

YES, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN TRAINING AND
DEVELOPING. UNDERSTANDING
IT CAN HELP YOU IMPROVE
PERFORMANCE.

Training Versus Development

BY WILLIAM FITZGERALD

Have you ever stopped to consider what training and development really means? For example, have you really considered how training is different from development and how they are similar?

Understanding the distinctions will help you understand the processes that characterize training and development and the ways in which they affect the short- and long-term success of an organization. Developing an effective employee performance and development plan is one of those processes.

To develop a meaningful development plan, it is important to understand what is behind that plan: training and development.

I define training as follows:

- ▶ the acquisition of knowledge and skill for present tasks
- ▶ a tool to help individuals contribute to the organization and be successful in their current positions
- ▶ a means to an end.

Two key points are worth highlighting. The first has to do with the purpose of training: to help people learn and develop skills.

People need some level of training if they are to meet expectations,

contribute to their organizations, and experience a high degree of success. And those elements ultimately lead to job satisfaction.

The other significant point is that training is a means to an end and not vice versa. To be successful, training must result in a change in behavior, such as the use of new knowledge and skills on the job. Training must be tied to performance; otherwise, it is an event with little payback for the organization.

This brings us to development, which is defined as follows:

- ▶ the acquisition of knowledge and skill that may be used in the present or future
- ▶ the preparation of individuals to enrich the organization in the future
- ▶ the act of being involved in many different types of training activities and classes.

Development looks beyond today. It takes a more long-term focus—perhaps one to three years. Training, on the other hand, is short-term—a year or less.

The key to any organization is its people. Development is necessary so people can meet new challenges and ensure the long-term health and vital-

ity of an organization. It positions us to meet change head-on. In fact, a well-developed workforce does not react to change—it creates change.

Development differs from training in that it does not occur during a class. It's what happens after the class that causes real development to occur.

The how

Now that we understand the *what*, we are left with the *how*. How do we create meaningful development plans?

To answer that question, we need to look at two different (but related) planning tools. One is the performance plan. The other, in its purest sense, is the development plan.

A performance plan includes

- ▶ objectives, tasks, or projects that the employee must accomplish before his or her next review
- ▶ a determination of how performance will be measured and evaluated
- ▶ learning activities that are tied to performance
- ▶ a short-term focus (often 6 to 12 months).

The performance plan outlines what is expected in terms of performance or

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results, and exactly how that performance will be measured. It includes learning activities that will help the employee be successful.

It is important to recognize that attending a training class is not an objective. Attending training is tied to some long-term behavior; the plan outlines clearly how the performance will be measured.

A development plan

A development plan complements a performance plan and includes the following:

- ▶ a list of one to three measurable development objectives
- ▶ a long-term focus (up to three years)
- ▶ a focus on the employee's present job or future opportunities
- ▶ an action plan.

The development plan is different from a performance plan. The development plan focuses exclusively on one's growth and development. Actual performance will certainly enter into the discussion, but the development plan discussion should not turn into another performance review. Performance plan and development plan discussions are two separate but related conversations and should occur at different times.

The development plan could include several development objectives, but more than three may be too much. The objectives may focus on a person's present position (job objective) or take more of a long-term (career objective) approach. Table 1 gives examples of three abbreviated development objectives and related development actions.

Remember that in order to move into a new position, you need to be successful in your current position first. It would not make sense to plan for future opportunities if you hadn't yet contributed to your current project or mastered your current assignment. Current performance should certainly be part of the discussion.

Another important point to remember is that a development plan has a long-term focus. It's this long-term focus and knowledge of where an organization is headed that helps us plan staffing, training, and development. It will ultimately ensure that we have trained and prepared people adequately to meet future challenges.

TABLE 1

Development objectives

Development objective

Find ways to increase productivity from X to Y.

Action plan

Use TQC methodology to understand current process and find ways to automate.

Talk with ACT coordinator to learn software tools.

Development objective

Learn about other products in the product line.

Action plan

Interact with engineers on other product lines, with research and development, and with the technical staff in marketing. Attend the basic X42 course.

Visit a customer site to see how product Q is used.

Development objective

Make transition from technician to materials engineer by 1993.

Action plan

Work with a materials engineer on technical project X.

Participate on a technical project that requires independent effort.

Attend assertiveness training.

Obtain bachelor's degree in electrical engineering by 1993.

By looking only at the short term—at what needs to be accomplished today (the performance plan)—we risk mortgaging our future.

