Building a training plan

What is a training plan?

A training plan is a systematic way to ensure each member of your team gets the skills and knowledge they need to do their job, at the right time. The plan details what each type of training aims to achieve (for example, what skills or knowledge will be learnt), who will be trained, how and when they will be trained and how the training will be evaluated.

When and how do I build a training plan?

Creating a training plan starts when you are recruiting and selecting a staff member. You will have thought about the skills and knowledge needed for the job and will select the staff member accordingly. The chances are that no one will be a perfect match, so discuss any gaps with the person you select. How you will fill these gaps becomes the first component of their training plan. This is also a good time to make clear that training is a key part of the business and all staff are expected to actively participate in regular training.

Orientation:

Many orientation activities involve training, and many of them, such as health and safety training, are standard for all staff. Use a checklist like this to ensure all new staff receive the same training and information.

The orientation process also involves identifying training needs and then adding these to the training plan. Use a list of skills like this one to help you and your new staff member plan what training they need and when and how it will be delivered.

Performance review:

The performance review process involves talking to your staff about what they have achieved and how well they have done, but it’s also about discussing what their goals are for the future and agreeing how they can be achieved. This discussion is the ideal time to further develop their training plan. It will cover gaps in their current performance and the actions needed to remedy these, as well as training that will further develop their skills and help them achieve their goals.
What does a training plan look like?

Overall plan:

As mentioned before, each staff member should have a plan like this one. Be sure to update it regularly and ensure you and your staff work together to make it happen.

Individual task training plan:

For each task that requires training, answering the questions on this training planner will ensure the training that is delivered is effective. Effective training covers not just the task but why it is important, what to do if things go wrong and what your expectations are of the trainee.

Who should deliver the training?

Think about who is the best person to deliver the training. Sometimes it is you, and at other times it could be external training organisations or your own experienced staff.

If you use your own staff to train others, consider sending them on a “train the trainer” course to increase their skills.

How do I evaluate the training?

Training is generally all about improved performance. To evaluate training, you can first ask the trainee to tell you what they have learnt, and then ask them to show you what they learnt. A few months after the training, observe the trainee to see if they are still applying what they learnt on the job. If not, they may need extra coaching to make sure they do.

If the training has not been successful you need to rethink what was provided and how, and make another plan to meet the need.

Tips for planning and delivering training:

- Training staff is time-consuming and sometimes it feels like it is easier to do something yourself rather than taking the time to train someone. However, once people are trained properly they will free up your time and you will reap the rewards of your training efforts. Staff who participate in regular training are generally more motivated, more efficient and less likely to leave.
- To get buy-in, work together with your staff to develop and review their training plan.
- Training is not always the best solution. Sometimes buddying up staff, or coaching, will work better than more formal training. These can still be added to the training plan.
- Review the effectiveness of all training to ensure the time, effort and money spent are having a positive impact on your staff and on your business.