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Roll No. _____

2617

MBA Second Year (4th Semester)

Examination, 2010

Training and Development

Paper No. : 407-B

Time Allowed : Three Hours]

[Maximum Marks : 75

Note: Attempt **all** questions. Question Numbers 1 to 3 are of 15 marks each. Question 4 is carrying 30 marks.

Unit-I

1. Why is it necessary to link training and development activities to the achievement of the organization's strategic business objectives?

OR

"Training and retraining of employees is a non-recoverable expenditure or is it a productive

P.T.O.

investment"? Explain your answer with suitable examples.

Unit-II

2. Discuss the steps involved in conducting a training programme in a systematic way.

OR

Explain the qualities of course content. What efforts need to be put in the planning process of a good course design?

Unit-III

3. Why are classroom based training programs used much more than individualized approaches to training? Do you think this choice is appropriate? Explain and illustrate.

OR

Explain how you would apply principles of andragogy in developing training programme?

Unit-IV

4. "Sunit, you've done a great job in identifying the training needs for first-line managers. The choice of topics for the training program is also good. However, our job is just half done. I want you to sort out the issues I pointed out

to you regarding the design of the training program. I want you to think over the design again. Come back to me with the suggested changes And I want you to concentrate on how we can make this training program more effective," said VK Prasad (Prasad), the Vice-president-HRD of Direc 2U, a direct sales company that dealt in a range of consumer appliances.

Sunit Verma (Verma) had been working as the Training Manager in Direc2U for the past 6 months. During this period he had been involved in the training of ten batches of trainee sales representatives. For the last three months, a lot of his time and effort had been dedicated to identifying the training needs of the first-line managers of the company. Last week Verma spent a lot of time identifying the training needs under Prasad's guidance. They also identified the topics that were to be taught in the proposed training program for first-line managers. Thereafter, Verma was entrusted with the responsibility of designing the training

program.

Verma had drafted a training design proposal and had come to Prasad to get it ratified but now it seemed that he had considerable changes to make before the training design proposal would be approved.

Before joining as the Training Manager in Direc2U, Verma had practically no job experience. He had just graduated from a reputed business school in North India with a specialization in HRD. Summer training at one of the leading fast moving consumer goods companies in India as part of his MBA curriculum-- where he was involved in a training need analysis (TNA) project for the company's sales representatives -- was about his only experience in the training function. In fact, Prasad who had initially interviewed him for the position, was quite impressed with his project work.

Verma too was attracted to the placement opportunity in Direc2U. It was a company on a growth curve and had carved out a niche

for itself in the competitive consumer appliances industry in India. It had developed a name for itself in the market for its well-trained sales force despite having entered the market just about a decade before. Having developed a liking for the training and development function during his summer internship, Verma felt that joining as a Training Manager at Direc2U would be an ideal start to his career.

Verma was selected for the position and joined the company in April 2008. Once Verma joined the company, Prasad spent a couple of sessions with Verma to get him acquainted with his job responsibilities. He was also provided with a lot of training materials that had been developed for the staff and information pertaining to the various training programs that had been conducted at the Direc2U in the last one year.

Verma's first assignment was to take up the role of the training administrator in a training program for sales representatives that was scheduled to start in four days. He was asked

