Employee Training and Development in Nigerian Organisaitons: Some Observations and Agenda for Research

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate aim of any training program is to add value and once a training program cannot add value, it should be reworked or altogether cancelled. Without training, it will be very difficult to acquire skills and without skills organizations will not achieve its objectives through people. Some organizations see training as an expensive venture and may put embargo on training and utilize the money for other projects in the organization. Organizations must encourage learning organizations through its serious approach to training and development. A leadership organization is one which continuously enhances the skills of its entire workforce. Organizations should show in words and indeed its resolve to place high emphasis on training by having a training philosophy, identifying training needs, training objectives, training administration and also evaluating training needs. It is discovered that organizations show poor attitude to training administration by not preparing and equipping their trainees before, during and after a training program. More importantly, research efforts should be devoted to identifying missing gaps in the reviewed materials. Priority would be given to empirical analysis of the significance of identifying specific and appropriate needs before venturing into training and the reason why training fails.

Keywords: *Training, Development, Nigerian Organizations.*

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate aim of every training and development program is to add value to human resource. Any training and development program that would not add value should be abandoned. Organizations should therefore make training and development of their employees a continuous activity.

Arnoff (1971) observes that training and development foster the initiative and creativity of employees and help to prevent manpower obsolescence, which may be due to age, attitude or the inability of a person to adapt him or herself to technological changes. According to Obisi (2001) training is a process through which the skills, talent and knowledge of an employee is enhanced and increased. He argues that training should take place only when the need and objectives for such training have been identified Scott, Clothier and Spriegel (1977) agree that training is the corner-stone of sound management, for it makes employees more effective and productive. They argue that training is actively and intimately connected with all the personnel and managerial activities. It would be difficult for a new employee to grow on the job and become a manager without adequate training and development. According to Mamoria (1995) training is a practical and vital necessity because; it enables employees to develop and rise within the organization and increase their market value, earning power and job security. Mamoria explains that training helps to mould employees' attitudes and help them to contribute meaningfully to the organization. The organization benefits because of enhanced performance of employees. He further states that a well trained employee would make a better and economic use of materials and equipment which would go a long way to minimize wastages.

According to Ohabunwa (1999) if organizations train their employees very well, managers and superiors would have the confidence to delegate authority to their subordinates but when subordinates are not properly trained, it would be difficult for authority to be delegated to them by their superiors.

Last year, I walked into a prominent bank in Lagos as the Head of Human Resource of the bank was going through some letters of employment. He picked one of the letters, admired the qualification and experience of a

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particular candidate and suddenly threw the applicant's letter into the trash basket. He said the candidate was over qualified, our organization cannot bend this candidate, he added. But I believe that with training, the candidate could become flexible, dynamic and adaptive to the organizations needs and environment.

TYPES OF TRAINING

There are two major types of training, on-the -job training and off- the -job training as identified by Alo (1999): On-the-job training, is normally handled by colleagues, supervisors, managers, mentors' to help employees adjust to their work and to equip them with appropriate job related skills Armstrong (1995) argues that on-the-job training may consist of teaching or coaching by more experienced people or trainers at the desk or at the bench. It may also consist of individual or group assignment and projects and the use of team leaders and managers.

According to Armstrong, on-the-job training is the only way to develop and practice the specific managerial, team leading, technical, selling, manual, and administrative skills needed by the organization and it has the advantages of actuality and immediacy as the individual works, learns and develops expertise at the same time.

Disadvantages of on-the-job training according to Armstrong are that the effectiveness of the learning is strongly influenced by the quality of the guidance and coaching provided on the job. Many managers and team leaders are unskilled at training and disinclined to carry it out or to encourage it. Furthermore, relying on fellow employees in “sit by me” training has obvious disadvantages as instruction may be inadequate and the training may perpetuate bad habits. Again, the learner may be distracted by the same environment and find it difficult to acquire basic skills quickly.

To resolve these disadvantages, train the trainers programme should be regularly embarked upon to sharpen the skills of supervisors and in-house trainers.

Off-the-job Training

According to Ejiogu (2000) off-the-job training would include lecture, vestibule training, role playing, case study, discussion and simulation Armstrong (1995) listed group exercises, team building, distance learning, outdoor and workshops as part of off-the-job training. He further explains that off-the-job training may be provided by members of the training department, external education and training establishments, or training providers-training consultants or guest speakers. He encourages line managers to be closely involved to bring reality into the classroom, to ease the transfer of learning, and to make sure that those involved in off-the-job training are carefully selected, briefed and monitored so as to ensure that they make the right contribution.

