

Mother may know best!

TIM BRYANT looks at how to align an individual's talents and skills with an employer's needs.



level of competence and their 'required level of competence', i.e. the agreed standard with which they can be judged to be doing their job effectively and, most importantly, consistently.

Key questions to consider when considering your employees development needs are:

- What level of knowledge and skills are required for your employees to be consistently performing to an agreed standard of performance?
- What is the appropriate attitude for your employees to adopt that will enable them to consistently perform to this standard?

Establishing the individual development needs of your team is therefore a process of accurately recognising their particular capabilities and motivations in specific areas, most usually: "Knowledge", "Skills" and perhaps most importantly, "Attitude".

Someone who has raised several children may have tremendous organisational skills but not immediately think of these as useful to their employer

immediately think of these as useful to the organisation. Skills assessment should identify gaps that require ongoing training and development.

An individual's 'areas of development' (or training needs) are therefore the gaps that exist between an individual's current

for completion within an allotted time. This technique of 'knowledge gathering' can be very cost effective and quick to implement. Be aware, however, that assessing knowledge alone will only tell you what participants claim to know, and will not confirm how they actually translate their knowledge into action.

S=Skills
i.e. demonstrating competence in carrying out the sales process/customer experience.

The assessment of skills leaves individuals facing their biggest critic – themselves. During an assessment or observation there is little room to hide. If you are competent, then the assessment will prove that to be the case. If you have areas of development, the assessment will raise these areas to your attention.

Structured interviews with employees, their direct line managers and, if required, a qualified assessor will ensure that all aspects of an individual's current skill levels are observed and reflected upon.

It is this highly practical needs assessment technique that has made the ATA assessments provided by the IMI such a roaring success since launch. Individuals are much more likely to 'own' their individual development plans as a result of having their skills formally assessed, as opposed to simply completing a current knowledge test.

A=Attitude
i.e. being positive and customer focused at all times.

An individual may have the appropriate levels of knowledge and skills required to do the job; they simply choose to mix their capability with an inappropriate or negative attitude.

As automotive retailers are fundamentally service providers, the way you are treated as a customer is equally as important as getting the job done correctly.

To enable this to happen, line managers should be encouraged to look at their team members' individual needs for learning and training at the time of their performance appraisals.

This may be done by comparing the level of competence achieved by the individual against the organisation's competence framework. Even if this level of structure is not available, then a statement of what the individual needs to learn in terms of new knowledge, enhanced skills and changes in attitude can be prepared at appraisal time and may be built into an individual development plan which can be shared, discussed and agreed with the individual concerned.

Training or Learning?

It is important to recognise that training can often be perceived as 'the stuff that needs to be put into people', when actually organisations should be encouraging people to learn for themselves. In this way, they become personally responsible for

achieving their own potential, and developing in the areas that they are most capable of, as well as their areas for development.

'Learning' far better expresses an individual's personal development needs than 'training'. 'Training' is about the organisation. 'Learning' is about the person.

Learning extends the idea of personal development (and thereby organisational development) into the realms of beliefs, values, wisdom, compassion, emotional maturity, ethics, and integrity.

When you help people to

Attracting, developing and retaining talented employees

PART THREE

develop as people, and not simply as employees, you create far greater alignment between work itself and people's actual lives – providing more meaning for people at work, and strengthening your employees' readiness for any amount of skills, processes and knowledge development that your organisation will ever need.

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