.

There is an ongoing debate in the U.S. government about the role of both legal and illegal immigration in terrorism and the reduction of job opportunities for U.S. citizens.

American companies will likely continue to struggling to fill jobs despite the recent expiration of restrictions on work visas that occurred due to pandemic and Trump administration policies. Despite the high unemployment rate because of the pandemic, potential workers are not attracted to the low paying and seasonal jobs typically held by immigrants.

Globalization also means that U.S. companies have to carefully consider the costs and benefits of moving jobs overseas or using foreign suppliers. *Offshoring* refers to the exporting of jobs from developed countries, such as the United States, to countries where labor and other costs are lower.

Increased Value Placed on Intangible Assets and Human Capital
Intangible assets such as human capital contribute to a company's competitive advantage because they are difficult to duplicate and imitate. Intangible assets are equally as valuable as financial and physical assets, but they are not something that can be touched and they are nonmonetary.

There are four types of intangible assets:
1. Human capital refers to the sum of the attributes, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, energy, and enthusiasm that the company's employees invest in their work.
2. Intellectual capital refers to the codified knowledge that exists in a company
3. Social capital refers to relationships in the company
4. Customer capital refers to the value of relationships with persons or other organizations outside the company for accomplishing the goals of the company (e.g., relationships with suppliers, customers, vendors, and government agencies)

Training and development have a direct influence on human and social capital because they affect education, work-related know-how and competence, and work relationships. Training and development can have an indirect influence on customer and social capital by helping employees better serve customers and providing them with the knowledge needed to create patents and intellectual property.

The value of intangible assets and human capital has three important implications, including a focus on knowledge workers, employee engagement, and an increased emphasis on adapting to change and continuous learning.

- o Knowledge workers are employees who contribute not through manual labor but through what they know, perhaps about customers or a specialized body of knowledge.
- o Employee engagement refers to the degree to which employees are fully involved in their work and committed to their job and the company.
- o A learning organization embraces a culture of lifelong learning, enabling all employees to continually acquire and share knowledge.

Focus on Links to Business Strategy
Given the important role that intangible assets and human capital play in a company's competitiveness, managers are beginning to see a more important role for training and development as a means to support a company's business strategy—that is, its plans for meeting broad goals such as profitability, market share, and quality. Managers expect training and development professionals to design and develop learning activities that will help the company successfully implement its strategy and reach business goals.

Changing Demographics and Diversity of the Workforce
Companies face several challenges as a result of changing demographics and the diversity of the workplace. In particular, the workforce will be older and more culturally diverse. Not only must organizations provide a fair workplace, they must provide training to enhance diversity and help accommodate the needs of different groups.

Between 2019 and 2029, the U.S. labor force will continue to grow more ethnically and racially diverse due to immigration, increased participation of minorities in the workforce, and higher minority fertility rates.

The aging population means that companies are likely to employ a growing share of older workers—many of them in their second or third careers. Older people want to work, and many say they plan a working retirement.

The popular press suggests that five generations are represented in the workforce; each one may have unique and similar characteristics to the others. Consider some of the attributes that have been suggested. For example, Gen Z are supposedly more attached to mobile phones and tablets for learning and connecting with others than are millennials. Baby boomers, the "Me" generation, are characterized as being competitive, hard-working, and concerned with the fair treatment of all employees. It is important to note that research does not support the existence of generational differences. That is, generational differences are more fiction than fact. It is important to understand the needs, experiences. and preferences of learners but that should be based on an audience analysis, rather than assumptions about generational differences.

The death of George Floyd, #MeToo, the Black Lives Matter movement, verbal and physical attacks against Asian-Americans, the multigenerational workforce, and the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in U.S. companies.
- o *Diversity* can be considered any dimension that differentiates one person from another.
- o *Equity* refers to fair treatment, access, equality of opportunity, and advancement for all employees, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.
- o *Inclusion* refers to creating an environment in which employees share a sense of belonging, mutual respect, and a commitment to others so they can perform their best work.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion can help companies gain a competitive advantage. Training and development may be instrumental in this regard. Important outcomes expected from diversity practices include improved public image of the company, improved financial bottom line, decreased complaints and litigation, and retention and recruitment of a diverse workforce.

