**Chapter Three**

**Needs Assessment**

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Discuss the role of organization analysis, person analysis, and task analysis in needs assessment.

2. Identify different methods used in needs assessment and identify the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

3. Discuss the concerns of upper- and mid-level managers and trainers in needs assessment.

4. Explain how person characteristics, input, output, consequences, and feedback influence performance and learning.

5. Create conditions to ensure that employees are receptive to training.

6. Discuss the steps involved in conducting a task analysis.

7. Analyze task analysis data to determine the tasks in which people need to be trained.

8. Explain competency models and the process used to develop them.

**MULTIPLE CHOICE**

3.1. Which of the following statements is true of needs assessment?

1. The needs assessment process fails to provide information regarding the outcomes that should be collected to evaluate training effectiveness.
2. Upper- and mid-level managers are excluded from getting involved in the needs assessment process.
3. The role of the needs assessment is to determine if training is the appropriate solution.
4. A company’s decision regarding outsourcing its training is independent of needs assessment.

Answer: c

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective:

3.2. \_\_\_\_\_ involves determining whether performance deficiencies result from lack of knowledge or skills.

* 1. Organizational analysis
  2. Person analysis
  3. Performance analysis
  4. Task analysis

Answer: b

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 1

3.3. \_\_\_\_\_ analysis involves determining the appropriateness of training, given the company’s business strategy, its resources available for training, and support by managers and peers.

1. Organizational
2. Task
3. Gap
4. Value-chain

Answer: a

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 1

3.4. According to the text, collecting data on social support for training from managers and peers is a component of which level analysis?

1. Organizational analysis
2. Personal analysis
3. Task analysis
4. a and b

Answer: d

Difficulty: hard

Learning objective: 1

3.5. \_\_\_\_\_ are more concerned with how training may affect the attainment of financial goals for the particular units they supervise.

1. Operational workers
2. Instructional designers
3. Mid-level managers
4. Upper-level managers

Answer: c

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 3

3.6. Which of the following methods is inexpensive and allows the collection of data from a large number of individuals?

1. Survey
2. Observation
3. Focus group
4. Interview

Answer: a

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.7. A primary disadvantage of using \_\_\_\_ in the needs assessment process is that the data obtained may lack detail.

1. Crowdsourcing
2. Interviewing
3. Survey
4. Observation

Answer: c

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 2

3.8. \_\_\_\_\_ are useful with complex or controversial issues.

1. Surveys
2. Observations
3. Focus groups
4. Historical data reviews

Answer: c

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.9. \_\_\_\_\_ refers to asking a large group of employees to help provide information for needs assessment.

1. Crowdsourcing
2. Historical data review
3. Focus group
4. Benchmarking

Answer: a

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.10. \_\_\_\_\_ refers to the process of a company using information about other companies’ training practices.

1. Brainstorming
2. Crowdsourcing
3. Outsourcing
4. Benchmarking

Answer: d

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.11. In the needs assessment process, organizational analysis deals with identifying \_\_\_\_\_.

1. the training resources that are available
2. employees’ personal characteristics
3. the conditions under which tasks are performed
4. the employees who require training

Answer: a

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 1

3.12. Employees’ readiness for training includes identifying whether \_\_\_\_\_.

1. an organization’s work environment will facilitate learning and not interfere with performance
2. an organization should develop training programs by itself or buy them from a vendor
3. peers’ and managers’ attitudes and behaviors toward the employees are supportive
4. managers are using a similar frame of reference when they evaluate associates using same competencies

Answer: a

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 4

3.13. In person analysis, \_\_\_\_\_ relate(s) to resources employees need to help them learn.

1. outputs
2. inputs
3. consequences
4. feedback

Answer: b

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 4

3.14. \_\_\_\_\_ relates to intellectual capability and general intelligence.

