



An Investigation on the Evaluation of Employee Training and Development Programme at Company X

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to evaluate the current employee training and development programme at an information management company in Johannesburg in order to make recommendations to management for targeted training programmes. The company increased resources to enhance the functioning of all of their processes, practices and systems, including their training and development systems. Methods were sought to ensure that training and development was cost-justified and that training and development activities furthered the organisation's goals by making all employees more productive. In 2012, training analysts and practitioners provided the training manager with several models and frameworks for best practices. However, few if any of these models were evaluated to determine if the elements of effective practice they describe do make a difference in the quality of training and development programmes. Most employees feel that they are trained just for the sake of settling the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) scorecard. With the advent of these problems the study identified a gap in the evaluation of employee training and development programmes at the company and recommended to management the importance of developing effective training and development practices.

Keywords: Development Systems; Training; Human Resources; Course Evaluation.

1. Introduction

A major reason to evaluate training performed is to determine whether the training programs are accomplishing their specific training objectives. A second reason for training evaluation is to assure that any change in the trainees' capabilities is due to the training program and not to other conditions. In order to determine that a training program is responsible for changes in trainees, it is necessary to compare the trainees' performance before and after the program with a control group. Some organisations view training and development like other routine activities (Haldar, 2013:282). The information management company is a leader in fully integrated records and information management in South Africa, with over 30 years of experience in the field with 26 purpose-built facilities across the country. Currently the company lacks a meaningful evaluation of its training and development programmes. Most of the employees complain that they are not given an opportunity to apply what they learnt from the programme. Human resources are a crucial but expensive resource and therefore in order to sustain economic and effective performance of this resource, it is important to optimize their contribution to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the organization through training and development. Aamodt (2007:318) highlighted that "training is vital for various reasons for every employee of the organisation for the new process implemented or if the employee is new to that particular process. Employees selected for a particular job often need to get appropriate knowledge and skills about the work to be done". When a job changes training helps the employee to adapt to the new environment. Training is necessary to understand, grow and get success in a new job role in an industry. There is always scope for current old employees to undergo a training process so as to improve and succeed in different job roles to grow in their careers. Therefore, training is more profitable not only to associates but also to the organisations in which they work. Pattonayak (2010:83) stated that the last step in training is the evaluation of

training. Although, in the current scenario professionals were not concerned about knowing how many new employees had undergone training and how much they liked it and what they have learned through the training. Management is interested to know that whether employees are implementing what they have learned during the training, and very importantly in what percentage it has helped to improve institutional results. Evaluation involves various types of analysis and also important models and methodologies usually applied with significant impact on performance. Pattonayak (2010:84) also highlighted why evaluation is important:

- To determine whether a programme is accomplishing its objectives;
- To determine the strength and weakness in the HRD process;
- To determine the cost and benefit ratio of a programme;
- To decide who should participate in future;
- To test the clarity and validity of the content;
- To identify which participants benefited the most;
- To develop any future programme.

Most of the employees who have been trained complained that training and development programmes at the company are not benefiting the trainees as they are not given opportunities to apply gained knowledge and skills from the training. In each financial year the company increases their training budgets. The training department advised however, that most of the models provided have not yet being assessed or implemented. The training department still utilises “smile sheets” to evaluate their training programme. Most employees feel that they are trained just for the sake of settling the “broad based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) score card”.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the current employee training and development programme at the information management company and make recommendations to management on how to make their training effective and beneficial to all. This study has the following objectives:

- To evaluate the current employee training and development programme at the information management company and employee perceptions;
- To make recommendations to the management on how to make their training and development programme can be effective and beneficial.

Research Questions

The study focuses on the following questions:

- What are the core components of the current employee training and development programme at the company?
- How do employees perceive their training and development programme?
- Based on best practice, how can management make their training and development effective, by improving their employees' performance?

The study highlights some of the indicators of effective training and development programmes by ensuring top management's commitment to training and the involvement of training managers in the company's planning and goal setting. The implementation of ineffective training and development programmes leads to employee dissatisfaction, whilst management saves costs. Therefore the researcher's recommendations will encourage management to learn how to implement an effective training and development and encourage management to review their training and development programmes based on a meaningful evaluation system. The importance of engaging all stakeholders in their training and development programme is highlighted. As a result, the company would be able to benchmark its training and development programmes against best practices and to align their training objectives towards both the organisation's goals and employee development.

2. Literature Review

Training evaluation can be defined as any attempt to obtain feedback on the effects of a training program and to assess the value of training in the light of that information for improving further training. The evaluation of training can be viewed as a method of measuring change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, job performance, costs and quality of training facilities. A major reason to evaluate training programs is to determine whether the training programs are accomplishing their specific training objectives.

Objectives of an Evaluation of Training and Development Programme

Lynton and Pareek (2007) refer to five sets of objectives which include:

- i) Evaluating the training programme to improve the training programme as a whole, to improve major components of the training programme, and to increase the effectiveness modules or sessions.
- ii) Evaluating the training process to improve the training climate, to improve the training methodologies, and to improve the trainers' team.
- iii) Evaluating the training execution to improve the training facilities and contextual factors.
- iv) Evaluating training outcomes and learning by, to increase the use of learning in work performance, to contribute data to organisational effectiveness, and to help the organisational change.
- v) Evaluating training programme factors to maximise effectiveness, to ensure post training support, and to identify helping and hindering factors.

