



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Planning a comprehensive and systematic approach to developing a workforce that is adequate in numbers and skill level requires attention to four specific elements:

- Forecasting – Accurately forecasting demand and supply for specifically skilled workers
- Career Awareness and Recruiting – career awareness that creates career interest
- Training – Training in rigorous, accredited, industry-based certificate-bearing programs
- Employing – Systematic process to move individuals directly from training to careers

Forecasting. Tools exist to assist industries in forecasting the demand and existing supply of workers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics measures labor market activity and working conditions in the US economy. Forecast tools are also available within specific industries to understand the demand for skilled workers and assess where these potential workers exist.

Career Awareness. Career awareness programs are critical as competition for workers increase and every industry must differentiate itself in order to keep current personnel and recruit new workers. Career paths are critical tools to clearly explain the options and career growth opportunities each industry can provide. Efforts to recruit and train the next generation of professionals includes reaching students in secondary schools, job training programs, and helping veterans find civilian careers. For example, the Navy COOL (Credentialing Opportunities On-Line) Program helps Navy Service members find information on civilian careers that are related to their military experience.

Training. The continuous evolution of regulations and processes within any industry or profession brings with it a series of challenges. Professionals working in an industry are faced daily with new technologies, new regulatory requirements, and uncertain economic times where “doing more with less” is the norm. A competent workforce has the agility to respond to evolving and changing practices where personnel start with a common level of competency and continue learning through recognized professional development.

Employment. Employers must play a role in finding employment and launching their careers of workers they identify and train. An integral element of an effective workforce development program is a systematic process to move individuals directly from training to careers. The details of the systematic process may vary from company to company and organization to organization but general elements of the process include: case management and placement, on-boarding assistance, mentoring, and follow up.

Workforce Training Analysis

To understand the magnitude of a workforce training program, an assessment is conducted to understand the current state of workforce within an industry and address the elements of workforce training. Learning outcomes are developed from a process for analyzing the knowledge areas and tasks performed by individuals in an occupation, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform those tasks. Results from this analysis establish a body of knowledge that reflects the skills, knowledge, and abilities required for competent job performance. After which a certificate program can be established and trainer standards of practice developed to address the performance of trainers to deliver the certificate program. This licensed certificate program can be made available nationwide to qualified trainers and organizations. Employers know that graduates of a certificate program are skilled professionals with validated knowledge, skills, and abilities.

These elements form a workforce training analysis:

- Program review and preparation – Review current materials relevant to the industry and profession. Establish an Oversight Committee, subject matter experts (SMEs), for a facilitated session and lead through a process to: 1) describe and define jobs accurately, 2) describe the tasks workers perform, 3) describe the means of the tasks that workers perform, and 4) describe tasks that demand certain knowledge, skills, tools, and worker behaviors. This qualitative assessment serves as the basis for a comprehensive survey to stakeholders to develop learning outcomes and the assessment method used to measure learner attainment of intended learning outcomes.
- Learning Outcomes meeting – Convene SMEs for a meeting to draft learning outcomes.
- Administration of Learning Outcomes survey – A draft learning outcomes survey based on the agreed upon qualitative assessment is developed and the survey is used to gather statistics on tasks and knowledge areas via Internet survey software systems; i.e. SurveyMonkey®. Sources of potential respondents will be solicited to ensure a target large enough to represent industry/profession stakeholders.
- Analysis of Learning Outcomes survey results –The results of the learning outcomes survey will be used to determine the weighting of knowledge areas and establish the body of knowledge. Knowledge ratings are based on a 1 to 4 scale and using the survey accumulated scale ratings, the mean, standard deviation, and standard error of the mean rating for each knowledge area will be calculated and discussed with the SMEs to determine if any areas should be removed.
- Learning assessment development – SMEs will convene again to develop a learning assessment aligned with the body of knowledge and this learning assessment evaluates individual understanding of the body of knowledge. Using accepted practice, writing techniques are used to develop items (questions) for the learning assessment.
- Certificate program development – Develop learning modules and training materials aligned with the established and promulgated body of knowledge. Develop trainer standards of practice and program license agreement.