

Review article

**TRAINING MANAGEMENT
IN THE MODERN BUSINESS SYSTEM**

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Abstract. *The human resources or the human capital can be regarded as a driving force of the modern organizations' development. At the same time, the training of employees is observed and defined as a necessary prerequisite for their development and realization of both personal (professional) and organizational goals. Moreover, contemporary authors believe that the competitive advantage of organizations in the global economy and industry 4.0 depends on the competencies, knowledge, skills and willingness of employees to respond to the challenges of turbulent economic environment and scientific and technological development. Special attention should be paid to the obligations and responsibilities of the organization to provide the material and organizational conditions necessary for modern education and learning; provide a positive learning climate; motivate employees to learn permanently; stimulate the application of acquired knowledge; require and encourage a continuous education of managers, etc. Organizations that respect this concept promote learning as a fundamental element of the current business strategy and as a fundamental basis of their development and business efficiency in the future. However, relevant sources indicate that the modern business environment suffers from numerous weaknesses and shortcomings in the organization and implementation of the employee training. Starting from that, the paper elaborates the basic characteristics and phases of training management with a special emphasis on the transfer of training as an integral part of the management strategy in a modern business environment.*

Key words: *training, management, knowledge, economy*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary literature, the modern business environment is described as complex, unstable (Jovanović, 2017), dynamic, ever-changing (Torkkeli, 2021), unpredictable, turbulent (Đeržević et al., 2016), and it even implies hyperchange, hyper competition and hyper turbulence, as stated by Kareska & Davcev (2016). Such descriptions are derived from some of the main elements that characterize the modern business environment, such as globalization, liberalization of the economic environment, technical-technological revolution, shortened product life cycle, flexible organizational structures, global recession, emergence of various forms of crises (Jovanović, 2017), absence of barriers, the focus on complementary activities and resources (Kareska & Davcev, 2016) etc. The challenges that a modern business environment imposes on modern organizations are actually a challenge of their survival, development and securing a leading position in relation to competitors (Jovanović, 2017). The modern business system is also influenced by digitalization of societies and businesses, by the rise of environmental entrepreneurship and international business practices in response to climate change, and by the increasing volume of immigrant entrepreneurship due to increasing global migration (Torkkeli, 2021). Considering all of the aforementioned, it is quite clear that organizations, and their employees, cannot remain immune to obvious changes and continue their “business as usual”.

As Kareska & Davcev (2016) point out, knowledge and intellectual capital become key resources in operation, and information and communication technologies become a necessity for coordination of work activities in the modern business system. Modern organizations need employees who are characterized by quick thinking and responding when making business decisions (Đeržević et al., 2016) and who can easily adapt to new situations and challenges (Rahman & Malik, 2021). Today, the management of modern organizations continuously explores new ways of using resources to increase efficiency. One of them is training to gain new skills and techniques (Kareska & Davcev, 2016), as one of the most widely accepted ways to improve work productivity of the individuals and transfer the organizational goals to new staff (Arthur et al., 2003). The investments of modern organizations in the training of their employees are significant, because this is precisely what maintains the success of the organization itself (Rahman & Malik, 2021).

2. TRAINING AS A PREREQUISITE FOR WORK PRODUCTIVITY

Training is a directed, time-limited activity clearly focused on the organization (McDowall & Saunders, 2010), a planned intervention aimed at improving the determinants that affect the work productivity of an individual, regardless of whether he/she is a member of a team or works independently (Campbell & Kuncel, 2001), that is, an intervention strategy aimed at acquiring knowledge and attitudes when it is required by the phenomenon that affects the productivity of the organization (Abdul, 2015). In other words, estimation that the cause of reduced productivity is the lack of employees’ knowledge and skills is an indicator of a mismatch between the expected outcomes and the achieved ones, which implies the need for training. Accordingly, training can be defined as an activity in which employees are involved with the aim of acquiring skills that they will apply at work, i. e. as an activity that aims at satisfactory job performance; adherence to set performance standards; and provision of requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective performance (Ibid.). At the same time, it is important to note that employee training is not only a means

of improving the competencies needed to perform a job, but also a means of increasing employee satisfaction with their performance, which consequently reduces the possibility of employees leaving the organization (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

The main characteristics of training are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Training characteristics

