
BPIR Best Practice Management Brief : Vol 4 Issue 1 - Employee Development

Author: Neil Crawford

Research assistance: Kevin McKenna

Centre for Organisational Excellence Research

Welcome to Vol 4 Issue 1 of the BPIR.com Best Practice Management Brief that provides short, easily digestible research summaries based on specific topics or tools. Summaries include comments from experts, case examples, and survey analyses. Topics chosen for the briefs are partly based on those submitted as requests through our members' Research Request Service. Read and absorb, then pass on to your staff/colleagues to do the same.

Employee Development - definition

Employee development is a strategic investment in the training, development, and growth of talent within an organisation. Employee development is typically provided through internships, job rotation, coaching, mentoring, training courses, and peer group assistance within the work place.

The stage

Currently we are in a period in time where there is high demand for skilled employees and where these employees are more likely to leave for new and or better opportunities than ever before. This trend is likely to continue and become stronger. To address this organisations must seek to both attract and retain the best talent within their own ranks. Talented workers have a powerful influence upon the success of an organisation, with improved productivity, enhanced innovation, better morale, and new growth opportunities being driven by skilled workers. Employee development programmes form a cultural platform for an organisation's leadership and management structures. By investing in sound employee development programmes an organisation's talented workers can be internally grown and retained.

Expert Opinion

Empowerment

Job satisfaction, performance, and motivation can be increased significantly through the empowerment of employees. Karen Robinson [1] the head of Employee Involvement at Boeing, believed that employee development initiatives along with a strong organisational learning culture have the following benefits:

1. *They help to create a shared vision;* A clearly defined and well understood organisational vision needs to be personally delivered to employees. Comments and suggestions concerning an organisation's vision or mission statements should be elicited e.g. at employee orientation sessions, during re-engagement activities, and as part of training activities. A shared vision can ensure that employees understand both where the organisation has come from, and where it is heading.
2. *They encourage the growth of teams and individuals;* The provision of challenging learning and growth opportunities can encourage creativity and innovation which in turn stimulates growth. Employee development through increased knowledge can improve performance by,
 - a. Keeping knowledge of trends and technologies current,
 - b. Introducing new areas of knowledge which lead to a diversity of experiences and provide new perspectives, and
 - c. Engaging and challenging staff making them less likely to look for other opportunities.
3. *They cultivate systems thinking;* As employees understand how their respective roles' impact upon the rest of the organisation they tend to take greater ownership, and thereby to make more effective improvements in their own work areas. [1]

Engagement

Ray Baumruk practice leader with Hewitt Associates writes [2] that "engagement" describes the energy and passion that employees have for their job and their employer. Engaged employees have a feeling of greater connection with their organisation and its leadership, and they have confidence in the organisation's future direction. In essence, when staff feel that they are truly valued they tend to produce better results. Employees also feel more engaged when their employer demonstrates a willingness to provide greater opportunities for development, whether through job rotations, training programs or simply via greater management involvement. In the *Survey and Research Data* section of this briefing paper evidence is provided concerning higher shareholder returns being associated with organisations that have worked at developing truly engaged employees. Baumruk cites the former chairman and CEO of General Electric's, Jack Welch, who said "real and limitless productivity comes from challenged, empowered, excited, rewarded teams of people". [2]

The following ten ways in which to engage employees are adapted from work by Dr Charles Woodruffe, [3] managing director of UK Human Assets consultancy:

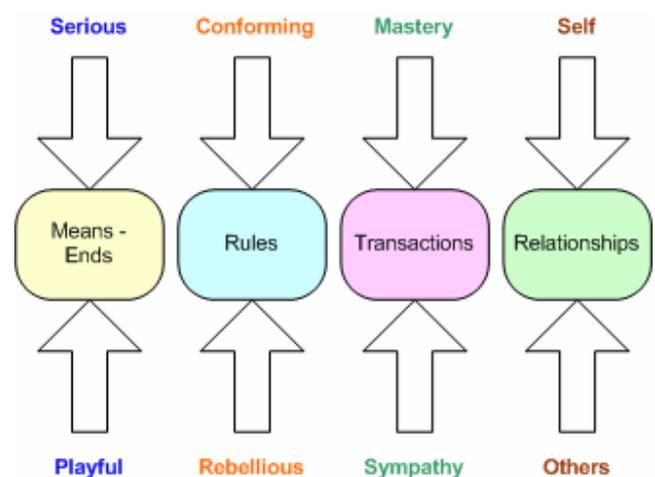
1. Publish a statement of commitment from the Chief Executive and the Board concerning the importance of retaining talent by developing excellent people-management practices.
2. Ensure that all line managers embrace the culture of talent retention and that they understand engaging employees is a core part of the organisation's business strategy for marketplace success.
3. Treat every member of your staff as an individual by discovering his or her work needs and by giving careful attention to meeting these.
4. Ensure that managers are supported and coached concerning people management skills.
5. Carry out regular employee satisfaction audits.
6. Take scrupulous care to ensure that talented people are hired and offered a commitment by the organisation.
7. Avoid destroying the employee's trust with a 'hire and fire' mentality.
8. Strive to develop employees so that their worth to the organisation increases.
9. Challenge all areas where the organisation is not being flexible and responsive to employee needs.
10. Carefully identify core talent and invest resources in developing those people. [3]

Reversal Theory

An understanding of what it is that drives employee behaviour patterns can assist with encouraging higher levels of performance and achievement. Stephen Carter managing director of Apter International writes [5] that Reversal Theory describes a number of discrete ways of experiencing the world and shows that these fundamental states comprise pairs of opposites. The switches between each pair of opposites are called 'reversals.' The four possible domains described by reversal theory are:

1. *Means ends;* (Serious versus Playful)
2. *Rules;* (Conforming versus Rebellious)
3. *Transactions;* (Mastery versus Sympathy)
4. *Relationships;* (Self versus Other)

The following diagram adapted from [4] depicts the four domains and pairs of states described by reversal theory:



At the heart of reversal theory is the idea that our experience is shaped by a set of alternative ways of seeing the world, each of which is based on a fundamental value or motive. Specifically, four pairs of such opposite

states have been discerned. In the course of everyday life, and under a variety of circumstances, we switch - or "reverse" - quite frequently between opposite 'motivational states' or 'styles'. In today's global business community organisations compete for basically the same fundamental resources e.g. similar technologies, communication systems, information, and interest rates. Human talent, effectiveness, passion, and commitment are the areas in which differentiation and real productivity improvements can be discovered. These human qualities need to be nurtured i.e. people tend to display these qualities if they feel motivated towards displaying them. Hence Organisations wishing to encourage employees to offer more of these human qualities in the workplace can benefit from an understanding of the key principles of human motivation and behaviour. The application of reversal theory offers tools to help employees understand what they want from their work and non-work related lives by enabling them to:

- Understand that various states, and sometimes out of the ordinary ones, can liberate their potential for productivity, performance and happiness in ways that they might not have imagined possible;
- Deal with situations that previously have caused anxiety and were therefore avoided.
- Take measured, and considered, risks where appropriate. [5]

Coaching and Mentoring

Duncan Brown [6] assistant director general of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development stated that "Coaching is the vehicle to achieve behavioural change that can alter the whole performance of the organisation". Research involving 25 major employers including the BBC, Dixons, Selfridges and Shell, found that all of these companies were extremely positive about the impact of effective coaching, and reported improvements in:

- Business and individual performance,
- Employee and customer attitudes,
- Leadership behaviours and skills,
- Communications, and
- Confidence

These employers also noted the risks and the financial investment required, reporting that coaching was not cheap, nor a magic solution for fixing performance failings. Two common factors were highlighted which underpinned successful coaching schemes:

1. *Coaching should be integrated with other training.* Successful coaching complements rather than replaces traditional training methods, and needs to be part of an integrated development strategy which is linked to business goals.
2. *Coaching requires a clear purpose and suitable design.* The research highlighted three main variants relating to coaching system designs as follows:
 - Technical skills development, similar to that used for traditional sports coaching;
 - Personal development and support, as typically offered by executive coaches, and
 - Helping individuals and teams to improve business processes and to deliver organisational change. [6]

