



# **EMPLOYEE TRAINING** *and* **DEVELOPMENT**

## **Needs Assessment** Chapter 3



**6<sup>th</sup> Edition**  
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# Objectives

- Discuss the role of organization analysis, person analysis, and task analysis in needs assessment
- Identify different methods used in needs assessment and identify the advantages and disadvantages of each method
- Discuss the concerns of upper- and mid-level managers and trainers in needs assessment
- Explain how personal characteristics, input, output, consequences, and feedback influence performance and learning

# Objectives

- Create conditions to ensure that employees are receptive to training
- Discuss the steps involved in conducting a task analysis
- Analyze task analysis data to determine the tasks for which people need to be trained
- Explain competency models and the process used to develop them

# Introduction

- The design process begins with a needs assessment
- Subsequent steps in the process include
  - Ensuring that employees have the motivation and basic skills necessary to learn
  - Creating a positive learning environment
  - Making sure that trainees use learned skills on the job
  - Choosing the training method and evaluating the results
- **Needs assessment:** Process used to determine whether training is necessary

# Introduction

- Involves
  - **Organizational analysis:** Determines the appropriateness of training, given the company's business strategy and resources
  - **Person analysis:** Determines
    - Whether performance deficiencies result from a lack of knowledge, skill, or ability
    - Who needs training
    - Employee readiness for training

# Introduction

- **Task analysis:** Identifies the important tasks and knowledge, skills, and behaviors that need to be emphasized in training for employees to complete their tasks

# Why is Needs Assessment Necessary?

- Training may be incorrectly used as a solution to a performance problem
- Training programs may have the wrong content, objectives, or methods
- Trainees may be sent to training programs for which they do not have the basic skills, prerequisite skills, or confidence needed to learn

# Why is Needs Assessment Necessary?

- Training will not deliver the expected learning, behavior change, or financial results that the company expects
- Money will be spent on training programs that are unnecessary because they are unrelated to the company's business strategy



# Figure 3.1 – Causes and Outcomes of Needs Assessment

## *Reasons or “Pressure Points”*

- Legislation
- Lack of Basic Skills
- Poor Performance
- New Technology
- Customer Requests
- New Products
- Higher Performance Standards
- New Jobs
- Customer Dissatisfaction
- Reduce Scrap
- Improve Quality



## *Outcomes*

- What Trainees Need to Learn
- Who Receives Training
- What Training Method is Appropriate
- Frequency of Training
- Buy versus Build Training Decision
- Training versus Other HR Options Such as Selection or Job Redesign
- How Training Should Be Evaluated
- How to Facilitate Transfer of Training

## Table 3.1 – Key Concerns of Upper-Level and Mid-Level Managers and Trainers in Needs Assessment

	<b>Upper-Level Managers</b>	<b>Mid-Level Managers</b>	<b>Trainers</b>
Organizational Analysis	<p>Is training important to achieve our business objectives? How does training support our business strategy?</p> <p>What are the threats to our talent base?</p>	<p>Do I want to spend money on training? How much?</p> <p>How will training and development help meet my business goals?</p>	<p>Do I have the budget to buy training services?</p> <p>Will managers support training?</p>
Person Analysis	<p>What functions or business units need training?</p> <p>What do employees need to do to accomplish our business objectives?</p>	<p>Who should be trained? Managers? Professionals? Core employees?</p>	<p>How will I identify which employees need training?</p>
Task Analysis	<p>Does the company have people with the knowledge, skills, and abilities or competencies needed to compete in the marketplace?</p>	<p>For what jobs can training make the biggest difference in product quality or customer service?</p>	<p>For what tasks should employees be trained? What knowledge, skills, ability, or other characteristics are necessary?</p>

# Who Should Participate in Needs Assessment

- **Subject-matter experts (SMEs):** Employees, academics, managers, technical experts, trainers, and even customers or suppliers who are knowledgeable with regard to
  - Training issues
  - Knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful task performance
  - Necessary equipment and conditions under which task has to be performed

# Who Should Participate in Needs Assessment

- **Job incumbents:** Employees who are currently performing the job
- It is important to get a sample of job incumbents involved in the needs assessment because:
  - They tend to be most knowledgeable about the job
  - They can be a great hindrance to the training process if they do not feel they have had input in the process

