

QMT April 2005 Newsletter

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Training

An organisation will be successful in its performance if it invests in its human resources. Maximising the potential of the people in an organisation is probably the single most important step taken towards achieving an organisation's strategic goals.

Research has shown that the benefits of training include:

- Increased profit levels
- Higher staff morale leading to lower staff turnover and reduced absenteeism
- Higher productivity
- Improved quality of work

For the training to deliver these types of results it needs to be part of a company-wide strategy and linked into the overall business goals and performance. It needs to be efficiently planned, implemented and evaluated to be most effective. Any gaps between the skills of staff and the skill requirements of the business need to be addressed by either recruitment or through training. A useful way of identifying the skill gap is through a training needs analysis as this will pinpoint the key training issues. Looking at training needs in this way can make sure that you spend your training budget where it is most needed.

After identifying the training required you will need to decide how it is to be provided. Selecting your training provider is an important decision and needs to be carried out thoroughly. To select your learning/training

provider you need to review their information either using their brochure, or online, if they have a website. Thus the process is:

- Identify the training needs by analysing the skills required - this can be provided from your training needs analysis.
- Select a method of delivery, whether it should be a public, in-house or distance learning/e-learning training course.
- Select the learning/training provider by evaluating and reviewing their information and comparing them. Choose carefully and make sure that the qualification gained is a valid one. Ask questions to find out how long the learning/training provider has been delivering the course, review the course contents, their staff experience, capability and attitude, which can be a reflection on their training and delivery of information. Also consider the cost of the course, the lowest cost provider is not always the best option.

Developing a learning culture within an organisation can create a working environment where individuals at all levels are interested to learn and increase their potential in a worthwhile way. This can satisfy their desire for self-improvement and provide more loyal and enthusiastic employees with greater acceptability and adaptability to change, which in effect can revitalise the organisation by making it more adaptable to the market needs and changes.

Inclusive Design

A new British Standard has been released - BS 7000-6:2005; it is a guide to managing inclusive design. The guide provides a framework for organisations to make sure that disabled people's needs are taken account of at all stages of a products life cycle. Many organisations took part in the drafting process including RNID, RNIB, Design Council, Tesco Stores. The Co-ordinator of the BSI drafting committee says, "Organisations that adopt a proactive approach based on better understanding of consumer needs and aspirations stand to benefit from higher quality products, services and facilities; increased sales, customer satisfaction and loyalty; stronger brand values and enhanced brand recognition; and greater profitability".

The other standards in the BS 7000 series are:

- BS7000-1:1999 Guide to managing innovation
- BS7000-2:1997 Guide to managing the design of manufactured products
- BS7000-3:1994 Guide to managing service design
- BS7000-4:1996 Guide to managing design in construction
- BS7000-5:2001 Guide to managing obsolescence
- BS7000-10:1995 Glossary of terms used in design management

For more information on the new standard visit www.bsi-global.com

ISO 14001 Survey

The International Standards Organisation (ISO), have recently carried out a survey to gather feedback on ISO14001 in SMEs. It aims to use the results to increase the value to SMEs of implementing an environmental management system. Alan Bryden, ISO Secretary General has commented that, "Small and medium sized enterprises are by far the most numerous in most economies and thus vital to economic wealth and to environmental health. Therefore, it is important to facilitate their use of environmental management systems". A report on the survey will be available online after 1 May 2005.

For further information visit www.iso.org, ISO14001 section.

ISO9001 : 2000 for local government

An international workshop is being held in May 2005 in Mexico to develop guidelines that aim to make it easier for local government authorities to implement the ISO9001 standard. Although the new version of the standard is more suitable for implementation by service organisations than the 1994 version, it is hoped that these new guidelines will further encourage the take up of quality management systems amongst local authorities.

For further information visit www.iso.ch

Customer Focus

New research carried out by the Work Foundation found that Customer focus is the driving force in a large number of organisations in the UK. 80% of respondents said that rapid customer service and quality issues were their main business strategies. The survey also highlighted the common struggle to identify competitive advantage and the high rate of mergers, de-mergers and acquisitions. (UKExcellence Feb/March 2005)

Networking

A new networking group is being launched by the British Quality Foundation. The group will look at issues relevant to multinational organisations and will be lead by a high profile sponsor. There has been plenty of interest in the group and if you want to know more visit www.quality-foundation.co.uk

The IQA are asking their members if anyone is interested in forming an education special interest group (SIG). SIGs provide members with a forum to network and exchange views on good practice with others from their sector. Any members interested in joining this SIG should contact the IQA www.iqa.org

The IQA has a Financial Services Business Improvement Group that is a network for the exchange of business optimisation experience between financial services professionals. The Group includes executives from major financial corporations such as HSBC and American Express. The group's mission is to :

Create the most active member based business optimisation group with the UK financial services

For further information visit www.iqa.org

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000, came into force on 1 January 2005. To help public authorities meet and maintain compliance, BSI have released 'The Guide to Freedom of Information'. This guide aims :-

- To be a single reference source for advice on the Act
- To provide descriptions of the actions required
- To help you deal with problems arising
- To keep you up to date with changes

For more information visit www.bsi-global/foi

E skills Degree

A degree course aimed at the e skills consortium of IT and telecommunications businesses is being launched by the University of Greenwich. The course content meets the requirements of e skills UK and is supported by many companies including BT, Ford, Dell etc. E skills UK is a not-for-profit organisation licensed by the Government as the Skills Sector Council for IT, Telecoms and Contact Centres. Karen Price CEO of e skills UK said "This is the first degree of its kind being launched specifically to meet the skills needs of our sector which is so important to the national economy".

(South East Business News March)

Training Input needed from Employers

Schools and Colleges are now much more aware of the need to offer more vocational courses that meet the needs of business employers. Colleges have to demonstrate that they are responsive to these needs and have to quantify their "employer engagement" activities. Employers have an important role in supporting those who provide training and can do so by:

- Providing work experience placements
- Speaking at schools and colleges
- Acting as Governors
- Mentoring young enterprise programmes

- collaborate with the planning of training courses
- provide contributions in cash or kind to support the training programmes.

(South East Business News March)

Working Time Directive

The Working Time Directive of the EU has reached a critical stage in consultation. The Directive aims to limit by law the number of hours people can work, even if they wish to work longer than the contracted hours. The UK wants an opt-out clause that would allow people to choose for themselves. In the British Chambers of Commerce employment survey carried out last year, over 50% of businesses surveyed said that removing the opt-out would adversely affect their business. The current drafting proposals have removed the opt-out clause and this could have a detrimental effect on a large number of UK businesses. For up to date information contact your local chamber of commerce.

Dyslexia

In a recent report on dyslexia in the workplace by the Trades Union Congress, it was found that many employers are not doing enough to tackle the condition at work. Managers may not appreciate the link between dyslexia and common performance problems and so may not treat dyslexic employees fairly. Common problems can be: dealing with maps and charts, following spoken or written instructions, writing, giving presentations and scheduling work. The recent Disability Discrimination Act has helped many workers get support. Workers with dyslexia need to know that the law is on their side and help is available for them.

(Quality World March)