Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VI

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

2. Describe major learning, performance, and motivational theories, including how their concepts can be applied to training development.

7. Evaluate internal and external resources used when delivering appropriate development process interventions for career development.

Reading Assignment

Before completing your required reading assignment, watch the video that will briefly introduce some of the readings and unit concepts:

- Click here to access the Unit VI Video.
- Click here to access the Unit VI Script.

In order to access the following resource(s), click the link(s) below:


Griffiths, J. (2008). Career development for practice nurses; Practice nurse access to education, training and career development has been patchy. Julie Griffiths takes a look at what the Working in Partnership Programme (WiPP) is doing to correct this situation. *Primary Health Care, 18*(4), 17-19. Retrieved from http://go.galegroup.com.libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&sw=w&u=oran95108&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA181232341&asid=2c42ae15f0b2ea037eb381a82ae41d9

Unit Lesson

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), the median number of years that all U.S. wage and salary workers had been with their current employer was 4.6 in January 2014. Based on this number combined with a full-time working life of roughly 40 years, the average person holds seven to ten jobs in his or her lifetime. In addition, the workplace is not what it used to be. The days of staying with one company for 30 years and advancing up through the ranks to retire as a Senior Vice President are long gone. As organizations become “flatter” and more efficient, promotions into management and executive positions are becoming fewer. Employee development programs have replaced promotional opportunities in many organizations. On the other hand, as employees increase their KSAs (knowledge, skills, abilities), they may also develop more loyalty to their organization and/or may find they are more marketable when the time comes to go elsewhere.

There are three different ways to develop employees in the workplace:

1. Train the employee while within the position,
2. rotate the employee through different jobs in the organization, and
3. provide special assignments to the employee.

No matter which method is used (or a combination of all three), one important consideration is to provide developmental experiences that both increase employees’ KSAs and follow a course that will ultimately benefit employees’ futures with the organization. Traditional training is often focused on skills utilized immediately: What do you have to know to do your current job well? Development should be focused on what you have to do in order to do your next job well, and part of that is understanding what career path employees wish to follow.

The responsibility to develop every employee stems from the culture of the organization, support from the direct supervisor, and a talented HR department. From a legal perspective, access to development should be treated like access to training—everyone should be allowed equal opportunities to succeed, and any preference should be clearly based on demonstrated (and documented) performance and ability.

Playing favorites and offering development opportunities and plum work projects only to favorites is a surefire way of creating disgruntled employees who may pursue legal action, especially if they feel that they are being discriminated against as a member of a protected class. Developing employees to transition from staff or line jobs to management can be a particularly difficult process. Although managers, directors, and executives certainly still perform many specific task-related duties, their jobs are more complex. Measuring effectiveness in a task-based job is relatively easy: meeting deadlines is an example of this.

As a manager or employer, it is important that you familiarize yourself with employment laws to prevent lawsuits. As you may already know, lawsuits can result for many reasons, not just when someone is in a protected class. For example, Mathew Niswonger, a former employer of Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) filed a wrongful termination lawsuit after being fired in 2012. Niswonger worked as a power line worker for eight years, and his employment was terminated after being granted a month-long medical absence to cope with anxiety and panic attacks after working with live powerlines at the request of his supervisor (Baxter, 2013). Before being terminated, Niswonger filed a safety complaint. The result of the case is that PG&E will pay Niswonger $595,615 for lost wages and benefits and an additional $500,000 for emotional distress (Baxter, 2013). Even if PG&E is able to win on appeals, they have already paid a large amount of money in legal fees and risked their reputation. Could this lawsuit have been prevented? Do you think PG&E was in the wrong?

If you were to ask, many people would say that they would like to move up in their careers and earn promotions and pay increases. Training and development along with career planning can help employees make their dreams into reality. Some may think that training is only for entry-level employees, but it is for all employees, even those in managerial positions. Discussing training and career development plans with all members of an organization is just good business sense. Career planning gives employees an incentive to stay with the organization because they feel they have a future there and goals to work towards.

Not all organizations believe it is their responsibility to provide career development to their employees, and some believe that it is the responsibility of the employees themselves. While the employee should, of course, have some responsibility, managers can do a lot to help employees meet their goals. Additionally, a lack of career development in an organization will hurt the organization in both the long-term and the short-term.
Setting and meeting goals will create more satisfied employees who want to perform well, and this in turn will create a more competitive organization.

Organizations should also consider creating trainings and professional development that are mutually beneficial. Employers may not always be able to give employees exactly what they want, but helping employees develop skills that will be useful in that organization will benefit both parties. A good example is an organization's tuition reimbursement program. This program is certainly a benefit for employees, but also should be a benefit to the organization. Guidelines should be established to determine if the course of study would mutually benefit the employee and the company.

Like anything else that we discussed in this course, hands-on management has its benefits and drawbacks. However, if used correctly, hands-on managers can benefit both the organization and the individual employees:

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<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Drawbacks</th>
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<td>Getting to know employees' goals and skills</td>
<td>Becoming too controlling over employees</td>
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<td>Tailoring training to meet the needs of individual employees</td>
<td>Making unrealistic promises to employees</td>
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<td>Recognizing the value of employee input</td>
<td>Risking employees seeing managers as their “buddies”</td>
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This leads us to motivation. Successful hands-on managers understand what drives employees to want success in their careers. The best way to understand employee motivation is to examine three principles:

1. Behaviors occur for a reason.
2. All behavior is directed toward achieving a goal.
3. Each employee has unique motivations.

Several motivation theories support these principles. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs is one of the most popular motivational theories and is unique in that it categorizes human behavior into two groups: deficiency needs and growth needs. Deficiency needs, including psychological and safety, must be met first, and then we can move on to meeting the growth needs, such as self-actualization. Employees must first feel safe, both physically and emotionally, before they can grow as employees within the organization. What do you think organizations can do to ensure they provide a good working environment?

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory concludes that employees have two different needs categories that create employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction: hygiene factors (extrinsic) and motivation factors (intrinsic). Something interesting to note is that the factors he found that created satisfied employees were different than the factors that caused dissatisfied employees. For example, some of the reasons why employees were happy with their jobs included recognition, growth, and achievement, but supervision, relationships, and salary caused unhappiness (Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene, 2010). Some of these factors do relate to the work itself, while other factors connect more with employees' personal lives. For example, a lot of financial stress could cause employees to be unhappy with their income. We can also connect this theory with Maslow's hierarchy of human needs by noting that meeting a deficiency need, such as financial security, must occur before one can attain a sense of accomplishment.

Additional theories that you may want to study further include McClelland’s theory, which is based on studies that show some people have an intense need to achieve and make that their driver of motivation. Vroom’s expectancy theory is based on outcomes and rewards for motivation. This means that when individuals realize that their behavior is linked with certain positive and negative outcomes, they will be more motivated to work towards those positive outcomes. And finally, Adam’s equity theory states that individuals want equal treatment, and will compare themselves to others to make certain their treatment is fair.

As we consider the different motivational theories and what drives people, we must also remember that no two people are exactly alike. What motivates one person may not work for another. Additionally, people are at different stages of their careers and have different long-term goals. Some just starting out may be eager to
get ahead, while others may be more comfortable staying in their current position. An effective manager understands this and is able to work with all types of employees regardless of their goals.

References


Suggested Reading

This video explains how career development can be accomplished in a world where people are constantly questioning how they are doing:


In order to access the following resource(s), click the link(s) below:

