SESSION REPORT

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MARKETING YOUR TRAINING FUNCTION

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Project: TRED
Session: M352

427

August 22, 1983

MARKETING THE TRAINING FUNCTION

ABSTRACT

Have you ever wondered how you could tell your training story more

effectively? In this session we will cover different techniques that

let your user groups gain awareness of your capabilities. Approaches

ranging from open houses to printed catalogs will be discussed. Our

objective is to offer you a plan to help you with the communication

process.

Data Processing Training Managers need visibility in their organization's data processing community probably more than any other attribute to successfully do their job. What is needed is for the D.P. community to know that the Training Department is there and what that training department can do to help in the performance of the D.P. job.

Because of the ever changing, dynamic nature of data processing, training of the DP professional is an on-going continual process. What you do as the training professional is vital to the success of your organization's data processing effort.

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

Visibility is the key to success in a training department and perhaps the starting point for this visibility is to survey and identify the DP training requirements or demand. This is known as a "Training Needs Analysis." Conducting a "Training Needs Analysis" is difficult but necessary.

Basically there are two areas of "needs analysis." The first is "Organizational Needs." What are the data processing training needs for the entire organization? What are the training requirements based on hardware, software, applications installed and planned? In order to determine these needs you require close associations with data processing applications development, operations and the user departments to be kept apprised of what is going on and what is planned. You also need to know what type of training is required for each type of hardware, software and applications now in use and planned for the future.

The second type of "need analysis" is "Student Need." What are the needs of the people for whom you provide training. You must analyze what the DP personnel know now and what they need to know. The difference is "Student Need." This is a very simplistic statement that represents one of the most difficult jobs in a training department.

In order to be effective, the training department should be in "proact" and not "react" mode, and so the training department must be an integral part of DP planning process for new hardware, software and techniques.

So let's step back and see how these two "Needs Analyses" can be performed.

First,

HOW DO YOU INVOLVE THE TRAINING DEPARTMENT IN THE DP PLANNING PROCESS

There are a number of ways:

1. Make yourself visible.
2. Define training needs to convince management that they need
    to act to improve productivity and performance. Involve
    management in problem solving by soliciting and incorporat-
    ing their ideas.
3. Develop a methodology for getting top management's commit-
    ment for training.
4. Be useful and indispensible in not only the training process
    but the planning process as well.

Remember you need to be in on planning so that you are to PROACT and
not REACT mode.

Learn about your DP installation and its contribution to corpo-
rate goals.

Learn what data processing problems are to be solved.

Show that training is in a position to help.

Plan on a long relationship.

If necessary, get "small commitments" - successfully complete
them and this success and will lead to larger involvement.

HOW ARE THESE NEEDS OF THE ORGANIZATION MADE KNOWN TO THE TRAINING DEPARTMENT?

In order to do this, the training department must reach out to the DP
community through periodic training request forms or questionnaires
and personal contact and interviews. Personal Interviews are perhaps
the best way to establish a needs analysis. You meet your users and
DP managers and let people know what and where you are. A periodic
questionnaire or training request form make a good follow-up tools.

A SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How can the Training Department best suit your training needs?

What do you and your people expect from training courses? The train-
ing facilities? How can we improve effectiveness?

What training is needed in 1983 and when?

How many people do you need to train? Over what time span?

What training reports do you need? How often? What data do you want
on these reports? Who should receive these reports?

Possible examples of topics for reports are:

Training to be taken
Training courses available
Scheduling
Actual training taken
Actual vs. planned training
Training resource usage
Training costs in-house and outside schools

STEPS IN ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

1. Obtain information from your DP and User Managers on what educa-
    tion they will need for the next six months to one year through:
    Personal interviews.
    Survey questionnaires.
    Request forms.

2. Who do you need to train? Define your audience.
    Executives
    Managers
    Operators
    Analysts
    Programmers
        Application
        Systems - Technical Support
    Systems Designers
    Users - Application area
    Administrative Support

3. Define the job functions for these people.
    Job descriptions are a necessity. You need to know their
    competency levels and what they need to do to be successful in
    the job.