Recruiting a Personal Coach

How do you choose a suitable coach? To achieve positive, measurable changes in our behaviour it is important that our coaches are people that we respect and who also respect us. Marshall Goldsmith [7] editor of Learning Journeys, and author of "The Leadership Frontier", writes that helpful behavioural coaches are most likely to be people who impact our daily lives. For this reason in selecting a coach consideration should be given to managers, direct reports, colleagues, customers, friends, and family members. We should seek to involve people who can help us get better, and we should not ask for advice if we don't really want to hear it! Goldsmith provides the following three questions to ask a potential coach that may help predict the likelihood of a successful coaching relationship:

1. *Are you willing to "let go" of my past behaviour and help me change my future behaviour?* Coaching can be much more constructive by focusing on the development of future rather than dwelling in mistakes. Focusing on the future will make the coaching process much more enjoyable.
2. *Are you willing to be a supportive coach, i.e., not a cynic, critic, or judge?* Successful people tend to respond well to advice that can help them achieve their goals. They tend to resist advice when it is judgmental or manipulative. Likewise the two way relationship needed for successful coaching will be destroyed by an atmosphere of cynicism or criticism.
3. *Will you be honest with me when you give me suggestions for the future?* Coaches need to be honest to be truly helpful. Just as overly negative comments can be demoralising, so too can overly positive comments become damaging by reinforcing inappropriate behaviour. [7]

Mentoring occurs in all organisations regardless of whether it is fostered as a formal strategy or not. Consciously and unconsciously people learn from one another and model each other's behaviours and attitudes. They also absorb the culture and perceived values of the organisation through these relationships. A discussion paper [8] from The Growth Connection Pty. Ltd., Sydney describes the traditional mentoring relationship as one in which a wiser and more experienced person assists someone to grow and to learn. However new ways of mentoring have arisen that allow individuals to interact more as colleagues and on an equal footing which can cultivate mutually beneficial growth and learning. Experience, skills and a genuine desire to help are more valuable assets in a mentoring relationship than age or position. Open and assertive communication and the trust of both parties are essential. The best teachers learn much from their students and both parties grow and develop along the way. The following are common reasons for developing an organisational mentoring programme:

- *Induction;* helping new employees to become established
- *Skills Enhancement;* passing on of experience and knowledge to others
- *Career Development;* helping employees to plan, develop, and manage their careers and to better handle times of change by becoming more self-reliant and self-directed learners

- Affirmative Action; assisting women and minority groups by providing support and helping to overcome barriers blocking their progress
- *Leadership and Management Development*; encouraging the development of competencies through example, guided practice and experience
- *Education Support*; bridging the gap between theory and practice
- *Organisational Development and Culture Change*; sharing the values, vision and mission of the organisation
- *Customer Service*; modelling desired behaviours; developing competencies, motivating and cultivating the right attitudes
- *Staff retention*; offering support and a planned career paths [8]

Individuals who are well mentored tend to feel that they are being looked after; they consequently gain confidence in their abilities and respond accordingly. They are often happier, more loyal and productive as a result. An article posted [9] by UK Exemplar Limited, a business support services organisation, states that mentees tend to become more effective in their job and to stay with organisations longer, and that mentoring programmes help to smooth the integration of new employees into organisations more quickly, forming a useful asset for attracting and retaining good calibre staff. Other reported advantages of mentoring schemes include:

- Improved motivation of employees
- Promotes reflection upon performance and the achievement of goals
- The possible stimulation of entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour
- Line managers are able to suggest that mentees should discuss difficult issues with their mentors and thereby gain different perspectives and benefit from expertise.

