

9.12: Identifying Training Gaps

Learning Objectives

- Discuss how to identify training gaps



A training gap exists when there is a variance between desired/required behavior or performance and actual behavior or performance. This gap can occur on an individual, team or organizational level. This gap can reflect a lack of hard or soft skills, a lack of understanding of job expectations, industry knowledge, cultural norms or other issues. Hard skills are job-specific or functional skills—for example, cloud-based computing skills or knowledge of human resource-related laws and practices. Soft skills are bigger-picture capabilities that range from adaptability, curiosity and empathy to communication and critical thinking.

The training needs assessment process can be broken down into the following 6 steps:^[1]

1. **Establish clear expectations.** In order to accurately evaluate performance—and, therefore, accurately identify any training needs—job expectations must be clearly established and understood. Given this, job descriptions should be reviewed periodically to ensure performance requirements are current and include the desired/required performance.
2. **Measure performance.** Measuring performance not only establishes an objective point of reference, it creates an opportunity to discuss the instances of unsatisfactory performance and identify and document any issues and associated training or other actions. what training or other action is warranted. Identification of training needs and an associated training plan should also be incorporated in periodic reviews.
3. **Solicit input on training needs.** The individuals who are doing the work have a particularly relevant perspective on training needs are perhaps the best source of information on short-term training needs. Surveying employees individually or conducting focus groups are a couple of ways of obtaining input. In order to get a complete picture, managers should also be asked for input on individual and team training requirements. Use of 360 degree reviews, where employees—including management—are reviewed by their staff, peers and their manager—may also highlight training gaps. Soliciting input also encourages conversations about and progress on training and development broadly—an expectation of both employers and employees.
4. **Support career development.** Ask employees to rate their satisfaction with training and development opportunities and how existing policies and programs might be improved. Provide resources and support to help employees create self-directed development plans, in addition to the plans incorporated in their reviews. Identifying career interests and goals is valuable input into the overall organizational development plan.
5. **Conduct an organizational resource analysis.** Conduct an overall analysis of human resources roles and requirements relative to the organization's strategies and objectives to identify broad (for example, industry-specific) and position or job category-specific (including reskilling/upskilling) training needs and any resource requirements or redundancies. It may also be useful to convene a round-table group(s) to discuss the results of the organizational analysis, validate training needs and identify any additional issues or opportunities.
6. **Establish a coaching and mentoring program.** As discussed in the onboarding section, coaching and mentoring is an organizational best practice that is associated with high-performance. Mentors can support employee personal and career development and be another point of perspective on training gaps.

? Practice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/18164>

1. Jones, Melissa. "[How to Identify Employee Training and Development Needs.](#)" breathe. August 22, 2018. Accessed July 18, 2019. ↵

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