<i>Overall aim</i>	Improving the effectiveness in current role, typically provided by the organization
<i>Focus</i>	Performance of the task or of the specific job role
<i>Objectives</i>	Job specific fixed-term orientation
<i>Time span</i>	Can vary greatly in length, style of delivery and content
<i>Role of manager</i>	Very important for supporting learning
<i>Examples</i>	Skills-based training, customer-service training, professional training, open learning; can take place on or off the job
<i>Theoretical underpinning</i>	Rooted in learning theory and cognitive psychology, acknowledging interplay between individual characteristics and organizational requirements
<i>Learning</i>	Learning through instruction and skill acquisition
<i>Individual differences and motivation</i>	Training motivation encompasses a number of malleable variables such as self-efficacy
<i>Employee-employer relationship</i>	Relational contract; job for life, onus rests on employer to train their workforce; predictivist perspective focusing on person-job fit
<i>Projected outcomes</i>	Enhanced skills at the individual level and organizational benefits; should result in measurable improvement in workplace performance measures
<i>Validity</i>	Consistent evidence that well delivered training courses result in improvement in task performance, and that motivation predicts success

(According to: McDowall & Saunders, 2010, pp. 32-33)

In research focused on employee training and development (McDowal & Saunders, 2010), one of the managers describes training as “(...) something that feeds into development (...)” (p. 13). Slavković and Slavković (2019) agree with the stated, emphasizing that employee training is one of the essential elements for the creation of a general strategy for the development of each company, because the knowledge that employees acquired during formal education is no longer enough to successfully respond to job requirements and to adapt to the constantly new and changing demands of the modern market.

3. TRAINING MANAGEMENT – TERM AND PROCESSES

There is no single definition of the term *management*, which is confirmed by Thomas (2003, p. 23), emphasizing how the question “What is management?” provokes considerable confusion and puzzlement and that, like many simple questions, it is a lot easier to ask than it is to answer. Kreitner & Cassidy (2012) say that management is “the process of working with and through others to achieve organizational objectives in a changing environment” (p. 5), where it is crucial to use limited resources effectively and efficiently. Griffin (2016) defines management as “a set of activities (including planning and decision

making, organizing, leading and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human, financial, physical, and information) with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner" (p. 5). A similar definition is given by Daft (2015), stating that "management is the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient way through planning, organizing, leading and controlling organizational resources" (p. 4). Therefore, the definitions of management are most often based on the same idea: management is oriented towards the achievement of certain objectives, through the efforts of the people performing certain functions (Rao & Krishna, 2009). If the goal of the organization is to increase the efficiency through training, management refers to the process of its planning and organizing, implementing and evaluating. This is *training management*, which includes the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to training activities, with the intention of achieving the outcome of training. It is based on a cycle that includes: (1) planning, (2) implementation, and (3) evaluation (Manual on training management, n.d.). Each of these processes is described below.

3.1. Training planning

Training implementation is preceded by planning based on training needs analysis or assessment, training planning and training preparation.

Needs analysis can be defined as a formal process aimed at determining the gap between the ideal form and the current condition (Pangaribuan et al., 2019), i. e. at determining the existing problems (current or anticipated performance deficiencies) and their causes. If it is determined that these problems are caused by inadequate knowledge, skills or attitudes, a potential solution can be training implementation. In that case, a training needs analysis is carried out, in order to find out which problems have to be solved through training. The analysis of the need for training is based on data collection and causal analysis (Sels, 2002), on the systematic study of the current situation and the desired situation (Miglič, 2007), on the assessment of "what is" and "what should be" (Abdul, 2015), that is, on the analysis of the goals to be achieved, available resources and on whether training is the appropriate intervention. There is also a need for task and requirements analysis, in order to determine the nature of the task faced by the employees, as well as the knowledge and skills required for its execution. Person analysis is also important – it is used to determine, on the basis of the existing knowledge and skills, what kind of training an individual needs (Kozłowski et al., 2000), that is, what an individual should know in order to perform at optimum level (Abdul, 2015).

Therefore, the needs analysis includes: (1) organizational analysis in order to determine which organizational goals can be achieved through training, as well as where training is needed in the organization; (2) task analysis in order to determine what the individual needs to know in order to perform the job effectively and what the training would cover, and (3) personnel analysis in order to determine which individuals need training, what for (Arthur et al., 2003), what is the level of their existing knowledge, what are their learning styles and who will lead the training (Miglič, 2007). Ideally, a needs assessment would have three major steps: (1) description of the factors that contribute to the work productivity; (2) identification of the determinants on which these factors depend and (3) identification of the determinants that affect work productivity, and which will be positively affected by training. This step refers to the individuals (personnel analysis), to teams, or to forecasting the needs that could arise within an occupation, that is, the needs of the workforce in general (Campbell & Kuncel, 2001).