Haldar (2013:324) emphasised that "in order to make training programme effective, the training objectives must find answers to three questions i.e. – for whom, when, and how. The training programme should be designed considering the pedagogy or andragogy, and thereafter, who conducts the training programme".

The Benefits of an Evaluation of the Training and Development Programme

Both training and development help in enhancing the capabilities of employees. The planning methodology of both the processes should consider the following:

- Experience of the people performing work contributing to quality of product;
- Tacit and explicit knowledge;
- Managerial and leadership skills for smooth management;
- Planning and improvement tools for organisational effectiveness;
- Team building to use synergy;
- Problem solving is a part of mental process;
- Communication skills and personal expressiveness are essential for conveying ideas, thoughts, opinions;
- Cultural and social behaviour are essential to improve quality of work life;
- Needs and expectations of customers and other interested parties must be fulfilled to satisfy the customers, enhance customers base, and convert prospective customers to actual customers;
- Business knowledge refers to acquisition of information about the current state of the company environment, what the company does, the user, and the place of the user;
- Benchmarking is a process of comparing parameters of one's business processes with the performance metrics of industry bests;
- Creativity and innovation means thinking new things and implementing the thoughts

(Source: Haldar, 2013:285)

Organisations should not have training and development programmes that are ineffective, training and development must lead to organisational growth and improve the company's competitive strategy. Previously employees complained that the current training and development programme do not address their skill-gaps. Haldar (2013:325) points out that the scope or areas of evaluation are manifold and include pre-training factors, training an event, training management, training a process, participants' development, organisational development, and post training factors. According to Lynton and Pareek (2000) the purpose of evaluation should be to justify the role of training in line with the budget through a cost-benefits analysis and ROI approach. The quality and competency of the trainer and the methodologies used would also be important.

Principles of Training Evaluation

According to Mutsuddi (2012) the evaluation specialist should understand the goals and purposes of evaluation and that the process should be continuous and specific as well as being based on objective methods and standards. In addition, realistic target dates should be reached at each phase of the evaluation process. The criteria of evaluation as suggested by Haldar (2013:327) are:

Measure Reactions - This refers to the reaction of the trainees where one may be required to evaluate the reaction of trainees to be aware of whether they liked or disliked the training programme.

Level of Learning - Check the learning by examining whether the trainee could assimilate the concepts, ideas, and principles of the training.

Evaluation must be Specific - Evaluation can be subjective where one relies on the participants' verbal opinions.

Organisational Results - Impact on organisational changes indicates if changes brought about the training yield some benefits as supported by cost reduction.

Behaviour Change Patterns - One of the important criteria for the evaluation of training incorporates behavioural changes, that is, whether the training has caused any alteration in the behaviour or not. Mutsuddi (2012) suggested various techniques for training evaluation as:

- To use experimental and control groups
- Longitudinal or time series analysis
- Sending questionnaire to the trainees after the completion of the training program
- Assess the costs benefits associated with the program including those of needs assessment costs, trainers' costs, rental facilities, and trainee wages during the training period.

Training Evaluation Models

The Four Levels of training evaluation models according to Kirkpatrick (2008) are:

Level 1: Reaction - Reaction had to be favourable and attract new customers as well as get present customers to return to future programs.

Level 2: Learning - Learning can be defined as the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge and or increase skills as a result of attending the program.

Level 3: Behaviour - Behaviour can be defined as the extent to which change in behaviour has occurred because the participants attended the training program. In order for change to occur, four conditions are necessary:

- The person must have a desire to change;
- The person must know what to do and how to do it;
- The person must work in the right climate;
- The person must be rewarded for changing.

Level 4: Results - The final results can include increased production, improved quality, decreased costs, reduced frequency and severity of accidents, increased sales, reduced turnover and higher profits. The company does not apply the Kirkpatrick model. Instead they are currently using the "smile sheets that measure how well trainees liked a programme".

Training and Development Methods

Mutsuddi (2012:67) stated that "choice of training and delivery methods depends upon many things, including organisational culture and values, training and delivery objectives and content, profiles of trainees, and trainers, resource availability, time, location, and political constraints". Dessler (2008) mentioned the following types - On-the-job; Off-the-job; Job rotation; Lectures; and Apprenticeship.

Training Evaluation Methods

Training evaluation ensures that whether candidates are able to implement their learning in their respective work place or to the regular routines. There are various techniques that can be used by an organisation which will be briefly highlighted below (Pattanayak, 2010:87):

Observation Method: Direct observation is used to assess changed attitudes and knowledge. Weaknesses may be detected from the reaction of trainees.

Test-Retest Method: A test prior to the training program assesses existing knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Pre-Post-Performance: Actual job performance is rated prior to training being provided. Thereafter the participant's job performance is once again evaluated.

Experimental Control Method: Two groups are used, a control and an experimental, the control group having no instruction. If the training is effective the performance of the experimental group would have significantly improved.

