

7

Basic Understanding of Programs Being Administered

Learning, development, and performance programs should relate closely to the strategy of the WLP professional's organization and be part of a training policy that demonstrates the value of learning to the organization. To demonstrate ROI, WLP professionals must build measurement into learning and performance programs and develop and institute a means to communicate value so that they can justify and obtain program funding.

Learning Objectives:

- Define program administration.
- List six responsibilities in the role of a training manager.
- Describe the purpose of the following components of a program curriculum: topics, outlines, objectives, courseware, media, and delivery methods.
- State two considerations of managing facility equipment and resources.
- Describe two considerations for assigning instructors to train specific courses.
- Discuss considerations for using SMEs to provide training.

Program Administration

The learning function in an organization is responsible for all aspects of identifying learning and performance needs and designing, developing, and delivering or procuring the required interventions to meet an organization's needs. The training manager is primarily responsible for identifying needs, developing a strategy to meet target learners' needs, and securing resources to fill those needs. Program administration, another aspect of a training manager's role, includes factors such as managing program elements to support the delivery of training; securing equipment and resources; identifying and training instructors; managing logistics, including course registration, scheduling, and locations; and working with SMEs as needed.

The Role of the Training Manager

The training manager is the person in the organization responsible for all training projects and delivery. The role of a training manager includes

- ensuring that programs support the organization's goals and vision
- gaining leadership's support to ensure that employees attend and participate in learning interventions
- planning and budgeting for programs
- staffing and delivering programs
- monitoring and maintaining quality of delivery and services
- demonstrating ROI for programs—in essence, closing the loop and demonstrating the learning function's value to supporting company goals and objectives.

Program Elements

Several core elements define and support the development and delivery of learning and performance programs. Table 7-1 describes some of the most common elements.

Table 7-1. Common Elements of Learning Programs

Element	Description
Program curriculum	Big-picture perspective of what types of courses and content the training organization offers, for example, customer service training, new hire training, and sales representative training.
Topics	Within a curriculum, a list of topics is derived from the results of analysis. The topics relate to the knowledge and skills an employee needs to meet the baseline KSAs for a job. Topics are often classified into need to know and nice to know content.
Outlines	Based on the list of topics and types of skills that need to be trained (for example, cognitive or psychomotor), course designers develop course outlines during the analysis or design

Element	Description
	phases. These outlines may include some initial self-study content, such as reading material, to give target learners background information and level their baseline knowledge. Other course outlines may include instructor-led or other technology-delivered training for all content in the curriculum.
Objectives	As part of the design process, after course designers develop a course outline that organizes topics and types of skills needed, they develop training objectives in the A-B-C-D format—defining each element of an objective, including audience, behavior, condition, and degree.
Courseware	After the designer develops course objectives, courseware and evaluation content development can begin. Courseware may include self-study guides, job aids, instructor-led materials, technology-delivered training deliverables, and assessments.
Media	Media, also referred to as presentation methods, refers to the types of technology used to present training content, including audio, video, CBT, electronic text, EPSS, multimedia, online help, and teleconferencing.
Delivery methods	A number of delivery methods used for training include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> instructor-led or classroom training, which usually involves one or more learners with a facilitator in a single location who may or may not use an overhead projector, a slide projector, a laptop computer, or a flipchart and easel technology-facilitated training, often referred to as multimedia, CBT, e-learning, VR, and so forth, which uses technology to deliver learning to learners in a single location and may or may not include a live facilitator distance learning (for example, teleconferencing), which involves learners at one or more different physical locations than the source of the instruction on-the-job training distributed learning, which may include home study courses where training is distributed by a process, such as mail, that's not related to implementation learning technologies, which may be synchronous or asynchronous.

The training manager is responsible for ensuring that program elements support the learning objectives, but another responsibility that should not be taken lightly is evaluating training. Training evaluation should not be based solely on whether learners liked the course, but on

whether they are able to meet the training objectives when they walk out of the classroom—and, most important, when they are back on the job.

Facilities: Equipment and Resources

Two key assets for training delivery that must be planned, coordinated, and managed are equipment and resources. Before training managers begin the facility selection process, they need to know the program's learning objectives and then plan for a physical setting that supports those objectives. Because presentation techniques must be adapted to the ways that adults learn, training managers should account for them in selecting facilities.

Most rooms in which training takes place accommodate a wide range of uses. They can serve as movie theaters, storage rooms, classrooms, and even restaurants. Given the inevitable limitations of a multipurpose space, training managers should strive to adapt the facility for learning as well as possible. Chairs must make people comfortable (but not too comfortable), and tables must be movable yet stable. Restrooms must be available for use by a large number of people in a short period of time and must be wheelchair accessible.

In addition, a way to check the adequacy of room dimensions is to judge all distances based on the width of the screen used for visual presentations. The following are some guidelines:

- The distance from the screen to the last row of seats should not exceed six screen widths.
- The distance from the screen to the front row of seats should be at least twice the width of the screen. Participants who are closer than that may experience discomfort and fatigue.
- The proper width of the viewing area is three screen widths. No one should sit more than one screen width to the left or right of the screen.
- The room's ceiling should be high enough—a minimum of nine feet—to permit people seated in the last row to see the bottom of the screen over, not around, the heads of those in front of them.
- If possible, screens should recede into the ceiling and raise and lower automatically.

For more information, see Module 2, *Delivering Training*, Chapter 4, "Training Delivery Options and Media."