The coordination between training and the employees' needs, with an effective trainer who emphasizes the practical application of what has been learned, i. e. the knowledge transfer, is a key factor that contributes to the success of the training (McDowall & Saunders, 2010). However, in practice, employees are often involved in the training process, without a proper needs analysis conducted beforehand, that is, without determining whether training is needed or not (Agnai, 1996). The importance of needs analysis is reflected in the fact that it represents one of the ways to increase the benefits of training. In addition, training would be more useful if the employees are prepared and motivated before the training. For this purpose, it is important to reduce their anxiety about the upcoming training, to demonstrate the value of the training and ensure that they are highly involved and engaged with their jobs (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

Training planning includes setting the goal and objectives, as well as selecting the contents and activities through which the employees will acquire desirable knowledge and skills (Manual on training management, n.d.). Training goals are determined based on the identified needs and represent the outcomes that a training program should produce. These objectives actually represent the criteria for evaluating the achieved results, that is, for determining the effectiveness of the training. In addition, it is necessary to select an adequate training method and to identify the factors that can enhance the learning process and transfer of acquired knowledge and skills into practice (Sels, 2002). Greany (2021) points out that it is crucial to consider the context, design, format and delivery method of the training program at the planning stage, because the success of the training program relies on the employees engaging with the content. Therefore, it is necessary to ask the following questions: What makes the content relevant and useful? How to present the content in a digestible, attractive and engaging way? Are interactive elements or other strategies that can help employees retain new information incorporated? How will the content be distributed to employees? etc.

Training preparation is based on determining the structure of work (dividing the goals into concrete tasks, i. e. determining what needs to be done in order to achieve the set goals), schedule and available resources (Manual on training preparation, n.d.).

3.2. Training implementation

Training implementation refers to its practical realisation (Dessler, 2012), which becomes a present demand placed before every company, given that training is accepted as an important means to improve employees' productivity (Aragón-Sánchez et al., 2003) and, therefore, the organization's ability to achieve its key goals (Kozłowski et al., 2000).

Before training is implemented, several key points must be considered: (1) understanding the overall vision and goals of the organization; (2) training must be aligned with the organization's overall strategy; (3) the first step in the development of a training strategy is to determine the existing skills within the organization; (4) after that, it is necessary to predict what skills might be needed in the future; (5) to determine how to overcome the gap between existing and required skills; (6) to determine the strategy success criteria; (7) and to ensure adequate funds; (8) the strategy must not create cultural conflicts between different parts of the organization; (9) a cost analysis needs to be conducted and (10) the training strategy must be supported by all key stakeholders (Cartwright, 2003). However, the key prerequisites for the successful implementation of a training program are: (1) a precise identification of the need for training of employees; (2) a carefully designed training plan; (3) a good management of training details; (4) thorough and relevant materials and (5) prepared trainers (Hamza, 2012).

There are two approaches to implementing a training program. The first approach is focused on the trainer who controls learning content and experiences, and the second is focused on the learner, while the trainer guides the training process and provides the necessary sources of knowledge. It is important to emphasize that the second approach implies active participation, exchange of experience and freedom to learn at one's own pace. Therefore, this approach is preferred (Designing and implementing training programs, n.d.).

Given that the task of the trainer is to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the content, his skills and abilities are very important for training implementation. Trainers are required to have effective communication skills (Kapur, 2018), to be familiar with the learning contents, to have interpersonal skills, and to use appropriate learning methods and techniques (Korte, 2006), such as lecture, discussion, case study, role play, group exercise, brainstorming, demonstration, etc. (Kapur, 2018). Using the appropriate methods, along with an adequate training design, can help maximize the benefits of training. This can be achieved by encouraging the employees to organize the content themselves, to put the effort in the acquisition of new skills and to learn from their mistakes (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

3.3. Training evaluation

Training evaluation represents the systematic investigation of whether a training program resulted in knowledge, skills, or affective changes in learners (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). However, monitoring and evaluation of training are often ignored or carried out formally (Manual on training management, n.d.), even though this is one of the trainer's key roles as it helps in determining the progress of employees (Designing and implementing training programs, n.d.), that is, the effectiveness of the training program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Also, without evaluating the training effectiveness, the managements of organizations are not willing to invest in employee training and development. Training evaluation is a starting point for planning the future employee trainings, but also for the development of the entire organization (Urbančová et al., 2021).

Training is most effective when it addresses specific needs of the organization (Firdousi, 2011). Accordingly, the effectiveness of the training program must be considered in the phases of its planning and implementation, where the following factors should be taken into account: determining needs, setting objectives, determining subject content, selecting participants, determining the best schedule, selecting appropriate facilities, selecting appropriate instructors, selecting and preparing audiovisual aids, coordinating the program, and evaluating the program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Sels (2002) indicates the need for process evaluation and outcome evaluation. Process evaluation refers to assessing the achievement of the set objectives in each phase (needs analysis, training design, etc.), while outcome evaluation refers to measuring the training effects on the employees, the job and the organization. In other words, it is desirable to carry out a formative evaluation, during the practical implementation of the training, so that the necessary adjustments can be made, as well as summative evaluation, after the training, based on which the future training will be planned. Urbančová et al. (2021) indicate the importance of the evaluation carried out immediately after the completed training for strengthening the willingness and motivation of employees for future trainings, because it helps in identifying the shortcomings that demotivate the participants – e.g., absence of activation elements, the way of training, perception of lecturer's

personality. In addition, it is important to check the effects of training periodically, that is, to monitor outcomes and assess the continuing performance of employees (Designing and implementing training programs, n.d.).

