Small Business Management Toolbox

Manage a small team

Training Tips

Training is an important investment in your business. Train yourself and your staff well and your business will benefit greatly.

As part of training an employee, you often need to demonstrate and explain skills, jobs or techniques. There are ‘Train the Trainer’ courses designed to help you in this process, but a few general tips are listed below.

Introducing training - ‘GLOSS’

The steps in introducing a training session can be summarised by the acronym GLOSS - Gain interest, Link, specify Outcomes, provide Structure, Stimulate motivation.

• **Gain the interest** of the person you are trying to train.
  
  This may involve telling them why they need to know what you are about to show them or posing a problem that needs to be solved.

• **Link** what you are doing with what they already know.
  
  Educational research shows that learning is more effective when connections can be made to existing knowledge.

• **State the outcomes** of what you are trying to show them.
  
  This gives them the sense of where they are going.

• **Provide a structure** of how the training will take place.
  
  Let them know what will happen and in what order.

• **Stimulate** their motivation to learn.
  
  When someone is motivated to learn, they learn more effectively.
Conducting the training

To train in a skill, you may choose to start by demonstrating the skill. To train in theory, you may need to use other methods. In any case, the following are useful guidelines.

- Care needs to be taken with the flow of training topics. Simple, everyday or common tasks that they may do on a regular basis should be covered first. From here, progress through to tasks at different stages of difficulty and occurrence eg there is no point training a staff member early on in a task they may do once a month as they will forget how to do infrequently done tasks.
- Begin with an overview what is to be learned.
- Discuss terminology and introduce any new equipment that is to be used.
- Break up the skill to be learned or the theory to be mastered into ‘chunks’ eg the different steps in a process or sections of the theory.
- Involve the trainee(s) with activities for them to do related to each ‘chunk’. This may involve them trying the skill you have demonstrated, answering questions or doing anything else to help reinforce what they have been shown. It also provides feedback to you as to how well they have understood your training to this point.
- Don’t just ask the trainee if they understand what to do. A critical aspect of training is that you have the trainee show you how to do the task you have just shown them. If they don’t do it right, show them again and let them redo it.
- Vary your learning activities as much as possible. This maintains interest and improves the learning process.

A training manual should be produced with a structured approach to the following.

- What is taught, when, how, where and why.
- A timetable for training.
- Quizzes, tests, homework reading (where appropriate).

Finishing ‘OFF’

The closing steps of your training session can be summarised by the acronym ‘OFF’ - Outcomes, Feedback, Future.

- Go over the outcomes of the training session, restating what they have learned.
- Provide a chance for two-way feedback. Ask them to comment on the training session and suggest ways they can improve or practise skills they have learned in this training session.
- Explain the links between this training session and future training sessions or applications in the workplace.