Chapter 5

Trainers’ Opinion about the Effectiveness of Training Programme

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5.1 Introduction:

The opinion of the trainers about the effectiveness of the training programme was collected personally at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai. The period of the study was from January 2006 to December 2006. There are seven trainers involved in the training programme. All the seven trainers’ opinion were collected and taken for analysis for identifying the training effectiveness at India Post.

The role of trainers in India Post is to impart training to the trainees and develop course material for the training programme.

The trainer is not responsible for the trainees’ transferring of the acquired KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) to the work place. The trainers are not involved either in training need identification of the trainees or in evaluation.

5.2 Profile of trainers:
The seven trainers in the Postal Training Centre are as follows:

1. Mr.T.Senthamilselvan
2. Mrs.K.S.Uma Rani
3. Mr.S.Radakrishnan
4. Mr.S.Subramanian
Apart from these seven trainers, the Assistant Director Mr. P.L. Ragunathan (Presently Mr. G. Gurusamy) and Director Mr. Rajarajan, IPS would impart training in a few training sessions and monitor the whole training programme.

There were five male trainers and two female trainers at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai at present. All the trainers are in the age group of 31 – 50 and have post graduate qualification.

Experience is an indicator of one’s effectiveness in the job. Only well-experienced trainers can impart training effectively. All the seven trainers at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai are well experienced in India Post. They have more than 12 years of experience in India Post, and have less than 6 years of experience as trainers at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai. Usually the trainers are posted at the training centre on the basis of their experience and academic interest.

5.3 Training objectives:
With clear training objectives, the trainers can facilitate the learning process effectively. Specific objectives allow the trainer to determine whether the trainees are progressing and making the appropriate modification.

At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai all the seven trainers describe expected outcomes, outline training content, plan specific training activities, develop course material, design evaluation procedures, communicate programme intent to trainees, and ensure that training is realistic and appropriate. They develop overall and segment (lesson) objectives and present them to participants on the first day of the training programme.

5.4 Schedule of the training programme:

The trainees should be aware of the complete schedule of the training programme. The schedule will present a clear picture about the entire training programme to the trainees.

At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai, all the trainers present the complete schedule of the training programme on the first day and the first session of the training programme. If a trainee misses the first session, it is difficult for him to know the entire schedule.
5.5 Language used:

So far employees of India Post drawn from Tamil Nadu have been trained in the Postal Training Centre, Madurai. All the employees use Tamil as medium of instruction in the work place. Considering this point, the trainers should use appropriate language for the training. As all the trainers are well educated and well experienced, they impart training both in English and Tamil.

Usually the trainers get the preference of language from the trainees on the first day of the training. The preference of the trainees is to have a mix of English and Tamil as medium of instruction. At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai, all the seven trainers use a mix of English and Tamil as the medium of instruction in all training sessions as preferred by the trainees.

5.6 Training Methodology:

Selection of appropriate training methods tells upon the trainer’s ability to develop KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude). Trainers must be able to evaluate all the methods in terms of strength and weaknesses.

Lecture is one of the oldest forms of training. It is the best method to create understanding of the topic or to influence attitudes through education
about a topic. The lecture is typically thought of in terms of a person (the trainer) speaking to a group (the trainees) about the topic.

Discussion method provides trainees with information that is supported, reinforced and expanded on through interactions both among the trainees and between the trainees and the trainers. This added communication gives it much greater power than the lecture. The discussion method provides a two-way flow of communication.

Exercise and simulations attempt to represent the way an industry or company functions. Typically, exercises are based on a set of relationships, rules and principles derived from theory or research. Trainees are provided with information describing a situation and are asked to make decisions about what to do. The system then provides feedback about the impact of their decisions, and the trainees are asked to make another decision. This process continues until some predefined state of the organization exists or a specified number of trials are completed.

Each method has its own merits and demerits. At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai the trainers give equal importance to all the three methods via lecture, discussion and exercise and the trainers make use of the method depending upon the requirement in the training programme. Lecture method is widely used in all training programmes.
5.7 Audio Visual Aid:

**Identifying the appropriate type of training aid for each session of training is important while designing the training programme.** Training aids are used as a supplement to methods of training, rather than as a stand-alone means of instruction.

