



A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF MANAGER AS A TRAINER AT WORKPLACE

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to study manager in the role of trainer at workplace. To study, a questionnaire was designed according to the objectives and the same was used to take views of employees working at managerial level across all levels.

Series of questions were design to gauge views of the managers on their contribution towards training process and their perspective towards the thought of manager as trainer at workplace.

Survey of 50 professionals reveals inclination of today's managerial workforce towards training their team members. The contribution of manager today is limited to assessing training needs and setting training objectives. These are the major role performed by the manager today.

Data from managers also revealed manager's willingness to go beyond their routine tasks to take up the role of trainer rather than just being a facilitator managers are willing to go beyond. But still this completely depends upon the business strategy and needs.

If the organizational factors are favorable enough to support such collaboration between manager and employee, then manager is a perfect fit for the role of trainer at workplace. The reason is their existing relationship, cost effectiveness and business needs.

Introduction

In this VUCA world, it has become essential for organization to survive. To survive in this dynamic environment, it has become necessary for organization to retain and attract top talent to grow.

Employee development is the fundamental concept used in organization to attract and retain employees. Apart from salary and incentives, career growth and training are the factors which attract employees towards an organization. Today's workforce focuses more on companies which provide them an opportunity to learn and grow continuously.

Training is provided to employees to impart required skills and knowledge. Employees are trained at all levels as well in different situation as and when required. Some employees are trained for future leader roles while some are trained for their poor performance.

Usually the training process is carried out by HR department where an individual is trained by trainer for certain period which can be a year. After training employee is put on the role assigned to them. An analysis of the



normal training process includes a new joinee getting trained by outside professional trainers where they are made to work in different departments. The managers under which they are going to work are hardly included in the entire training process. Once the training process gets over, the employee's performance is analyzed and is assigned to a department under his/her reporting manager. The employee underwent the same process in training for higher positions as well.

The manager is the one who will guide employee during his/her journey in organization. It takes time for managers and their subordinate to understand each other working style and expectations. There might be a situation that both employee and manager might not get along with each other.

If an employee is well informed about the manager expectations and working style during the training process. Then employee will get an opportunity to adapt according to needs of manager during the training period itself. This situation leads to the need for considering manager for role of trainer at workplace.

Manager today can contribute at all levels of training process from training need analysis to actually training the employees. It will be really effective if employees are trained on the job by their managers. This is beneficial for managers, employees and company. Managers will get an opportunity to learn new skills, employees will become more efficient and company will get benefit in terms of cost savings.

Literature Review

In recent years, it has become apparent that, in many organizations, the responsibility for employee development is being devolved to line managers (Hyman and Cunningham, 1998). Salaman (1995) contends that the pivotal role of today's managers is to '*support the management of performance or the management of learning.*' So managers are under increasing pressure to manage the learning process for other employees. A recent training and development survey by CIPD (2003) gauged the extent to which line managers themselves are now driving development activities. Indeed, this study demonstrated that there has been a considerable devolution of responsibility for staff development to line managers in all sectors.

IES' own research has surveyed organizational views concerning the particular competencies that managers require to manage effectively. These include: the ability to plan ahead, to see the bigger picture and to manage relationships. More specifically, there has been a shift from the role of the 'manager as a controller' to that of a coach or mentor, of which developing employees is a major part (Tamkin et al., 2003). Despite this, there has been little empirical research that specifically deals with the role of managers. In a recent qualitative investigation by Beattie (2002), semi-structured interviews and analysis of critical incidents were used to identify managerial behaviors that either facilitated or inhibited the development of other employees (see Table 1). These skills/behaviors identified by Beattie provide a general overview of what makes an effective, or ineffective, developer of others.



The role of managers as developers is not only limited to the short-term development of staff in their current jobs. Some authors have argued that employees also require information and advice regarding their careers in order to manage their own development effectively. For example, Hirsh et al. (2001) demonstrated that effective career discussions often lead to practical actions and can be highly motivating for employees. More specifically, their examination of 250 particular career development conversations in five major employing organisations showed that, not only did the majority of discussions take place outside of any formal HR processes, but that only 20 per cent of these career conversations were with their direct line manager. The majority of the discussions took place with other managers within the organisation.

The role of managers in both the skills development and career development of staff is widely discussed in the very large research literature on mentoring and coaching.

