Training : A Key Step Towards Human Resource Development in the University.

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Introduction

This paper addresses the issue of human communication in higher education institutions. It stresses the need for strengthening human communication through the process of "training" "Training" is the key step towards human resource development (HRD) which, in turn, is the key to organizational success.

This paper does not aim to cover the overall comprehensive approach to human resource development nor suggest any particular model on the subject. It will not touch upon the broader picture of manpower planning nor the often advocated career development plan. It will concentrate only on one aspect of HRD, namely "Training of human resource"

We all agree that the most valuable and indespensible resource of an organization is its human resource. Despite this fact the development of such resource has not been given due importance. Many administrators may give high priority to the development of curricula and teaching facilities but have taken training of their faculty members for granted. In some cases faculty members know **what** to teach but not **how** to teach. In short, they know the subject matter content but not the process of teaching or communicating.

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Issues at hand

The reason for low priority given to training of faculty members may stem from the fact that:

1. Most of us feel that faculty members who are professionally trained in a particular discipline will be automatically equipped with the skill to transfer their Knowledge to students.

2. Most of us believe that "Universities" are the gathering place for scholars. Therefore, these so called "Scholars" will always seek to educate and enlighten themselves with the knowledge and skills they lack.

However, we also know that the above cases are not always true. As students, we had experience with professors who "lecture" the same subject for the last twenty years using the same one-way teaching method and the same materials dating back to the time he himself graduated from college.

The example above illustrates the clear need for staff to up-grade themselves. with the "acadmic freedom" we all adhere to. What can we do to solve this problem? How can we adapt our teaching to keep up with the fast moving pace of today's technology. How can we avoid falling into this trap ourselves? Will "Training" be the key to unlock this problem?

The aim paper is of this to divert the attention of administrators toward their "human resource" which will be a big step forward to organizational success. For higher educational institutions, there is no exception. In fact HRD is even more crucial to foster growth of educational institutions which prepare human resource to serve society. The overall assumption of this paper is that **professional training expertise and the required overall training infrastructure must be built up within the organization.** Unless this infrastructure is built into the programme of the educational institutions, the HRD component is unlikely to be effective,

thus reducing the overall success of the organization.

Most, if not all, of the higher educational institutions have some kind of training expertise or training unit set up for the purpose of staff training. As administrators, some of the questions we need to ask ourselves are:

- Have we paid enough attention to strengthen it?

- Does it receive enough priority in terms of human and financial resource allocation?

- Is the training unit set up in a place within the organizational structure where all staff can participate and benefit from its activities?

- Does professional training expertise (experienced and well trained trainers) exist?

- Does the unit systematically plan, conduct and evaluate their own training courses based upon clearly identified training needs?

These questions will probably make some of us unlock ourselves from our own "activity trap", to stop, think and look back despite the fact that "I think so" is the answer to the questions. One has to admit, though, that due to the lack of awareness, time and resource, one cannot aim for a perfect training resource within an organization. What then is the minimum requirement for such training unit to be effective?

The present picture of Training

Let us first look at the very many types of training structure and expertise that exist in our organizations. The author has had experience with examples which greatly vary from the ideal to the most improvised such as:

1. **A centralized Training unit** set up as a core part of the policy maker's office, receiving full attention in terms of facilities equipment, supplies, budget and which has full-time top quality trainers well trained in the training dicipline.

2. A faculty based (or department based) **decentralized training unit** scattered in

each faculty where fields of specialization are taught to students. The unit utilizes its own facilities, equipment and supplies. Trainers come from within the faculty. Sometimes, outside resource persons are invited.

3. **Traning unit as a part of the Person nel Section.** Here budget, facilities, equipment and supplies will be shared with other activities of the Personnel Section. In big institutions fulltime trainers may exist. Otherwise, trainers with be invited from the teaching faculties or from outside.

4. **Training unit as a part of the continuing education programme** of the University which provides training courses and consultancy services within the University and to outside organizations as a reasonble charge for service. Here faculty members who need training can join such courses to upgrade themselves.

5. **Training function delegated to a committee** (such as "staff development committee") set up with representatives of various units within the organization. In this case, there is no structure or unit assigned to do the task, but the committee will meet to plan, conduct and evaluate training whenever needed.

6. **No internal training responsibility within the organization.** Faculty members who need to be upgraded will be sent to outside courses conducted by private and governmental agencies.

The examples given above are by no mean a complete picture as there are many other ways and means to carry out training for our staffs. In some institutions, training functions are effectively carried out at many different levels at the same time combining the examples of 1, 2 and 3 above.

It will be beyond the scope of this paper to identify a proper place for a training unit. Each institution is unique. It has its own strengths and weaknesses. A centralized unit may work well in one organization but may be disastrous in another. Thus the author chooses to remain impartial about this decision. Nevertheless the general advice would be to integrate the training functions as a core part of the organization, receiving high priority in terms of budget and human resource allocation and to make sure that it is in a place where all staff members can participate in its acitivites and fully benefit from them.

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