Talent Management

Talent management refers to the systematic, planned, and strategic effort by a company to use bundles of HRM practices, including acquiring and assessing employees, learning and development, performance management, and compensation to attract, retain, develop, and motivate highly skilled employees.

Talent management is becoming increasingly more important because of changes in demand for certain occupations and jobs, skill requirements, the retirement of Baby Boomers, and the need to develop managerial talent and skills of the next generation of company leaders.

The results of surveys suggest that opportunities for career growth, learning, and development, and the performance of exciting and challenging work are some of the most important factors in determining commitment to employers, especially among Millennials.

The pandemic has highlighted the war for talent as companies involved in producing vaccines have thousands of job openings but were competing for a limited number of workers who have pharmaceutical manufacturing or bio-tech degrees or willing to work overnight shifts on production lines.

A number of talent management challenges are confronting organizations today:

- o *Changes in demand for occupations and jobs.* Approximately 46.5 million job openings are expected, with more than three-fourths resulting from the need to replace workers who retire or leave an occupation. Most new jobs added between 2019 and 2029 will be in service-providing occupations, particularly health care and social assistance. The occupations with the most new jobs projected between 2019 and 2029 include home health and personal care aids, software developers and software quality assurance analysts and testers, fast-food and counter workers, registered nurses, and restaurant cooks.

- o *Skills requirements.* Several studies illustrate how jobs are changing, the influence this is having on skill requirements, and the difficulty companies are having finding qualified workers. Skills shortages are occurring in manufacturing and service jobs and are expected to continue into the future. Skill shortages are also occurring in three service industries that together employ almost one-third of all U.S. workers: retail; health and social assistance; and leisure and hospitality.

- o *Developing leadership.* Companies report that the most important talent management challenges they face are identifying employees with managerial talent and training and developing them for managerial positions. This is attributed to the aging of the workforce, globalization, and the need for managers to contribute to employee engagement. Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations will experience the greatest turnover due to death or retirement.

Customer Service and Quality Emphasis
Due to increased availability of knowledge and competition, consumers are very knowledgeable and expect excellent service. This presents a challenge for employees who interact with customers. To compete in today's economy, companies and employees need to be better skilled than ever.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a companywide effort to continuously improve the ways people, machines, and systems accomplish work. The following are key principles of TQM:
- Methods and processes are designed to meet the needs of internal and external customers
- Every employee in the company receives training in quality
- Quality is built into a product or service so that errors are prevented from occurring rather than being detected and corrected
- The company promotes cooperation with vendors, suppliers, and customers to improve quality and hold down costs
- Managers measure progress with feedback based on data

The emphasis on quality is seen in the establishment of the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award* and the *ISO 9000:2000* quality standards. To become eligible for the Baldrige, which is awarded annually, a company must complete a detailed application that consists of basic information about the firm and an in-depth presentation of how it addresses specific criteria related to quality improvement. The Baldrige Award winners usually excel with training and development.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) develops standards related to management and a wide variety of other areas. The ISO 9000 is a family of standards related to quality (ISO 9000, ISO 9001, ISO 9004, and ISO 19011). The ISO 9000 quality standards address what a company needs to do to meet regulatory requirements and the customer's quality requirements while striving to improve customer satisfaction and continuous improvement.

Many companies are also using Six Sigma for monitoring and improving quality. The Six Sigma process refers to a process of measuring, analyzing, improving, and then controlling processes once they have been brought within the narrow Six Sigma quality standards. Training is an important component of the Six Sigma process.

Training can help companies meet the quality challenge by teaching employees a concept known as "lean thinking." *Lean thinking* is a way to do more with less effort, equipment, space, and time, but still provide customers with what they need and want. Part of lean thinking includes training workers in new skills or teaching them how to apply old skills in new ways so they can quickly take over new responsibilities or use new skills to help fill customer orders.

New Technology
Advances in sophisticated technology along with reduced costs for the technology are changing the delivery of training, making training more realistic, and giving employees the opportunity to choose where and when they will work. New technologies allow training to occur at any time and any place.

The most important implication of technology for training is that it has facilitated the development of digital learning. *Digital learning* refers to learning that can occur daily in the work setting using devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. It can help employees solve problems and communicate and collaborate with peers. Digital learning can be enabled by the company when it provides access to

specific learning activities such as courses, videos, or discussion boards. But digital learning can also occur spontaneously when employees search the Internet, search for videos on YouTube, or interact with others on social media.

Companies are embracing digital learning because it allows them to create a workplace where employees can engage in continuous learning focused on upskilling and reskilling. *Upskilling* refers to employees improving or expanding their current skills. *Reskilling* refers to employees acquiring new knowledge or skills. This training helps employees engage in upskilling and reskilling, both of which are important for their growth and employability.

Digital learning solutions can include the use of artificial intelligence and wearables. Artificial intelligence is a technology that simulates human thinking. It works through queries that allow it to learn from data over time so that it can identify trends and patterns that influence future searches and suggestions. Wearables are increasingly being used for training and performance support solutions. Wearable Intelligence provides smart eyewear technology and camera technology to give employees hands-free, voice-activated access to procedures and checklists and live access to experts using tablet computers. These technologies allow data and live video sharing, the opportunity to review best-practice videos before or during the performance of complex procedures and operations, and real-time notifications and alerts.

Flexibility in where and when work is performed.
Technology can enhance flexibility in where and when work is performed. Many companies are recognizing the benefits that can be gained by both the company and employees through providing flexible work schedules, allowing work at-home arrangements, protecting employees' free time, and more productively using employees' work time. The benefits include the ability to have an advantage in attracting and retaining talented employees, reduced stress resulting in healthier employees, and a rested workforce that can maximize the use of their skills. Employees in managerial, business, and financial, operations and professional occupations are most likely to do some or all of their work at home. It appears that many workers would prefer to continue working remotely after the pandemic is over.

Increased Use of Nontraditional Employment.
More companies are moving away the traditional employment model based on full-time workers to increasingly rely on nontraditional employment. Nontraditional employment includes the use of independent contractors, freelancers, on-call workers, temporary workers, and contract company workers.

What does nontraditional employment look like? Often, a website or mobile app is used to assign work, and the worker sets his or her own schedule. Because these workers do not work for a company, they do not have taxes withheld from their earnings, they do not have to receive minimum wage or overtime pay, and they are not eligible for worker's compensation and unemployment insurance.

Some companies that rely primarily on nontraditional employment to meet service and product demands are competing in the *gig* economy. Examples of companies that rely on the gig economy include transportation services Uber and Lyft and food-delivery services such as Caviar.

A key training issue that nontraditional employment presents is providing training is specific, on demand, delivered in small chunks, and specifically focused on their job.

High-Performance Models of Work Systems

One of the most popular methods for increasing employee responsibility and control is work teams. Work teams involve employees with various skills who interact to assemble a product or provide a service. Work teams may assume many of the activities reserved for managers, such as hiring new employees and coordinating work activities.

Cross-training refers to training employees in a wide range of skills so they can fill any of the roles needed to be performed on the team.

Virtual teams are teams with members that are separated by time, geographic distance, culture, and/or organizational boundaries that rely almost exclusively on technology to interact and complete their projects. The success of virtual teams requires a clear mission, good communications skills, trust between members that they will meet deadlines and complete assignments, and an understanding of cultural differences (if the teams have global members).

Snapshot of Training Practices

Training Facts and Figures
- o After rising from 83 billion in 2019, total training expenditures slightly declined to $82.5 billion in 2020.
- o Average training expenditures per employee have gradually risen over the last several years.
- o The average number of learning hours per employee in 2020 increased over the previous three years.
- o There is an increased demand for specialized learning that includes manager, professional, and industry-specific content.
- o The use of technology-based learning delivery has increased from 43 percent in 2017 to 56 percent in 2020.
- o Self-paced online learning is the most frequently used type of technology-based learning.
- o Traditional, instructor-led classroom training continues to be the most popular method. However, its use continues to decline (54 percent in 2017 versus 40 percent in 2020).

