

Management of Training

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SUMMARY

Training is one of the key factors in building capacity for Surveyors and Surveying.

Training often tends to be specific and related to fairly narrow fields of development.

This paper will look at the management of the overall training process, the stages of development and a holistic approach to training for Surveyors.

This paper will suggest the basis for best practice in the management of training.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Training is one of the key factors in building capacity for Surveyors and Surveying. Training often tends to be specific and related to fairly narrow fields of development.

This paper will look at the management of the overall training process, the stages of development and a holistic approach to training for Surveyors.

Aristotle might have said, "The whole development of a Surveyor is more than the sum of individual training courses".

2. OVERALL STRATEGY

The most important factor in training is putting together a long-term development program, which satisfies the overall aspiration of the individual and increases the skills of that individual to meet the challenges of the present and future.

For most individuals whether employees, consultants or academics a strong motivation will be to achieve a more senior position which commands improving remuneration, this motivation can endure throughout a career and can therefore provide the basis for a long-term training program.

The conventional path to increasing the worth of an individual is to initially develop technical skills, then management skills and then corporate skills.

2.1 Technical Training

Technical Training required for the technical competence of a Surveyor.

This will include: -

- Health, Safety and the Environment
- Communications & Teamwork
- Planning monitoring reporting
- Setting out
- Practical Skills in Surveying Techniques
- Latest Trends in Technology
- Quality Control & Record keeping

2.2 Management Training

Training of a Surveyor in Management skills.

This will include: -

- Time Management

Management & leadership
Negotiating
Presentations
Supply chain management
Work winning
Risk & Change
Programming
Value Engineering/Change Management
Commercial Awareness
Quality Systems

2.3 Corporate Training

Training of a Surveyor in corporate skills, which would allow the running of a modest consultancy, would include: -

Dealing with the Press
Accounts
Commercial Awareness particularly cash flow
Networking and knowledge of the Industry
Contract Law

2.4 Continuing Training

Not all individuals will wish or can become board directors it is therefore necessary to maintain the interests and development of all individuals by assessment of their needs and aspirations.

At the same time corporations need to be planning for the needs of the company to set a strategy for training, which matches the forecast development of the company.

3. ASSESSING NEEDS

3.1 Training Need Analysis

A good training needs analysis (TNA) will first look at "what further skills are required for the individual to be able meet the demands of the current role?" Then the TNA will assess where they are now against where they need to be. This will define the skills gap. The next step is to consider what type of intervention will best 'up skill' the individual.

3.2 Skill Gap

Whether as an individual or as part of an organisation this Skill Gap should be assessed on a regular basis.

Companies need to formally assess individual's skill gaps. In the UK only some 40 percent of employees have formal needs assessment annually.

4. Structured Training Schemes

In UK training to professional qualifications is guided by the requirements of the Engineering Council and the development objectives of RICS and CICES. Any structured development scheme should therefore incorporate the Institutional requirements for Initial professional development and lead on to managerial and corporate skills.

In some countries there is a mandatory requirement for continuing training. Does this raise the status of those professionals?

4.1 Initial Professional Development

Core requirements are defined and the candidate has to achieve a defined level of competence normally these levels are defined in increasing levels of skill as: - appreciation, knowledge, experience and ability.

Requirements are to achieve progress against core objectives and to collect evidence of that development and learning. Supervisors, mentors, assessors and sponsors all contribute to the robustness of this part of a training programme.

4.2 Continuing Professional Development

Training schemes concentrate on the initial core technical capabilities but need to be extended to cover individual's total career period to retirement. Long-term commitment to the individual will improve long-term commitment to the company or employer. Supervision and mentoring should continue after professional status has been achieved.

Companies should consider providing career and organizational structures, which allow people to develop their careers within increasingly flat management structures.

The industry needs to be seen as more attractive to a wider range of people and young people need to be persuaded of the benefits of a career in surveying.

To measure improvement the level of achievement has to be assessed.

4.3 Types of Training

To develop a well-rounded individual, training needs to address a mix of technical and interpersonal skills. Development of those most likely to have the capacity for the best decision making may mean taking people who have a range of experience from different working environments and scenarios.