Employee Attitude Survey: Employee opinions would be elicited on a variety of issues including whether the mission is successfully communicated to employees.

The types of items included in these surveys may concern many relevant areas and this process should help the organisation understand employee perceptions.

360-Degree Feedback: This feedback is beneficial for organisational growth and team and individual improvement.

Increased Self-Awareness: Employees are provided with insights into their strengths and areas requiring improvement.

Balanced View: Feedback is given to the individual's supervisor and other key personnel in the company.

Leverage Strengths: Particular strengths are recognised for future career growth.

Uncovers Blind Spots: Overlooked behaviours and blind spots are highlighted.

Development of Skills: Encourages accountability and gives employees control over their career paths.

Alternative Training Evaluation Methods

360 –Degree Appraisal Feedback Process : This type of performance evaluation system gathers most of its input from all employees' levels such as appraisers, supervisors and teammates to assess performance (Mutsuddi, 2012:70). This process assists in the identification of skills-gap and training needs assessment of an employee.

Performance-Learning and Satisfaction-Evaluation: This method uses both conceptual components and data processing to assess business results at an organisational level and financial results in terms of monetary ratios.

The Balanced Scorecard: Balanced scorecard is a strategic planning and management system highly used in business and industry, government and non-profit organisations worldwide to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organisation, and improve internal and external communications, and monitor organisational performance against strategic goals. Balanced scorecard assists senior managers in aligning all their training programmes to the goals of the company and evaluating the return on investment after conducting a training programme. Iyer, R., Pardiwalla, P. and Bathia, J. (2009) briefly explore the various methods of training evaluation to understand the need for training evaluation with emphasis on Kirkpatrick's model. Scholars concluded that although there are different methods to evaluate training, training evaluation is still the weakest and most under developed aspect of training. Griffin (2010) finds that there is a "mismatch between organisational desires to evaluate training and the extent and effectiveness of actual evaluation. There are a number of reasons for this including the inadequacy of current methods. Griffin has proposed a productivity based framework to focus data collection and the utilisation of a metric to present results. A metric provides an ideal tool to allow stakeholders informed judgement as to the value of a programme, whether it has met its objectives and what its impact is. Most importantly the approach focuses on the bottom line and draws evaluator's attention to consider what the ultimate overall impact of learning is. Management may also use qualitative data such as work habits, attitudes, development, adaptability, and initiative to evaluate training programs. Most companies, however, prefer to place more weight on the quantitative data such as costs, output, quality and time (Ramachandaran, 2010:120). Reid and Barrington (2011:341) stated the following as the reasons why an evaluation is required:

- Evaluation enables the effectiveness of an investment in training to be appraised in general terms and provides data that can justify expenditure on training.
- It provides feedback to the trainer about her performance and methods and is therefore part of her learning experience.
- It enables improvements to be made, either on the occasion, or if evaluation is on-going, as the training proceeds.
- Reviewing and evaluating his achievement to date is also an intrinsic part of the learner's progression and the experimental training cycle, and therefore should be part of the learning process itself.
- The evaluation indicates to what extent the objectives have been met and therefore whether any further training needs remain.

3. Research Methodology

The study started with a review of all the existing training records related to the employee training and development programme within the company. This survey was designed to investigate employee perceptions about training and development and development programmes and employee perceptions of the achievement on the following key elements of best practice:

- Integration of the training and development programmes into organisational strategy;
- Procedures for the transfer of training to the job;
- Procedures for evaluating training and development programmes;
- Policies governing the training and development programmes.
- Employees will be asked to give their own opinion in all the listed indicators of effective training and development practice.

Research Method

Kothari (2013:7) stated that research methods may be understood as all those methods or techniques that are used for the conduction of research. Research methods or techniques refer to the methods the researchers use in performing research operations.

Research Paradigm: Weaver and Olson (2006:460) stated that “paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished”. According to Shajahan (2005:35), “there are two research paradigm, namely, phenomenology paradigm and positivism paradigm”.

Research Approach: According to Gupta (2011:14) in research, “there are two basic approaches to research: quantitative approach and qualitative approach”. Gupta (2011:9) stated that “qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon that is relating to or involving quality or kind, as for example, the reasons for human behaviour, and techniques of qualitative research like sentence completion test and story completion test”. Since a qualitative or phenomenological approach was utilised for the study, the most suitable research strategy used was the explanatory study.

Research Design: This research study is designed as an explanatory study. This study did choose the explanatory study design because it makes it easier for the researcher to match collected data with the physical situation at the company. An explanatory study enabled the researcher to establish a causal relationship between variables, and clarify a problem. Explanatory research is a study which seeks to explore conclusive / descriptive subjects and is also called analytical study. (Shajahan, 2005:26).

Research Strategies: The researcher used a phenomenological research strategy as it enabled the researcher to collect data by conducting some interviews. “The interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses” (Kothari, 2013:97).

Population: In this research the population involved both male and female employees from different departments at the company. The sample of the study consisted of 10 employees and attention was given to the selected departments. The 10 employees represent the entire population of 2670 employees of the company as they come from different departments.

