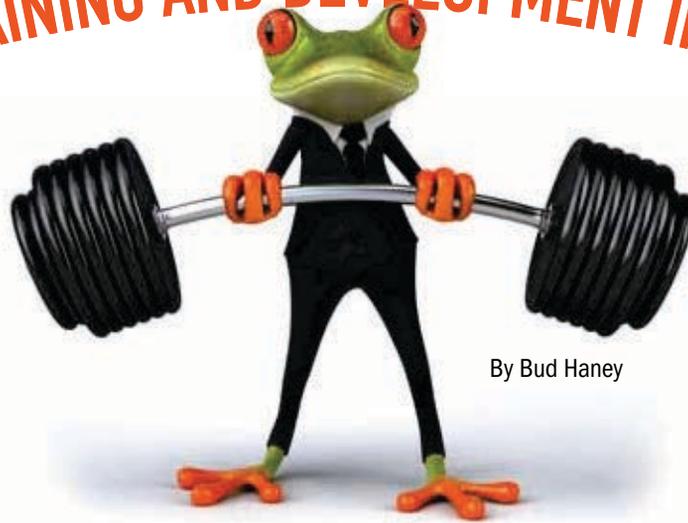


DOUBLE YOUR RETURN ON YOUR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT!



By Bud Haney

An employee's first few days or weeks on the job are usually consumed with training, training, and more training. The employee must learn everything from company policies and procedures to how the computer system works, not to mention all the responsibilities of the job. But as the months pass, the training becomes less and less frequent, eventually ceasing altogether.

Many companies provide an abundance of training in the beginning but fail to provide ongoing professional-training opportunities for their employees. Employees most often choose to leave their jobs because they are bored. Workers want to expand and polish their skills, abilities, and experience—and when they feel they cannot do that in their current position, they start looking for opportunities outside the company to fulfill those developmental needs.

Training and development programs can play a role in reducing employee turnover, but they can also be a large investment for a company.

As is true with any large investment, companies that invest in training and development want to ensure

that their investment will pay off. Training's success is measured by how participants apply their new knowledge when they return to work. It is a manager's responsibility to make certain that the skills employees learn in training are applied effectively, ensuring professional on-the-job-behavior and an increase in productivity.

So, how do managers and trainers ensure that employees apply the knowledge and skills taught during training to the job?

To successfully change on-the-job behavior, managers and trainers must reinforce the learned skills before, during, and after training. They must also address three essential issues prior to training:

1. IDENTIFY TRAINING NEEDS.

Before a company can implement a training program, the skills that are most pertinent to the employee's specific challenges and success must be identified. Improving or enhancing an employee's professional on-the-job behavior, knowledge, and skills should be the primary objective when identifying training needs.

2. ENSURE THAT MANAGEMENT IS PREPARED TO SUPPORT USE OF THE NEW SKILLS ON THE JOB.

Management must be able to recognize value before supporting an investment in training. Managers

must decide whether they are willing to provide the required time, money, and support necessary for training to succeed. Effective training can increase revenue, improve market penetration, and increase employee retention.

3. TRAINERS AND MANAGERS MUST UNDERSTAND EMPLOYEES' KEY JOB-MATCH CHARACTERISTICS.

People tend to be more motivated to learn when they know that they can immediately apply the skills they are learning. Employees will be more interested in training that teaches skills applicable to a specific daily task, because this kind of training will resolve issues they face constantly. Broad topics, such as effective listening, are often less interesting to employees and therefore can offer a lower return on investment.

Training and development provides skills, knowledge, and the potential for successful application on the job. The extent to which learned skills are implemented in on-the-job situations reveals the training's degree of success. Reinforcing the use of newly learned skills on the job determines whether or not the skills will continue being used in the future. **N**

Bud Haney is the CEO of Profiles International. For more information, please contact jcaspole@AssessmentSpecialists.com.

*"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."
—Goethe*