Understanding Training and Development

According to Obisi (1996) the concepts, of training and development are used interchangeably. However, it can be differentiated from the other. Training is for specific job purpose while development goes beyond specifics development covers not only those activities which improve job performance, but also those which bring about growth of personality. In training, you using one stone to kill one bird while in development you use one stone to kill two birds Mamoria, (1995).

Steinmetz, Lawrence (1996) notes that training is a short-term process, utilizing a systematic and organized procedure by which non-managerial personnel learn technical knowledge and skill for a definite purpose. Development on the other hand is a long term educational process utilizing a systematic and organized procedure by which managerial personnel learn conceptual and theoretical knowledge for general purpose.

Cambell, (1971) states that training refers only to instruction in technical and mechanical operations while development refers to philosophical and theoretical educational concept. Training is designed for non- managers while development involves managerial personnel. Training courses are typically designed for a short term, stated purpose, such as the operation of some piece (s) of machinery while development involves a broader education for long-term purpose. Training is for short-term while development is for long-term. Training is for specific job related purpose while development is for general purpose.

Vital issues in Training and Development

According to Armstrong (1995) the following issues are relevant to Training and development effectiveness.

- Organization training and development philosophy
- Strategic focus in Training
- Relevance of training
- Training process
- Identifying Training Needs and Training Needs analysis
- Identifying Training Objectives
- Evaluation of Training

Organization Training and Development Philosophy

Philosophy is the starting point to wisdom. Any organization that does not have a training philosophy is bound to fail for it invariably means that it does not have a serious approach for training. It may also mean that the organization pays lip service to training. If an organization does not have a training philosophy, it means that the organization does not believe in training. If an organization does not believe in training, it also means that there is no deliberate effort on the part of the organization to encourage training. For example, Some Nigerian organizations may stop temporarily their training activities and divert money meant for training, to other activities. But if the organization has a strong training philosophy it would attach great importance to training.

Strategic Focus in Training

Training activities in an organization should be a continuous process and not a once and for all activity. It is an on going process for new, old, transferred and promoted employees. According to Armstrong (1995) training strategy takes a long- term view of what skills, knowledge and levels of competence employees of the organization need. Training should be an integral part of the management process which in turn require managers to review regularly with their teams and the individuals reporting to them, performance in relation to agreed objectives.

Relevance of Training

Relevance of training is a very important issue that organizations should look critically at if they really want to improve the effectiveness of their employees. Any training program that is not relevant should not be undertaken. Training should be designed to solve problems and to fill gaps in employee performance. Training should make things happen and bring about changes that would enhance organization's effectiveness. It is not proper for an organization to embark on any training program which is not relevant to it and its people.