Sampling: A sample design is a definite plan determined before any data are actually collected for obtaining a sample from a given population. Samples can be either probability samples or non-probability samples. With probability samples each element has a known probability of being included in the sample but the non-probability samples do not allow the researcher to determine this probability (Kothari, 2013:15).

Types of Sampling: This study utilised purposive sampling method of the non-probability sampling because sampling is selected by some arbitrary method and it is known to be representative of the total population, or it is known that it will produce well matched groups. This method is appropriate when the study places special emphasis upon the control of certain specific variables (Singh, 2008:91). The method gave the researcher an option to choose the sample based on who they think would be appropriate for the study. The researcher used the sample size of 10 employees which will represent 2760 employees.

The Research Instrument: The interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. This method can be used through personal interviews and, if possible, through telephone interview (Kothari, 2013:97). The interview was conducted in the way of direct personal

investigation where the researcher had an opportunity to meet employees whom data have to be collected. This approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analysed and compared (Kothari, 2013:97).

Pilot Study: The aim of conducting a pilot test was to test the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2007:121). The researcher conducted the pilot study with the General Manager, Training Manager, and Warehouse Supervisor. Their responses were recorded and reviewed and it became evident that the twelve pre-compiled questions were not sufficient and as a result three additional questions were designed and included in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis: Gupta (2007:89) defined data analysis as a “process which entails an effort to formally identify themes and to construct hypothesis as they are suggested by data and an attempt to demonstrate support for those hypotheses”.. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the gathered data in the interview. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data. By using inductive and deductive Thematic Analysis, the researcher was able to identify themes from the data and literature gathered, with a semantic approach being used to achieve this aim. In this study six themes were initially identified and then finally redefined into two core themes.

Validity and Reliability: A sound measurement must meet the test of validity, reliability and practicality (Singh, 2008:73). A pilot study was deemed necessary to ensure operational administration, validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

Credibility: According to Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) the credibility criteria involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible from the perspective of the participant in the research. (. These criteria assisted the researcher in describing or understanding the phenomena of interest from the participant’s eyes, as the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results.

Transferability: Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) advise that “transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings.

Dependability: This refers to the criteria which assisted the researcher to describe the changes that occurred in the setting and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study. It also assisted the researcher in addressing the issue of reliability to show that if the work were repeated in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained.

Conformability: According to Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) conformability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. The researcher utilised this criteria to document the procedure for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study.

Limitations of the Study: The problem of poor training and development systems is widespread in most organisations in South Africa. Due to the shortage of resources and time, the study only focuses on the evaluation of employee training and development programme at this one company.

Elimination of Bias: Elimination of bias is the process that involves understanding inherent biases and minimizing the effects. In this study the researcher remained objective throughout the study by avoiding calling employees by their job titles, or identifying people by their race or gender. The researcher interacted with employees regardless their culture and age.

Ethical Considerations: “Any researcher who involves human sample subjects in his research has certain responsibilities towards them such as protecting the dignity and welfare of the subjects.” (Singh, 2008:219). The researcher consulted and communicated on ethical issues and refrained from mentioning the name of the subject anywhere in the report. The researcher applied the general rule of respecting the human sample subjects selected in this research study.

Informed Consent: The researcher ensured that all participants were well informed and understood the nature of the research study. Participants were told in advance that they are not forced to participate, their rights to or not to participate are well respected.

Protection from Harm: The researcher ensured all participants’ health and safety during the research period was free from any physical, or emotional harm and interruptions (Welman, J.C and Kruger S.J. (2001) **Confidentiality and anonymity:** The researcher gave all participants assurance that their indemnities were protected and the information given would be treated strictly in confidence and the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act) will be applied. Through written correspondence, the researcher has been granted permission to undertake a research study from the executive member of the understudy organisation.

4. RESULTS

A standardised, open-ended interview process was conducted with selected respondents at the company, with the aim of understanding why the company does not evaluate their employee training and development programme. This qualitative study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What are the core components of the current employee training and development programme at the company?
- How do employees perceive their training and development programme?
- Based on best practice, how can management make their training and development effective, by improving their employees' performance?

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Thematic analysis refers to the process for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data, rearranging and describing it in a minimising manner for the data to be organised and emphasised in great detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006:77). The data in this study was collected from a sample size of 10 employees from each department, with company's work experience ranging from five to 22 years.

Identification of Themes

The six themes presented are:

- i) The impact of training and development programmes on the work performance.
- ii) Current training and development evaluation method .
- iii) Organisational issues constraining training and development programmes.
- iv) Respect for legislative compliance.
- v) Training and development methods available at the company.
- vi) Neglected evaluation of training and development results.