The survey used for the 2020 Training Industry Report included several questions about the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on training practices. The results show that not all companies stopped training. Sixteen percent of companies put 75 percent or more of their training on hold while 20 percent temporarily stopped slightly more than 25 to 50 percent of their training. Fourteen percent of companies did not temporarily stop any training. The biggest challenges that companies reported during the pandemic included having the technology to deliver remote training, lacking resources, converting training content to a digital format, and getting employees engaged in remote learning.

Training Investment Leaders

Higher investment in training by companies in the United States is related to use of innovative training practices and high-performance work practices such as teams, employee stock ownership plans, incentive compensation systems, individual development plans, and employee involvement in business decisions. Such spending has been shown to be related to improved profitability, customer and employee satisfaction, and the ability to retain employees.

The Association for Talent Development (ATD) BEST Award winners are companies that aligned training with business strategy, valued learning in their company culture, offered a variety of learning activities for all employees, measured the effectiveness of training, and provided non-training solutions, as needed. Specifically, the BEST companies are characterized as:

- o Alignment of business strategy with training and development
- o Learning is valued as part of the culture and supported by executive leaders and top managers
- o Effectiveness and efficiency of learning is measured
- o Investment in training and development
- o Different learning opportunities are provided and all employees have access to them
- o Measurement of effectiveness and efficiency of training and development activities
- o Non-training solutions for performance improvement used, including organization development and process improvement

Roles, Competencies and Positions of Training Professionals

Trainees can typically hold many jobs, such as instructional designer, technical training, or needs analysis. The ATD competency model describes what it takes for an individual to be successful in the training and development field.

- o Learning strategist: determines how workplace learning can be used to help meet the company's business strategy
- o Business partner: uses business and industry knowledge to create training that improves performance
- o Project manager: plans, obtains, and monitors the delivery of learning and performance solutions to support the business
- o Professional specialist: designs, develops, delivers, and evaluates learning and performance systems

Although training professionals spend most of their time designing learning, delivering training, managing learning programs, identifying, selecting, and using learning technologies, and coaching, they do spend time in other areas as well. Namely, training professionals engage in performance improvement, talent management, and knowledge management.

Who Provides Training?

In most companies, training is provided by trainers, managers, in-house consultants, and employee experts. Training may also be outsourced. Outsourcing means that training activities are provided by individuals outside the company.

Who Is in Charge of Training?

Training and development can be the responsibility of professionals in human resources, human resource development, or organizational development. Companies may also have entire functions or departments (e.g., human resources, human resource development, talent management or development, or organizational development) that provide training and development. In small companies, training is the responsibility of the founder and all the employees.

Human resource development refers to the integrated use of training and development, organizational development, and career development to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness.

Preparing to Work in Training

Being a successful training professional requires staying up-to-date on current research and training practices. The primary professional organizations for persons interested in training and development include:

- o Association for Talent Development (ATD)
- o Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD)
- o Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- o Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)
- o Academy of Management (AOM)
- o International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI)

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the forces affecting the work place and learning. How can training help companies deal with these forces?

   A number of forces are impacting the workplace and learning, including: economic cycles, globalization, customer service and quality emphasis, talent management, new technology, increased value placed on human capital, focus on business strategy, changing demographics and diversity, and high-performance work systems.

   Training can improve professional conduct, improve job performance by teaching new techniques and skills, and increase a company's productivity and customer satisfaction.

2. Discuss the relationship between formal training and development, informal learning, and knowledge management. How are they related to learning and creating a learning organization?

   Formal training and development refers to training and development programs, courses, and events that are developed and organized by the company. Typically, employees are required to attend or complete these programs, which can include face-to-face training programs (such as instructor-led courses) as well as online programs.

   Informal learning is also important for facilitating the development of human capital. Informal learning refers to learning that is learner initiated, involves action and doing, is motivated by an intent to develop, and does not occur in a formal learning setting. Informal learning occurs without a trainer or instructor, and its breadth, depth, and timing is controlled by the employee.

   Knowledge management refers to the process of enhancing company performance by designing and implementing tools, processes, systems, structures, and cultures to improve the creation, sharing, and use of knowledge. Knowledge management contributes to informal learning and human capital development.