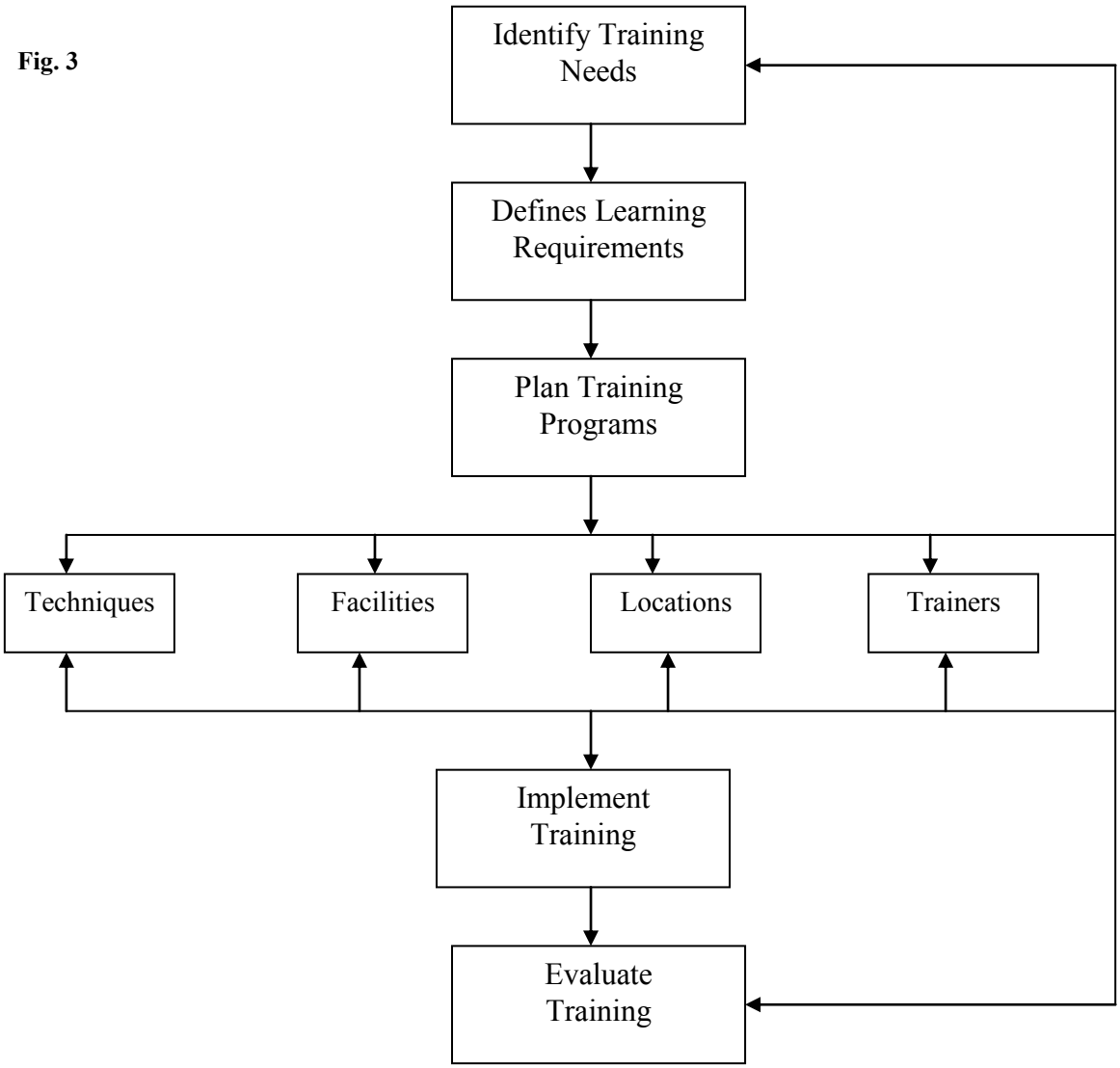
Armstrong (1995) agrees that for any training program to be relevant, it must satisfy identified and appropriate needs.

Planned Training

According to Kenney and Reid (1995) planned training is the deliberate intervention aimed at achieving the learning necessary for improved job performance. Planned training according to Kenney and Reid consists of the following steps:

- Identify and define training needs
- Define the learning required in terms of what skills and knowledge have to be learnt and what attitudes need to be changed.
- Define the objectives of the training
- Plan training programs to meet the needs and objectives by using right combination for training techniques and locations.
- Decide who provides the training
- Evaluate training.
- Amend and extend training as necessary.

Fig. 3



The Process of Planned Training

Source: *Armstrong Michael (1995) A Hand Book on Personnel Management Kogan Page London.*