The best way to achieve maximum impact in training is to make it relevant, varied and enjoyable at the same time as keeping to measurable outcomes.

4.4 Objectives of the Institutions

To ensure that surveyors undertake regular training and development activities, in common with other chartered institutions, the RICS and CICES takes a mandatory approach to continuing professional development or CPD.

The policy of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requires Surveyors to undertake a minimum of 35 hours per year of CPD. Failure to do so can result in suspension from chartered status.

FIG Publication No 15 provides guidance to the surveying community on how to maintain professional competencies during periods of change and the need for the individual to take responsibility for managing that training.

4.5 Who should be trained?

For all staff, regular training and development opportunities lead to greater competence in existing roles. In turn, this helps the business to respond to change and overcome uncertainty in trading conditions.

The benefits of some training may be perceived as intangible, for example improved motivation or customer satisfaction. As a result, it may be tempting to ignore or neglect staff development, particularly for support staff, until mistakes or problems such as poor performance or complaints become obvious.

In a similar way, the benefits of non-technical ‘soft skills’ training, such as communication or management skills, can be difficult to measure in terms of return on investment. As a result, there is a tendency for surveyors to put a higher emphasis on content or ‘hard’ aspects of training, such as knowledge and technical skills.

There remains inequality in learning provision. Those with higher levels of qualifications are more likely to receive training, as are those in younger age groups.

People with degrees are more confident in initiating training, and they tend to undertake more learning outside the workplace.

Those with a lower level of educational attainment tend to prefer more passive approaches, such as on-the-job training. This tends to be well received by employees, although high levels of organizational support are required.

According to a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey conducted in March 2005, women are more likely to receive training than men, and 71 per cent of over 55s receive training. Evidence suggests that part-time employees receive marginally fewer training days (a mean average of 4.3 days compared with 5.1 days for full-time employees).

4.6 How much training do people receive?

The use of contingent labour (e.g. labour only subcontracts, self-employed, agency workers) limits training and contributes to the emergence of skill shortages.

The mean amount of time spent on training activities during 2004 was 4.9 days per employee. Employees in small businesses are least likely to receive training from their employers. According to the CIPD's 2005 survey, employees in firms with more than 100 employees are more than twice as likely to receive training than those working in smaller organizations. The observation that individuals who possess a degree are more likely to initiate training themselves appears to confirm that the more learning an individual undergoes, the more confident they are in requesting further opportunities. Initiation of training by individuals is more likely to occur in organizations with fewer than 20 employees, where it is unlikely that there will be a human resources (HR) or training department.

4.7 How successful is training?

The CIPD survey shows that 50 per cent of those undertaking training thought it had been 'very successful', while 44 per cent judged it to have been 'quite successful'. These striking results confirm the importance of training in the workplace and the value that employees put on these opportunities.

As might be expected, there is a close correlation between the size of an organization and the likelihood of it having an HR or training department, and also whether employees have the opportunity of assessing whether their training has been successful. This is clearly an issue for owners and managers in small organizations as there is the possibility that training activities might not meet organizational objectives.

The support of line managers is essential in driving training and in evaluating its effectiveness. Getting management buy-in for training and ensuring that line managers are serious in their approach to learning remains a priority for smaller practices.

4.8 Forms of training

The two most common forms of training are teaching in a meeting room or classroom and on-the-job training. However, research shows that coaching is a growing trend, particularly for managers.

Learners prefer active rather than passive learning. This is particularly true for those with no or low levels of qualifications, who prefer being shown something and then practising it. Being taught in a meeting room or classroom and learning from colleagues are the next most popular activities for learners.

The least popular methods of learning include reading books and articles, watching videos and correspondence courses.

4.9 Barriers to training

The main reasons given by people for turning down an offer of training are that they are too busy or that the training is not relevant to their job.

4.10 Cost of training

Being able to calculate how much an organization spends on training and development activities is an important activity. An organization needs to know this in order to:

- Prepare training plans and budgets
- Carry out assessments of whether particular training interventions provide value
- Make decisions about whether to buy in training services or provide them
- Evaluate the benefits of training
- Benchmark training expenditure against similar organizations'
- Calculate the return on investment in staff training.