# Table 3.2 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Needs Assessment Techniques

Technique	Advantages	Disadvantages
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generates data relevant to work environment</li> <li>• Minimizes interruption of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs skilled observers</li> <li>• Employees' behavior may be affected by being observed</li> </ul>
Questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inexpensive</li> <li>• Can collect data from a large number of persons</li> <li>• Data easily summarized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires time</li> <li>• Possible low return rates, inappropriate responses</li> <li>• Lacks detail</li> <li>• Only provides information directly related to questions asked</li> </ul>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good at uncovering details of training needs, as well as causes of and solutions to problems</li> <li>• Can explore unanticipated issues that come up</li> <li>• Questions can be modified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-consuming</li> <li>• Difficult to analyze</li> <li>• Needs skilled interviewers</li> <li>• Can be threatening to SMEs</li> <li>• Difficult to schedule</li> <li>• SMEs provide only information they think you want to hear</li> </ul>

# Table 3.2 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Needs Assessment Techniques

Focus groups and collaboration tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful with complex or controversial issues that one person may be unable or unwilling to explore</li> <li>• Questions can be modified to explore unanticipated issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-consuming to organize</li> <li>• Group members provide only information they think you want to hear</li> </ul>
Documentation (technical manuals, records)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good source of information on procedure</li> <li>• Objective</li> <li>• Good source of task information for new jobs and jobs in the process of being created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may be unable to understand technical language</li> <li>• Materials may be obsolete</li> </ul>
Online technology (software).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective</li> <li>• Minimizes interruption of work</li> <li>• Requires limited human involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May threaten employees</li> <li>• Manager may use information to punish rather than train</li> <li>• Limited to jobs requiring interaction with customers via computer or phone</li> </ul>
Historical data reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides data related to performance and practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available data may be inaccurate, incomplete, or not fully represent performance</li> </ul>

# Methods Used in Needs Assessment

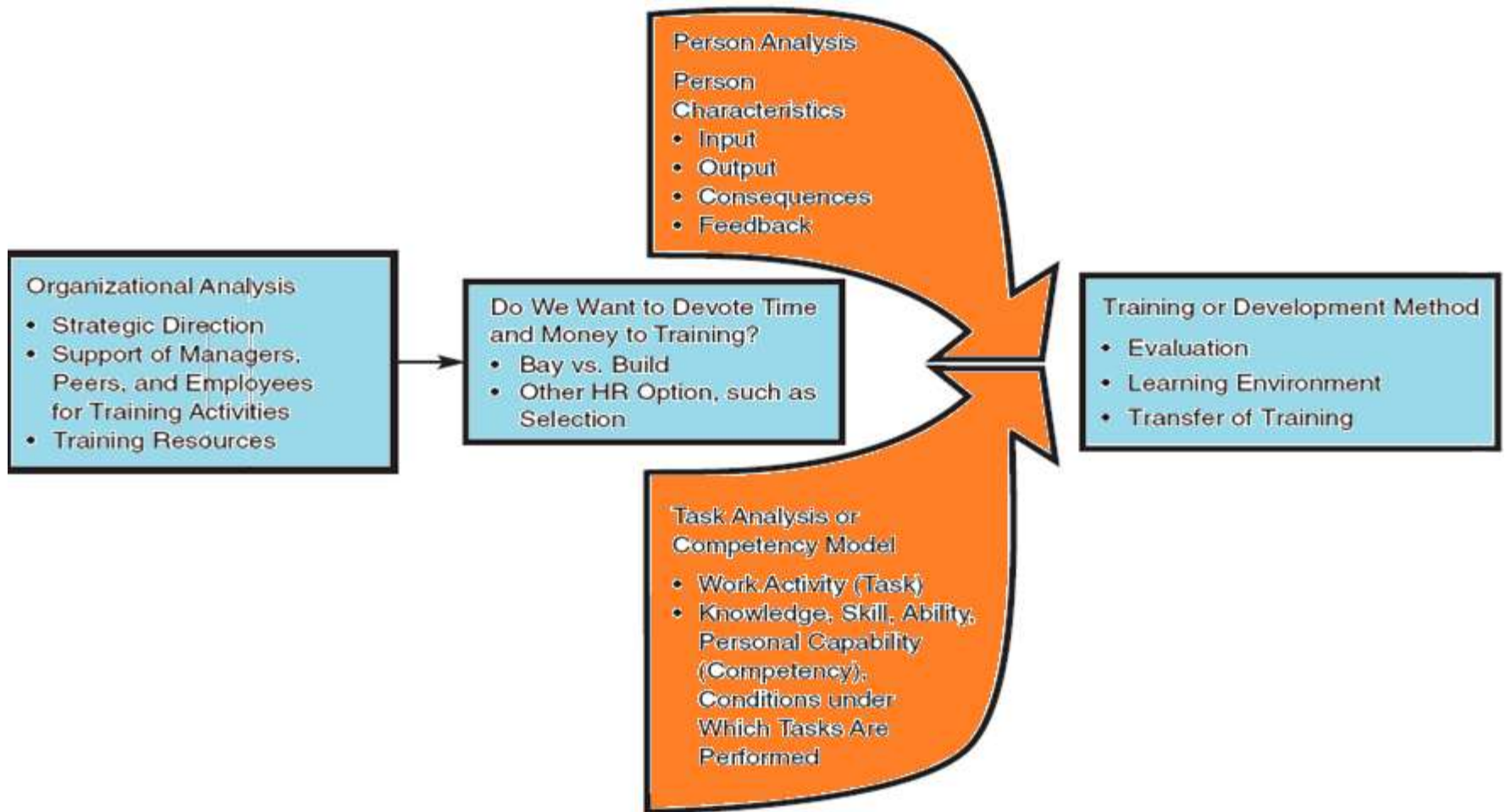
- For newly created jobs, trainers often do not have job incumbents to rely on for this information
- Historical data review provides information regarding current performance levels
- Online technology is available to monitor and track employee performance
- Because no one technique of conducting needs assessment is superior to the others, multiple methods are used

