

WRITING A DYNAMIC TRAINING PLAN



- Step 1:** What does the trainee need to learn? Go into detail. Go into even more detail.
- Step 2:** Who are the best people in the company to teach the trainee what needs to be learned? What are their qualifications to teach the skills to the trainee?
- Step 3:** If I were learning this skill, how would I want to be taught? Would the trainee want to be taught the same way?
- Step 4:** Plan the training phase. How will the trainee learn each skill? How much time should learning the skill take?
- Step 5:** How will we know the trainee has mastered the skill? What behavior would we expect to see once the trainee knows the skill?
- Step 6:** Plan the next training phase.
- Step 7:** How will we know the trainee has mastered the skills in this phase?

- Step 8:** Plan the next training phase, and keep repeating the planning each of phase until all the skills are covered.
- Step 9:** Plan for cultural exchange. International trainees are not just Americans with cute accents. The best training plans intentionally allow trainees to share their cultural background with American employees and employees to share what it is to be American with the trainees.
- Step 10:** Put it all together. Now that we know what the trainee is going to learn, how the trainee is going to learn, and how we know that the trainee has learned, what is the over-all purpose of the training program?

Notice that developing a dynamic training plan starts with identifying what will serve the trainee and what the company has to offer. Dynamic training plans take just that - planning. Careful thought given to planning pays off. More than one trainee supervisor has said, "Thank you for helping us develop a real training plan - now I know what to do with a trainee."

Dynamic training plans develop not only the career skills of the trainee, but of the supervisors and mentors as well. In teaching the trainee, permanent staff examine why they do what they do. The result is more motivated, productive employees.

Dynamic training plans also recognize that different learning styles and different skills are best addressed by various training activities. The best training plans result in documents or products trainees can refer back to in future years to remind them of what was learned.

Here's a sample of training activities commonly found in training plans;

- Maintaining a Learning Journal - For each skill or objective, the trainee maintains a weekly journal of new insights, reactions to the training, future uses, etc. The journal is shared with the supervisor on a periodic basis as a point of reference for discussion on the trainee's progress.
- Interviewing Experts - Companies will frequently arrange for the trainee to meet with experts in the field to discuss issues and share experience. The expert need not necessarily be a company employee.
- Shadowing Experts - Observation is a powerful teaching skill, particularly when structured debriefing is build into the training plan.
- Guided Research Projects - Researching specialty areas can be a constructive learning tool if it is combined with intelligent discussion regarding the findings.
- Departmental Rotation - Rotating through several departments is a way to provide an over-view of how the pieces interact to contribute to the whole. Beware of rotation phases that last too long in one place, however. The time spent in each department must be justified by what is being learned.
- Classroom Training, Workshops, Seminars, Conferences - these are the traditional methods of adult learning. As with Shadowing Experts above, they are most effective when followed by structured debriefing.
- On-the-Job Training - By itself, on-the-job activity is not training. On-the-job activity must directly accomplish a stated goal or objective of the training plan. It also should be coupled with frequent, structured debriefing regarding what has been learned. Usually, the best use of on-the-job activity is to demonstrate competency in what has been learned through other training activities.
- Other - American companies are innovative. That's why international trainees come to the U.S. Be open to including the company employees' ideas on how to best contribute to the trainee's learning experience.
- Two last tips - use common everyday English. The Visa Sponsor, the trainee, and the host supervisor need to be able to use the training plan to know what the trainee should be learning at any given time. Avoid piling on redundancy. Burying the training activities under piles of meaningless words is a good indication that the activities are insufficient for the time being requested.

Focus on what the trainee is going to learn, not what the trainee is going to do. Managers are very accustomed to writing job descriptions, or what an employee is going to do for a company. A training plan is just the opposite, what the company is going to do for the trainee.

Finally, before you start to develop a training plan, call the American Immigration Council and discuss the program with us.

Find out what the American Immigration Council can do. Contact:

American Immigration Council

International Exchange Center

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