The first four themes describe the different reasons to evaluate training and development programmes while the two last themes expand on the deviation from 'best practice' that are common in the evaluation of an employee training and development programmes. The first theme identifies the impact of training and development programme on the work performance in meeting organisational objectives and enhance organisational strategy. The second theme described the current training and development evaluation model which have influenced the achievement of organisational goals. The third theme identified issues that hinder training and development programmes of employees. The fourth theme identified the high levels of perceptions for the company meeting legislative compliance in terms of employment equity and skills development legislation. The fifth theme establishes the training and development methods which company management may use to enhance their training and development programmes. Theme six identifies the extent to which organisations evaluate the results of their training and development strategy to determine whether it was a success or failure in assisting the organisation achieve its strategic goals. In the second part the six themes will be discussed in detail. The researcher identified the following two overarching themes:

- Impact of training and development programme on work performance
- Current training and development evaluation methods applied at the company

Impact of Training and Development Programme on Work Performance

An overarching theme identified in the in-depth interview "is the impact of training and development programme on work performance of organisational employees that resulted from the need of training to be provided and aligned with the organisational goals and vision, training focused on career development tailored to the career needs of individuals (Chen, G., Thomas, B. and Wallace, J.C. (2005). . Poor work performance "is of great concern when considered against the fact that Statistics South Africa has recently released figures confirming that from the period 2008 to 2012, South Africa recorded an average 2% economic growth and 5% between 2004 and 2007 (StatsSA, 2015)". Analysed data from the respondents identifies some challenging issues that are cause for concern when viewed against , a 3% drop in economic growth rate. Respondents raise issues of lack of management support. This issue was further broken into lack of motivation in terms of the employees' desire to self-improvement and growth, career path and rewards and lack of mentoring and time constraints causing the inability to apply the learned skills.

Current Training and Development Programme Evaluation Methods

Another overarching theme identified in the interview is the current training and development programme evaluation model applied at the company, as evaluation lead to creating a design that meets the needs of the organisation and targeted participants, and providing a feedback system to redesign and adjust further iterations of the programme based on organisational and participants' perspectives and needs. The current evaluation model failed to attract and develop new skills. Most of respondents raised this challenge of attracting employees to attend training programmes. Evaluation of training is the most neglected part in the training process (McClelland, 2010). McClelland mentions that "budgetary and other constraints have caused many trainers and instructional designers to employ standardised instruments, commercially available evaluation instrument that pose many disadvantages". This lack of meaningful evaluation models that incorporates both organisational and "participants' perspectives, resulting in a customised training programme poses a threat to organisational and individual growth". Top management's commitment to the training and development programme is mostly required to its success (Fricker, 2004). Fricker further noted that "Chairmen and chief executives need to recognise the value of learning as the primary force to facilitate and achieve change in their organisation". The following were stated as the principles of best practices (Human Technology, 2003):

- "Develop organisational policies governing the training development programme;
- Establishing training and development needs;
- Build transfer into training and development;
- Devise training and development evaluation strategy;
- Sustain and continuously improve the training and development system".

The main organisational issue raised by the majority of interviewees is the lack of top management support for their training and development. The results for question 1 revealed that the company has no clear training and development policy in place, which results in high sustainability costs as the company depend on external recruitments instead of developing from within the company. This is evident from the answers given by respondents 1, 5 and 10 where respondent 10 indicated that their training and development policy is "a binding agreement and procedure for funding training and development and a guide in the provision of training and development resources". The findings are an indication that the development of a clear training and development policy is of critical importance in ensuring that the company enhance the skills of their employees, leading to customers' satisfaction whilst complying with the Skills Development Act. The analysis implies that training and development policies at institutions are not mostly known to employees which sometimes hinder any proposed training and development programme (Armstrong, 2006). The results for question 3 also revealed that the company utilises one model of evaluation, the "smile sheets" instead of applying the four levels of training evaluation. This is evident from the answers provided by respondents 1, 5 and 10. Asare-Bediako (2008) reported that "training content must seek to achieve individual personal needs, goals and self-development". The findings indicated the need for all stakeholders' participants during the design, conduct and evaluation of the training and development programme. This is evident from the answers given by respondent 1, 7, 8, and 9. The results for question 2 indicated that "employee's perceptions of the Status, Effectiveness and Value of training and development programme needs improvement". This is supported by answers provided by respondents 1 to 10. All the respondents rate the training and development programme as of no value, less effective and as training for the sake of compliance with the Skills Development and Levies Act. There is no interlink policy between the training department and the organisational policy, since the policy for both the organisation and training department is identical. Therefore all departments and divisions within the company should strive towards achieving the same goal "to provide innovative solutions that manage our customer's information challenges, risks and opportunities securely, intelligently and cost effective and most importantly, meeting our customers' needs and exceeding our customers' expectations". Respondent 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 agreed that there is training and development policy at the company. Respondent 8 further indicated that the policy focuses on development initiatives, improving training facilities, grievances handling method, operations and problem solving mechanisms. Training policy can reduce negativity and uncertainties towards training and development and can increase employee engagement and training efficiencies. Ivancevich (2010) confirms the analysis which says "training contributes to improving efficiency and effectiveness of current or future performance of employees". The findings from the interview revealed that training and development programme at the company lack management support and commitment. This is in line with the responses provided by respondent 1 to 10. The structure of best practices model also suggest that "monitoring the value of training and development is central to a well-functioning programme". The findings revealed that the company measures the value through employee's perceptions which is "one measure whilst value might be continuously measured in other ways as well, such as financial return on the investment in training and development programme and increased productivity that results from training and development". This was in line with the views of respondent 1, 5, and 10 who pointed out

