Needs Assessment

"Needs assessment" refers to the process of determining learning needs and opportunities and analyzing whether training is necessary. Needs assessment provides a multilevel perspective to guarantee that different perspectives are taken into account during the assessment:

- Organization analysis
- Person analysis
- Task analysis

If not performed or performed poorly, any one or more of the following may transpire:

- Incorrect training can be used to solve performance difficulties.
- Training can have wrong content, objectives, or methods.
- Trainees could be sent to training programs with insufficient skills, knowledge, and ability.
- Training may not deliver goals, objectives, behavior change, or financial results.

Training could depend on:

- Legislation
- Skills, knowledge, and ability
- Performance
- Technology
- Customer requests
- Customer dissatisfaction
- Products/Innovations
- Higher performance standards

Depending on specific circumstances, employee selection, better on-the-job supervision, or job redesign might be the solution.

Knowledge of outcomes helps to ensure that the most appropriate data is collected during the needs assessment process. This includes:

- What to learn
- Who to train
- What training type is needed
- What training frequency is required
- Whether to buy or provide in-house training

The key stakeholders are leaders, managers, trainers, and employees:

- Company leaders should anticipate training needs, align them with the business strategy, and ensure that the training is integrated to add value to the company.

- Managers must know how training impacts their financial goals, how the training cost takes a slice out of the budget, which employees need training, and what jobs are included in the training.

- Trainers must know whether training and the business strategy are aligned, should training be purchased or be in-house, what content is in the focus, what training methods should the employees use, and what degree of management support is required.

- Employees should determine their own learning needs for their current and future employment prospects, along with their motivation to learn.

Subject matter experts (SMEs) may be good resources. Experts may include individuals such as employees, managers, technical experts, suppliers, and academics; knowledge could include:

- Training issues or tasks

- Knowledge, skills, and abilities for effectiveness and efficiency

- Necessary equipment

- Conditions and performance of tasks

Barriers While Conducting a Needs Assessment
In order to efficiently and effectively build planning and actions to overcome any roadblocks to the needs assessment process, the challenges given below should be taken into consideration.

Given below are the barriers, or disadvantages, of needs assessment, listed according to the type of method employed (Noe, 2017):

Review the tabs to learn more.

- The assessor requires skill in observation
- Being observed may affect employee behavior

- Has potentially low response rates from employees
- May lack detail as all the criteria may not be considered

- Is time consuming

May have potentially socially desirable responses

- Is difficult to analyze

[?]

- Are time consuming
- May have potentially socially desirable responses
- Are difficult to analyze

[?]

- May be difficult to understand
- Are potentially obsolete

[?]

- Has low response rates
- May threaten employees (data may be used to punish rather than train)

[?]

- May be inaccurate
- May be incomplete
- May not be fully reflective of performance

Additional Materials

From your course textbook, *Employee Training and Development*, read the following chapters:

- Needs Assessment
- Learning and Transfer of Training