



Article :IMPORTANCE OF ON THE JOB TRAINING IN BPO INDUSTRY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this article is my original contribution and has not been published earlier in any other magazine. I have also not sent this article to any other publisher for publication.

AN ABSTRACT:

The present article is about the significance of on the job training in Indian BPO Industry. This is a conceptual paper and designed to understand the need and importance of OJT-On

the job training in BPO industry which is associated with the challenges faced by HR Managers in BPO industry. An effort is put to highlight the procedures followed, roles and requisites of an on the job trainer and finally what are the steps to be followed while training the employees on the job.

Key Words: Growing segment, personnel and organizational goals, training needs, quality, better performance, efficiency of employees.

INTRODUCTION:

When the people talk about training, they think of class room training, where an instructor is standing in the class, delivering his training on the concerned topic. But when we talk about training programme in BPO industry, the classroom training is certainly one method of training, the fact that classroom training is only one part of training that goes on in the learning process. In BPO Industry, one more important part of training or learning takes place through on the job training (OJT).

BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) is the practice of outsourcing various business processes that occur along various parts of the value chain of business enterprise. Indian BPO firms currently provide a variety of ITeS (Information Technology Enabled Services) including customer care, payment services, finance, administration, HRM, Content development in sectors such as banking, financial services, insurance, manufacturing, retail, utilities, transportation and health care. (NASSCOM 2005)

There is no doubt about the fact that BPO is one of the fastest growing segments of our economy. BPO is a part of the outsourcing industry. "BPO is the delegation of one or more business processes to an external provider that in turn owns, administers and manages the selected process based on defined and measurable performance criteria".

NEED;

The rate at which it is expected to grow, the BPO sector requires large numbers of trained and well-groomed employees. In the recent year, significant changes have been taking place in the business world. HR managers need to understand the learning demands of the business process like frequent changes in technology, attrition of employees, downsizing, and competition from other countries like China, Philippines, Taiwan and Korea. Under these circumstances, it is not enough to provide classroom training for employees which should result in production, quality of work, efficiency of employees. In addition to it, there is a great need for on-the-job training in the BPO industry.

TYPES OF OJT:

Two different types of on-the-job training are frequently distinguished: structured (planned) and unstructured (unplanned). Unstructured is the most common kind and refers to on-the-job training programs that largely involve less experienced employee working with an experienced employee, who serves as a guide or mentor during on the job training. The new workers largely learn by trial and error with feedback and suggestions from experienced workers or supervisors. Unstructured training is designed based on work requirements, not on imparting job skilled needed by new workers. Consequently, unstructured on-the-job training often fails to impart needed skills fully or consistently, because experienced employees sometimes are unable to articulate clearly the proper methods for performing a job and they sometimes use different training methods each time to train new workers.

In contrast, structured on-the-job training involves a program designed to teach new workers what they must know and do in order to complete their tasks successfully. According to William J. Rothwell and H.C. Kazanas in “Improving On-the-Job Training”, On-the-job training represents a significant investment considering that roughly 30 percent of a new worker's time is spent in on-the-job training during the first 90 days of employment, that productivity of experienced workers assigned to train new workers may decrease during the training period, and that new workers may make expensive mistakes or errors. Hence, it is the responsibility of concerned process management of the company to design and implement systematic training programs.

SIGNIFICANCE OF OJT:

“I hear, I forget, I see, I remember, I do, I understand” says a popular Chinese proverb. Many people learn better when they start performing the tasks that they will be responsible for. On-the-job training technique is used by many BPO companies around the world. OJT has distinct advantages over classroom training, namely;

- It gives lots of scope for learning as the employees may come across with the doubts, questions and there is a need for clarification of these queries.

- Learning process is enhanced, because here both learning and performance takes place at a time, this will be more effective and remembered by employees in a long run.
- There is no loss of man-hours since the employee is working as well as learning concurrently.
- Employees get full knowledge about the process. This practical exposure of process training gives better result.
- OJT makes employees a sense of performing a meaningful job while learning, whereas classroom training may tend to prolong the stages of training.
- Better result in terms of quality improvement is possible. In the process of on the job training, any error found can be rectified immediately.
- Group discussion is one more benefit from on the job training. Taking an example of some process scenarios which occurs rarely, can be discussion in the group so as to make sure that the rare scenarios are known to all the employees and when they come across in future, they can process it without any error.
- It facilitates the transfer of learning to the job because the trainee has an immediate opportunity to practice the work on the job.
- It improves efficiency and effectiveness as they get the hands-on training.
- Training costs are reduced because no training facilities are needed.
- As employees are exposed to real-time scenarios, and they get experience, thus it enables employees to be more confident and to be motivated.