The very old traditional training aid used by most of the trainers is chalk and talk. Now in all the training rooms chalk and black board are replaced by marker and white boards. Marker does not produce dust and it is harmless to both the trainer and the trainees. Postal Training Centre, Madurai also has both black board and white boards.

Word processors are able to develop large print suitable for overhead projectors and photocopy machines can transfer the images on to a transparency. The advantage of the overhead projectors is that it can be used in a fully lighted room. The trainers can prepare the transparency sheets well before the training programme and they can use during the training sessions. At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai, the computer, printer and photocopier machine are available for the trainers. Postal Training Centre, Madurai has 4 overhead projectors.
Laser compact disk projectors are similar to overhead transparencies, but they can be presented in a more sophisticated manner using various software packages. Laser compact disk offers the advantage of combining, photographs and other graphical images with text. It also makes the presentation more professional. Postal Training Centre, Madurai has 1 laser compact disk projector.

All the class rooms have facility to use all the training aids. All the trainers are able to use all the training aids. All the training aids are widely used in all training programmes.

5.8 Batch size:

The trainers’ personality influences the training programme in several ways

- Trainers reduce anxiety related to the unknown
- Trainers focus attention
- Trainers increase the likelihood of being successful in training.

Training should be designed not only to provide KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) but also to motivate trainees to learn those KSAs’
(Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) and apply them to their job. For this purpose the size of a training batch should not be big.

At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai, each batch consists of 40 trainees at the maximum. All the trainers have personal contact and interactions with each and every trainee. This will help the trainee to learn more from the training programme.

5.9 Trainees’ participation:

Those trainees who come to a training programme with positive expectation are more successful. The reason is that those with positive expectations are better motivated and they will always interact and actively participate in the whole training programme. At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai, all the trainers say that only 50% of the trainees actively interact and participate effectively in the training programme.

5.10 Content of handout:
Handout material is an important support to the training. To keep up the trainees’ interest and their complete involvement in discussion, handout material is highly useful. Handout materials provide notes on the entire presentation. If the trainees refer to reading material and sit in the training programme, they can pay more attention to what the trainers say and do rather than concentrating on taking notes.

The trainees can add information in the handout material when the training is continuous. It is sometimes better to keep certain information from the trainees until it is time to use it. Exercises are an example of material that should be held back. Trainers do not want trainees being distracted from the topic by trying to figure out various problems ahead of time.

All the trainees at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai are supplied with the handout material for the entire training modules on the first day of the training programme. The seven trainers of Postal Training Centre, Madurai, have developed the handout material for various training programmes. All the trainers are known to have taken pains in preparing the handout materials, and the handout material covers all the contents of the training programme.
5.11 Evening Assignments:

The training programmes conducted at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai is residential. Usually the trainers give evening assignments to the trainees on the topic discussed on the day, otherwise the trainees are asked to prepare some useful notes or tips for the next day’s discussion. The evening assignments are not given on all the days. Only on a few days assignments are given to the trainees. This evening assignments are part of the training programme.

The trainer’s opinion about the completion of evening assignments by the trainees is that all the trainers agreed that all the trainees are able to complete the evening assignments in the stipulated time. The Postal Training Centre’s library is kept open till 8 P.M. The library has 3000 books for reference. The trainees can prepare their evening assignments in the library during evening hours. Otherwise the trainees can also make use of the handout material for preparing the evening assignment.

5.12 Trainers’ KSAs’:
Effective trainers should have KSA (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) related to both subject matter, content and the role of the trainer. In addition, a trainer must establish his credibility with the trainees. It is useful to examine the KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) of an effective trainer.

KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) required for an effective trainer are as follows:

Knowledge includes subject matter, adult learning process and instructional methods.

Skills required for the trainers are interpersonal communication skills, verbal skills

Attitude required for the trainers are commitment to the department, commitment to help trainees and high level of self-efficacy.

