

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 LEARNERS

Learn best when information is presented visually. For example, provide charts, infographics, or live demonstrations to explain new concepts.

AUDITORY LEARNERS

Learn best when information is presented orally. Incorporate discussions, podcasts, or narrated presentations to engage these learners.

READING/WRITING LEARNERS

Learn best when they read information and write it down. Supply detailed written guides, manuals, and opportunities to take notes.

KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

Learn best by doing. Include hands-on exercises or simulations to reinforce their understanding.

Your training program should incorporate elements that cater to these diverse learning styles to ensure everyone benefits.

WHEN TO TRAIN

ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES

Training new hires lays the foundation for their approach to learning and growth during their tenure with your organization. Strive for balance: too much information too quickly can overwhelm them, while too little can lead to frustration.

- Treat onboarding as a period of **rapid growth**, not a one-time event.
- Plan for **regularly scheduled trainings** over the first year. Start with daily sessions and transition to shorter, less frequent training as they progress.
- Don't assume knowledge of fundamental tools like Windows, Word, or Outlook. Even seasoned users may be unaware of key features. For instance, introduce Outlook's calendar sharing feature or Word's advanced formatting tools early on.

IMPLEMENTING CHANGES

When introducing new processes or software, provide training to help your team adapt.

- Start with **survival training** on day one, focusing on critical daily tasks. For instance, demonstrate how to log into a new CRM or submit reports in a revised format.
- Follow up with refresher classes and training on advanced features to build mastery. For example, show how to automate workflows in the new software after your team is comfortable with the basics.

ONGOING TRAINING

Even experienced employees benefit from ongoing training. Over time, people can develop inefficient habits or forget about less frequently used features.

- Schedule regular refresher sessions. For example, a quarterly webinar on advanced Excel functions can reignite interest and improve productivity.
- Highlight underused features of existing tools, such as creating email rules in Outlook to streamline inbox management.

TRAINING ON DEMAND

Provide accessible resources your team can use as needed:

- **Videos:** Short clips focused on specific tasks, such as using a pivot table in Excel.
- **Digital Courses:** Step-by-step lessons on software basics and advanced features.
- **Written Guides:** Manuals filled with screenshots and detailed instructions.

Reward employees for using these resources to encourage self-guided learning.

TRAINING FORMATS

GROUP TRAINING CLASSES

Group sessions, whether in-person or virtual, allow employees to ask questions and learn collaboratively. To enhance effectiveness:

- Incorporate hands-on exercises. For instance, during a webinar on Microsoft Teams, have participants create and share files in real time.
- Provide on-demand resources, such as a video library or written materials, to reinforce group sessions.

ONE-ON-ONE TRAINING

Some employees benefit from individualized attention:

- Use one-on-one sessions for tasks unique to an individual's role or for slower-paced learning.
- Balance these sessions with group training to maximize overall effectiveness without slowing the team.

TRAINING TOOLS

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (LMS)

An LMS is a digital hub for organizing and tracking training programs:

- **Features:** Gamification (*e.g.*, badges and leaderboards) and social learning tools (*e.g.*, message boards).
- **Content:** Decide whether to create your own training materials or select an LMS with pre-made courses. For example, a system offering ready-made courses on software basics can save time.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

Modern video conferencing tools, like Zoom or Microsoft Teams, serve as virtual classrooms:

- Use features like **whiteboards** and **screen sharing** to facilitate learning.
- Leverage **breakout rooms** for small group discussions or individual support.

By blending diverse formats, tools, and techniques, you can create a dynamic training program that drives success for both your team and your organization.