The type of activity will affect how easy or complicated it is to cost the training. For example, sending people on an external training course is relatively easy to cost as there will be a cost per person charged for the course plus any associated travel, accommodation and subsistence costs. More difficult is the costing of developing and delivering a course from scratch.

Whatever training activity is chosen, the costs of employees' time away from work must be included especially when making assessments of value for money.

There are certain areas of business where investment in training cannot be avoided, key health and safety legislation includes a legal requirement to provide staff with sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to work safely.

5. CONCLUSION

Training for surveyors needs to be structured to cover the complete period of professional life. Training needs to be targeted at the skills gap formally assessed for that individual on a regular basis not by subscription to courses on a numerical basis or just by fulfilling hours on a CPD record.

Professional organizations provide the outline for continuous professional development but the individual must take responsibility for that development (a Personal Development Plan) and for the broader training required by a rounded individual.

Regular training of all individuals is required to maintain levels of competencies and to keep up to date with changes in the environment such as legislation and technology. Monitoring of that training is required if we are to measure how successful it is.

A best practice checklist is attached as Appendix 1

Surveying is a people driven profession; investment in training is investment in the future.

APPENDIX 1

Typical Checklist

- 1 Link training to long-term strategic business plans.
- 2 Include all staff when drawing up a training and development policy.
- 3 Staff must take some responsibility for their own learning opportunities. Encourage them to highlight training needs throughout the year and ask them to suggest opportunities and ideas for learning events.
- 4 Set funds aside for a dedicated annual training budget – e.g. a percentage of sales.
- 5 Formally assess training needs at least once a year. A performance appraisal or skills audit with up-to-date job descriptions including person specifications.
- 6 Manage expectations - training doesn't automatically lead to promotion. In most situations, it aims to help individuals to perform to the best of their ability in their current role.
- 7 Training doesn't always mean formal classroom-style learning. For example teaching others provides a better understanding of the subject matter. Involvement in a project team creates greater knowledge of a subject. Leading a project team provides people-management skills. Participating in contract negotiations provides legal knowledge, negotiating skills, people skills and a wider understanding of the issues. Troubleshooting provides investigative and problem-solving skills.
- 8 Employers in the UK are not allowed to charge staff for any health and safety training undertaken.
9. The best programmes offer a blended learning approach; this provides learners the opportunity to absorb learning in different ways according to their preferred learning style. A mixture of on the job training ie work shadowing, job rotation or secondments, extension or project work, technical courses and soft skills courses may achieve this.
10. Graduates normally follow a formal structured 3-year programme containing all of the above elements with additional opportunities for the brightest to compete for places on a Fast Track programme leading towards Senior Leadership. For these high performers learners are assessed for Emotional Intelligence and Motivation and other characteristics of high performing leaders. Once assessed, the mode of learning can be by self-directed learning.
11. Training must include the use of case studies from within the industry. Efforts must be made to replicate best practice, share knowledge, learn from mistakes. This is particularly true when employees are leaving a business or retiring.
12. Senior managers need to attend courses and deliver training sessions

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Richard Hucker MBE BSc. (Hons) FICE, F.Inst.CES, is a Chartered Civil Engineer who has been involved in the Development of Projects, for over 40 years. Richard graduated from City University and worked on a variety of different schemes in the UK before becoming an Agent for a major UK contractor. Richard then moved to the Middle East on a heavy marine project progressing through UK, Europe, Oman, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malaysia as Country Manager before setting up a Project Management company in Egypt. Richard has been involved in the development of skills through his involvement in local institutions,

setting standards for membership and sitting on panels reviewing national standards. Richard presented a paper in 2007 at the Hong Kong working week on “Planning & Development in Northern Iraq” having been awarded an MBE in 2006 for his services to British business in Iraq. Richard also gave papers in 2008 in Stockholm on “Recruitment & Retention of Surveyors”; on “Planning and Risk” at Eilat in 2009 and has contributed to the Historical section. Richard is a member of the Management Panel for the Institution of Civil Engineers is a Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors and Chairman of FIG working Group “10.3 - Project and Programme Management.” Richard currently works for Costain as a Senior Manager leading Proposal and Estimating teams for Major Projects.

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