

Development of human resources -- Part 1

BEYOND TRAINING a perspective on improving organizations and people

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This is the first in a [series of articles](#) which originally appeared in [Tappi Journal](#) in 1995-96, to introduce methods addressing the development of individuals and organizations through the field of Human Resource Development. (The article has been updated, and is reproduced with permission of the copyright owner.)

To be successful in the current rapidly-changing world, we need to maximize the productivity of all of our resources -- physical, financial, information, and human. How are we doing?

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT.

The authors of this series of articles are part of a rapidly-growing profession called HRD. It's actually been around for some time under many different names. It's a broad field, encompassing many subject areas. But it's never been more important, more necessary.

A definition of HRD is "organized learning activities arranged within an organization in order to improve performance and/or personal growth for the purpose of improving the job, the individual, and/or the organization" (1). HRD includes the areas of training and development, career development, and organization development. This is related to Human Resource Management -- a field which includes HR research and information systems, union/labor relations, employee assistance, compensation/benefits, selection and staffing, performance management systems, HR planning, and organization/job design (2).

"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANG'IN."

Are they ever! And our organizations and jobs will never be the same. Changes are based on the global economy, on changing technology, on our changing work force, on cultural and demographic changes, and on the changing nature of work itself. The changes are different this time. They are permanent, and will permanently affect the way our work and our lives are structured.

We need to learn new skills and develop new abilities, to respond to these changes in our lives, our careers, and our organizations. We can deal with these constructively, using change for our competitive advantage and as opportunities for personal and organizational growth, or we can be overwhelmed by them.

Who is affected by change -- you are! With all the downsizing, outsourcing and team building, responsibility and accountability are being downloaded to individuals. So everyone is now a manager. Everyone will need to acquire and/or increase their skills, knowledge and abilities to perform their jobs (and now, to perform other people's jobs too!)

The goal of HRD is to improve the performance of our organizations by maximizing the efficiency and performance of our people. We are going to develop our knowledge and skills, our actions and standards, our motivation, incentives, attitudes and work environment.

Is training the answer? Yes, partly, sometimes, but certainly not always. In the paper industry, training has been big with capital projects but often is not continued into operational improvement. We have often thought training was what was needed (or not needed). But there are other answers too -- the solution may lie with organization development, career development, or a combination of these or other strategies.

We plan a [series of articles](#) to address the broad scope of HRD, to introduce methods to address the development of individuals and organizations. Here's what we will discuss in future issues:

- **[ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS -- the first step](#). This sounds simple, but we are often in too much of a hurry. We implement a solution, sometimes the correct intervention but not always. But we plan, very carefully and cautiously, before making most other investments in process changes and in capital and operating expenditures. We need to do the same for HRD -- implement the appropriate planning. This needs assessment and planning will lead to several possible ways to improve performance. (Of course, one of these is to do nothing! -- we may decide to focus on other activities with greater impact and greater value.)**

- **PROGRAM DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION.** We need to consider the benefits of any HRD intervention before we just go and do it: What learning will be accomplished? What changes in behavior and performance are expected? Will we get them? And of prime importance -- what is the expected economic cost/benefit of any projected solutions?
- **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT** -- acquiring knowledge, developing competencies and skills, and adopting behaviors that improve performance in current jobs, including: adult learning theory and applications, instructional systems design, train-the-trainer programs, and instructional strategies and methods.
- **ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT** -- the diagnosis and design of systems to assist an organization with planning change. OD activities include: change management, team building, learning organizations, management development, quality of work life, management by objectives, strategic planning, participative management. organizational restructuring, job redesign, job enrichment, centralization vs. decentralization, changes in the organization's reward structure, process consultation, executive development, action research, third party interventions, and more. We will discuss these in future articles.
- **CAREER DEVELOPMENT** -- activities and processes for mutual career planning and management between employees and organizations. Changes in our organizations (including downsizing, restructuring, and outsourcing) are resulting in more empowerment for employees. The responsibility for our own career development is downloaded to us. (Translation: career ladders are gone; career development is now the responsibility of the individual.) Later in this series we will explore strategies and tactics to survive and prosper in this new workplace environment.
- **ORGANIZATION RESEARCH & PROGRAM EVALUATION** -- an exploration of methods to evaluate, justify, and improve on HRD offerings.
- **THE HRD PROFESSION(S) AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS** -- we plan to list and briefly describe the principal HRD organizations, their missions and goals, and their addresses and contacts.

HRD can give you the tools you need to manage and operate your organizations. Everything -- production, management, marketing, sales, research & development, you-name-it -- everything may be more productive IF your people are sufficiently motivated, trained, informed, managed, utilized and empowered. In future articles in this series, we're going to tell you how to do it. Stay tuned.

LITERATURE CITED

1. Gilley, J.W. & Egglund, S.A., Principles of Human Resource Development, Addison-Wesley, NY, 1989, p. 5.
2. McLagan, Patricia A., "Models for HRD Practice." Training and Development Journal, September 1989, pages 49-59.

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other articles in this series:

1. **Human Resource Development: Beyond training - a perspective on improving organizations and people**(this article)
 2. **[Needs Assessment - the first step](#)**
 3. **[Organization Development - the management of change](#)**
 4. **[Career Development - personal career management and planning](#)**
 5. **[Managing Change with Large-Scale, Real-Time Interventions](#)**
 6. **[High Performance Training](#)**
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