1. Basic skills
2. Cognitive ability
3. Self-efficacy
4. Reading ability

Answer: b

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 4

3.15. Trainee self-efficacy level can be increased by \_\_\_\_\_.

1. letting them know that the purpose of training is to identify areas in which employees are incompetent
2. providing limited information about the training program prior to the actual training
3. convincing them training is important
4. showing them the training success of their peers who are now in similar jobs

Answer: d

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 4

3.16. Which of the following statements is most true about age and generation in the context of training?

1. The speed with which people process information increases with age.
2. Gen Xers dislike close supervision.
3. Motivation tends to decrease with age.
4. Traditionalists prefer more of a self-directed training environment.

Answer: b

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 4

3.17. Which of the following is considered an “input” in the context of person analysis?

1. Awareness of performance standards
2. Social support
3. Cognitive ability
4. Workgroup norms

Answer: b

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 4

3.18. \_\_\_\_\_.refer(s) to the type of rewards that employees receive for performing well.

1. Consequences
2. Feedback
3. Motivators
4. Outcomes

Answer: a

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 4

3.19. In which of the following instances is training most likely needed?

1. Employees have the knowledge and skill to perform a job, but they have inadequate input.
2. Employees have the knowledge and skill to perform a job, but they lack feedback.
3. Employees lack the knowledge and skill to perform a job, but the other factors are satisfactory.
4. Employees have the knowledge and skill to perform a job, but the consequences are inadequate.

Answer: c

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 4

3.20. Which of the following issues is addressed by task analysis?

1. Who needs training?
2. What is the focus of training?
3. Does training support the company’s strategic direction?
4. Should training be built or bought?

Answer: b

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 6

3.21. Which one of the following is true of task analysis?

1. It should be undertaken before organizational analysis.
2. It involves breaking a task into several jobs.
3. It should be undertaken before a person analysis.
4. It involves determining KSAOs needed to perform specific tasks.

Answer: d

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 6

3.22. The first step in task analysis is to \_\_\_\_\_.

* 1. develop a preliminary list of tasks performed on the job
  2. select the job or jobs to be analyzed
  3. identify the KSAOs important for successful task performance
  4. identify important and frequently performed tasks for which training is required

Answer: b

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 6

3.23. Which of the following statements is true of competency models?

1. They are not useful for recruitment and selection.
2. They fail to identify the best employees to fill open positions.
3. They cannot be used for performance management.
4. Traditionally, needs assessment failed to focus on competencies

Answer: d

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 8

3.24. In the process of developing a competency model, the job or position to be analyzed is identified after \_\_\_\_\_.

1. the needs assessment strategy is selected
2. the effective and ineffective job performers are identified
3. the business strategy and goals are identified
4. the competencies responsible for effective and ineffective performance are identified

Answer: c

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 8

3.25. Which of the following statements is true of rapid needs assessment?

1. It involves using a large amount of resources such as money and SMEs.
2. It ultimately results in the sacrifice of the quality of the process.
3. Its scope is independent of the size of the potential pressure point.
4. It opts for methods that provide results in which trainers have the greatest confidence.

Answer: d

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective:

**TRUE-FALSE**

3.26. Pressure points almost always suggest that a training need is present in the organization.

Answer: false

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective:

3.27. The primary role of upper-level managers in the needs assessment process is to ensure that learning efforts are integrated with business strategy.

Answer: false

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 3

3.28. Upper-level managers are not usually involved in identifying which employees need training or the tasks for which training is needed.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 3

3.29. Mid-level managers typically determine how much of their budgets will be devoted to training during the needs assessment process.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 3

3.30. Subject-matter experts (SMEs) should have an understanding of the company’s language, tools, and products.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.31. Job incumbents should be included as SMEs because they tend to be the most knowledgeable about the job.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.32. Surveys do not allow many employees to participate in the needs assessment process.

Answer: false

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.33. Surveys and interviews share common disadvantages as needs assessment methods.

Answer: false

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 2

3.34. Online technology is useful in the needs assessment process because it is most effective in generating detailed responses.