4. Identify the tasks within the job function.

    A Typical Task Analysis Contains:

    Entry Behavior
    Exact tasks to be performed
        Break job down into steps
    Skill required
    Knowledge required
    What materials will be used in the task

Sequence and frequency of the task
   Determine type of performance:
      Verbal, motor, discrimination
   Quality of performance

5. What is the core curriculum for each type of training needed?
    Needs by job function: Hardware
                             Software
                             Application

6. Prepare a general list of education courses (core curriculum) for
    each type of person needing training.

7. What special training requests are there?   For example, conver-
    sion from one hardware type to another.

TRANSITION TO ACTION:

   From the training needed:
      Media selection
         Self-study
            Develop In-House
            Purchase Course
         Classroom
            Develop In-House
            Vendor presented In-House
      Outside Vendor schools

WHAT DECISIONS INFLUENCE THE SELECTION OF METHOD

   Knowledge of audience
   Size of audience
   Is the course "on-going" or "one-time"
   Cost of training
   Turnover
   Time constraints
   Skills and time needed to develop course
   Location of students (Geography)
   Frequency of needs to teach this subject
   Instructors available now and in future
   Availability of material
   Space, equipment available for study and teaching

ASSESSING SIUDENT NEEDS

When the organizational needs are defined you are ready to determine
individual needs. The first step is to perform a skills assessment.

When you are trying to establish what people can do -- you need
personnel profiles, and skills inventories.
Then, when you know what they can do, but they need to do more --
the educational needs analysis.

STEPS IN STUDENT EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Using the Job Functions and Job Descriptions developed through orga-
nization needs and the tasks within job function, you determine what
they should know. The next step is the most difficult, that of what
do they know. You need to define present skill levels by
interviewing individuals and/or their managers or by using
questionnaires, and finally perhaps by testing for skills.
Here the major problem is the introduction of skills assessment as
just that, and not a threat to the individual. The emphasis must be
on evaluating what they can do to provide additional training and not
performance appraisal. Any skills assessment, whether done by
student questionnaires, or skills performance testing must be followed
by training and updating to emphasize the reason for the assessment.

From all of this we prepare an individual employee profile through
personal interviews and establish technical expertise through skills
assessment.What they should know minus what they do know equals needs.
Here you step in to help managers select right people for the right
training. Prepare an education plan for each person. From these
individual plans you compile an Education Planning Schedule and
implement training and education programs. It is important that you
keep individual skills inventories and education plans up-to-date.

Evaluate and assess achievement of your plan but most of all be
responsive.

MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM

Again, the main thrust is visibility.

You should:

Present a consistent image of the training department that is professional and credible.

Define and advertise the scope of your training function.

Package your product attractively.

Publish and advertise.

Make a name for yourself -- concentrate your initial efforts on an attention grabber.

Create a non-threatening environment.

Make yourself available and receptive.

Most organizations have rather standard techniques, such as:

Announcement tools:

Catalog -- Publication of Services
Annual or semi-annual
Include classes and self-study courses describing:
Pre-requisites
Objectives
Type of media
Duration
Audience
Cost
Easily available

Monthly newsletters

Publicity Flyers

Memos

Bulletin Board

Schedules

Articles in Inter-company publications

Also consider:

Teleconferences to announce

Award "Certificates of Completion"

Letter to employee and his/her manager on successful completion of a course.

Announce on your Computer network

Education Planning Seminars
Help managers assess needs and create plans and schedules for their people

Publish a listing of additional training resources such as
Library materials available
Video, self-study, etc.

Know who has In-House expertise so you can solicit their help for student assistance

KEEP IN FRONT OF YOUR AUDIENCE

Sponsor Seminars -- DP Professional Training
    Technology awareness, state-of-the-art

Workshops
    Users -- Computer literacy

Extra availability of self-study
    Education browse sessions
    Evening program for availability and personal development

Movies -- State of art

Outside industry seminars (such as American Bankers Association,
    and Institute of Banking)

Personal contact
    Memos and letters

Presentation on your services to User and DP management

Follow up on students to complete self-study courses

Education coordinators monthly meetings

Finally, you too must keep informed of what is available through:

Vendor catalogs

    Marketing representatives

    Seminars

    "800" number for education information

Membership in professional groups

Create your own catalog

    from flyers, bulletins, education literature

Subscribe to training publications

Attend conferences

Develop peer contacts

And so in summary:

    Deliver what training is needed and when it is needed
    Deliver training to the right audience
    Find a need and fill it
    Help DP Managers plan for their people
    Be cost conscious
    Evaluate your programs through
        Student critiques and follow-up with managers and trainees
        on-the-job at periodic intervals
        Keep records over time
    Communicate training results to your management and the
    organization
    Be professional -- establish credibility
    Be attentive to details
    Be responsible
    Be seen
    Be heard
    Be available
    Find what needs best fit your organization

Remember:
    Training programs must be
        Continuous
        Geared to job assignments and objectives
        Identifiable to managers and employees

    In successful training programs
        Management is involved and future DP plans must be
        considered in planning training
        Training must be justified through cost and benefits
        The training medium is selected only when it fits the need

"The program planner must learn the skillful art of giving the people
what they need to know, and indeed must know, while he is giving them
what they want" *

    * Pearl S. Buck in PEOPLE Vol. 4 No. 1 (April, 1945).

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