# Methods Used in Needs Assessment

- **Focus groups:** Type of SME interview that involves a face-to-face meeting with groups of SMEs in which the questions that are asked relate to specific training needs
- **Crowdsourcing:** Asking a large group of employees to help provide information for needs assessment that they are not traditionally asked to do
- **Benchmarking:** Using information about other companies' training practices to help determine the appropriate type, level, and frequency of training



# Figure 3.2 - The Needs Assessment Process



# Organizational Analysis

## The Company's Strategic Direction

Strategic role of training influences the frequency and type of training

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## Support of Managers, Peers, and Employees for Training Activities

If peers' and managers' attitudes and behaviors are not supportive, employees are not likely to apply training content to their jobs

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## Training Resources

One way to identify training resources is for companies that have similar operations or departments located across the country or the world to share practices

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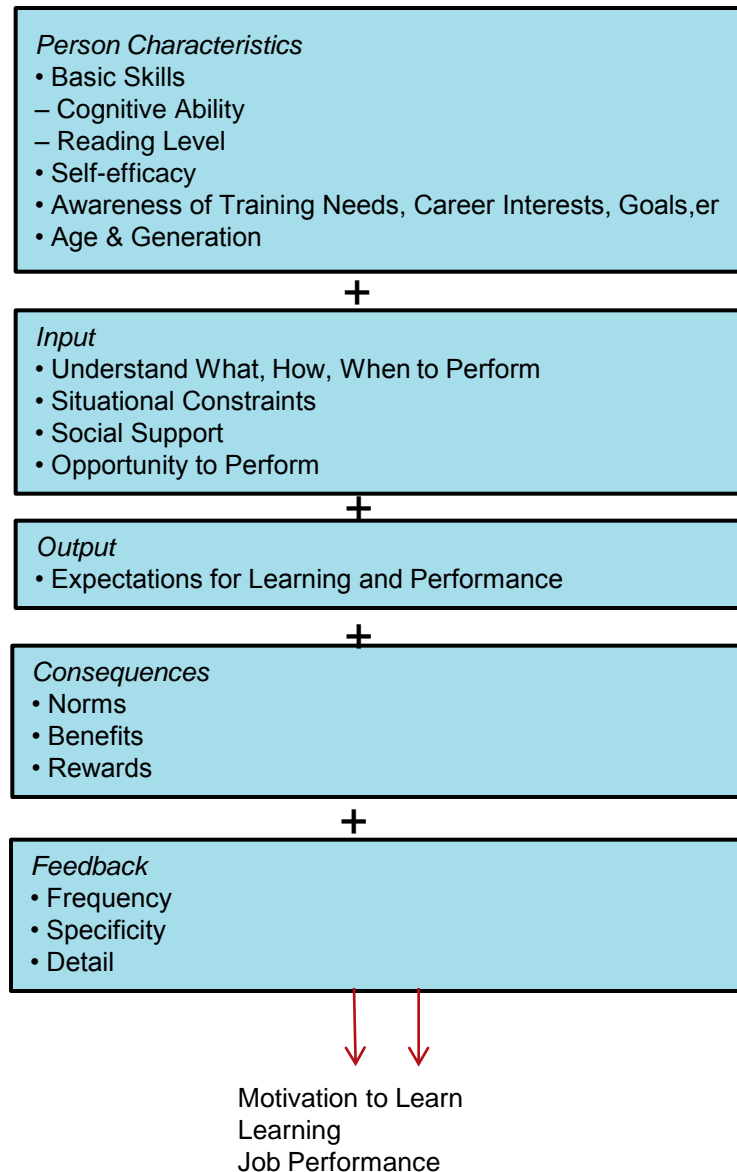
# Person Analysis