Clutterbuck (1998) suggests that high performing organizations retain their competitive advantage by the way in which they balance the 'soft' and 'hard' sides of people management. Clutterbuck refer to this as 'challenge versus nurturing', that is, the combination of demanding targets with a high degree of emotional support. Challenge is closely related to the intellectual values of organisations, and nurturing to the emotional

Research Objectives and Methodology

Objectives of the study

- To study managers contribution in training process at workplace.
- To study manager's view towards role as trainer at workplace.
- To study manager's views towards the concept of "Manager as a trainer at workplace."

Research Design

This study considers a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design offers accurate profile of relevant aspects of the phenomena of interest from an individual and organization perspective. Descriptive research design focuses on the existing situations. This research design will help to analyze the current views or opinions of profession across organizations.

Research Methodology

The research is Descriptive in nature. To achieve the objectives, this research uses combination quantitative method and primary source. The research is in primary form where data is collected by floating questionnaire to managers of various organizations to achieve the research objectives. The data collected is Quantitative in nature.

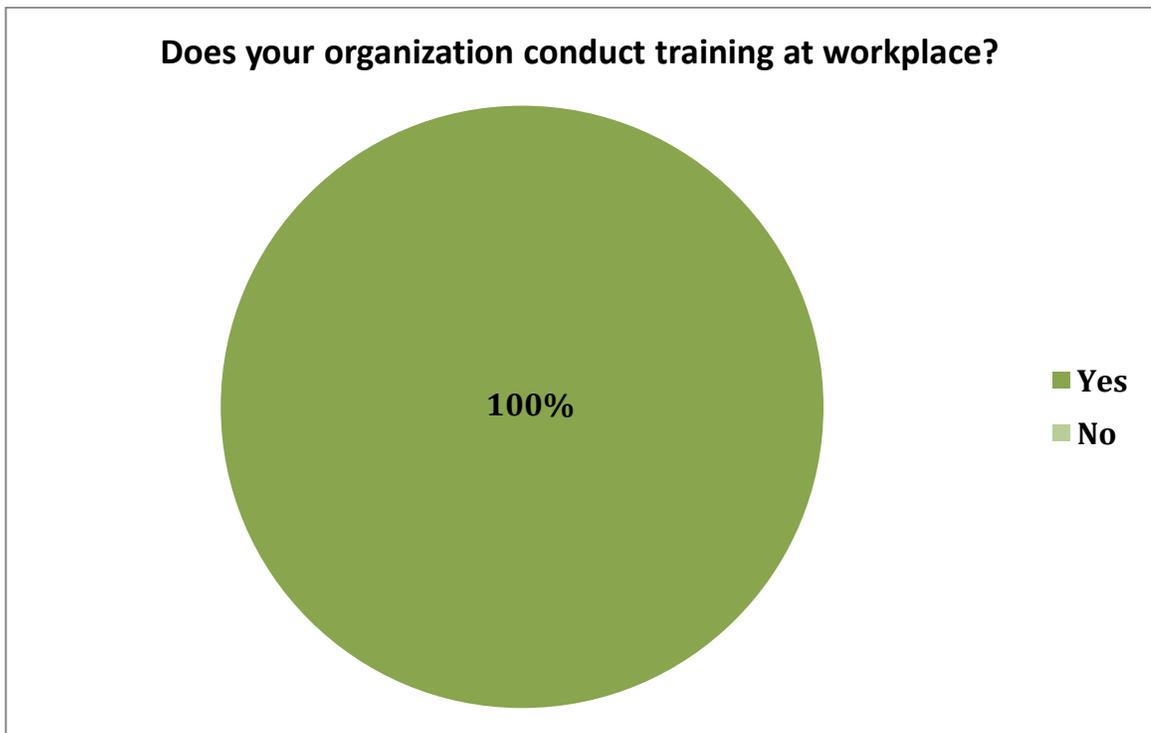
Sample size

The sample size is 50 and the sample is selected using random sampling method. The sample is the true representation of the entire population as it includes Managers across various levels and functions. Managers are considered for the survey as they have experience of working in both the role, the role of a subordinate as well as a manager. Hence they can represent both the perspectives.

Analysis

Questionnaire

- 1) Does your organization conduct training at workplace?

