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TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT FOR PROMOTABILITY IN GHANAIAN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Training and Management development have become key concerns of many chief executives in Ghana since the capabilities of staff in any organization largely determine its ability to compete with others engaged in similar activities. Increasing complexities in jobs, technological advancement, concerns for the environment and competing interests of stakeholders in most organizations demand continuous training and self-development of employees. Management that fail to invest cash in the training and development of their staff often pay for it through poor quality goods, poor customer service, loss of market shares and high labour turnover. This paper examines training and staff development programmes as necessary concerns that can ensure that employees rise to the highest level of their capabilities. The study relied on a review of literature (desk study) besides observation. The onset of mediocre performance, giving rise to non-promotability at certain levels can be reduced through constant training and taking of opportunities for self-development. Managers who fail to improve their skills and redesign their organizational structures to reflect the changing demands of their internal and external publics usually cede part of their market and image to the more visionary ones.

KEYWORDS

Training, Management Development, Promotability, Organizations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This article is focused on training and management development for promotability in Ghanaian organizations.

Training is defined as a process that “seeks in a planned, coordinator and continuous manner to develop in all employees those understandings, skills, and attitudes which will maximized individual present and future efficiency and the effectiveness of the over-all company operations”. DePhilip et.al (1960:6).

Megginson et al. (1992:36) on the other hand defined training as “the process of attaining specific, detailed and routine job skills and techniques” Even though the two definitions appear different at a cursory look, they both emphasized training as a process and acquisition of skills that have links with the output of a trainee. Training therefore essentially targets improvement in the performance of a trainee and hence ties the transfer of knowledge and know-how to deficiencies and challenges existing or anticipated in the short-term by prospective trainees.

From the foregoing definitions, the actual training process must necessarily be preceded by a determination of training needs for prospective trainees in any organization. This may call for consistent appraisal of prospective trainees to discover whether particular shortcomings have continued to recur in spite of coaching from their superiors. A routine capacity diagnosis, of both the organization and its employees through job analysis, opinion surveys, annals of an organization as well as interviews of major stakeholders and former employees often serve as valuable sources of what needs to be done. Company records are particularly useful in determining productivity, absenteeism, malingering, health status, grievances, promotion and labour turnover. They may disclose misassignments difficulty working with certain peers or lack of skills. Training seeks to provide the needed skills for everybody to give his best, whenever management changes its organizational structure to reflect fresh insights, there is often able the need for retraining of employees since existing relationships about authority, responsibility and accountability are disturbed in the process.

Training needs obtained from a diagnosis of the performance evaluation of staff and the structure of the organization are then used to develop the training objectives for those affected. The objectives must reflect the needs and expectations of trainees to enlist the support and interest of employees. Where trainees perceive training objectives to be unrelated to their current or future tasks, they become disinterested or lukewarm towards the whole programme.

Training may be offered on the job or in classroom situations. Extreme care must be taken to select the training method that least dislocates ongoing work and disorientates the trainee but offers him the highest possible level of information to improve his performance.

On-the-job training methods include coaching, job rotation, apprenticeship and understanding. The latter method is used when the immediate superior is to be transferred, promoted, proceed on course or some leave of absence. In all these situations, the trainee must perceive that the training is relevant, unavoidable, enjoyable and would eventually bring social and economic rewards.

Off-the-job training methods may entail classroom situations that use lectures, case studies, role plays, audio-visual aids, syndicates, conferences, workshops, seminars, and vestibule methods. The list of techniques is by no means exhaustive in view of the ever-expanding research in making training more interesting, accessible and cost-effective. My contact with the curriculum vitae of applicants for employment at the University for Development Studies revealed the surprising lack of any form of off-the-job training by many candidates. This suggests that training is not receiving the right support due to scarce resources. Inattention to training offer results in employees who believe they are marketable to seek jobs with other organizations the hope that their full potentials might be identified and developed.

