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used and how it will be used (project, problem); (2) strategies for reaching the goal (including what the trainee will do differently, resources needed, and type of support needed from managers and peers); (3) strategies for receiving feedback; and (4) expected results. The action plan also provides a progress check schedule, with specific dates and times when the manager and trainee agree to meet to discuss the progress being made in using learned capabilities on the job. The action planning process should start by identifying a goal and the strategies for reaching that goal. Once those are determined, strategies for obtaining feedback and identifying what the accomplishment of the goal will look like are completed. To complete their action plans, trainees may need additional technical support, such as access to experts who can answer questions or reference materials. Trainers or project managers can help trainees get the resources that they need to complete their action plans through either face-to-face or electronic meetings.

Sonic Automotive uses managers as trainers and its trainees complete action plans to support their learning and use of new skills.<sup>65</sup> To reinforce training's role in the business, within each dealership Sonic Automotive chooses a manager for a new trainer position. These managers change their job titles, job descriptions, and pay plans to support their new responsibilities, which include training and coaching new and current employees. After trainees complete training, they are asked to identify an opportunity to use their new skills at their store. Their action plans must be developed within 7 days and implemented within 45 days.

Table 5.11 presents a checklist that can be used to determine the level of manager support before, during, and after training. The more statements that managers agree with, the greater their level of support for the training program. There are several ways to gain managers' support for training.<sup>66</sup> First, managers need to be briefed on the purpose of the program and its relationship to business objectives and the business strategy. Managers should

**TABLE 5.11** Checklist for Determining a Manager's Level of Support for Training

**Please read each statement and check all that apply to you:**

- I have discussed the course and set learning objectives for employees.
- I understand the purpose of training.
- I know how training matches what the employee needs to learn.
- I know enough about the training to support employees' use of what they learn when they return.
- The employee has completed action plans or other types of learning contracts designed to help apply learning on the job.
- I have communicated my expectations regarding training.
- I encourage employees to share what they have learned after the course or program.
- I encourage employees attending training to prevent distractions by using call-forwarding and out-of-office e-mail notices.
- I allow employees to attend training.
- After training, I will debrief employees on the learning objectives and discuss how to apply them.
- After training, I will meet with employees to hear their ideas of how to apply what they learned.
- I will provide opportunities for employees to share what they learned with other employees.
- I recognize and reward learning that is demonstrated on the job.



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