Trainers

Successful trainers share a number of characteristics. First, they must have a thorough, comprehensive knowledge of the subject they are teaching. Material should be presented clearly and straightforwardly, using language and written materials geared to learners' comprehension level. Competent trainers demonstrate a sincere concern for and interest in

learners' progress and well being. They also show an interest in finding out more about learners' abilities and encouraging them to strengthen and develop their strong points.

To help learners progress and overcome problems, effective trainers work on a one-to-one basis with students. In addition to providing practical applications for training, instructors can show them how to use their new knowledge or skills on the job. Last, top-notch trainers should be comfortable enough to approach the learning environment with a sense of humor, using laughter to lighten rather than create tension.

When looking for trainers, consider the following:

- Confirm what skills or knowledge learners need to perform their jobs successfully. This information may be available from comprehensive needs or task analyses. The profile of target learners and learning objectives of the instruction also help in determining which trainers are most appropriate to conduct the training.
- Identify trainers with information and solid background in the content to be trained. Learners can spot an ill-prepared trainer in a flash. Trainers who are poorly prepared may have to spend the rest of the course trying to recover learners' cooperation and confidence. The WLP professionals should set ground rules about expectations for the amount of preparation and depth of knowledge he or she expects trainers to have before conducting the course.
- Trainers show their commitment to their work, profession, or field, and their enthusiasm for training the course materials through their gestures and activity. The best way to motivate learners is to have a trainer who is truly motivated as well.
- Trainers demonstrating concern for and interest in learners help build a safe learning environment in which learners actively participate. By showing these qualities, instructors demonstrate that they understand and at times share learners' points of view and present them in an objective and articulate fashion.
- Trainers need to maintain flexibility about both subject matter and participants. They should be open and adaptable when conceptualizing topics and themes for the instruction and should always be willing to listen and learn from the group.

SMEs (Subject Matter Experts)

SMEs often work with training managers and learning design team members to help with various aspects of designing or delivering training. SMEs fall into one of two general categories: Some have expertise in a specific skill, and others have more conceptual or knowledge-based expertise.

SMEs are often asked to provide a combination of services. Asking an SME to teach an already designed program requires the least work for an SME. Requiring an SME to assist an instructional designer in curriculum creation allows the SME to work with an instructional design expert. In this situation, the SME and instructional designer create the program with the designer, using the SME's knowledge to develop a curriculum.

- **The learning outcome:** This is the most basic element an SME must understand. Training managers must give clear parameters for results of the instruction. For example, at the end of the instruction, participants will be able to demonstrate all the steps required to make widget Y on the assembly line.
- **The learning audience:** Any trainer, SME or not, needs to know the defining qualities of participants. At a minimum, the SME should know the group's composition, comfort level in learning from a computer screen or print materials, and prerequisite knowledge and ensure that the material allows for flexible learning styles.
- **Methods of delivery:** Because training may be delivered using a variety of instructional methods and media, training managers need to ensure that SMEs are comfortable with both the instructional methods and media used to deliver the training.

Preparing an SME to Work on Course Design and Development

When selecting SMEs to work on course design and development, training managers should consider them primarily for their subject matter expertise, not their instructional design capability. Training managers need to ensure that SMEs understand the basics of creating an effective instructional program, including

- conducting a needs analysis to determine training requirements
- designing the training program
- developing instructional materials and testing the program
- delivering or implementing the program
- evaluating the effectiveness of the training program.

For more information, see Module 1, *Designing Learning*, Chapter 6, "Content Knowledge and Content From SMEs."

✓ Chapter 7 Knowledge Check

1. A manager of the learning function has been informed that budget cuts of 50 percent are being instituted across the organization. What programs should be cut?
 - a. The programs currently conducted by an external vendor
 - b. The most expensive programs to administer and maintain
 - c. All instructor-led training because distance learning is less expensive
 - d. The programs that aren't strategically aligned with the organization's goals and vision
2. When considering room dimensions for a training event that uses material presented on a screen, the seating area should be six screen widths wide and no more than six screen widths from the screen to the last row.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. SMEs are usually a project's primary content resource and have deep knowledge of designing and writing training materials.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. The learning objectives of instruction affect planning and selecting a facility.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. A training manager is working on assigning trainers to courses for the next quarter. When making these staffing assignments, the primary considerations include all the following except
 - a. Trainer's knowledge of the subject matter
 - b. Trainer's ability to adhere firmly to the course outline
 - c. Trainer's ability to demonstrate enthusiasm and interest in learners
 - d. Current knowledge and skill level of target learners
6. A training manager's responsibilities include all the following except
 - a. Staffing programs
 - b. Planning and budgeting for training programs
 - c. Ensuring that instructional programs support the organization's goals and objectives
 - d. Developing multimedia content to include in instruction

References

- Carliner, S. (2003). *Training Design Basics*. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press.
- Finkel, C., and A.D. Finkel. (2000). "Facilities Planning." *Infoline* No. 258504.
- Goldsmith, J.J. (2000). "Development Teams for Creating Technology-Based Training." In G. Piskurich, P. Beckschi, and B. Hall, eds., *The ASTD Handbook of Training Design and Delivery*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hodell, C. (2000). *ISD From the Ground Up*. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press.
- Russo, C.S. (1999). "Teaching SMEs to Train." *Infoline* No. 259911.
- Sanders, E. (1999). "Learning Technologies." *Infoline* No. 259902.
- Seagraves, T. (2004). *Quick! Show Me Your Value*. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press.
- Sharpe, C. (1997). "How to Create a Good Learning Environment." *Infoline* No. 258506.