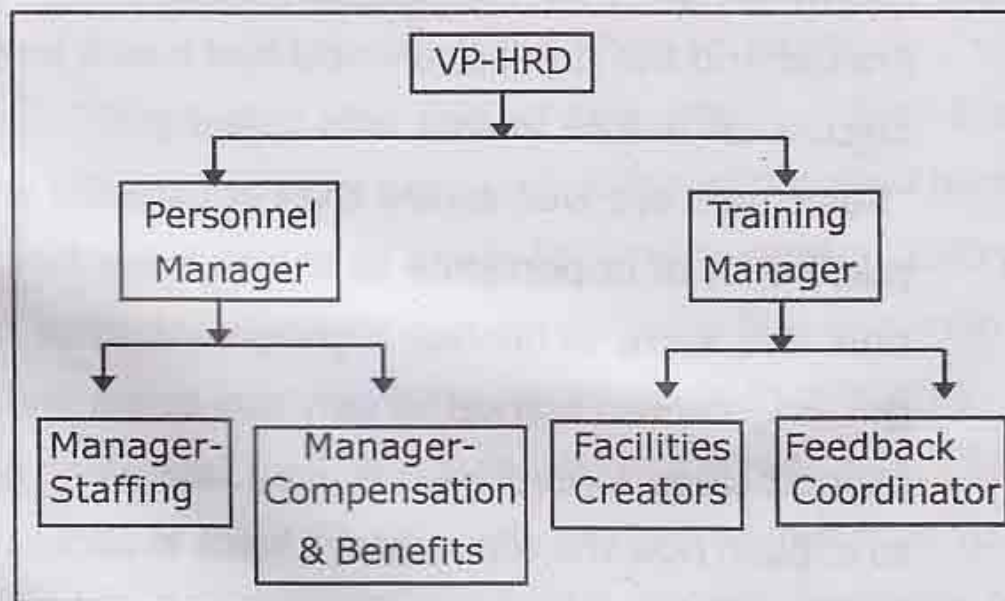
to be present during the training program and also co-ordinate the various training activities, keeping track of costs, etc. Being a fast learner, Verma quickly picked up the required skills and the management was quite pleased with him. Of course, Prasad was always there to guide him and Verma was very much at ease in his new job.

Prasad had joined Direc2U in 2000 as a Training Manager. During that time the company was in its formative period. The HR department in the company was almost non-existent. There were a couple of people involved in wage and salary administration, while Prasad single-handedly took care of the training function of the company. As the company grew, the management of the company recognized his contribution by promoting him to the position of Vice-president in the newly created HRD department. Verma felt that Prasad was largely responsible for creating the HRD department at Direc2U. By 2006, Prasad was running the training function at the company with the help of a Facilities Creator and a Feedback Coordi-

nator. Training was imparted by Prasad and a number of resource persons were drawn from the industry. In 2008, with the company turnover reaching Rs.800 million and the sales force increasing to around 600, Prasad felt the need for a Training Manager and hence Verma was recruited. Verma felt that Prasad was very approachable and always ready to provide guidance. In fact, Verma admired him for setting up a strong HRD department at Direc2U from scratch (Refer to Table I for the structure of the HRD department at Direc2U).

Table-I

Structure of the HRD Department at Direc2U



Two months into the new job, Verma was already conducting some sessions in the training programs. In July 2008, just after Verma had finished conducting his fourth training program at Direc2U and was seated at his workstation reading some of the trainees' feedback on the training program, Prasad rang him up and asked him to come to the CEO's cabin.

"Welcome young man. Prasad has told me that you have got into the groove very quickly. Please take a seat," said Raj Pal Singh (Singh), the CEO of Direc2U as Verma entered the room. Singh was seated in the room with Prasad and the duo apparently had had a long discussion before Verma was called in.

"Sunit, you are well aware that at Direc2U we place a lot of importance to the training function. We have achieved high growth rate in this fragmented market largely due to our well-trained sales force," said Prasad. He went on to explain how the top management at Direc2U placed a great emphasis on training and how

good training had contributed to the company's high growth rates in the last five years. In the next few years the company wanted to introduce training and development interventions at all levels of the company and by 2013 it also wanted to create a new position of Organizational Development Manager. " So, in addition to the various sales training programs that we conduct for the grassroots-level sales force, we would also like to start some management development programs for junior managers and middle managers in the coming years. And we would like to start off with a short training program for the first-line managers in 2009", Prasad added.

Singh said, "In fact, I feel that our first-line managers are not our greatest strength. There is considerable room for improvement. Every good company has very strong first-line managers and we have to improve in this area... Prasad told me that you are already familiar with the TNA process, and so we felt that you should be entrusted with the responsibility of

conducting a TNA of the first-line managers.” Verma was very happy to have got this assignment. He thanked Singh and Prasad and from the next day started working on the new assignment.

Verma devoted most of the next two weeks to designing questionnaires meant for various managers. He refined these questionnaires further with the help of Prasad. In addition to sending questionnaires to managers at various levels, Verma also consulted some industry experts and also toured the sales-territories of some of the first-line managers to gain first-hand experience of the environment in the field.