Webber (1975:675) thinks that the value of training and management development lies in the use of interpersonal skills as a bridge linking middle level managers to lower level employees and top-level management Technical, human and conceptual skills have to be identified, developed and imparted through communication. The success of routine training also requires communication skills that would allow trainers to be clear, concise, credible, consistent and detailed to the level of the trainees. Although training programmes are expensive, they invariably improve performance, reduce supervision, raise employee morale, reduce waste and provide a pool of skilled persons to draw from to fill vacancies, thereby saving costs through external advertisement to recruit an outsider. Timing for off-the-job training programmes is very important as work may have to proceed whilst trainees are away. Where a trainee’s presence at his beat is crucial, then training should be timed to coincide with periods of closure for routine maintenance or holidays. Effective training often requires the development of an evaluation criteria to ensure that there is a fit between training needs, objectives and post-training performance.

Management development is about providing the ideal environment for the actualization of individual potentialities, Ahuja (1988:177) defined management development as “a planned, systematic and continuous process of learning and growth designed to induce behavioural change in individuals by cultivating their mental abilities and inherent qualities through the acquisition, understanding the use of new knowledge, insights and skills”

Megginson et.al (1992:361) defined management development as “the broader scope of improvement and growth of abilities, attitudes and personality traits. The two definitions all place emphasis on the need for man “to know thyself.” They emphasize the need for a continuous search to discover oneself in order to give off one’s best in any organization. The aim of training and development therefore is to facilitate the process for employees in the production or service delivery sectors to constantly develop themselves to respond appropriately to the ever changing situations in the environment. These ever-changing forces in the environment demand appropriate strategic initiatives through focus, commitment and mastering of one’s job.

Steward (1996:203) explained that training usually requires minor behaviour changes through the application of new knowledge but development requires a major behaviour change in attitudes by top managers to significant changes in organizational structure or policies. The transition from one stage to another is often discomfiting and can be resisted at several levels of management. The tensions often generated by attempts to introduce change led Alvin Toffler to

assert that the greatest challenge to managers in the next millennium will be the management of change itself since change will come as surely as the sun will rise and set daily. Management development is therefore best undertaken in organizations that can be classified as learning organizations.

Several definitions of learning organizations exist developed from different viewpoints. Garwin is quoted by steward as defining a learning organization as “an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights. Steward again cites Senge's work (1990) as defining a learning organization as one where “people continually expand their capacity to create the results they really desire, where new and expensive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together.” others such as Pedler et. al. (1991) defined a learning organization as “one which facilitates the learning of all its members, and which continuously transforms itself.”¹⁰ All these definitions emphasize facilitation, continuity, participation of self, behaviour modification and focus on the mission of organizations. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is not particularly aimed at any specific problem, but the cultivation of analytical reasoning that can be applied in one's work experience upon reflection and conceptualization of the issues on hand. In this respect, learning for self-development is holistic and future-directed.

Livingstone (1971) and Megginson et al. agree that knowledge is the most effective source of power and hence it should be a lifetime concern for managers who want to be successful. Information is the mother of transformation. Megginson et al. (1992) quoted Margaret Mead as saying: “No one will live the world into which he was born, and no one will die in the world in which he worked in his maturity...learning...must go on not only at special times and in special places, but all through production and consumption.” The competitive nature of human endeavours, compounded by increasing globalization, have no place for laggards except innovators. Ahuja (1988:216) supports this line of thinking when he quoted a local Indian proverb: “If you wish to plan for a year, sow seeds, if you wish to plan for ten years plants trees, if you wish to plan for a lifetime develop and educate men.” There is considerable joy in learning for those who perceive knowledge as a vital decision-making tool in their career as managers.

Promotability, refers to possessing the desired qualities in organizations that determine the deservedness of raising the rank, responsibilities and remuneration of an employee on account of merit. I am using the word continuously because at many top management levels, it is not the mere possession of the required skills and knowledge but also the use of power to achieve results. Power is enhanced by knowledge but knowledge without power is not a desirable recommendation for any person seeking a top management position. Since the manager is expected to bargain and negotiate to overcome conflicts and differences in opinion, “the use of power to influence decisions in order to achieve those outcomes” is a plus in any managers curriculum vitae (Daft, 1992:45). Promotion is used in this text to mean an actual elevation in rank which goes with higher responsibilities and remuneration. From the ongoing, it becomes a disincentive if mediocre performers and high-fliers are promoted together with very little regard for productivity and time-tested laid down conditions for promotion.