Mentors and Protégés/Mentees

Linda Kaplan chairperson and a founding member of the Money Mailer Mentoring Programme stated [10] that a mentor is a trusted teacher or counsellor; mentoring programs need not to be overly complex; and a protégé is the main reason that mentoring programmes exist. Kaplan believed that effective mentoring programmes lead to increased productivity and greater profits. The following are benefits and key attributes required of mentors and protégés:

1. Mentors

Key attributes, mentors must:

- Possess skill, knowledge, and experience
- Be willing to share these assets
- Be willing to give the time necessary
- Possess the ability to listen
- Be able to identify goals
- Possess a genuine caring attitude and desire to help
- Be able to offer encouragement and "be a cheerleader"

Benefits, the mentor will:

- Stay sharp
- Enhance his or her own performance by being a role model
- Increases his or her value to others

- Be more creative
- Nourish his or her soul
- Increase his or her own focus

2. Protégés

Key attributes, protégés must:

- Respect the mentor's time
- Be willing to listen and act promptly on the information learned from the mentor
- Respect the mentor's efforts to help
- Know what is confidential and treat it as such
- Bring energy to the mentoring relationship
- Discuss problems and goals

Benefits, the protégé will:

- Receive coaching and advice
- Set goals with the mentor's help
- Increase productivity
- Increase self-confidence and work satisfaction
- Decrease the learning curve
- Become proficient more quickly

The following advice [10] was also provided for initiating and maintaining mentor/protégé relationships:

- Take the time to get to know each other
- Become familiar with each other's roles, cultural background and common interests
- Set specific goals and expectations
- Commit to maintain privacy and confidentiality
- Create a positive environment that encourages openness
- Establish a time to talk, meet and call each other
- Try to keep meetings specific and focused
- Track progress to see if goals are being met

Internships

Internships are of value to both employees and employers. An employer can benefit from the new talents and skills provided by the intern; and similarly an intern with desirable attributes can be groomed for long-term service within an organisation. Maryon Urqhart, director of customer relations at Career Edge writes [11] that the best tips for coaching interns are to; acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of interns (i.e. their nationality, life and work experiences, skills); recognise that interns want to learn and succeed; become a trusted resource for the intern; and provide interns with career building experiences.

Coaches should make sure that the intern receives:

- clear expectations and messages;
- a realistic picture of the coach's time availability;
- the opportunity to ask questions;
- constructive feedback;
- profession-specific vocabulary;
- encouragement for their career direction; and
- information about programs and opportunities.

A well run internship programme can provide long-term benefits for organisations. Dawn Onley a freelance writer based in Washington DC writes [12] that internships give students an opportunity to learn valuable skills which can often translate into full-time employment, in addition they also provide employers with an ideal opportunity to test each participant's contribution to the workplace. As well as being able to identify top performers many employers report that higher retention rates are found among employees who began as interns. For organisations to

achieve a successful internship programme it is wise to commence with careful planning by:

- Determining what goals could be achieved through the internship programme - such as diversity objectives or a special project;
- Deciding which areas of the organisation could most benefit from additional staff;
- Preparing a job description;
- Preparing available staff as mentors who can communicate with and guide interns regarding what is expected of them;
- Making arrangements for physical aspects, such as a workstation or computer network permissions, office supplies, and security access.
- Enhancing integration into the work environment through training and orientation concerning the organisation's rules on dress, behaviour, ethics and technology use.

Many colleges and universities encourage students to apply for internships as part of their normal curriculum. Interns are commonly highly motivated persons that can add value to an organisation at minimal cost. Dr John Byrd, president of a consulting firm, and Dr Rob Poole, director of the internship programme at Bellarmine University write [13] that by employing interns organisations derive many benefits i.e., competent assistance without large financial outlays; the ability to evaluate prospective new employees at low risk (eliminating recruitment expenses and greatly reducing the cost-per-hire); and the role of supervising interns allows existing employees to develop leadership experience. The following ways are suggested to increase the value that interns may offer an organisation.

1. Assign the intern to projects that are accomplishable, and provide training as required.
2. Involve the intern in the project planning process.
3. Appoint a mentor or supervisor to guide the intern.
4. Invite project suggestions from other staff members.
5. Ask interns to keep a journal of their work activities.
6. Rotate interns throughout the organisation.
7. Explain the rationale behind work assignments.
8. Hold interns accountable for projects and deadlines.
9. Treat interns as part of the organisational staff, and invite them to staff meetings.
10. Establish a process for considering interns for permanent hire.

