Ten Employee Training Tips

Well-trained employees are the key to company's success. Studies have shown that the most successful, productive employees are those who have received extensive training. They're the cream of the crop, and often have the strongest stake in the company's future.

In an ideal world, you would be able to hire people who already possess the exact skills your business needs. But in today's competitive labor market, demand for skilled workers far exceeds supply.

That's where training comes in. Not only does instruction arm your employees with needed professional or technical skills, but it also shows that you are invested in them and interested in bringing them with you into the company's future. This helps keep workers motivated and involved.

To successfully launch an employee-training program in your own company, follow these 10 helpful tips:

1. <u>Stress training as investment</u>. The reason training is often considered optional at many companies is because it is thought of as an expense rather than an investment. While it's true that training can be costly up front, it's a long-term investment in the growth and development of your human resources.
2. <u>Determine your needs</u>. As you probably don't have unlimited time or funds to execute an employee training program, you should decide early on what the focus of your training program should be. Determine what skills are most pertinent to address current or future company needs or ones that will provide the biggest payback. Ask yourself, "How will this training eventually prove beneficial to the company?" Repeat this process as your business needs change.
3. <u>Promote a culture of learning.</u> In today's fast-paced economy, if a business isn't learning, it's going to fall behind. A business learns as its people learn. Communicate your expectations that all employees should take the necessary steps to hone their skills and stay on top of their professions or fields of work. Make sure you support those efforts by providing the resources needed to accomplish this goal.
4. <u>Get management on board.</u> Once you have developed a prioritized list of training topics that address key needs within your company, you need to convince management to rally behind the initiative.
5. <u>Start out small.</u> Before rolling out your training program to the masses, rehearse with a small group of users and gather their feedback. This sort of informal benchmarking exposes weaknesses in your training plans and helps you fine-tune the training process.
6. <u>Choose quality instructors and materials.</u> Who you select to conduct the training will make a major difference in the success of your efforts, whether it's a professional educator or simply a knowledgeable staff member. Having the right training materials is also important — after the training is over, these materials become valuable resources for trainees.
7. <u>Find the right space.</u> Select a training location that's conducive to learning. Choose an environment that's quiet and roomy enough to spread out materials. Make sure the space is equipped with a computer and projector, so you can present a visually stimulating training session.
8. <u>Clarify connections</u>. Some employees may feel that the training they're receiving isn't relevant to their job. It's important to help them understand the connection early on, so they don't view the training sessions as a waste of valuable time. Employees should see the training as an important addition to their professional portfolios. Award people with completion certificates at the end of the program.
9. <u>Make it ongoing.</u> Don't limit training solely to new employees. Organized, ongoing training programs will maintain all employees' skill levels, and continually motivate them to grow and improve professionally.
10. <u>Measure results.</u> Without measurable results, it's almost impossible to view training as anything but an expense. Decide how you're going to obtain an acceptable rate of return on your investment. Determine what kind of growth or other measure is a reasonable result of the training you provide. You'll have an easier time budgeting funds for future training if you can demonstrate concrete results