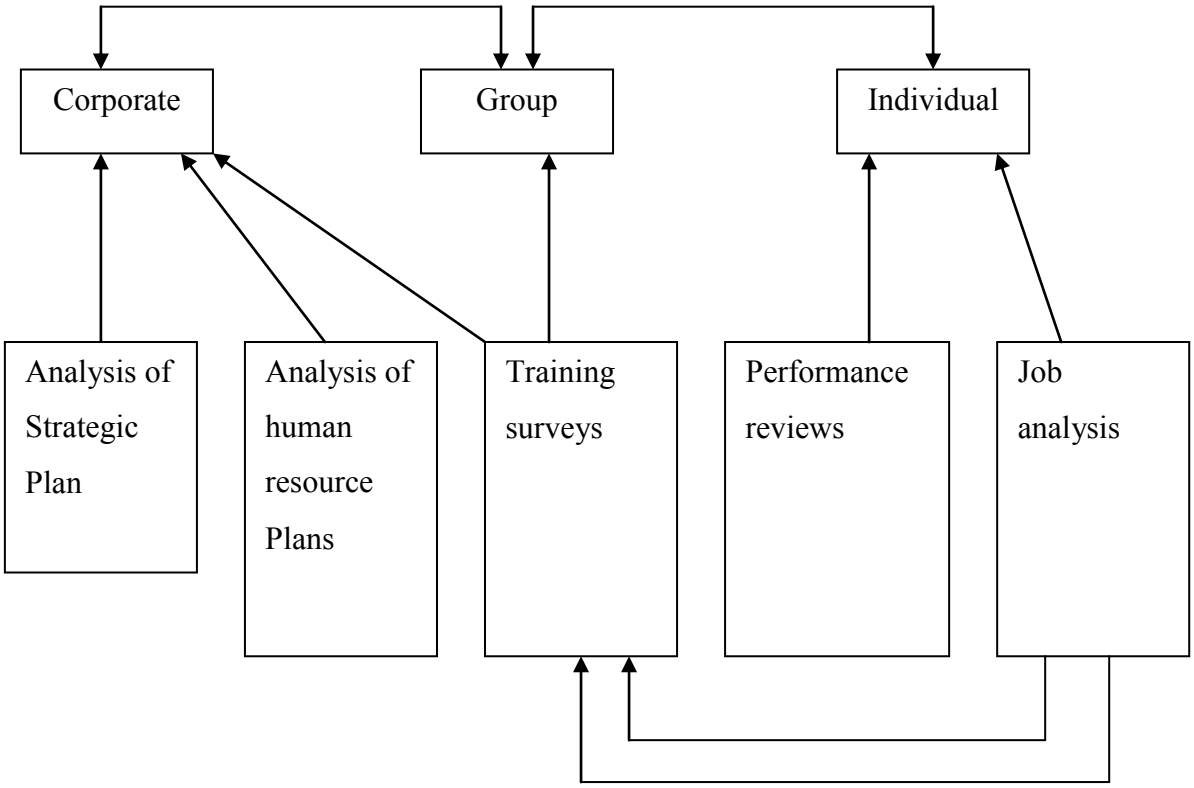
The inability of organizations to identify training needs is one of the major tragedies in organizations training practice. Employee performance appraisal outcome should reveal strengths and weakness. The weakness revealed should form training needs. Whenever there is a gap or vacuum between what employee is doing and what he should do, there is a training need.

Armstrong (1995) presents a clearer understanding of what is meant by training needs. He writes that the gap between what people know and can do and what people should know and be able to do is called training need. Therefore when an organization observes that there is a gap between what is happening and what should happen, there is a training need.

Analysis of Training need: There are four major ways of analyzing training needs.

- Analysis of jobs
- Performance appraisal
- Conducting training surveys
- Business and human resource analysis

Armstrong (1995) gives a diagrammatical analysis of training needs. Training should be analyzed first for the organization as a whole-first for corporate needs, second, for department, teams, functions or occupations within the organization-group needs, and third, for individual employees-individual needs.



Training Need analysis-Areas and Methods

Source: *Armstrong Michael (1995) A handbook of personnel Management practice Kogan page London.*

Training Objectives

Objectives of training are what employees would achieve and gain after undergoing the training program. The benefits of a training program refer to the objectives. Before employees embark on any training program, it is assumed that there are handicaps. If the handicaps are overcome after undergoing the training program it means that objectives have been achieved. Objectives mean what we can learn and do after a training program. Some organizations send their employees on a training program without identifying objectives and without knowing what the trainees would achieve by the time they come back from the training program, they will be able to achieve certain things. For example, employees were not able to conduct bank reconciliation statement or were not able to operate windows '98 and windows 2000. If they are able to do so at the end of a training program, one could say that the objectives have been realized.

Training Proposal and Planned of Training

Employee training is not cheap. It is a costly affair as care should be taken in drafting training proposal. The following steps should be taken into consideration, while drafting a training proposal

- Identifying Training needs
- Developing a theme for the training program.
- Introducing the theme.
- Objectives of the training program has to be identified
- Content of the training
- Benefits to participants
- Benefits to the organization
- Resource persons
- Duration
- Cost
- Training method
- Venue
- Time

- Target group
- Feedback, Monitoring and follow-up

Training Faculty

Training faculty consists of those who are in charge of training the participants. According to Fajana (1997) training faculty should be made up of competent instructors. The instructor should be competent in his or her areas of specialization and should have the personality to convey competence and ability. Atiomo (2000) explains that the training faculty should be aware in details of planned changes in policy, structure or process within the organization, as regards training. They should work more from within than from outside and be conscious of the need for continuity of training plans and activities. The growing complexity of industry and its problems makes increasing demands on the training faculty members to improve the quality of the workforce at all levels.