By October 2008, Verma had collected all the data he needed, tabulated and analyzed them under the guidance of Prasad. They came to the conclusion that :

- * The first-line managers fared well in selling skills but lacked some advanced selling skills.
- * Many first-line managers lacked effective team management skills.

- * There was no formal way of coaching team members.

Based on the results, Verma suggested that the company conduct a week long training program for the first-line managers focusing on advanced selling skills, team management skills, and coaching. "We can also conduct a session on 'positive attitude' by some leading corporate trainer", Verma added.

Prasad replied, "Put your plan on paper. Design a training program, identify the concepts to be imparted in the training program, the technique and tools to be used, etc. And also prepare a training design proposal which we will forward to Mr. Singh."

Verma spent the next week on designing the training program. He identified the concepts and topics that would help in achieving the training objectives. He had discussions with some resource persons who had earlier been commissioned by the company to take some sessions in their training programs. By the end

of the week he had also tentatively identified the resource persons to impart the training on various topics. He even identified one or two topics in which he would impart the training himself.

The next day Verma went to Prasad with the training design proposal. After carefully going through the training design proposal and some of the supporting materials that Verma had brought along, Prasad said, "You have done a good job. But I feel that you have to spend some more time on this OK, first let me ask you a question. Why are we conducting this training program?"

"We are conducting the program so that we can improve the knowledge and skill levels of our first-line managers so that they could make a positive difference in the field," replied Verma.

"So, will this objective be met if we just conduct a training program? Or, will our objective be met if the managers internalize the training?" asked Prasad.

"Of course, the trainees have to internalize

the training for the training program to be successful. Sir, I don't understand what you are trying to say," said Verma.

Prasad smiled and replied, "The average age of our first line managers is 30 years. Many of these managers have close to ten years of experience. Tell me, why should they be enthusiastic about the training program? What could you possibly teach them that they already do not know?"

"But Sir, we have seen in the TNA survey how there is a skill shortfall and we sat together and identified the training needs," Verma retorted.

"I agree that there is a training need and I have no issues with the topics you have proposed. What I am trying to say is that training a person with experience is not the same as training a greenhorn. I want you to answer these questions... How will you ensure transfer of learning? How will you ensure that the managers are motivated throughout the training program?" asked Prasad.

Verma said, "As you said, most of the managers are mature. So, they should be able to understand the significance of the training program."

"That is only if they understand why they should learn something new. You should be able to develop a "need to know" in them... The way the training program is conducted, the training methodology, training tools used, all have a bearing on whether the training program would be successful or not," said Prasad.

"So, what changes do you suggest?" asked Verma.

Prasad smiled and replied, "Sunit", I know you will be able to get it right by yourself. Just give it some thought. I will give you a hint... Your training design is too dependent on the lecture method."

Verma asked, "But, don't you think a lucid and participative lecture will help achieve our objective?"

"I am not saying that the lecture method is bad. In fact, till now we have used external

corporate trainers who relied heavily on the lecture method on the few occasions that we conducted some training sessions for mid-level managers. The response from the trainees wasn't great.... The problem with the lecture-led method of learning is that adult learners often do not want to 'be told'. We cannot expect a person who has a background of experience to suddenly go back to their school days, sit attentively and say "teach me"... Try to find ways in which we can harness their experience instead to achieve the training objectives," replied Prasad.

Prasad then told Verma that he was happy with the progress Verma had made in the last six months. He was particularly happy with the way he had conducted the TNA and identified the training needs. However, he asked him to prepare the training design proposal again and report back to him in two days time.

The next day, being a Sunday, Verma was catching up with some of his business school

batch-mates who were now working in different industries. But, he could hardly keep his mind from wandering back to the discussion that he had with Prasad yesterday. He has to come out with a definite training design proposal tomorrow. Verma knew that Prasad already knew what he wanted to do, but Prasad wanted him to come out with the answer. Verma did not want to disappoint Prasad either. So,

Read the above case and answer the following questions :

- (i) What changes should he make in the training design so that the first-line managers will be motivated and internalize the training?
- (ii) What additional changes should he make in the training design to ensure better transfer or learning?
- (iii) What training methods/tools should he adopt to ensure this?