the use of “smile sheets” for the training programme evaluations. The findings also revealed that the company has a training committee that supposed to conduct departmental skills audit once a year but the committee is not utilised any more. This is supported by the views of respondent 6 and 9. The findings also revealed that trainees are not given opportunities to utilise the acquired skills through job shadowing and job sharing. This was supported by all respondents (1 to 10). The findings further revealed the limited resources due to budget constraints. This is the view for respondent 1, 6, 8 and 10. All the interviewees have long service with the company ranging from five to twenty two years of experience. This implies that their years of experience will assist the researcher to collect much reliable and valid data as the qualitative study offers the advantage of rich data (Kothari, 2012:3). Respondents indicated that the company could use on-the-job training, lectures, mentoring and coaching, simulation training, off-the-job training, seminars, colleges or universities, job rotation, learnerships and system enhancement training when training their employees. By using different methods, the company could get the desired results from any of their training programme. Halder (2011, 139) states that “there are various methods to use in the transfer of knowledge such as lectures / classroom training, on-the-job training, job rotation, job mentoring and learnerships”. The company’s training generally ends in the classroom. Respondent 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 indicated that on-the-job training helps employee to gain hands-on experience and as a result, it improves employees’ performance. Respondent 1 emphasised that the accuracy on the input increases, which generate more capital and less expenses on staff not knowing how to operate equipment when performing their duties. Respondent 4, 6, 9 were not sure, stating that employees are not given chance to prove themselves after training. Mutsuddi (2012:70) state that alternative evaluation methods such as 360-degree appraisal feedback process, performance-learning satisfaction-evaluation and the balance scorecard should be applied to determine change due to training. Respondents suggested budget, programme content, personnel to be trained, how long will the programme take, who are the key stakeholders, transfer method, trainees’ educational background, relevance to operations, resources and attendance as the main items for discussion in the design, conduct and evaluation of their training programmes”. The findings clearly shown that training as a systematic process is likely to face some challenges in the (Armstrong, 2006). Interviewees raised budget as the main issue for addressing at the company. Respondents also indicated that for their training to be effective, they required hands-on experience, and to be given an opportunity to apply the acquired skills. They also suggested that there must be a policy to regulate the training programme and that the training managers should be involved in the organisational planning and goal setting. Respondent 10 suggested that the training needs assessment should be conducted. By conducting training needs assessment, involvement of key stakeholders, formulating training policies and allowing acquired skills application would improve employees’ performance. Ivancevich (2010) indicated that “training contributes to improving efficiency and effectiveness of current or future performance of employees in any institution” Respondents indicated the lack of top management support and commitment, limited budget, lack of mentoring and coaching, lack of communication, “lack of training resources as the inefficiencies of company training and development programmes”. Respondent 6 pointed out that models of effective training and development practice are not well practised. When top management showed their full support of the programme, employees tend to give their required support. Most of the respondents feel that management are not doing enough to address the inefficiencies mentioned above. Only respondent 6 mentioned that management is looking at increasing the 2016 budget and will convert the two boardrooms to training rooms. As it was mentioned in the literature review that the advantage of qualitative study is that it provides rich data, this urges the company to conduct an internal investigation on how to improve their training and development programme. Respondent 2 to 9 denied the fact that their training and development programme are managed effectively. They indicated the “lack of management support, lack of resources, the lack of following the correct training and development procedures and the use of the old fashioned training methods”. Respondent 3 emphasised that they conduct training for appearance sake. Respondent 1 and 10 noted that their training and development programme are managed effectively referring to the “Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and Annual Training Report (ATR)”. Respondent 10 indicated that mentors and coaches are appointed during the intervention. Criteria for training evaluation should include measure of reactions, level of learning, organisational results and behaviour change patterns (Mutsuddi, 2012:70). Respondent 1, 3 and 8 suggested the encouragement of trainees to “apply the acquired knowledge and skills” whilst respondent 2 and 9 urge for the involvement of all stakeholders. Other respondents suggested top management support and commitment, the provision of the relevant training and monitor individual progress, first preference to be given to the developed employees when promoting and the introduction of new and more innovative ideas. Company management should consider using balanced scorecards to transfer learning to behaviour (Kirkpatrick, 2008:82). Respondents 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 admitted that the company has a training and development policy in place but it needs to be amended whereas respondent 2 indicated that there is no clear policy. According to respondent 1 and 7, a person must study only courses related to their jobs, must have two years with the company, payback when leaving the company. Respondent 10 emphasised that their policy is a binding agreement and procedure for funding training and a guide in the provision of resources and further stated that they have a development programme policy on succession planning and the study leave policy. Only respondent 4 and 9 are not sure or don’t know if there is a policy in place. Since new challenges emerged on yearly basis that are related to training and development such as “competency development, outsourcing, e-learning and knowledge management”, company’s training and

development require some updates to accommodate these changes (Kirkpatrick, 2008:82). Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 pointed out that the company expects good quality facilitators, accredited, subject matter experts and well experienced facilitators. Respondent 5 disputed these by saying that the company prefers cheaper and less experienced facilitators. Kirkpatrick (2008:42) stated that “if the objective of the program is to increase the skills of participants, a performance test is need”. Respondent 1 to 8 pointed out that there is no link between current training and development programme and the organisation’s goals. There is also misalignment between the organisation’s goal setters and those who have to execute them. Respondent 9 and 10 admitted that the current training and development programmes enhance the company’s goals. This implies that the current training is not set to contribute in the company’s goals. The findings will assist goal setters to review their training and development strategies. Reid and Barrington (2011:343) confirm that evaluation must be co-operative. Respondent 1, 7, 8, 9, and 10 agreed that the current training and development programmes lead to individual goal setting and also stated that through training needs assessment, individual’s weakness and strength are identified and training planned to address the weaknesses. Respondent 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 disagreed by pointing out that recruiters always look externally for candidates and employees are only allowed to study courses in-line with their job. Asare-Bediako (2008) indicates that planned training and the training content should be able to address one’s need, goals and self-development.