The training faculty should also have credibility with the trainees and should be able to use the chosen learning methods to meet learning objectives and they should be available whenever they are needed.

In the final analysis training faculty members should not only come from within the organization but external consultants should also be encouraged to be faculty members so that they can bring independence, experience, expertise and as Armstrong (1995) says that the external faculty members can bring a useful 'extra pair of hands' to the training activities.

Information and Logistics

For training programs to be effective, information should be readily available to the trainees. Extensive discussion with the trainees would go a long way to prepare them on various issues like reasons for the training and the benefit of the training to the trainees and the organization.

The inability to provide timely information and poor logistics can ruin training programs. At times you hear participants in a training program coming late or even not coming on the first day and this may not be unconnected with lack of logistics. Good transport, accommodation, and releasing money for the trainees on time. In some cases, the final approval for the training may be done on the day the training program is starting.

The location for the training should be conducive to help the participants relax and concentrate on the training activities.

Training Aids and Support Materials

According to Mamoria (1995) training materials have to be prepared with care and distributed among the trainees so that they may come well-prepared to a session and are able to understand the operations and demonstrations quickly and correctly. Mamoria argues that the following are the variety of tools and equipment utilized to impart effective training.

- Lectures
- Role playing
- Case studies
- Use of pamphlets, charts, brochures, booklets, handbook etc.
- Graphics, pictures, books, slides, movie projector, film strips, tape records.
- Reading room and libraries
- Teaching machines.

Evaluation of Training

The process of evaluation enables us to know whether a training program has been worthwhile or a waste of time. If the training has not been worthwhile, then it can be amended.

Employees come back from a training program and it is business as usual. This kind of approach may render training program impotent. Hamblin (1974) writes that evaluation of training program is any attempt to obtain information (feedback) on the effects of a training program, and to assess the value of the training in the light of the information obtained.

Evaluation of training program would enable organization find out whether or not the training has achieved its purpose, and objectives. One of the ways of evaluating training programs is by getting reactions from the trainees, by asking those who attended the training to write a report or by designing a comprehensive questionnaire which should be distributed to those who attended the training programme. Information obtained from the questionnaire should be analyzed for success or failure of the training. Training could also be evaluated through job performance.

This can be done by measuring the extent to which trainees have applied what they have learnt from the training on their job. Evaluation of training can also be done by measuring the impact of a training program on working of the unit or department where the trainees come from. The truth is that every training program should have effect not only on the employees who went for the training but the department or the unit where the trainees come from Armstrong, (1995). Finally evaluation of training program can also be done by looking at the impact of the training program on the entire organization.

The assumption is that the organization pays for employee training program and the organization should feel the impact or the effect of the training program. Therefore training program should be evaluated starting from the effects of the training on the employees who participated in the training program to the department or unit they work with and the ultimate effect on the organization.

Responsibility for Training

Everybody in the organization is responsible for training. It is not true that it is only management that is responsible for training. Employees should take their destinies in their own hands and train and develop themselves in their organizations but many are not ready to do that, truly speaking, four major groups should be responsible for training in an organization. These groups should include the top management who sees to the framing of training policy, the human resource department that organizes designs and audits training programs, the supervisor and officers who carry out the training programs and lastly the employees that help in providing feedback.

Creating a Desire for Training

Organizations should create conducive environment for training to flourish. Employees at all levels can be persuaded to have interest in training. Robert and Benn (1969) explain that trainees will respond to training programs involving changed behavior if they believe that the resulting modification in the behavior is in their own interest, that they will receive personal benefits as a result of their new behavior. Secondly, trainees will change their behavior if they became aware of better ways of performing (more productive or otherwise more satisfactory ways) and gain experience in the new pattern of behavior so that it becomes their normal manner of operation. Organizations should create a learning environment which will serve as a motivation for employees.

