

**Ken Moore Associates Presents**

**Guest Columnist**

**Society for Human Resources Management  
Organizational Development Special Expertise Panel**

**How Do I Design A Talent Management Program?**

**All training programs must build to a desired outcome that will advance the objectives of the department or the organization, the employee, and the customer. Without a clear cut payoff, managers will balk at the expense of sending an individual through the training and the loss of productivity during the training. Employees will also be less than enthusiastic if they fail to see a benefit to their job performance and career opportunities. You must start with the basics.**

**1. Know your company well.**

**The amount of information about a company or an industry available to the general public is immense. Most high performing employees want to buy into the company's mission, vision and values. Thus, certain questions must be clearly articulated, for example:**

- a. Why is the company in business?**
- b. How does it make money?**
- c. What are its core competencies?**
- d. What challenges are the company and the industry facing?**
- e. What is its competitive advantage**

**These seem like simple questions but in reality the answers are frequently quite complex. If your company's core competency is marketing, such as Nike, developing training programs that will sustain and advance those skills will be eagerly anticipated. Conversely, a well designed and produced training program for a company that is sliding into bankruptcy will not be effective.**

**RULE: Study your company in detail and include this knowledge in your talent management program.**

**2. Know your employees.**

**Various employee groups respond to management activities in differing ways. These groups include age, ethnicity, religious, nationality, and educational levels. For example, where baby-boomer bosses are focused on career achievements, their Gen X & Gen Y subordinate are more focused on a flexible work/life balance. They are not locked into the 8-5 workday clock. Rather, they prefer to be given a task with performance standards and deadlines and allowed to do the task in their own time. Younger generations value learning experiences so they can add them to their**

resume of KSAs and use them for career advancement. In companies with international operations, national cultural programming plays a key part in developing and managing talent. Understanding cultural differences will help you to focus your training programs in areas that will advance the KSA of the participants and not violate their cultural norms.

**RULE:** Make a concentrated study of employee needs and backgrounds before you develop any program.

### 3. Know the business

People naturally want to work for organizations that are thriving and successful. Think Google. Worldwide competitive and economic forces are affecting all businesses. The key is for everyone, not just the leadership teams, to keep a sharp eye on the trends impacting the industry. What challenges are our customers facing that we can help them solve with our products or services. Changing energy costs are affecting virtually everyone and are forcing companies to modify their business models. Solutions to problems like these are not always found in the executive offices. Often they are found on the ground floor with the employees and by looking at what competitors and non-competitors are doing to solve the same problem.

**RULE:** Study the industry that you are in and develop a best practices approach to your training program.

### 4. Understand the differences between education and training.

By definition, training teaches a person how to do a particular task. Education tells him why it is done a particular way. Training people how to improve their efficiencies and effectiveness with, for example, computer programs or operating a new piece of machinery has certain metrics that must be achieved in order to pass the course. On the other hand, subjects such as leadership and diversity training are typically subjective and open to interpretation by the teacher and the participants. The desired outcome for either training or education programs must benefit the company, the employee, and the customer who buys our products and services.

**RULE:** The more you can quantify the training outcomes, the more effective your programs will be.