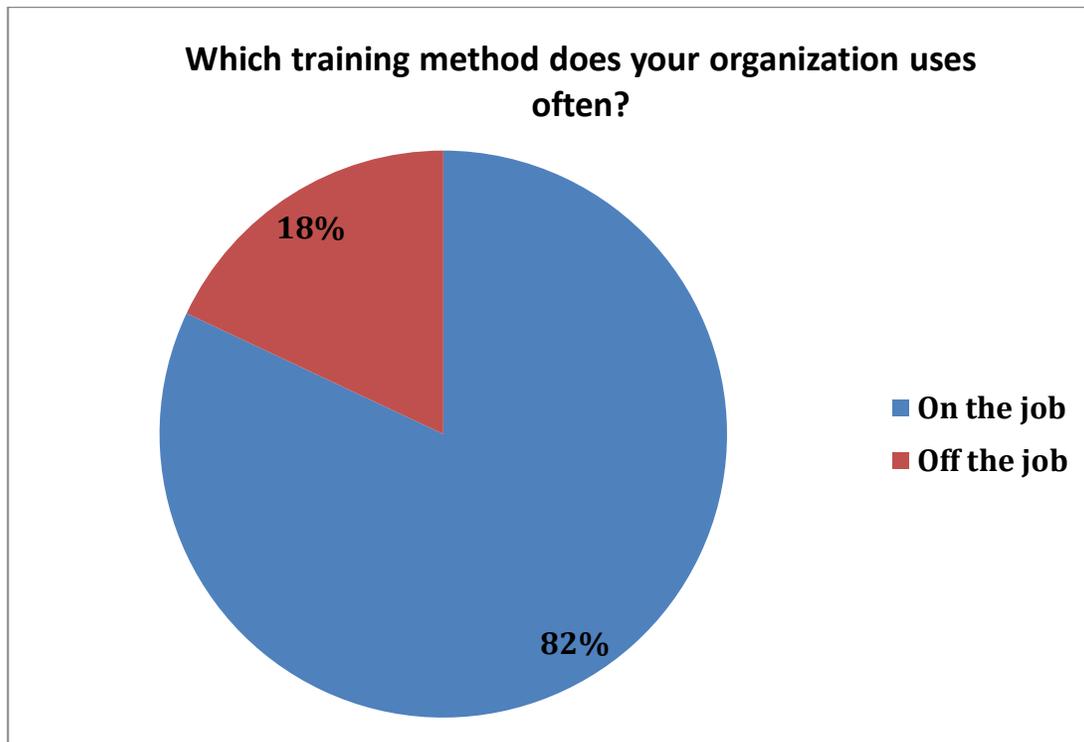


Out of 50 professionals surveyed, all responded that training is conducted at their workplace for employees.

This highlights the fact that all the organization provides training to all the employees. Training could be imparted on the job or off the job but it is considered as essential part to make employee capable enough to perform their job effectively.

Training today is considered as important aspect in each and every employee's journey

2) Which training method does your organization uses often?