Survey and Research Data

Doing a fair share of the work

A UK survey concerning employee development which was carried out by "Investors in People" revealed that in all sizes of organisation half of employees reported working directly with someone who failed to do their fair share of work. Almost 4 out of 10 managers also complained about colleagues not pulling their weight. However action did not appear to be being taken with 40% of employees reporting that their employer did not take any action to address this issue. Staff cited that working longer hours and feeling undervalued were amongst the most damaging issues they coped with, and that this in turn led to decisions to begin looking for a new job.[14]

Employee Development and new challenges

A survey by specialist recruitment company Hays NZ, found that of 450 respondents 36.9 % chose new challenges as the main reason to consider changing jobs. The 10 most common reasons for changing jobs, in order of importance, reported were:

- 1 - Seeking new challenges
- 2 - Lack of career progression
- 3 - Poor management
- 4 - Salary
- 5 - Lack of training or development opportunities
- 6 - Seeking to specialise in a particular field
- 7 - Travel time too great
- 8 - Poor work/life balance
- 9 - Office politics
- 10 - Too much stress

When looking for a new job, respondents cited the 10 most important considerations, in order of importance were:

- 1 - The company's vision, values and culture
- 2 - Job security
- 3 - Project-based learning or formal training
- 4 - Work/life balance
- 5 - Engagement with the work undertaken
- 6 - Salary
- 7 - Hours of work
- 8 - Closeness to where you live
- 9 - Benefits
- 10 - Holiday allocation [15]

Coaching has positive effect on bottom line

A Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey of 500 UK employers found that 93% aspired to create a coaching culture and more than half planned to increase coaching activities. The need for coaching was motivated by a number of factors such as rapid organisational rates of change and shortages of capable leaders; however the survey indicated that the strongest driver reported was the need to improve business performance with 92% of managers believing that coaching had a positive effect on the organisation's bottom line. [16]

Employee internships essential for meeting career goals

The following summarises the findings from a 2005 WetFeet survey involving 2,653 US students connected with internship programmes.

- Internship offers at top-tier universities increased by 18% for undergraduates, and 11% for MBA students compared to 2004.
- 79% believed that a good internship experience was essential for meeting their long-term career goals, up from 76% in 2004.
- Average salary offers for internships were;
 - Undergraduates, US\$ 638 per week;
 - MBA students, US\$ 1,473 per week.
- Some 20% of interns were unpaid, however most earned college credits for their work.
- Interns were usually put to work alongside full-time staff professionals.
- Some 39% of all graduating seniors and 61% of MBA graduates received offers for full-time employment in 2005,

commonly from the companies where they had worked as interns. However, 51% declined offers mostly because of a better offer from another company.[17]

Employee Engagement increases total return to shareholders

A UK Watson Wyatt survey "Connecting Organisational Communication to Financial Performance" found that a significant improvement in communication effectiveness (engagement) was associated with a 29.5% increase in market value and that companies with the highest levels of effective communication experienced a 26% total return to shareholders from 1998 to 2002, compared to a 15% return experienced by firms that communicate least effectively'. Effective communications create engaged employees, creating loyal customers who in turn create bigger profits. It was also found that organisations which communicate effectively were more likely to report employee turnover rates below or significantly below those of their industry peers. [18]

Employee engagement associated with high shareholder returns

Hewitt Associates consulting data base which was derived from studying the operation of some 1,500 U.S. businesses demonstrated a strong positive relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance as follows:

- Organisations with engagement scores of 60% or higher produced an average 5 year total shareholder return (TSR) greater than 25%
- Those having scores between 40 to 60% had 9% average TSR, and those with scores below 40% showed an average TSR of 3.4%.

Similar results have been shown for the strong positive relationship between employee engagement and return on assets, market-to-book ratio, customer retention and operating performance (operating income-to-assets ratio), not to mention the strong relationship to other people-related measures, such as retention and absenteeism, which directly impact productivity. [2]

Employee engagement and double digit growth

The following data reports on the relationship between employee engagement, employee attitudes and double-digit growth (DDG) i.e. organisations having 5 year compound average revenue growth of 10% or more.

