TNA

training needs analysis toolkit

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In addition to the 33 page guidelines, the toolkit includes templates for recording information (master plan and short plan), and a detailed case study.

introduction

Whether fully recognised or not, all organisations, whatever their size, invest time and money developing their staff. Whether it's training them how to use a new piece of software, complete a form, give good customer service or write a professional letter, training is an essential part of every organisation's management.

Most organisations formalise this process by providing a budget and resource for training. Whilst it is clear that investing in your people makes good business sense, providing a budget or resource to do so will not in itself ensure the investment is a good one.

To ensure the best possible returns for the organisation, training and development activities, like any investment, have to be targeted, planned and managed. First and foremost, the training and development required for the organisation to achieve its objectives must be properly identified and prioritised. That is the purpose of a training needs analysis (often referred to as a TNA).

Too often, particularly when the organisation's focus turns to cost/income ratios, training is seen as an easy option for cost reduction. Training managers have a responsibility to ensure that the need to develop skills, and the benefits of so doing, are properly identified and demonstrated. Continued, long-term investment in training and development can only be secured if such activity is seen to add value to the organisation.

the glasstap toolkit

Training needs analyses can be complex. Consequently they are often not a favourite activity of trainers who may well have been selected because they thrive in a creative, people focused environment. Many a trainer will go cold at the thought of having to complete lots of documentation!

With this in mind we have designed a toolkit that is simple to use, yet effective. It will help ensure training is efficiently prioritised within your organisation by providing a clear system for identifying and understanding training needs – a system that will give you a sound foundation from which to plan training and development activity, and later, evaluate its success.

The toolkit is flexible enough to be adapted to numerous situations and can be used to assess the training needs for an individual role, project team, department or an entire organisation.

key to symbols used

In this toolkit we have introduced some simple symbols to highlight certain areas of text:

	The flag is used to highlight important points or areas of potential danger.
	The bell is used to highlight time saving tips or ideas.
	The open file is used to highlight text relating to our case study.

how to use your toolkit

The following guidelines, although comprehensive, introduce a system that we are sure you will quickly become comfortable with. We take you through the entire process step by step, and our easy to follow case study demonstrates the toolkits practical application. At the back of this booklet is a simple summary of the key points, useful for customers already familiar with using a training needs analysis, or as a point of reference in future.

Please feel free to adapt the forms and processes contained in this toolkit to your own needs. If you have a large organisation, automating some of the collation of information using a database system, may be beneficial. If you would like to explore this option and would like to know how Glasstap can help, refer to the further help section at the end of this toolkit.

Making it work for you

Within this toolkit, we have shown the use of the training needs analysis in it's most complex form, starting with an overview of the requirements of an entire business entity and breaking this down to the requirements of individual roles. This ensures a thorough and accurate assessment of training needs. However, the system is flexible. You might choose to take a high level overview of training needs, only perhaps going down to team level, and relying on line managers knowledge of their staff and requirements to provide a sufficiently accurate analysis of overall need. Remember though, that the further you take your analysis, the more accurate it is likely to be.

step 1 - decide where to begin

The toolkit can be applied at any level within your organisation. You can use it to identify the training needs of a department, project team, individual role or even an entire organisation. (In future we shall refer to these collectively as the 'business entity').

The first stage then, is to decide where to begin. There are a number of advantages to starting your analysis at a high level:

- You identify the purpose of each individual role in relation to the overall organisational aims and objectives.
- Training can be easily prioritised according to its importance to the overall organisational objectives, rather than its importance to an individual role.
- For a new project, department or team, it enables you to identify the individual responsibilities and tasks to be undertaken by the team, and individuals within the team, without losing sight of the overall objective.

Why are there two different forms – which do I use?
At the highest point of your analysis you should use the master plan provided within your toolkit. The simpler short form should be used for individual roles. For any intermediary levels you choose the form that best suits your needs. This is likely to depend on whether the responsibilities for planning training rests with line management or a central function.

Having decided where to begin your analysis, insert the name of the business entity in the first box of your toolkit master plan.

If appropriate, for example if the business entity is a project or team within a department, insert the name of the department in the relevant box. Insert the name of the manager with overall responsibility for the business entity where indicated.

Page 2 of both the master plan and short form provides useful space to record the names of key personnel involved in the analysis or working in the business entity, together with their contact details.

Case study (1)

To illustrate the use of the toolkit we will imagine that it is being used within a company called Chilled Out Limited, a medium sized ice cream manufacturer. We will follow this example through the entire Training Needs Analysis process.

Let us assume therefore that within Chilled Out Limited, it has been decided to start the analysis at project team level within the company. The project involved has been code-named Project Polar. It has been set up within the Marketing Department whose manager is Fred Cool. Fred Cool has overall responsibility for the success of the project.

The training manager has used page 2 of the master plan to record the names and contact details of key personnel involved with the training needs analysis, for ease of reference.

See items marked (1) in the case study to see how these details have been entered into the toolkit's master plan.

step 2 - identify business objectives

Having decided where you are going to begin your analysis, the next stage is to identify the business objectives for that business entity. In other words, why does it exist? What is it expected to achieve? What is it intended to contribute to the organisation?

Ideally, every organisation will have an established list of objectives (starting with the initial business plan) that are regularly reviewed and updated. Every activity undertaken within the organisation should contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

Whether or not such a plan exists however, you will still need to work with line management to identify the primary and secondary business objectives for the business entity you are reviewing.

Put simply, the primary objectives are those objectives that the business entity is expected to achieve, and towards which the majority of effort will be directed. The secondary objectives might be things that it would like to achieve or which are likely to naturally occur as a result of achieving the primary objectives.

Case study (2)

In our case study, the training manager has held a meeting with the Departmental Manager (Fred Cool) and also the newly appointed Project Manager, Annie Wafer in order to gain a full understanding of the project's objectives.

Involving both ensures there is a shared understanding of the objectives and that everyone feels properly involved in the training needs analysis process.

The primary and secondary objectives of Project Polar have been identified and entered in the master plan (see items marked (2))

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Thank you for your assistance.

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