3. What steps are included in the training design model? What step do you think is the most important? Why?

   Step 1 is to conduct a needs assessment, which is necessary to identify if training is needed.

Step 2 is to ensure that employees have the motivational and basic skills necessary to master the training content.

Step 3 is to create a learning environment that has features necessary for learning to occur.

Step 4 is to ensure that there is the necessary support in the work environment for trainees to apply training content to their jobs.

Step 5 is to develop an evaluation plan. Developing an evaluation plan is important to determine if training worked, how it can be improved, and how training affects the "bottom line."

Step 6 is to choose the training method based on the learning objectives and learning environment and to deliver training.

Step 7 is to evaluate the program and make changes in it or revisit any of the earlier steps in the process.

All of the steps in the model are important. Students' answers regarding which step is most important will vary based on their individual perspectives.

4. What are intangible assets? How do they relate to training and development?

    Intangible assets consist of human capital, customer capital, social capital, and intellectual capital. Intangible assets have been shown to be responsible for a company's competitive advantage. Training can help a company's competitiveness by directly increasing the company's value through contributing to intangible assets. Intangible assets are equally as valuable as financial and physical assets, but they are not something that can be easily imitated or duplicated.

5. How are companies using training and development to benefit them in today's economy?

    A wide variety of examples were presented in the chapter discussing how training and development has helped organizations succeed in today's economy. Companies are using training and development to help them combat a host of challenges associated with the global pandemic, develop new products and services, retain employees, help individuals utilize new technologies, and to promote workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion. These concerns have affected companies in several different business sectors, and training and development has helped them succeed.

    Students should provide examples from some of the companies detailed in the chapter, as numerous examples were provided throughout.

6. What is agile learning design? What advantages does it have over traditional instructional design?

    To overcome the limitations of the ISD model, companies are starting to use agile learning design. Agile learning or agile instructional design refers to any approach to training development that focuses on speed, flexibility, collaboration, repeated review, and reuse of existing content, if appropriate. Course development occurs in what are known as "short bursts" or "sprints." There are

likely several of these sprints involved for each part of a course. Each "sprint" includes planning, designing, developing, testing, deploying, reviewing, and launching. The process starts again for each element of the course and ends when the entire course is complete. Agile learning design is advantageous due to its relative speed and flexibility.

7. Explain digital learning. How can it benefit companies? Employees? What are some of its potential limitations?

    Digital learning refers to learning that can occur daily in the work setting using devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. Digital learning can be enabled by the company when it provides access to specific learning activities such as courses, videos, or discussion boards. Digital learning can also occur spontaneously when employees search the Internet, search for videos on YouTube, or interact with others on social media.

    Companies are embracing digital learning because it allows them to create a workplace where employees can engage in continuous learning focused on upskilling and reskilling. It can help employees solve problems and communicate and collaborate with peers, and it gives employees control over learning. A limitation of digital learning is that it may put too much control in the hands of employees, which may be problematic if they are not highly motivated to learn.

8. Which of the training professionals' roles do you believe is the most difficult to learn? Which is easiest?

    Student answers would vary.
    o   The learning strategist determines how workplace learning can be best used to help meet the company's business strategy.
    o   The business partner uses business and industry knowledge to create training that improves performance.
    o   The project manager plans, obtains, and monitors the effective delivery of learning and performance solutions to support the business.
    o   The professional specialist designs, develops, delivers, and evaluates learning and solutions. These roles are included in jobs such as organizational change agent, career counselor, instructional designer, and classroom trainer.

9. What is the relationship between diversity, inclusion, and equity?

    o   Diversity can be considered any dimension that differentiates one person from another.
    o   Equity refers to fair treatment, access, equality of opportunity, and advancement for all employees, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.
    o   Inclusion refers to creating an environment in which employees share a sense of belonging, mutual respect, and a commitment to others so they can perform their best work.

10. Describe the training courses that you have taken. How have they helped you? Provide recommendations for improving the courses.

As answers will vary from student to student, try to identify similarities and differences in their responses. Emphasize that training courses can be improved by following the ISD model.