1. Employees of DDG organisations are:
 - 17% more likely to say they have a good understanding of their company's goals;
 - 18% more likely to say they have a clear understanding of their role in the company's success;
 - 12% more likely to say they have the information and empowerment to do their jobs;
 - 28% more likely to have confidence in their employer's future business direction;
 - 13% more likely to trust their senior leader.
2. Regarding training and development they are:
 - 18% more likely to feel there are sufficient opportunities to obtain the skills necessary for advancement;

3. Such employees speak highly of the organisations with:
 - 24% calling it an exceptional place to work;
 - 14% report trust and mutual respect among colleagues;

DDG companies have 39% more employees who are highly engaged. [2]

Example cases:

Learn valuable lessons from these organisations:

Frimley Park Hospital NHS Trust, UK



Learning centre with easy access

After carrying out an extensive training needs analysis it was decided to set up a learning centre at Frimley Park which aimed at providing:

- Low cost access for all staff to on-line training and a library containing learning resources
- Easy access for staff at times which suited them
- An opportunity to supplement classroom-based training
- The opportunity to address basic skills needs
- Increased management development and personal skills through self-study.

The centre had 5 PCs plus TV, video and DVD equipment. Learners reportedly appreciated the flexible access and comfortable non-threatening learning environment. Frimley Park promoted the learning centre through poster campaigns, e-mail messages, presentations to staff and managers, leaflets and an Internet site. Also regular competitions were held which offered prizes which helped to raise the profile of the centre. [19]

Tetra Pak, UK



Employee development programme helps apprentices

Tetra Pak used specifically tailored training courses, including a progressive outdoor development programme, for its new employees. Apprenticed employees during their first year worked on gaining engineering qualifications despite the fact that not all of them would end up with an engineering role, and this helped them to develop a well rounded understanding of Tetra Pak operations and to become more effective employees. At the end of their first year the apprentices took part in a 7 day personal development programme which was designed to stretch them, and to instil confidence, self-belief, and self-discipline before they started work at Tetra Pak At the end of year two the apprentices were sent on another seven-day course which emphasised working as a team. This programme brought noticeable changes to the apprentices and enabled them to fit in at the factory more easily. [20]

Mattel Inc, International



Employee development improves market performance

Radical performance improvements were needed at Mattel hence a workforce development strategy was introduced throughout the organisation. Performance tracking, succession planning and leadership development processes were implemented. A corporate strategy and vision was developed along with a unifying internal brand. Learning maps depicting critical functions within the organisation were developed to help employees visualise their roles within the organisation. To foster teamwork special training courses were provided and a single performance management system was implemented across the organisation which focused on targeted results, assessment, and coaching. A formal talent management system was also put in place to help facilitate sound succession planning practices and to encourage better communication among divisions, breaking down cultural silos that had developed within the organisation. Both Mattel's employees and the organisation benefited through, (a) 75% of the open positions being filled internally, (b) attrition rates falling to 8% annually, and (c) by improved share market results. [21]

Bridgehouse Hotel Operations UK Ltd



Coaching - experience gained from the bottom up

Developing new administrative management talent was seen as a requirement of a manager's role at Bridgehouse Hotel Operations UK Ltd. A formal management training scheme was used to maximise the potential of talented trainees. The two-year schedule included experience in every department of the hotel, from sales to services. The trainees started from the bottom in each role, working up within the department until they reached supervisory levels, at which stage they moved to another department. The training scheme aimed to keep the best people within the Bridgehouse family through training them to the highest standard and making them into champions of the organisation's brand. [22]

US Liberty Bank



Mentoring reduces new employee turnover rates

Liberty Bank ran two mentoring programmes:
1.) New employees were assigned one or two "buddies" who had an understanding of the position. The buddies helped the new employees learn the ropes and to navigate through the organisation. The aim was to help employees to become acclimatised faster and to ease frustration. The buddy programme had reduced turnover rates for new employees and improved skill development while providing emotional support that previously had been non-existent.
2.) Minority personnel and employees having the potential for higher level positions were also offered mentoring assistance. In this programme mentors and protégés met as required. In addition a general meeting was held quarterly to give the protégés an appreciation of the wider

operations of the bank. The programme was part of Liberty's strategy to produce minority senior managers from within its own employee pool. [23]

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), USA



Mentoring helps attract new talent

PWC operated three mentoring programmes:

- 1.) A connectivity programme aimed at all staff in which each partner was responsible for 12 to 15 staff. In this was the partner learned of the staff's personal goals and daily work performance. It was found that this programme engendered a better connection with the firm and an ability to get to know staff in greater depth.
- 2.) A minority transition programme which connected new minority employees with a peer mentor. This helped the new person to become acclimatised to the firm, connect with higher level employees, gain assistance with professional progress, and to work on high-profile projects/clients.
- 3.) A mentoring partnership programme which focussed on the development of potential partners. It was found that the PWC mentorship programmes were a useful tool for attracting new talent to the firm. [24]

US ShoreBank



Coaching by giving timely encouragement

ShoreBank employees were believed to function at their best when given clear expectations, and when managers took a meaningful interest in how employees performed. Hence ShoreBank implemented on-the-job training and its managers served as coaches giving timely encouragement and reinforcement to employees. ShoreBank's approach had the following key characteristics:

- 1.) All new employees were immediately linked to a service-quality coach/mentor who demonstrated competence in service-related skills and held employees to high standards.
- 2.) Coaches supported employees undergoing service quality training which included individual self-study, personalised one-on-one practice, and frequent on-the-job feedback regarding the use of skills with customers.
- 3.) Coaches acted as positive role models.
- 4.) Coaches provided performance feedback to employees to reinforce their achievements and to support continued improvement.
- 5.) Employees were recognized bank-wide for service-quality proficiency. [25]

Crealy Adventure Park Enterprise Ltd, UK



Employee Internship produces impressive results

An internship project at Crealy Adventure Park was used to reduce costs whilst increasing perceived value through the introduction of more efficient, operational procedures within the park. The intern carried out the following work:
- Undertook a thorough investigation the organisation's operating processes

- Liaised with staff members to gain an understanding of their roles
- Produced value stream maps detailing departmental duties
- Analysed the efficiency of operational processes
- Developed practical ideas for improvement

This work resulted in a value stream mapping system being established which helped to clarify business processes. Paperwork was dramatically reduced, safer more time efficient work methods were introduced, and overall operations procedures were streamlined. The management at Crealy's were very impressed with the internship results. [26]

Brunel University, UK



Employee Internships and valuable collaboration

As part of Brunel's Master's degree programme in Design, Strategy, and Innovation, students completed four months of academic theory before embarking on a four week design management audit. The audit consisted of a close examination of a selected company to investigate its management of design and innovation. Students worked in teams of 5 to 7 and in close collaboration with company personnel. Audits were followed immediately by a 12-week internship. The aims of the internship were to continue the investigative process established during the design management audit and to give students first-hand experience of the day-to-day organisational dilemmas that occur in the workplace. Both the companies and the students gained a great deal from their collaboration. A survey of graduates revealed that 40 percent were offered full-time positions of employment at the end of their internships. [27]

Southampton University Hospital NHS Trust



Career Planning impacts positively on retention statistics

A 2002 research project reported staff turnover had fallen from 26% to 13% at Southampton University Hospital's NHS Trust in London. To retain staff the hospital:

1. Flattened its leadership structure to better share responsibilities and provide professional development opportunities for its staff;
2. Identified and capitalised on nurses desire for professional development;
3. Promoted staff development through contractual arrangements;
4. Introduced an educational plan that allowed for equitable staff development; and
5. Provided protected time for staff to take part in continuing education. [28]

Measure and Evaluate Employee Development

In order to fully evaluate the impact of Employee Development initiatives it is necessary to undertake, where

possible, a quantitative assessment of their impact and assign calculable values. The following provide some simple ideas on how Employee Development can be assessed:

Employee satisfaction - Pride e.g. employee pride in the organisation as measured by survey. This is a measure of the employees' perception of the overall experience and benefits of working for, and values demonstrated by, the organisation.

Employee - Development plans e.g., the % of employees that have individual development plans. This forms a measure of the deployment of development plans among employees. Development plans should be designed to satisfy both the needs and aspirations of employees and the organisation.