- Helps to identify employees who need training
- The need for training may result from the pressure points
- **Readiness for training:** Refers to whether:
  - Employees have the personal characteristics necessary to learn program content and apply it on the job
  - The work environment will facilitate learning and not interfere with performance

# Person Analysis

- This process includes evaluating person characteristics, input, output, consequences, and feedback
- A major pressure point for training is substandard or poor performance
- Another potential indicator of the need for training is if the job changes such that current levels of performance need to be improved or employees must be able to complete new tasks

# Figure 3.3 – Process for Analyzing the Factors That Influence Employee Performance and Learning



# Person Analysis

- **Consequences:** Type of incentives that employees receive for performing well
- **Feedback:** Information that employees receive while they are performing
- **Motivation to learn:** Trainees' desire to learn the content of training programs
- Personal characteristics include basic skills, cognitive ability, language skills, and other traits that employees need to perform their jobs or learn in training and development programs effectively

# Basic Skills

- Skills that are necessary for employees to perform on the job and learn the content of training programs successfully
  - Cognitive ability
  - Reading skills
  - Writing skills

# Cognitive Ability

- Includes three dimensions:
  - Verbal comprehension, quantitative ability, and reasoning ability
- Trainees' level of cognitive ability also can influence how well they can learn in training programs
- To identify employees without the cognitive ability to succeed on the job, companies use paper-and-pencil cognitive ability tests



# Reading Ability

- **Readability:** Difficulty level of written materials
- Readability assessment usually involves analysis of sentence length and word difficulty
- If trainees' reading level does not match the level needed for the training materials, four options are available
  - Trainers can determine whether it is feasible to lower the reading level of training materials or on-the-job training

# Reading Ability

- Employees without the necessary reading level could be identified through reading tests and reassigned to other positions more congruent with their skill levels
- Using reading tests, trainers can identify employees who lack the necessary reading skills and provide them with remedial training
- Alternative training methods need to be considered, or managers can elect a nontraining option
- To develop basic skills or close the skills gap, many companies are engaging in skills

# Self-Efficacy

- Employees' belief that they can perform their job or learn the content of the training program successfully
- Employees' self-efficacy level can be increased by:
  - Letting employees know the purpose of training
  - Providing as much information as possible about the training program and the purpose of training prior to the actual training

# Self-Efficacy

- Showing employees the training success of their peers who are now in similar jobs
- Providing employees with feedback that learning is under their control and they have the ability and the responsibility to overcome any learning difficulties they experience in the program

# Awareness of Training Needs, Career Interests, and Goals

- Managers should communicate the link between training and improvement of skill weaknesses or knowledge deficiencies
- Employees need to be given a choice of what programs to attend and must understand how actual training assignments are made to maximize motivation to learn

# Awareness of Training Needs, Career Interests, and Goals

- To ensure that the work environment enhances trainees' motivation to learn:
  - Provide materials, time, job-related information, and other work aids necessary for employees to use new skills or behavior before participating in training programs
  - Speak positively about the company's training programs to employees

# Age and Generation

- Millennials and Generation Y (born after 1980): Optimistic, willing to work and learn, and technology-literate
- Gen Xers (1965 to 1980): Need feedback and flexibility; they dislike close supervision
- Baby boomers (1946 and 1964): Competitive, hardworking, and concerned that all employees be fairly treated

# Age and Generation

- Traditionalists (1925 and 1945): Patriotic and loyal; great deal of knowledge of the history of organizations and work life