Findings from the Study: The study revealed that an evaluation of employee training and development programme is not a new system, since the system was in place as from 2009. This system was not properly applied as the company used only smile sheets that measure how trainees feel about the training whilst ignoring to measure other levels of evaluations which makes it difficult to get the optimal desired outcome. The researcher found out that employees’ perceptions were correct, the reviewed training records indicated that most of the programmes conducted during 2013-2014 financial year were focused on developing Africans especially African females and people with disabilities. The study also exposed a lack of communication amongst stakeholders which breaks down the link between the company’s goals, learners’ needs and departmental needs. Top management is good at laying out company policies and procedures but fail to show their commitment to them. There is a strong confirmation from all the interviewees that trainees performance after the programme is not monitored or evaluated, on-the-job training, job rotation is not happening at all as managers and supervisors lack time due to target constraints.

Findings from Literature Review: Mutsuddi (2012:70) defines training evaluation as “any attempt to obtain information or feedback on the effects of training programme and to assess the value of training in the light of that information for improving further training. Evaluation of training can be viewed as method of measuring change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, job performance, costs and quality of training facilities. It indicates how well an individual is fulfilling the job demands”. Training and development value in this study refers to the benefits that the company will derive in the future from successful training and development programmes. Measurement of these benefits can be obtained by evaluating the return on investment or the value added to improved productivity through training and development programmes. Findings of this study concur with Wacharia (2010) who emphasises “obligatory and periodic in-service training as part of the strategy to improve service delivery. She also recommends that quality employees training and development should be accepted as a prerequisite for improving efficiency in employee performance”. In this study, status of training and development programme included the design based on the merging of training and development into the strategic goals and mission of the organisation and the organisation’s efforts to continuously strive to improve the training and development programme. The major strategic role of the training and development programme included a clear support and a noticeable top management commitment to the programme. Respondents indicated the lack of top management support to training and development programme. For the training to be effective the company needs to put in place strategies that will encourage learning transfer into the job and providing the necessary feedback regarding its effectiveness and its worthiness. The findings of this study reveal that employee performance can be improved if quality employee training and development programmes are implemented; this concurs with Nel, P.S., Werner, A., Poisat, Sono, Du Plessis, A., Ngalo, O., Poisat, P., Sono, T., Van Hoek, L. and Botha, C. (2008), who contended that when organisations train and develop their employees they “invest in their employees and, in return, employees tend to reciprocate in positive ways. This theory outlines the importance of employees being trained and developed and the effect and impact that these training and development programme have on employee performance”. Respondents four and seven indicated that training and development for new employees is more effective than for existing employees. Findings from this study point to the importance of highly qualified facilitators designing and presenting employee training and development programmes in order to contribute to improved performance. This is noted in the findings of Naris and Ukpere (2009) that highlight that effective staff development and training programme will improve staff performance.

Primary Research Findings: The research objective of this study was fulfilled with the aid of interviews. Findings from the primary study as per the research questions were as follows: Both the literature reviewed and interview responses confirmed that employee training and development program entail key issues that determine the effectiveness of the programme. It was established that the key issues of T&D programme were the design, conduct, evaluation, regular feedback to employees, 360 degree feedback, strengths and improvement areas, support from

top management and action plans and best fit and compensation. The company currently uses a classroom method of training based on the use of one criteria of evaluation, namely the reaction criteria which only evaluate the reaction of trainees about the training programme. Unfortunately the classroom method ignores the other evaluation criteria such as level of learning, behavioural change and the results which include the evaluation of the ROI. The system fails to link employee T&D programme with on-the-job performance. The system did not have capabilities to encourage employees to apply new knowledge and skills. This objective was achieved because interviews and literature concurred that the current T&D programme was ineffective and unreliable and it has serious operational challenges because of its simplicity and practice. The second objective of the study was to evaluate employee perceptions of the adequacy and relevance of the T&D programme. Investigating the adequacy and relevance of employee T&D needs and strategies, significant factors that determine the quality of the programme were identified. These factors were the quality of and qualification of employee T&D facilitators and the quality T&D programmes delivered to employees. The quality of employee T&D Programmes will significantly affect the T&D of employees as employees T&D programmes which are of a high standard could improve employee performance and skills, thus leading to improved service delivery. From the data analysed and reviewed employees were of the view that employee T&D programmes at the company were of a low standard and out-dated and not improving employee performance, thus becoming evident as there is no improvement in the provision of their services. Some respondents highlighted that some of the T&D facilitators have lower qualifications and so employee T&D programmes were not successfully implemented. Employees perceive training and development programme as an act to settle the BBEE scorecard. This objective was also achieved because interviews concurred with Ekot (2010) who stated that “the quality of an organisation’s training affects its value, he adds that untrained or poorly trained employees cost significantly more than well-trained employee do”. The final objective of the study was to bring about some recommendations for a more targeted T&D programme to the management. Conducted interviews indicated that managers suggested a new T&D system which was in line with “global business performance developmental practices”. This study also revealed the importance of transfer of and access to T&D information as this will largely influence employee T&D, if employees are made aware of employee T&D programmes they become motivated to participate in such a programme. This study also revealed the need of a leadership/management development programme, customer service, project management, career development programme, system training, and organisational development programmes. Some interviewees pointed out that the multiple T&D programmes were ideal to avoid biases and have a better picture of the company’s development programmes. Results of the study confirm that training and development strategy was not correctly carried out at the company. The findings reveal that although the respondents were aware of the various aspects of training and development, there was no strategic framework in place as the foundation for training and development strategy even though management indicated that training and development was part of the organisation’s strategy. The conclusions drawn for the findings related to management and employees indicated that:

- Most organisations value the implementation of quality employee training and development as this result in an improvement in employee performance, which in turn lead to an improvement in the services offered to clients and greater ROI.
- There are important factors that influence and affect employee training and development in organisations, those factors would have to be considered if employee training and development is to be successful in any organisation. Those factors and attributes include the quality of employee training and development programmes, the qualifications of employee training and development facilitators and the transfer of or access to employee training and development information. Furthermore, it became clear from respondents that the major organisational issue constraining training and development at the company was the lack of top management support for training and development programmes. It is important for the company in its attempt to improve employee performance, motivation, retention and morale must endeavour to ensure effective training and development strategies across all departments. The survey data that was examined in the study based in the elements of the training and development framework: Best Practice Model. Analysis of data suggested a new structure of training and development programme that is perhaps an improvement upon the description of a well-functioning training and development programme. The idea of such structure for training and development programme model is that, with management commitment to an effective training and development programme that enjoys high status within the organisation, processes and procedures will follow from that commitment.

Recommendations for Management Practice

- In order to improve employee training and development programme at the company, and improved performance and efficient and effective service delivery, management should increase the number of employees taking part in training and development.

- Access to and transfer of information on employee training and development programmes can be improved by the senior management at the company.
- Establishing a well-functioning training and development policy. A policy that will improve channels of communication, giving employees access to training and development programmes and a policy that will enhance the transfer of knowledge and skill to the job after training.
- Using the four levels of evaluation models to evaluate training and development programmes. In order to position the company for success evaluation of training and development programmes should be on four levels rather than using only 'smile' sheets. This will help management to identify skills gap and enhance organisational performance.
- Involvement of training managers in organisational planning and goal setting. Training managers should be involved in formulating training goals that are linked to organisational needs and planning training strategies that achieve those goals.
- Ensuring that what is learned in training is transferred to the job. To ensure effective training and development programmes, techniques must be in place to ensure that the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are learned in training are transferred to the job.
- Inclusion of activities that sustain training and development as crucial to the organisation.
- Commitment of top management to training. For the company to have an effective training and development programme, their top management must view training as a strategic advantage, as a way to meet organisational goals.
- Involvement of multiple constituencies and use of various methods in assessing training and development needs. The company should conduct a thorough needs assessment in the development of content that meets their organisational needs and furthers organisational goals. Training information must be gathered from a variety of sources, including internal sources such as top managers, line managers, employees, job descriptions, and external sources such as their competitors and legislative and economic policies. The findings further recommend that management must be engaged in leadership development programmes. All employees should attend competency-based training, system training and the HR team should undergo policy development training.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Since the study only focused on the company in Johannesburg, future studies of this kind could include other regional branches in all provinces. Only senior managers were sampled in this study with the exception of the staff so the gathered data did not encompass all parties. Different views could have been provided if employees and other stakeholders had been considered in the study. As result future study may consider employees as the main source of data. A quantitative approach to studies of this nature can be followed fruitfully and future studies would profit from the use of additional measures to cross-validate findings which influence management and employees' perceptions quality service delivery and employee training and development programmes, respectively. The study results suggest that in order to influence a more effective training, companies need to consider how the training and development programme is aligned with the strategy of the organisation and what is being done to make sure that all training and development activities are effective especially the transfer of learning to the job. Evaluation of training remained a joint effort to continuously improve the training and development programmes. Despite the limitations this study provided some critical thinking into certain attributes that can be used in quality employee training and development to increase effectiveness and efficiency of service. Presented conclusions derived from the findings of the study suggested recommendations on how quality employee training and development can be improved in order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. The findings also re-enforces current thinking about the criticality of the status of the training and development programme and the importance of increasing its status by:

- Aligning the training and development programme with the goals and mission of the organisation;
- Evaluating training and development programmes;
- Continuously improving the programme;
- Building transfer into the programme;
- Assessing needs

Finally it can be concluded that quality employee training and development can lead to improved employee performance, and thus lead to improved and quality service.

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