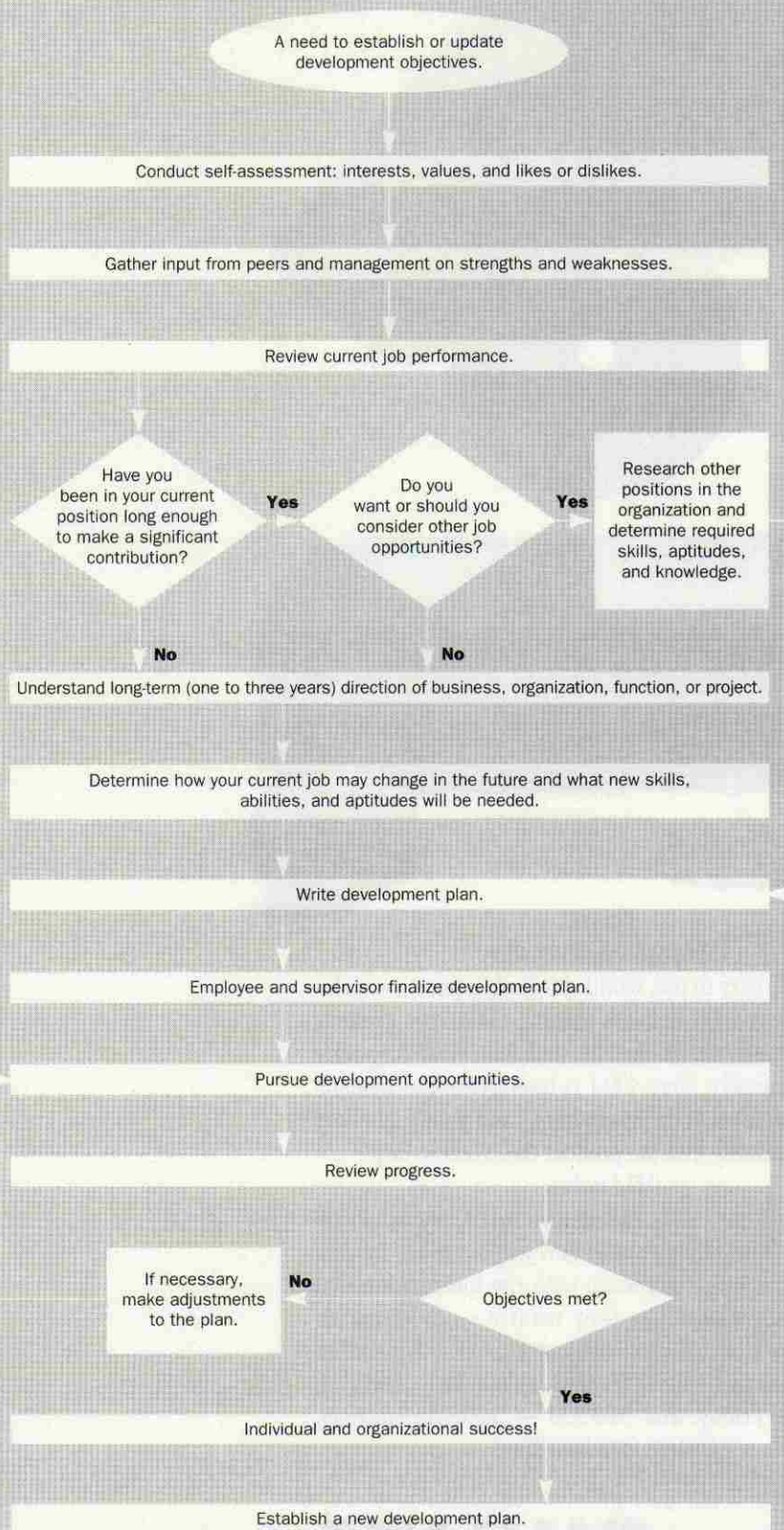
You must embrace two processes to get maximum benefit from both tools. The first is performance planning, which the supervisor and employee can use to reach agreement on objectives for the next year.

Managing by objectives

In a management by objectives, or MBO, environment, the supervisor is responsible for setting objectives. The performance planning process makes this more of a shared responsibility. Ultimately, the supervisor will support the final objectives, but many employees and groups participate in the decision making process.

The second process is the development planning process. This process demands more than most other performance review systems. It

TABLE 2
The development planning process



makes the employee responsible for the process. Supervisors can provide guidance and coaching, but ultimately each employee must be responsible for his or her own development.

One important aspect of the process is the consideration of long-term needs of the individual and the organization. The benefits of using this process include the following:

- ▶ a greater number of qualified applicants for promotion
- ▶ a workforce capable of initiating change and better equipped to react to change
- ▶ people who feel more in control of their careers and jobs
- ▶ less time spent on projects in research and development, marketing, and manufacturing because of increased skill levels
- ▶ people who are better prepared to meet changing expectations.

An employee is in control of the process if he or she uses it annually to create and revise a development plan and if the plan is completed on time. The goal is for each employee to be excited about how he or she is growing and for that excitement to translate into improved organization performance. Table 2 outlines the development planning process.

People often ask, "Isn't development only for people who want to change jobs?" Employees planning to stay in their current jobs still must work at keeping skills current, remaining productive, and being successful. None of us is in a job that will look the same in two years. Requirements are constantly changing, and it is critical to be current—if not ahead of the change. Without significant attention to personal and professional development, we limit our ability to fulfill more demanding expectations in the future.

To prosper in the nineties, organizations will need to use both of the processes described in this article. The common element is learning. In this era of global economies, increased competition, and advancing technologies, learning may be the only real competitive advantage we have. ■

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