11. How does training differ between companies that are considered BEST Award winners and those that are not?

- o Alignment of business strategy with training
- o Visible support from top management
- o Efficiency in training through process improvement, technology, and outsourcing
- o Providing all employees with access to training on an as-needed basis
- o A variety of learning opportunities provided
- o Measurement of training effectiveness
- o Use of non-training solutions where appropriate

12. How has the pandemic influenced current and future training practices?

The pandemic has influenced training is a variety of ways. For example:
- o Many companies have retooled their operations to provide new products and services, requiring new training
- o New training in health and safety protocols has become paramount
- o Individuals who were unemployed will need to become re-socialized into the workforce
- o Unemployed individuals may be reentering the workforce in new jobs, requiring training to acquire new knowledge and skills
- o Employees need to be trained in how to work virtually and to maintain appropriate work-life balance
- o More and more training will be conducted digitally

13. Explain how training relates to attracting new employees, employee retention, and motivation.

Training is an effective means to attract talented employees who seek to advance their careers. Extensive training may also draw individuals to organizations when individuals lack certain skills or are seeking a career change. When employees are properly trained, they possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform their job responsibilities. In this regard, employees may be more apt to remain with an organization. Finally, when employees see ongoing training opportunities, they may be more likely to remain with an organization because such training may lead to long-term employment prospects.

14. What is the relationship between talent management and employee engagement? What role can training and development practices play in keeping employee engagement high? Explain.

Talent management can serve to enhance employee engagement. Talent management gives employees an opportunity for personal growth within the company and allows them to perform their current jobs well. Training is one key part of the talent management process. It should be noted that training opportunities need to be well designed and job relevant. If not, employees may be disengaged and perceive training as a waste of time.

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Chapter 1
Zappos: Facing Competitive Challenges

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1. What challenges discussed in the chapter will have the greatest impact on Zappos's continued success as an online retailer? For each challenge you identify, explain how training and development can help Zappos overcome them.

    There are a number of challenges that may have a significant impact on Zappos. Below are examples of four such influences:

    o   Economic Cycles—during the pandemic, more and more people shopped online; thus, more specialized training is needed to help employees deliver exceptional quality service

    o   Globalization—the company likely faces intense competition; training catered to online retail can help employees develop customer service skills and operating efficiencies specialized for an online retail environment.

    o   Changing Demographics and Diversity of the Workforce—training should focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion for both supervisors and employees; the company and consumer base is very diverse, and training which highlights the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion is paramount for continued success as a company.

    o   Talent Management—training should focus on recruiting and selection, training and development, and performance management for supervisors; the company should also have an effective boarding program to socialize employees into the company

2. Which of Zappos's ten core values do you believe training and development can influence the most? The least? Why?

    The values that training and development can most influence include *Delivering Wow Through Service, Pursue Growth and Learning, Build Open and Honest Relationships with Communications, Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit, Embrace and Drive Change,* and *Do More With Less.* For example, training employees to develop interpersonal skills such as teamwork, change management, communications, and lean operations can help support these values. Creation of the Zappos.com library supports the company's *Pursue Growth and Learning* value.

    The values of a more affective nature (*Be Humble, Be Passionate and Determined,* and *Create Fun and a Little Weirdness*) are more difficult to train and are more inherent in the employees themselves. Employee selection may be particularly relevant to hiring the right individuals who embrace such values. That said, new hire orientation programs may be of value to socialize employees to these values.

3. Do you think that employees at Zappos have high levels of engagement? Why? Do you think their level of engagement remained high throughout the pandemic? Justify your position.

    Zappos's employees seem to have very high levels of employee engagement. The company has a positive organizational culture that is characterized by fun, growth, learning, team spirit, and freedom.

The company uses monthly engagement surveys to obtain feedback from employees, and the results from which are reflected on and acted upon by administrative staff appropriately.

On one hand, employees' engagement levels may have decreased during the pandemic if they were working from home. Zappos has a unique culture, and telework may have negatively impacted this fun culture. On the other hand, given that most of the employees' work is interacting with customers on the phone, they still might have been engaged appropriately during the pandemic.