The credibility of the trainer can be obtained through the first impression and experience. Trainers can exercise more control over the first impression and should strive to fulfill the expectation of the trainees.
Trainers need to update their KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) through regular reading and attending some trainers’ training programme. At the Postal Training Centre, Madurai, the trainers are regularly sent for trainers development programme conducted by various institutions and Postal Training Centre in other parts of India. Apart from attending the training programme, the trainers also read regularly to update their KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude).

5.13 Use of external trainers:

The credibility of a trainer has a significant impact on the effectiveness of training. Usually Postal Training Centre, Madurai uses internal trainers for all training programmes. Occasionally does the Postal Training Centre, Madurai utilize the services of practitioners from industry and academicians from educational institutions for their training programme.

When the internal trainers were asked about the importance and need of external trainers, all the internal trainers agreed that the external trainers should be included in all training programmes in one or two sessions to provide information about current trends, changes and problems faced by the industry. The trainees can make use of the expertise of the external trainers for understanding the concepts. The main problem with the Postal Training Centre is that they don’t pay well the external trainers
5.14 Transfer of acquired skills to workplace:

A skill or set of behaviour learnt by the trainees may not be used on the job. Sometimes a trainee may not have learned anything and may not use on the job.

All the trainers at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai are of the opinion that the acquisition of skill by the trainees in the training programme will be useful in their work place if the training is properly conducted.

5.15 Feedback:

Once the training programme is completed, a feedback session is essential. Feedback can be taken from trainees in numerous ways. If training is spread over a number of weeks, trainees’ feedback can be obtained in-between training sessions, but the benefits must be weighed against the cost of trainers’ time.

If the trainees provide real feedback, it will help the trainers to make corrections in the programme. In almost all the training programmes at the Postal Training Centre, Madurai, on the last day of the training, a few trainees are
asked to give oral feedback about the training and the trainers. In addition written feedback is also obtained.

Based on the trainees’ opinion many changes have been implemented at the training centre such as flexible timing, more games in the training programme, providing the training material (transparency sheets) etc., The trainers were also very much satisfied with the trainees feedback. It also helps them to develop in areas like dressing, eye contact, discussion etc.

5.16 Trainers’ satisfaction:

Malcolm Knowles (1976) provides the following checklist of trainers to assess to what extent they are truly professional. Trainers should assumptions such as

- **Learners are capable of self-directed development**
- **Training is a process of self-development through collaborative inquiry**
- **The role of the trainer is only that of a facilitator and resource to self-directed learners.**

The trainer should believe that:

- **Adults want to improve themselves**
- Learning is enhanced when stimulated by intrinsic motivation.

He can adhere to criteria that:
• **Places a great emphasis on establishing a climate conducive to learning**
  (a climate of warmth, mutual respect, caring, trust, informality)
• Engage trainees in formulating goals that are meaningful to them
• Select techniques and materials that engage trainees in an active process of self-directed inquiry

Trainers guide the trainees to upgrade their KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude) in their field. Trainers must determine what the trainee is capable of learning at any given time and then present the training and development activities in a clear and logical manner so the trainee is capable of performing the required tasks. At the training programme, always the trainers try to make the trainees understand the topic in depth. All the trainers at the Postal Training Centre have more than 5 years of experience as trainers and they are very much effective in developing the employees of India Post. The trainers feel that their contribution is immense to the India Post.

5. 17 Trainers’ role in evaluation of the training:

In India Post the trainers’ opinion cannot be given much consideration while evaluating the training programme. The trainers are permanently placed at the Postal Training Centre and their job is to provide training to the newly inducted employees and existing employees in specific skills required by India Post.
The trainers are not involved in identifying the training need of the trainees as the trainees come from various parts of Tamil Nadu and once the training is completed it is not possible to meet those trainees again. The trainer can only give instruction as to how to utilize the trained skills in the work place and it is in the hands of the trainees to use the acquired KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude). The trainers may not know whether the trainees use KSAs’ (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude). If the trainee fortunately uses them after the training the trainers will have no information. Even if there is a problem in transferring the learnt skills, the trainees will not come back to the training centre or contact the trainers. The department does not take it seriously when a trainee is not serious about the training and there is no retraining practice. The role of the trainer in India Post is limited.