Why Training Fail

Organizations training practices can fail for many reasons. Burak, Elmer and Smith Robert (1977) give the following reasons:

- The benefits of training are not clear to the top management
- The top management hardly rewards supervisors for carrying out effective training.
- The top management rarely plans and budgets systematically for training.
- The middle management, without proper incentives from top management, does not account for training in production organization
- Training external to the employing unit sometimes teaches techniques on method contrary to practice of the participants scheduling.
- Trainers provide limited counseling and consulting services to the rest of the organization.

Trainers and Training

Despite elegant and elaborate training programs, objectives of training programs are at times not achieved. The inability of training programs to achieve their objective is called training snap. The following reasons are suggested as the cause of training snap as argued by Armstrong (1995).

- Trainees who attended training program may not have learnt anything and they come home empty

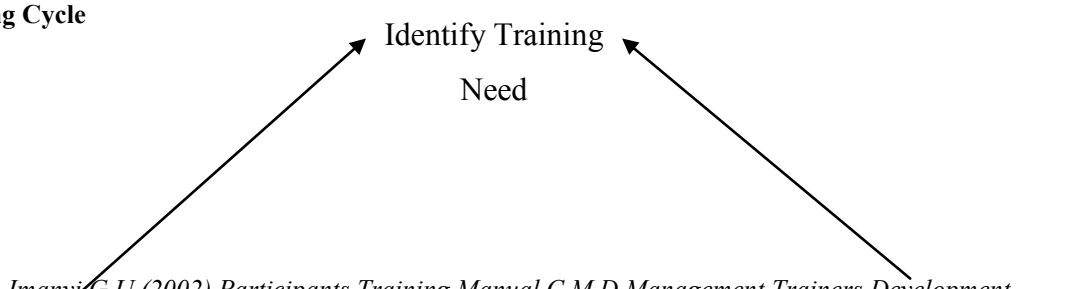
handed.

- Trainees who participated in the training program may learn something from the training they attended but they may not be allowed to apply it in their organization due to personal influences and awkward attitudes pervading their work environment.

Training Cycle

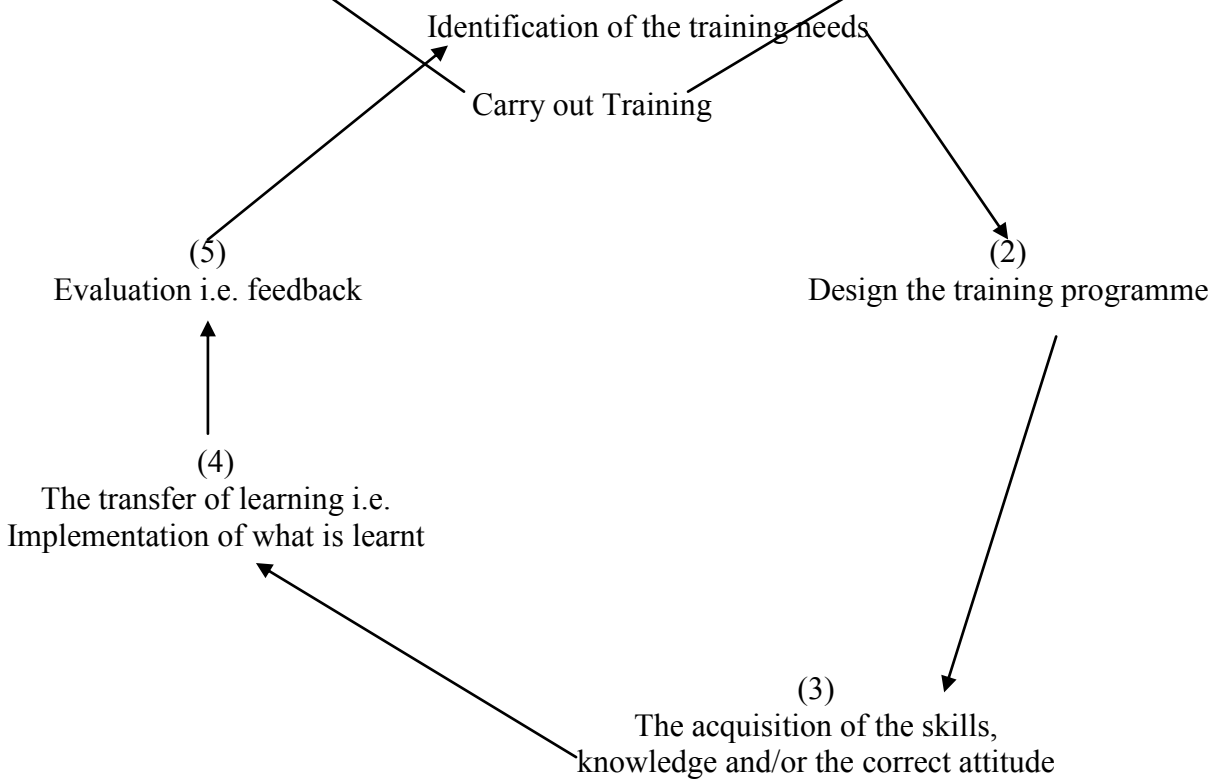
According to Management Services Commission (1981) Training Cycle involves identifying deficiencies, designing inputs, out puts and identifying learning strategies which should be evaluated to produce feedback which can be used to improve subsequent training. According to Imanyi (2002) systematic training cycle would include the following: identifying training needs, planning the training, carrying out the training and evaluating the training to know whether the training program is worthwhile.

