

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL TEAM THROUGH TRAINING

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People thrive when they continually learn new things. Creating a culture of learning and growth in your organization is key to employee retention and productivity. All too often, learning stops within a few weeks of onboarding a new employee or implementing changes. When constant improvement is not front of mind, people fall into bad habits and rarely get the most out of the tools they are provided.

DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

When implementing a training program, keep in mind that different people learn differently. The VARK model divides learners into four categories: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic. Visual learners learn best when information is presented visually: show them how to do it. Auditory learners learn best when information is presented orally. They want to hear how to do it. Reading/writing learners learn best when they read the information and write it down. Kinesthetic learners learn best by doing. Your training program should have features that appeal to different types of learners.

WHEN TO TRAIN

ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES

It all starts with onboarding new hires. The training you provide new hires lays the foundation for how they will approach learning and growth during their tenure with your organization. With new hires, it's all about balance. If you provide them with too much information too fast, they become overwhelmed and withdrawn. If you don't provide enough training upfront, they quickly become frustrated and lose their learning appetite.

Think of onboarding new hires as a period of rapid growth rather than a one-time event. As new hires grasp their role and responsibilities, provide more advanced training. Encourage them to seek out additional training as they are ready. Plan for a full year of regularly scheduled training for new hires. In the early weeks, new hires need daily training. As they progress, spread the training further apart and make it shorter in duration. Don't assume that new hires understand fundamental software such as Windows, Word, and Outlook. Even if they've been using them for years, there are sure to be features they are unaware of or don't know how to use properly.

IMPLEMENTING CHANGES

Whenever you implement a new process or software, provide training. On the day of the change, provide survival training - teach people how to survive in the new system and accomplish day-to-day tasks. Training on advanced or seldom-used features from the start will overwhelm your team and lead to low retention rates. Follow up the initial training with refresher classes and training on more advanced features of new software to ensure your team retains what they've learned and masters it.

ONGOING TRAINING

Everyone benefits from ongoing training, even on the software they've used every day for years. People fall into bad habits and forget about features they rarely use. Ongoing training reminds them of the proper way to do things and how to use the features they forgot exist.

TRAINING ON DEMAND

Provide training resources that are always available for reference when needed and reward people for taking advantage of these resources. Access to various resources such as videos focused on specific tasks, digital courses,

written step-by-step instructions filled with screenshots, and manuals that include everything from the high-level overview to the minute details is critical for engaging learners of all types.

GROUP TRAINING CLASSES

Whether done remotely via webinar or in-person, group training classes allow your team to ask questions and learn from each other. Ensure that group training classes provide exercises to allow your team to follow along with the trainer: many people learn best by doing it themselves. Ensure that any group training classes provide on-demand training in the form of written materials and videos for your team to refer back to.

ONE-ON-ONE TRAINING

Sometimes, people need one-on-one training. Either the task at hand is unique to them, or they need training at a slower pace than the rest of your team. Working with someone one-on-one provides ample opportunity to answer questions and work at their pace. While it's ideal for everyone to attend group training together, don't let one person make the training less effective for everyone.

TRAINING TOOLS

There are a lot of tools out there to help you implement your training program.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

A learning management system ("LMS") is a digital training hub. Training content is organized into digital courses that are assigned to learners. Administrators can track each student's progress. Many have gamification tools that reward learners for completing their courses with badges and recognition on leaderboards. Some employ social learning tools such as message boards and live chat.

When selecting an LMS, consider whether you want to create all of the content or if you'd prefer an LMS that comes with content ready for deployment. If you don't already have a wealth of videos and written materials, you'll either need to devote resources to creating that content at the outset or go with an LMS that supplies you with ready-made content.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

Virtual classrooms allow you to provide training virtually. Your team can join the training from anywhere with internet access. The days of needing a platform marketed as a virtual classroom are over. Most video conferencing software now includes virtual whiteboards and the ability for attendees to share their screen. Some allow for "break out" rooms, allowing people to work in smaller groups or receive one-on-one attention.