Employee empowerment authority e.g. the % of non-management staff authorised to act on an initiative. This measure indicates the degree to which employee empowerment has been adopted by an organisation. A key contributor to employee satisfaction, the practice of authorising employee action on a personal initiative is usually a tangible result of a solid program of employee training and development.

Employee empowerment - Level of e.g. "The financial or other limits up to which an individual is empowered to use (on their own initiative) in order to pacify a customer or, the complexity or reach / implication of an action up to which an individual is empowered to change a process.

Employee - Development plan review frequency e.g. the number of reviews undertaken in a given period. This forms a measure of the effectiveness of the human resources management process. Reviews of development plans reflect the organisation's awareness of changes in the capabilities required from its employees and of the needs of employees themselves.

Employee - Commitment and motivation e.g. the % of employees that are committed to the organisational goals and objectives or, % of employees that are considered to be 'highly motivated'. Employee motivation and commitment is one of the major contributions that employees can make to the organisation as it ensures that they are employing maximum effort to their activities and working to the benefit of the organisation. This measure is also an indicator of employee satisfaction levels. The measurement of employee commitment and motivation is qualitative in nature and is therefore usually based upon employee satisfaction questionnaires and personal appraisal processes.

Employee alignment e.g. the % of employees that are given personal objectives (task and or development) that align with organisational goals. This is a measure which provides an indication of the level of alignment of the workforce for achieving organisational goals.

Employee capability e.g. the No. of roles the employee is capable of filling. One of the keys to achieving organisational agility is to develop a workforce that is flexible enough so that new roles can be taken up speedily and with the minimum of re-training.

Employee involvement - Organisational performance e.g. the frequency of consultation among non-managerial employees for organisational performance review or analysis purposes. This measure can be used as an input in the calculation of employee satisfaction or engagement, and the assessment of stakeholder focus and leadership effectiveness.

Employee - Skill appraisal involvement e.g. the % employees involved in a review of their future skill requirements. This measure assesses whether employees are involved in reviewing their future skill development requirements. Employee involvement can be important in not only correctly identifying their future skill requirement but also in terms of gaining their commitment to future training and development.

Employee - Recommendation of organisation as an employer e.g., the % of employees who are willing to recommend the organisation as an employer to a friend or, average number of applications or enquiries received regarding employment following recommendation or, % of applicants or appointees that have received recommendations from current employees or, % of vacancies, or skills gaps, filled by recommendations. This is a measure of the willingness of employees to recommend the organisation to others as an employer.

Employee ownership - Company direction e.g., the perceived level of ownership of company directions by employees. This measure needs a carefully considered scale and collection method, but offers vital insights as to the effectiveness of leadership and of the completeness of alignment within the workforce.

Summary

Employee development initiatives are of benefit both to the individuals concerned and to the organisations that they serve. Well developed employees can help to facilitate growth through being better informed and by jointly sharing the organisation's vision; they are also better equipped to bring improvements to their work environment and processes. Such employees are described as being "engaged" or better connected with the organisation and its leadership. These employees tend to have confidence in the organisation's future direction and thereby put their energies towards producing better results.

The development of engaged individuals within an organisation is not a trivial exercise, it demands that the organisation's leadership and management structures will embrace a culture of talent development and retention. Engaging employees is seen as a core part of the organisation's business strategy for marketplace success. Coaching and mentoring are key components of an effective employee development programme, Special care is taken to ensure that talented people are both hired and then offered a commitment by the organisation to maintain their ongoing development.

An understanding of the various aspirations and motivating factors which drive behaviour patterns can be of assistance when seeking to encourage significant growth in employees. Coaching and mentoring can become the

vehicle that motivates behavioural change and changes the performance of an organisation. Benefits include improvements in business and individual performance, better employee and customer attitudes, improved leadership behaviours and skills, better communications and, increased confidence. Well mentored individuals know that they are being looked after and consequently gain confidence in their abilities and respond accordingly.

Internships are another form of talent development which are of value to both the employee and the employer. Employers benefit from the new talents and skills provided by the intern and the intern with desirable attributes can be groomed for long-term service within an organisation.

Note

Techniques and case studies mentioned or summarised in this article can be found in more detail via the BPIR.com along with the full text of most of the articles and reports in the reference list below.

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