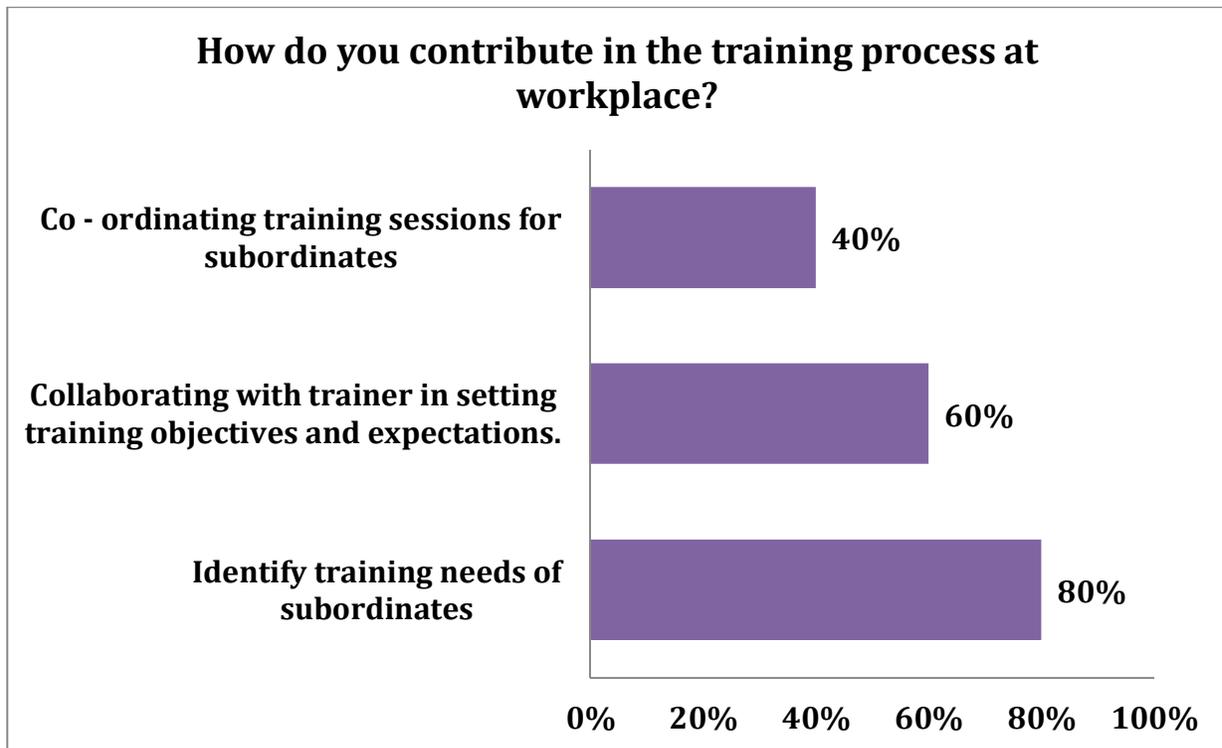


Around 82% out of 50 professionals that is 41 managers who were surveyed responded that their organization used on the job training method the most. On the job training is where employee performs the actual job under the supervision of manager. Coaching, mentoring and job rotation are some of the method used in organization.

9 managers responded that their organization uses off the job method the most. The organization here maybe using various methods like classroom session, assessment development centers to train their employees. Such method requires a lot of investment and hence is not much used in organization.

On the job method is widely used as it is cost effective and it improves the relationship between manager and employee as well. Various studies show that employee productivity and efficiency also increases when they are allowed to learn by actually performing the job.

3) How do you contribute in the training process at workplace?