Answer: false

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 2

3.35. Age, or even the generation an employee belongs to, does not affect how they prefer to learn.

Answer: false

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 4

3.36. It is important to assess trainees’ level of cognitive ability during the needs assessment process because cognitive ability is the person characteristic that most strongly impacts trainees’ confidence to learn.

Answer: false

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 4

3.37. The importance of cognitive ability for job success increases with job complexity.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 4

3.38. Determining a job’s cognitive ability requirement is part of the task analysis process.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 4

3.39. It is generally advisable to design training materials at a reading level that is slightly above trainees’ ability in order to “stretch” them during training.

Answer: false

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 4

3.40. To motivate employees to learn in training programs, managers should always avoid informing the employees about their skill deficiencies.

Answer: false

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 5

3.41. To motivate employees to learn in training programs, they should be given a choice of what training programs to attend.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 5

3.42. One of the most powerful ways to motivate employees to attend and learn from training is to communicate the personal value of the training.

Answer: true

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 5

3.43. Task analysis should be undertaken only after the organizational analysis has determined that the company wants to devote time and money for training.

Answer: true

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 6

3.44. It is always important to conduct a thorough needs assessment at the organization, personal, and task levels of analysis.

Answer: false

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 1

3.45. Competency models are typically only used for training purposes.

Answer: false

Difficulty: easy

Learning objective: 8

**SHORT ANSWER-ESSAY**

3.46. Name and describe the three levels of analyses for conducting a needs assessment.

* Organization analysis involves determining the appropriateness of training for the organization overall, given its strategy, resources, and support for training.
* Person analysis involves determining whether performance deficiencies result from lack of ability or from a motivational or work-design problem. It also involves determining who needs training and employee readiness for training.
* Task analysis identifies the important tasks, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that need to be addressed in training.

Difficulty: easy/medium

Learning objective: 1

3.47. Describe what problems might arise if a proper needs assessment is not conducted.

If needs assessment is not properly conducted, any one or more of the following situations could occur.

* Training may be incorrectly used as a solution to a performance problem.
* Training programs may have the wrong content, objectives, or methods.
* Trainees may be sent to training programs for which they do not have the basic skills, prerequisite skills, or confidence to learn.
* Training will not deliver the expected learning, behavior change, or financial results.
* Money will be spent on training programs that are unnecessary because they are unrelated to the company’s business strategy.

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective:

3.48. Why should upper level managers be included in the needs assessment process?

Upper-level managers need to help determine if training is related to the company’s business strategy and what type of training may be required. Upper level managers are involved to identify the role of training in relation to other HRM practices and determine if the necessary support exists within the organization to support training. They should also determine what strategic competencies are necessary for organizational success and determine employees that would benefit most from training. It is necessary to include top management because they are central to creating the overall architecture and support for a learning organization.

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 3

3.49. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of observation, interviews, and the use of historical data as methods for conducting a needs assessment.

*Observation*

Advantages: relevant data, minimizes interruption of work

Disadvantages: requires skill in observation, employee behavior may be affected by being observed

*Interview*

Advantages: good at uncovering detail, can explore unexpected issues

Disadvantages: time consuming, potentially socially desirable responses, difficult to analyze

*Historical data*

Advantages: provides data related to performance and practices

Disadvantages: data may be inaccurate, incomplete, or not fully reflective of performance

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 2

3.50. Name and describe the uses of competency models.

Competency models are useful in several respects:

* They identify behaviors needed for effective job performance.
* They provide a tool for determining what skills are necessary to meet today’s needs and the company’s future skill needs.
* They help to determine what skills are needed at different career points.
* They provide a framework for ongoing coaching and feedback to develop employees for current and future roles.
* They create a “road map” for identifying and developing employees who may be candidates for managerial positions (succession planning).
* They provide a common set of criteria that are used for identifying appropriate training activities for employees, as well as for evaluating and rewarding them. This helps integrate and align the company’s HR systems and practices.

Difficulty: medium

Learning objective: 8