
The Case for In-House Training Teams:

Cut Cost While Offering Employee Development

How to Implement In-House Training Teams in Your Organization

A New Directions paper

With training budgets down 7% last year, especially in finance, retail and manufacturing and a 4% drop in the amount spent by companies per learner, organizations are looking for creative alternatives. Overall, companies spent \$1,036 per learner in 2009 with mid-size companies reporting an increase of 24% to \$975 per learner. Small companies increased their hours of training per employee from 16.8 on average to 31 hours, mid-size from 18.4 to 29 hours and large from 25 to 33 hours. So, while the dollars are down, the need is obviously not. Exploring the option of creating a strong, versatile In-House Training Team, composed of employees with other jobs in the organization, is one creative way to solve the resource problem. (Trainingmag.com Oct/Nov. 2009)

Companies today are between a rock and a hard space when it comes to employee training and development. In order to grow, provide valuable employee engagement and remain innovative, a company must invest in personal development training of their workforce. However, now more than ever, there is a great call to cut costs and squeeze budgets usually resulting in a lack of employee development funding and even elimination of training. Setting up an In-House Training Team is an effective way to combat this paradox and offer employee development opportunities simultaneously.

What is an In-House Training Team?

An In-House Training Team is composed of 6-12 employees who perform other jobs for the organization as well as serve on the training team. In-house trainers become experts at delivering one or two modules several times a year, providing just-in-time training during downtime to maximize staff utilization. The training team may also take responsibility for overseeing OJT training quality, maintaining the training room, producing training workbooks and memory aids, ordering supplies, and scheduling and maintaining training records.

What are the benefits of creating an In-House Training Team?

- Opportunities for employee development without changing position
- Real-life examples used in training to make it more realistic
- Quick turn-around between training request and delivery
- Cost-effective compared to hiring professional, external trainers
- Development of in-house experts and role models
- Visible return on investment (six in-house trainers saved one organization over \$175,000 in training costs in one year)

How do In-House Training Teams aid employee motivation and retention?

As the workforce deals with four generations of workers, it's important to see how In-House Training Teams can aid employee motivation and retention across generational divides. For the Veteran generation (1920-1945) who like consistency, logic and discipline, In-House Training works to motivate them by establishing a credible in-house authority figure and by providing a low risk, familiar environment for the training. The Baby Boomer generation (1946-1965) on the other hand, likes to challenge authority and prefers experience over theory when learning. With In-House Training, this generation will find interest in the idea of 'continuing education,' and the voice of authority being an experienced peer who uses real situations and stories. Generation X (1966-1980) prefers using technology and is very independent. In-House Training is powerful for them because it fits their need to seek out new approaches, have less authoritative supervision and more frequent learning opportunities. Finally, the newest generation to enter the work force, Generation Y (1981-2000) prefers to learn in groups and requires lots of interaction and feedback – perfect for an In-House Training team to achieve. Plus Gen Y will be attracted to see how they can advance to being in-house trainers themselves in the future.

How do I select the In-House Training Team?

There are four fundamental actions an employer needs to take in order to form an In-House Training Team. First, the employer must recruit the perspective trainers, by sending out a **company memo** that begins with "As part of our initiative to build a strong organization with emphasis on teaming, efficiency and continuous improvement, we are launching an In-House Training Team." In the memo, the employer should mention that the organization is seeking volunteers, which applicants must be in good standing, must have approval and commitment of their managers and will go through an interview and presentation process to determine who will be selected. [For a sample of this memo visit:

www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT_Recruiting_Memo.pdf]

Next, the employer provides employees with the **application form** to become an In-House Trainer. Some questions on the form include asking why the person wants to be an in-house trainer, what prior experiences the applicant has had as a trainer, and how the applicant feels about teaching others. The application may also ask the applicant to identify specific talents or skills he/she has that might be beneficial to the team. [For a sample of this application visit:

www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT_Application_Form.pdf]

As the employer, it is important to include supervisors/managers in the process by asking for them to complete the **recommendation form** for their nominations. This recommendation form will be filled out by both the supervisor/manager as well as the applicant. [For a sample of this recommendation form visit:

www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT_Recommendation_Form.pdf]