Subsequently, one question arises, who has to take the role of trainer on the job training programme? It can be -

- Senior employee/supervisor who has understood the process very well and has more experience.
- Team leader.

- Subject Matter Expert (SME) – who is an expert in the concerned process and process related activities. SME can be from Onsite or Offsite.
- Process trainer – even this can be Onsite or Offsite people.

On the job training approach recognizes different needs of the trainer/supervisor. They are:

-Trainer needs to have a sound and complete knowledge of process (operational knowledge) and steps of each process to be followed,

-Trainer needs to do proper preparation and presentation of process with the help of documentation. Documentation is nothing but collection of steps to be followed with pictures (snapshot) in the form of documented folder either is word, excel, or pdf format etc. Further, this documentation also captures the different scenarios which are kept for future reference.

– Trainer should know the policy and procedures of the client about the business process.

–Trainer must be aware of Service Level Agreement (SLA) like turnaround time, maintenance of process quality and its procedures. Quality check can be done either internally (within the team of the process) or externally (onsite process related experts) internal quality checking of the process helps to rectify the errors and external quality checking done from site people has more to do with the customer impact error. Usually, 90% of the quality of process work is expected at the initial stage of business process i.e. first 3 months, 90% - 96% of quality work is expected from 3 to 6 months and 96%-99% quality work is expected from an employee. However, depending on the criticality or complexity of the process 96-99 can be varied and it could be up to 96%.

- Trainer should be aware of inter-process relation. How the process of one work item follows in the entire flow of business process operation, from which process exactly, one work item comes and after processing where exactly that particular work item goes to.

- All process related application software knowledge and also basic computer knowledge like MS word, excel, power point presentation and advanced computer knowledge (to some extent) like pivot table etc must be possessed by trainer.

DIFFERENT STAGES OF OJT:

There are different stages of On the Job Training to be performed by the trainer. Namely:

Preparation - Prepare the worker, put him at ease, define the job and find out what the trainee already knows. Make the employee interested in learning the job. Define the job, explain all responsibilities and procedures. Show the employee how the job contributes to the overall goals of the company; make sure to emphasize the need for quality, productivity and safety.

Presentation - Present the operation. Tell, show and illustrate one step at a time in proper sequence. Stress each key point which is important. As a trainer position yourself correctly alongside the trainee so that he will see the job as it is done and not in reverse. Demonstrate and explain as you are doing the job. After having presented the operation, ask the trainee to explain it. If something has been missed or misunderstood, go back to it at once. Demonstrate the use of personal protection/ safety measures and tell why machine guards/ password keys for all application related to the process are important. Encourage the employee to ask questions at any time.

Application- Let the employee perform the required tasks. Have the employee do the job. Provide coaching and correct any errors. Have the employee explain each key point during the process. Make sure the employee understands. Continue until you know the employee fully understands. Once you are sure the trainee understands the operation, it is time for a tryout under your careful supervision. This step of the process requires patience and carefulness on your part. As he performs the operation, have the worker explain each step, including the reasons “why” things were done.

Be sure the worker understands all the key points you have presented and can explain them in sequence. If the employee makes any mistake, reach professionally and explain calmly how to do things right. Repeat the steps until the employee gets it right. Work patiently with the employee until each step is mastered.

Inspection (Testing) - Give feedback, informing the employee of what he has done right and wrong. Follow-up. Let the employee work independently.

Designate a person to provide assistance. Check frequently and encourage questions. Stop coaching and conclude the follow-up. Inform the trainee where to find help if needed.

Conclusion:

BPO industry is a labour-intensive industry. A constantly changing work environment - due to technology, customer-driven markets, an information-based economy and globalization that are currently impacting on the process steps to be followed, structure of the workplace etc. are leading to an increased demand for various types of training especially On the Job Training. OJT-On the Job Training in BPO industry plays a vital role in terms of achieving the goals of organization as well as employees. The most important element is to document the training. Trainer should specify how the important points can be documented while taking training on the job. One method is to document the training on the individual's OJT checklist.

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