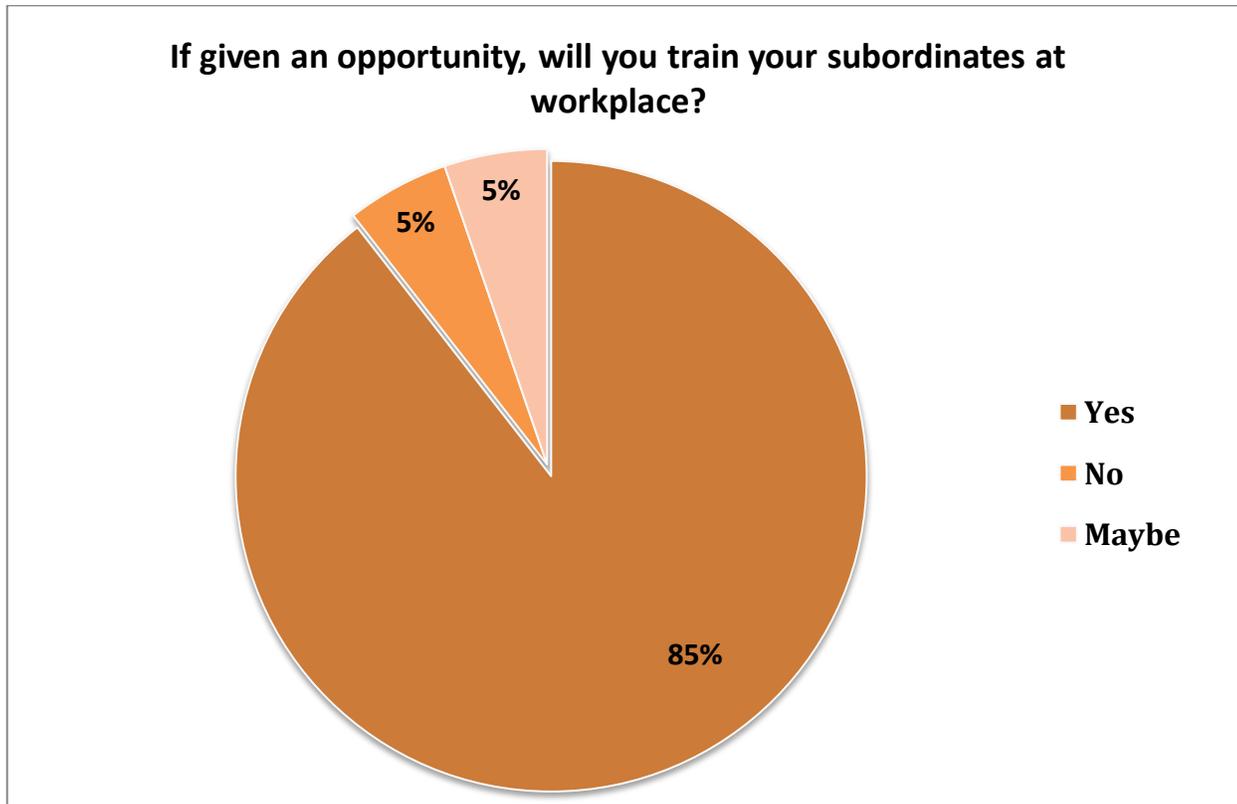


This question reveals the role of manager in the entire training process. 80% (40) professionals responded that they perform the role of Identifying training needs of subordinates. While only (40%) 20 professional perform the role of co- coordinating the training sessions. 30 professionals perform the role of collaborator that is collaborating with trainer to set training objectives and expectations.

The responses on this question highlights one fact that managers constant interaction with their team members enable them to analyze their tem members' performance and helps them to decide how and where their team members can improve. Managers in organization are well versed with the business needs and team performance, thus they are experience enough to set training objectives and communicating to trainer what is expected out of the training.

Managers also perform the role of coordinating the training sessions which has got the lowest votes. Another fact can be highlighted is here is that managers role today is not limited to arranging training session but to contribute at all levels from deciding training objectives to helping employees in applying what they have learn during training.

4) If given an opportunity, will you train your subordinates at workplace?



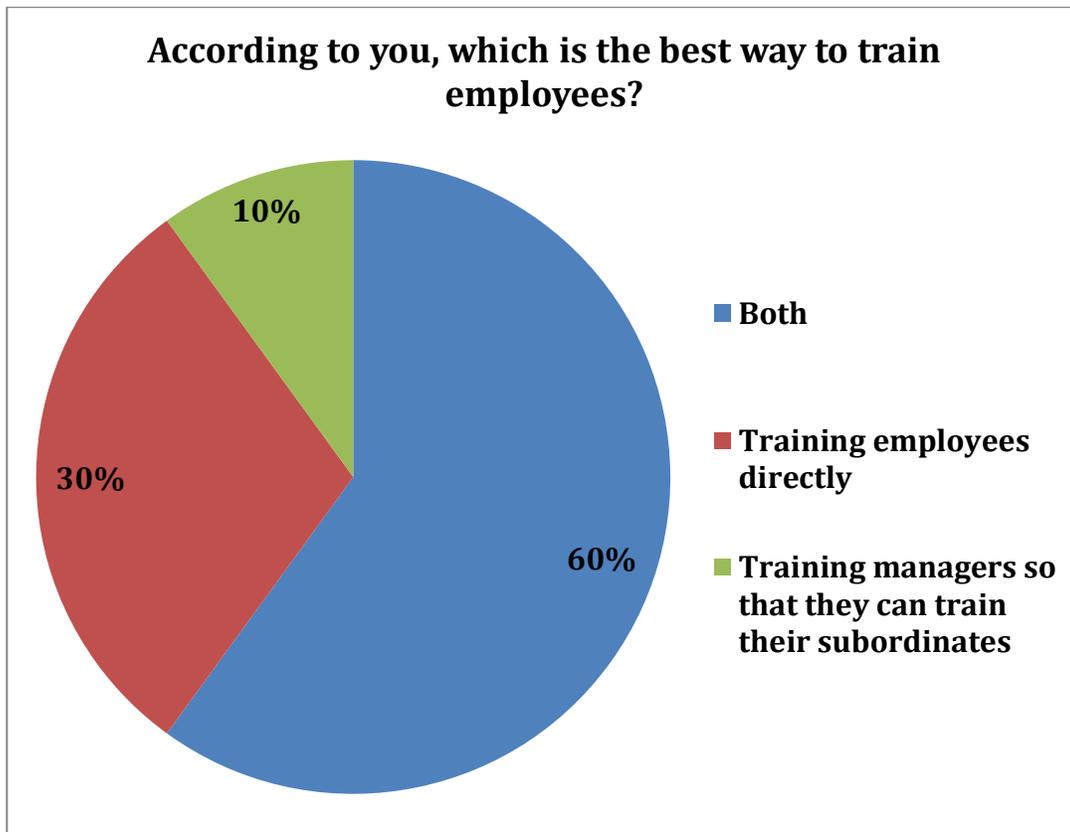
Out of 50 professionals, around 43 managers are willing to train their team members if they get an opportunity. While only 3 managers will take train employees if required.