Finally, the company should prepare a time for **interviews and presentations** by the applicants before a small group of people who will rate the results of this portion of the process. The interview should be 6-8 questions long and should determine if the applicant is a good fit for the training team. It's very important to discern between those applicants who just want to be in-house trainers for the prestige and/or ability to leave their desks, and those who really get excited by watching the "light turn on" in others. The presentation should be assessed for how the applicant demonstrates openness, confidence, eye contact, delivery, organization of materials, use of visual and/or learning aids, engagement and overall approach. [For samples of both the interview questions and presentation form visit:

[www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT Interview Questions.pdf](http://www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT%20Interview%20Questions.pdf) and [www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT Presentation Grader.pdf](http://www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT%20Presentation%20Grader.pdf)]

How do I launch the In-House Training Team?

There are seven steps to launching an In-House Training Team. First, your In-House Training Team should have a **team charter**, including clearly defined goals, deliverables and boundaries. Some goals might include maintaining a high quality, current Training Intranet for employees or evaluating competency levels of employees who have been trained through review tools, memory aids and regular auditing. The charter should include the purpose of the team, goals, expected activities, operating guidelines, expected communication, team membership, expected measures, and authority levels. [For a sample of a team charter visit: [www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT Training Team Charter.pdf](http://www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT%20Training%20Team%20Charter.pdf)]

Second, the In-House Training Team should review the **Training Team Guidelines** and gain agreement from members. The trainer guidelines set up expectations for the three phases of training: pre-training, during training and post training. [For a sample of the Training Team Guidelines visit: [www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT Trainer Guidelines.pdf](http://www.newdirectionsconsulting.com/samples/IHTT%20Trainer%20Guidelines.pdf)] *Agreement to these guidelines is critical to prevent mishaps later on when trainings are launched*

Third, the In-House Training Team should **require certification** of all in house training team members in Instructional Design, Adult Learning Theory, Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation and Presentation Skills, including the KOLB Learning Styles assessment or some other similar tool that defines learning style. Certification ensures that your trainers are best fitted to train their peers and facilitate learning plus it provides them with additional credibility to be a trainer. For In-House Training Teams overseeing On-the-Job training, the certification should include how to utilize Job Instruction techniques (Training within Industry).

Fourth, the organization needs to provide your trainers with high quality, proven training materials, including **scripted modules, workbooks, PowerPoint slides, Job Instruction forms and memory aids**. New Directions Consulting offers training modules on Meeting Skills, How Teams Work, Conflict Resolution, Communication Styles, Managing Multiple Priorities, and Problem Solving Tools [To order these trainings email info@newdirectionsconsulting.com] Other resources such as HRDQ: Learning Resources Company and ASTD: Training Resources offer training materials as well.

Fifth, the In-House Training Team should pair up with each other based on interests, gender mix, and experience and begin rehearsing and conducting **“dry runs”** of a training module. It's valuable for in-house trainers to work in pairs in order to have the support of each other if negative circumstances arise during a training session. Once the team is formed and the module assigned, it's important to have a specific training date for them to deliver the material.

Sixth, the team should hold **regular Training Team meetings** with the following items on the agenda: review status of modules, provide opportunities for trainers to practice new activities, review training supplies and materials, review evaluations and determine if modifications are needed, review training records and identify where “holes” exist, work on memory aids and refreshers, determine if employees are using the trainings and tools out in the workplace, and look for further education in training.

Finally, allow your In-House Training Team to have **follow-up trainings** in order to position them in the newest theories and practices of training. These additional trainings might include GenX/GenY learning needs, Belief Behavior Connection theory, The Power of Storytelling, Creating Memory Aids and Other Support Tools and Handling Tricky Situations.

Final Thoughts:

In-House Training Teams offer tremendous growth for employees who may not have the option of moving up in positional authority anytime soon. Trainers develop competency in learning theory, public delivery and facilitation skills, teaching others, evaluating whether others have learned, communicating effectively, handling tricky situations on their feet and numerous other competencies that will benefit them as future leaders. They also develop credibility and informal authority among their peers. In truth, we haven't found a downside yet to creating a skilled In-House Training Team.

Looking to Start Your Own In-House Training Team?

For more information or assistance on how you can start your own In-House Training Team please contact us at info@newdirectionsconsulting.com or by calling **800.730.3631**

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