

On-the-job training

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In the last few articles, I have discussed off-the-job training which took place away from an employee's immediate responsibilities and work area. This week I will discuss on-the-job training which typically involves job instruction and supervision by an employee's immediate manager or an experienced co-worker. This method of transferring skills, knowledge and competencies is a common method of training which has a high success rate. Although it seems obvious, 'learning by doing' is an essential and important educational method. A number of methods fall into the category of on-the-job training. Each method will be discussed briefly:

- Job rotation or cross training consists of placing an employee in different jobs for a limited period of time, ranging from a couple of hours to several weeks including up to a year, depending on the complexity of the job. This type of training provides an employee with an overview of how the departments of a business are interrelated and work together holistically as well as teaching them new skills and knowledge.
- Enlarged and enriched job responsibilities means giving an employee additional responsibilities or increasing the autonomy associated with their current job. This enables an employee to gain a more detailed understanding of their job and it assists in keeping them motivated and challenged.
- Coaching has become a popular means of training staff. A coach, usually the employee's new manager or an experienced colleague, takes responsibility for coaching the person. The role of the coach is to achieve developmental objectives by setting goals, provide support in reaching the goals and to give constructive feedback. The coach answers questions, provides guidance, encourages decision-making and problem solving and supports when challenges facing the employee arise. For coaching to work successfully, trust, cooperation and respect are essential.
- Mentoring differs from coaching in that an experienced manager (usually an older person) provides guidance to a junior employee (usually a younger person) and facilitates their personal development. Mentoring involves either a formal mentorship programme or an informal mentoring relationship. Informal relationships, where a mentor has spotted the potential of the mentee, are often more effective than formal mentorship programmes. The role of the mentor consists of: providing visibility for the mentee within the business, counselling on work and personal problems, and generally supporting the advancement of the career of the mentee.
- Work committees are formed to solve current problems, plan for the future and to act on issues which are important to the business. The nature of a work committee enables employees to gain confidence and to strengthen their skills and knowledge in a group situation through discussion and learning from others. The knowledge shared at the committee thereby increases the knowledge of all its members. In this way, resources are built up and institutional knowledge is gained.

Although prescribed by legislation, services under supervision can be regarded as a form of on-the-job training. Services of this nature refer to 'financial services that are rendered by a representative who does not meet the prescribed experience, qualification and/or regulatory examination requirements and where the services are rendered under the guidance, instruction and supervision of a supervisor'. The current requirements, detailed in a Board Notice^[1], stipulate the conditions that must be present before an FSP can offer services under supervision. The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is also highly regulated, including the activities that may be supervised, the period of supervision and supervision arrangements.

On-the-job training is a hands-on method of training that provides employees with valuable skills and knowledge needed to perform a specific job within the business. However, it does require a skilled and experienced instructor who is able to effectively train employees. Good interpersonal skills on the part of the person training are also necessary to encourage and motivate an employee during the process, especially when mistakes are made. On-the-job training supported by off-the-job training such as lectures, presentations and workshops enables an employee to get up to speed as efficiently and quickly as possible.

References

- Board Notice 104 of 2008 – Exemption in respect of services under supervision in terms of requirements and conditions, 2008.
- Grobler P, Warnich S, Carrell MR et al *Human Resource Management in South Africa* 3rd ed (Thomson 2006).

[1] The FSCA published a Consultation Paper: *Exemption of Services under Supervision*, on 31 July 2018.