

Skills Gap Analysis is the necessary evil for any organisation.

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Despite all the hype about the significance of human capital many organisations are not doing enough to build staff capacity through well -structured training programmes. The training program should be based on formal training and skills gap analysis. It is a matter of regret that where training is done, it is not well planned and it is done in a haphazard manner.

If the human capital is the lifeblood of any organisation, many organisations need to come up with staff capacitation programmes aligned with their vision, mission and strategy. That is the only way to enjoy any enduring competitive advantage.

Skills gap analysis is the difference between skills that an employer wants or needs and skills the employees possess. The skills gap analysis should be geared towards identifying skills gaps urgently in needed to drive the business in the short and long term. For each function and skill level, the gap in the quantity and quality of skills should be assessed. A gap in the quantity of skills means that an organisation faces difficulties in finding enough employees and a quality gap arises if the employees within the organisation do not have the right skills to perform well in the specific position, even though they might have the required formal education.

Training and development should be based on a comprehensive training needs assessment whose main objective is to identify performance gaps, determine their causes and recommend the appropriate interventions. This ensures that all training is demand driven, value based and responsive to the company's needs. In most organisations training is done without prior training needs assessment. This result in misplaced training priorities and lack of buy-in from the employees who are supposed to go through the training.

Why Training Needs Assessment Is Necessary during skills gap analysis?

It will guide an organisation's training targets and it focuses on programmes and activities that will impart employees with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes aimed at enhancing their productivity.

- It helps an organisation to realign its training and development programmes with the organisation's mandate, vision , mission and policies.
- It helps an organisation to analyse its performance problems, their causes and find solutions to the same.
- An organisation can identify critical areas of training needs according to job category
- It helps an organisation to identify key training needs and develop a training plan.
- It helps an organisation to embark on training programmes that will meet identified training needs.

To avoid training programmes that might be ill-directed and inadequately focused;

A Step-by-step process of bridging skills gaps

The steps that should be undertaken when carrying out a skills gap analysis varies from one organisation to the other. Below is are the suggested steps.

Step 1. Strategy Analysis and Review

Revisit your organisation's strategy, vision, values and mission and see how these should be synchronised with your training and development strategy.

Step 2. Identification of skills gaps

This process entails identifying both soft and hard skills possessed by employees. This can be done through various methods like psychometric tests, assessment centres and 360 degree. Psychometric tests measure the cognitive ability of employees.

Assessment Centres

Soft skills like leadership, teamwork, communication and business acumen also need to be assessed during skills gap assessment. Such soft skills can be exhibited by employees during assessment centre exercises like presentation and role plays.

Step 3. Prioritize the Skills Gaps

After the identification of the skills gaps, the next step is to prioritize the skills gaps to ensure the most pressing ones are addressed first. Most organisations make a mistake by trying to close all the skills gaps concurrently which is difficult if not impossible give resources constraints. The factors that determine the prioritization of skills gaps are the size of the gap and the criticality of the skill for business success. Therefore, it is imperative that any organization should come up with a skills gap prioritization matrix.

Step 4. Analysis of the root causes of skills gaps

The skills gaps that are encountered by many companies can be attributed to many and varied factors. Some of the reasons could be traced back to your human resources value chain like lack of a coherent talent management strategy and it could be that the training programmes you are offering are not informed by the training needs assessment and hence are misdirected in such a way that your training serve no purpose other than merely incurring costs for your organisation.

Step 5. Measures that can be taken to bridge the gap

Against this background It is high time that organisations should have a well developed training and

development strategy that is informed by a skills gap and training needs assessment, otherwise any training programme that is not rooted in skills gap analysis have no to little impact.

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