Manager and employee existing relationship could be one of the reason, another reason could be manager getting an opportunity to learn new skills and polish the existing skills.

Today's more and more of workforce is working in form of teams and the manager has the onus of improving the team's performance continuously. Working as a team together helps the manager to gauge employee's strengths and weakness and to guide them as and when require. Some managers also guide their employees towards an individual career path.

Hence managers are willing to guide and train employees as it will improve team and individual performance. Also it will make them more efficient.

5) According to you, which is the best way to train employees?



30% managers think that training employees directly is more fruitful, this could be the expertise required to offer effective training to employees. Often professional trainers are hired to train employees usually off the job, this is done to ensure employees learn under the guidance of experts and apply the same on the job.

60% professionals that are around 30 managers think that both the way is equally effective and fruitful. This again depends upon the organizational factors. For example- A organization at growth stage might prefer to hire professional trainers to train their sales person. The rationale behind this is the cost benefit analysis done by them.

5 managers think that training managers is effective as this will improve employee productivity immediately, save costs and impart new skills in the manager as well. Various studies reveals that managers today's are willing to take more and more challenging roles to learn new skills and polish their existing ones.

6) According to you, which of the following factors makes manager suitable for the role of trainer at workplace?



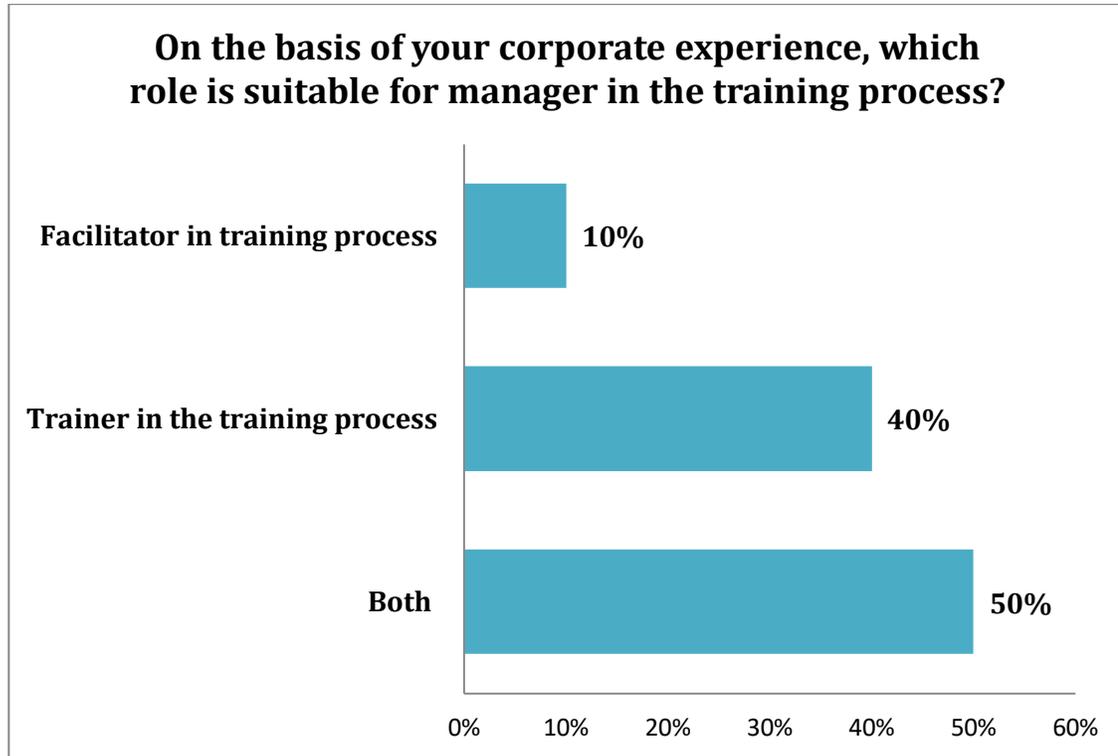
Out of 50 managers surveyed, 40 managers think manager ability to identify training needs of team members is the most important factor which could make manager suitable as trainer.

Managers at various levels are well-versed on how the business operates. They lead a team and hence this makes them well versed about job performed by their subordinates. This knowledge can act as a catalyst in providing guidance to the employees as and when required. Hence 40% of professionals that is 20 managers' values having knowledge of business and job requirements as second most important factor.