# Input

- **Situational constraints:** Include lack of proper tools and equipment, materials and supplies, budgetary support, and time
- **Social support:** Managers' and peers' willingness to provide feedback and reinforcement

# Output, Consequences, and Feedback

- Trainees need to understand what specifically they are expected to learn in the training program
- **Norms:** Accepted standards of behavior for workgroup members
- For employees to perform to standard, feedback needs to be given frequently, not just during a yearly performance evaluation

# Determining Whether Training is the Best Solution

- If employees lack the knowledge and skill to perform a job and the other factors are satisfactory, training is needed
- If employees have the knowledge and skill to perform but input, output, consequences, or feedback is inadequate, training may not be the best solution

## Table 3.5 - Example of the Relationships Among a Critical Job Issue, a Critical Process Issue, and a Critical Business Issue

### Critical Job Issue

#### *Desired Results*

No incomplete order forms  
100% accurate orders

#### *Current Results*

10% incomplete order forms  
83% accurate orders

### Critical Process Issue

#### *Desired Results*

Order cycle time of three days

#### *Current Results*

Order cycle time of thirty days

### Critical Business Issue

#### *Desired Results*

Market share of 60%

#### *Current Results*

Market Share of 48%

# Task Analysis

- **Job:** Specific position requiring the completion of certain tasks
- **Task:** Employee's work activity in a specific job

# The Needs Assessment Process

## (cont.)

- **Knowledge** – Includes facts or procedures
- **Skill** – Indicates competency in performing a task
- **Ability** – Includes the physical and mental capacities to perform a task

# Task Analysis

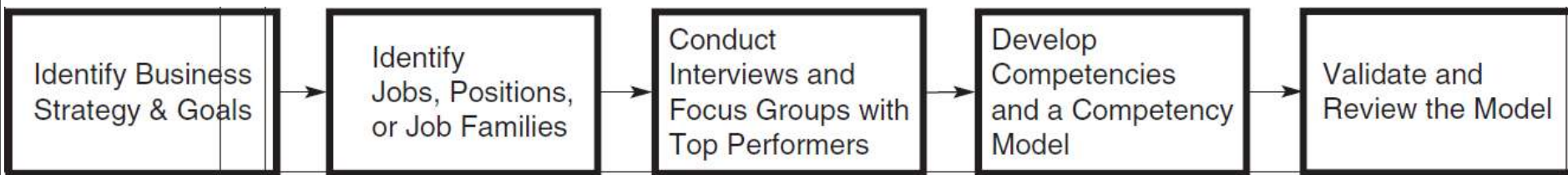
- Steps involved in a task analysis
  - Select the job or jobs to be analyzed
  - Develop a preliminary list of tasks performed on the job by:
    - Interviewing and observing expert employees and their managers
    - Talking with others who have performed a task analysis
  - Validate or confirm the preliminary list of tasks
  - Once the tasks have been identified, it is important to identify the knowledge, skills, or abilities necessary to successfully perform each task

# Competency Models

- Identifies the competencies necessary for each job
- Competency models provide descriptions of competencies that are common for an entire occupation or organization
- They can be used for:
  - Performance management
  - Identifying the best employees to fill open positions



# Figure 3.5 - Process Used in Developing a Competency Model



# Competency Models

- Competency models are useful for training and development in several ways
  - Identify behaviors needed for effective job performance
  - Evaluate the relationship between the company's current training programs and present needs

# Competency Models

- Provide a framework for ongoing coaching and feedback to develop employees for current and future roles
- Help in succession planning
- Help integrate and align the company's HR systems and practices

# Scope of Needs Assessment

- **Rapid needs assessment:** Needs assessment that is done quickly and accurately, but without sacrificing the quality of the process or the outcomes
- There are several ways to conduct a rapid needs assessment
  - Scope of needs assessment depends on the size of the potential pressure point

# Scope of Needs Assessment

- Consider using already available data collected for other purposes
- If business problems, technological developments, and other issues facing the organization are attuned to, training needs can be anticipated

# Needs Assessment in Practice

- The manufacturing operations of the Owens-Corning insulation business were interested in increasing the productivity, product quality, and safety performance of the business
  - Training was viewed as critical for helping the company meet its strategic objectives

# Needs Assessment in Practice

- Person analysis consisted of a survey of supervisor skills
- Training programs were developed to improve the identified skill deficiencies through methods that were congruent with the plant environment and culture