Promotion frequently leads people to the top from where they are expected to direct affairs of an organisation. Sometimes the best candidate gets there but cannot turn the organisation around as he envisaged. He becomes overwhelmed by the enormity of the problems confronting him. Although a careful recruitment or promotion was involved in selection, the difficulties of a promote may suggest that the Peter Principle is probable at play. Excellent performers are those who are able to diagnose a problem when given the necessary support and encouragement Roseman (1977:186) point out that one can recognize a non-promotable person by the trend of his rewards, status attention paid him, task assigned, variety of work, learning opportunities and security. He concludes that where rewards are plateauing and every other assessment is decreasing then one is becoming non-promotable in the eyes of his boss. Similarly, decreasing attention along these variables mentioned show that the boss no longer appreciates his output and probably prefers somebody else. If one's assessment along these criteria are increasing, then one is promotable.

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study relied on a review of literature (desk study) besides observation.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND FINDINGS

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Both training and development are necessary for the human resource improvement in any organizations. Roseman (1977:46) contrast training and development in his work for training practitioners which I find very useful.

Factors	Training	Development
Scope	Narrow	Broad
Emphasis	Skills acquisition	Behaviour change
Orientation	Subject	Problem
Methods	Classroom & canned	Guided
Learner role	Passive	Active
Direction	Teacher	Self
Time Perspective	Present & Short-time	Future & Long-term
Transferability	Uncertain	Certain
Anxiety level	High	Low
Participation	Involuntary	Voluntary

Source: ROSEMAN, E, 1997.

Winding down is a situation where an employee feels frustrated, disappointed and in many important decisions in which he used to be involved. The recommended strategy for such a person is to assign him more responsibility and counsel him on the need to develop self through career development opportunities.

Wandering is diagnosed in an employee whose performance is going down the hill. Such people usually look bored, indifferent and uncommitted to team goals and activities that promote the corporate image of the organization. They perceive their personal needs to be marginalized for the social and economic ends of the organization. Such people begin to put in very little effort to balance the perceived loss of benefits in their minds. They need closer supervision, assurance of being crucial partners and admonition to exercise self-control over the use of their time and leisure. Close supervision reduces malingering in them and ensures commitment.

Wailing refers to frustrated employees who are constantly complaining about everything in the organization being exploitative, bogus and unrewarding. Such people are, hurt, envious and unappreciated. They criticize almost everything and everybody around them. They become troubleshooters as their constant complaints can mislead other uninformed colleagues. Wailers need recognition and self-esteem in their organizations. A mere verbal commendation or certificate of long service may let them believe and feel that management is still very aware of their existence and contribution to the organization's corporate image.

Warring employees are those who become hostile, vindictive and feel cheated. Their frustrations tend to make them aggressive and disruptive of existing esprit de corps among work groups. Such people when identified should be counseled on the values of positive human interaction so that they may realize that their conduct is harmful to themselves, their colleagues and the organization as a whole.

Worrying employees are those who by their own perceptions feel that they are insecure on their jobs. They tend to brood over their own growing sense of despair in the belief that, they will be replaced or marginalized as time runs on. Such people have to be encouraged to take their destiny into their hands and develop themselves rather than complain of their inadequate skills.

These classifications are for conceptual clarity but in practice employees could display one or more of these “woes” with the onset of non-promotability. Managing these “woes” requires skills that will balance concern for people and concern for output in the whole organization.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In every Ghanaian organization, wanderers, wailers, withdrawers, winders, warred and worried threaten the very foundations of productivity at various levels. They deserve to be helped to overcome their negative behaviors and become promotable in the coming years. Training and Development hold the keys to transforming such disenchanting persons and bringing back hope of secure future. The level of success often depends on the degree of understanding of the fusion of personal and organizational goals. This task calls for a manager that believes in continuous learning.

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