Existing relation between manager and employee has received the lowest votes; the reason could be the nature and type of relation. For example: - Strained relation between manager and employee could not support the concept of manager as a trainer for his/her employees.



7) On the basis of your corporate experience, which role is suitable for manager in the training process?

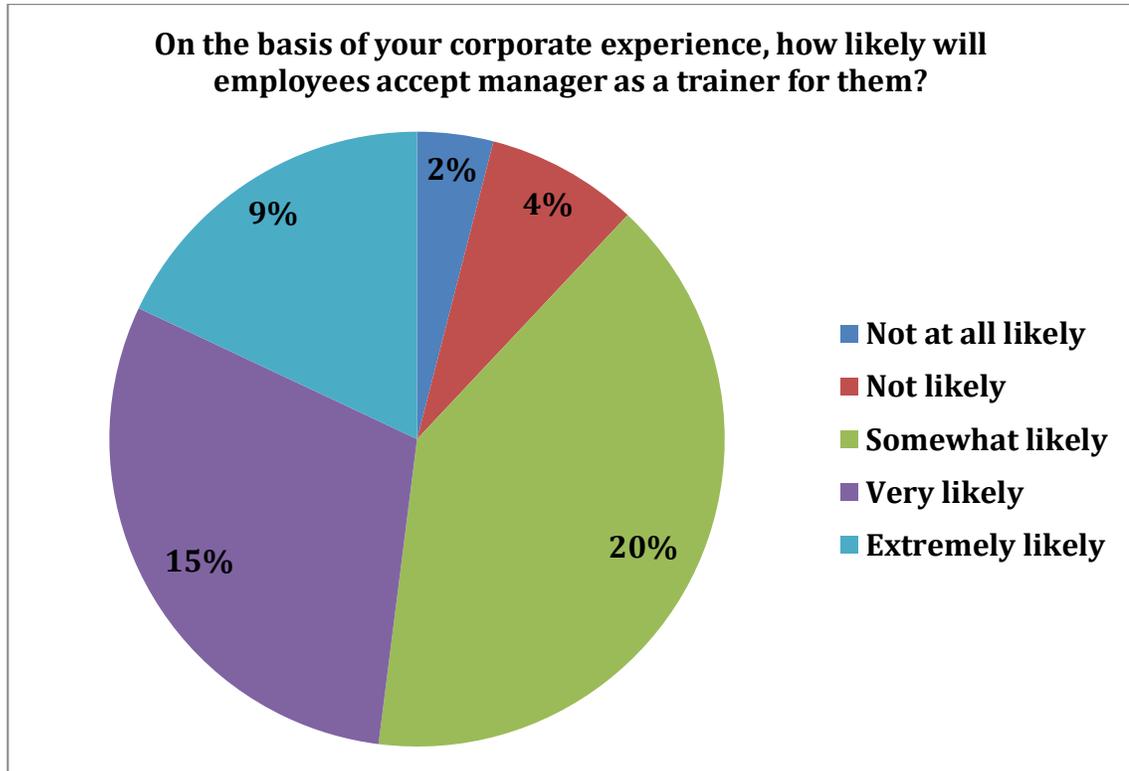


40% professionals that are 20 managers think that manager could add more value as a trainer in the training process. Managers think they can add value to organization if they act as a trainer. This will improve employee efficiency, would save cost and also polish manager's skills as well.

While only 10% think that manager should be facilitator in the training process. The reason is the expertise that is required to train employees for a job. Such expertise is often held by professional trainers and hence they are capable enough to train employees.

50% professionals think that both the role is equally effective. Manager as facilitator and a trainer in the entire training process depends upon various organizational factors. Factors like organizational strategy, hierarchy, training costs etc. For example – Organization which is birth stage usually the startups can't afford to hire professional trainers. They often resort to idea of managers offering guidance and training to their team members.

8) On the basis of your corporate experience, how likely will employees accept manager as a trainer for them?



Various factors influence whether manager could be a trainer or facilitator in organization.

One of the factors is employee acceptance. Team member's willingness plays an important role as they are the receiver in training process.

Out of 50 professionals surveyed, approximately 8 managers think that employees are very likely to accept manager as their trainer. While 5 managers think employees are extremely likely to accept manager as their trainer.