Training Cycle



Source: *Imanyi G.U (2002) Participants Training Manual C.M.D Management Trainers Development .*

The Training Cycle (1)



Source: Atiomo (2000) Practical Human Resource Management Malthouse Press Ltd Lagos.

Target Group

Employees with varying skills require training. It is important to identify the target group that the training is meant for, According to Mamoria (1995). Target group in a training program could be unskilled employees,

semi skilled employees, and skilled employees. Other target group could also be typists, stenographers, accounts, clerks and those who handle computer. They all need training in their particular fields.

Instructors or resource persons should know in advance the target group for the training in order to avoid irrelevant discussion and give them enough time to prepare and discuss to the point.

Training Methods

According to Armstrong (1995) there are a wide variety of training techniques that can be used. These can be divided into:
On-the-job techniques, which are practiced on a day-to-day basis or as part of a specially tailored training programs. These include job rotation, planned experience and mentoring.

Off-the-job techniques, which are used in formal training course away from the place of work. These include lectures, talks, simulation, case study, role playing, workshops etc.

Fajana (1997) argues that the important thing in choosing training methods is to recognize the nature of the training that will take place and facilitate it. According to him, the biggest problem in training methods lies in the failure to realize the distinction between learning theory and principles, and "how to" in practice.

Training Administration

Training administration according to Fashola (2002) is the series of activities undertaken by the coordinator before, during and after a programme to ensure its success. Training administration is the deploying of all necessary inputs to achieve the objectives of a training programme. Fashola argues that the following issues should be considered in training administration

- Make your audience or participants feel at home.
- Brief resource persons properly
- Provide decent location
- End the training on a cheerful note.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Training and development is the tonic employees need to enhance their performance and potentials that will in turn enhance organization effectiveness.

Nigerian organizations should face realities, serious approach to training and development requires careful systematic and planned training and development activities. Nigerian organizations should invest more in training and development as money invested in the employees is like money kept in a safe deposit, which appreciates in value over time.

Personal and awkward influences are affecting employee-training efforts. Laisez-Faire approach to employee training is retrogressive. A situation where organizations believe that training and development is an act of faith, that employees should find their way is fraught with dangerous consequences. Some organizations are accepting training programs from their friends and relatives which are not based on the need of their organization. On the other hand, some employees do not show seriousness whenever they are sent on a training program. They come late, in some cases, on a five day training program; they would show up only on the last day.

Training should therefore be based on the need of the organization. It must benefit the employee in terms of performance and knowledge which will in turn affect the organization. As it is, some of the micro and macro institutions designed to train and equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge are not doing very well in terms of number of people these institutions train. We recommend strongly that all Training and Development Institutions in Nigeria like company training institutions, Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, Industrial Training Fund, Centre for Management Development. Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, Financial Institutions Training Center etc. should be reinvigorated to bring about effective training and development capable of sustaining organization to wining a competitive advantage.

Need for Further Research

Based on some observations mentioned in this text, there is a need to conduct a survey on the major issues

raised in this paper like an analysis of the significance of identifying training needs, objectives etc. and the reasons why training fail.

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