20% professionals think employees are somewhat likely to accept them as a trainer. Only 2 and 4% think that employees won't consider their manager as a trainer for them.

Highest responses on very and extremely likely highlights fact that today's manager have developed good relations enough to support the new concept of adding new role in the basket of manager's duties, the role of trainer at the workplace.



Finding and Recommendations

Findings

This survey gained the responses and views of 50 professionals (managers) towards the trend of Manager as a trainer at workplace. Some of the findings from the survey conducted are:

- The sample size consists of managers with experience ranging from 3 years to 15 years with experience of handling team members with bracket ranging from 15 to 60 team members.
- All the managers responded that organizations provide training to their employees. This shows that organization value the importance of training to employees.
- On the job training method is used in most of the organization.
- Managers with experience 3 to 15 years develop the expertise of judging the contribution of subordinates and identifying the training needs. Most of managers surveyed contribute in training process by picking up the areas where employees could improve and second thing which contribute is actively participating in setting training objectives.
- Today's managerial workforce is willing to take up more challenges. If given an opportunity, managers are also willing to take up the role of trainer for their employees as well.
- Dynamic environment leads to changing business strategy and hence L & D strategy also varies with the changing business needs. 60% of managers think that both the ways of training employees that is training them directly or through managers depends upon the current business demands.
- Managers surveyed hold the experience of handling team of 15 to 60 members; this enables them to identify training needs of subordinates. Also managers are well versed with roles performed by team members and are well versed with the business. According to them, these two factors make them fit for the role of manager.
- 25 professionals think that a manager is suitable for both, the role of trainer and facilitator. 20 managers think that managers should be willing to take up the role of trainer so as to polish the skills.
- On the basis of corporate experience, most of the managers think that employees are more willing to accept managers as trainer for them. But this will eventually be influenced by the nature of relation they both hold.

Recommendations

On the basis of the survey conducted, following are the recommendations made:

- Managers today should actively participate in training process. They should not limit themselves to just training need analysis but they should try offer training to their team members on basic skills required for doing the job effectively.
- It is also recommended for managers to develop some set of skills to offer training to their team members. This will benefit manager, employees and the organization in the long run.



- Manager can also consider the role of trainer as profession ahead; this will surely pave a new way to their career.
- Manager as trainer will bring in more benefits to organization in the form of increased expertise, reduced costs and improved efficiency. But it depends upon the business strategy and external environment.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that 90% of professionals think that manager will train employees if given an opportunity. 40% of professionals feel that managers should themselves be the trainer in the training process. Managers today feel the need to go beyond their routine jobs and contribute to organizational growth in new ways.

The analysis shows that manager can play a role of trainer effectively as it is time for HR as a function to go beyond their basic role of team management and touch the softer aspects of the organization effectiveness. Most of the professionals do think that manager can participate in the training process by being the trainer. Manager eventually fits in both the role but this completely depends upon various factors existing in the organization.

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Appendix

Questionnaire on “The study of role of manager as a trainer at workplace”

- 1) How long have you been working in the managerial role?
 - a) 0 – 5
 - b) 6 – 10
 - c) 11 – 15
 - d) 16 – 20
 - e) 20 plus
- 2) What is your team size?
 - a) 0 – 20
 - b) 21 – 40
 - c) 41 – 60
 - d) 60 plus



- 3) Does your organization conduct training at workplace?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

- 4) Which training method does your organization uses often?
 - a) On the job
 - b) Off the job

- 5) How do you contribute in the training process at workplace?
 - a) Identify training needs of subordinates
 - b) Collaborating with trainer in setting training objectives and expectations.
 - c) Coordinating training sessions for subordinates

- 6) If given an opportunity, will you train your subordinates at workplace?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe

- 7) According to you, which is the best way to train employees?
 - a) Training managers so that they can train their subordinates
 - b) Training employees directly
 - c) Both

- 8) According to you, which of the following factors makes manager suitable for the role of trainer at workplace?
 - a) Existing relationship between manager and subordinate
 - b) Manager's knowledge of specific job requirements and business needs.
 - c) Manager's ability to identify training needs of team members
 - d) Other

- 9) On the basis of your corporate experience, which role is suitable for manager in the training process?
 - a) Facilitator of the training process
 - b) Trainer in the training process
 - c) Both

- 10) On the basis of your corporate experience, how likely will employees accept manager as a trainer for them?
 - a) Not at all likely
 - b) Not likely
 - c) Somewhat likely
 - d) Very likely
 - e) Extremely