Accordingly, training evaluation should be carried out in order to justify the investments (by indicating the contribution of the training to the achievement of organization's objectives and goals), in order to decide whether to continue or discontinue training programs, as well as for obtaining information on how to improve future training programs (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick's model: four levels of training evaluation, n.d.) is one of the most famous models for evaluating training programs. This evaluation model includes four levels: (1) reaction, (2) learning, (3) behavior, and (4) results. These levels indicate that the training evaluation must be based on determining: (1) the participants' reactions to the training program, where it is especially important to get positive reactions, because negative reactions reduce the possibility for learning; (2) the extent to which the participants change attitudes, improve knowledge and/or increase skills as a result of the training program; (3) the extent to which the change in participants' behavior has occurred because they attended the training program (4) the final results that the training program produced, such as increased production, improved quality, decreased costs, reduced frequency and/or severity of accidents, higher profits etc. (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

4. TRAINING TRANSFER AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Research on the effectiveness of training (Menon, 2013) showed that managers referred to several factors which limit the positive effect of training on productivity: individual characteristics of employees with a special emphasis on the importance of motivation for active participation in training activities and practical application of acquired knowledge and skills; work environment and the quality of interpersonal relationships; problems related to the organization - its structure, processes and other characteristics (weakness in leadership, evaluation, technology implementation, lack of incentives); the quality of the training program, including the trainer's expertise and experience, the content of the training and the degree to which the training matches the individual needs of the employees and the aims of the organization. Training management is usually focused on the preparation and practical implementation of the training program, which puts the effects of training, such as productivity, efficiency and job satisfaction, in the background. Acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes is undoubtedly of great importance, but this does not mean that the acquired will be applied on the job (Abdul, 2015). In other words, training will not lead to the anticipated results if the acquired knowledge, attitudes and skills are not fully and appropriately transferred to job-related activities (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). This implies the responsibility of trainers and managers: they must ensure the transfer of acquired knowledge into practice, i. e. the training transfer. Training transfer is the process of transferring knowledge, skills, attitudes and other qualities acquired during the training to the working environment (Abdul, 2015), that is, the extent to which new knowledge and skills learned during training are applied on the job (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). If it leads to an increase in productivity, effectiveness and job satisfaction, the term positive transfer is used. In contrast, negative transfer implies a decline in performance or motivation. Also, there is a possibility that no change will occur, which, just like negative transfer, means a

loss for both the employee and the organization (Gumuseli & Ergin, 2002), creating the impression that the training never took place (Abdul, 2015).

Successful training transfer depends on the following factors (Heathfield, 2019):

- *the trainer and the expectations* – participants react more favorably to trainers who have experienced the issues and situations highlighted in the training: the more closely the instructor can link the training to the participants' real-life experience, the better for training transfer;
- *training as a part of the consistent message from the organization* – classes must build on each other and reinforce the content learned in earlier sessions;
- *the involvement of each individual's manager, and the manager's manager in a training session with their staff* – participants will be more willing to try new ideas they learned during the training; employees are stimulated when they see their managers applying the new information on the job; trained managers can ask their employees questions to improve their learning and understanding of the concepts, etc.
- *providing training in "chunks" that are scheduled over a period of time* – learning is more successful when the content is divided into small amounts and learned within several training sessions in between which the trainees can practice previously learned concepts;
- *the acquisition of skills and information that are immediately applicable on the job* – "use it or lose it"; setting up situations in which practice is immediate and frequent, which helps participants retain the training;
- *a positive, productive tone for the session and the later application of learning* – at the beginning of the training, it is necessary to create a positive, informative, honest atmosphere with an emphasis on the set objectives and expectations (the importance of the training and the value of information for the trainees).

In order to be successful, training transfer must be integrated into the management strategy of the organization, that is, it must become a culture of the organization (Abdul, 2015). Management is an integral part of the so-called "continuous learning culture" that includes personal responsibility for learning, creating learning opportunities, challenging work tasks, etc. This is likely to encourage the participation of employees in educational activities, as well as more beneficial consequences of their participation (Birdi et al., 1997). As stated by Gumuseli & Ergin (2002), organizations have to adopt the model of *learning organizations*, which requires managers to interpret the role of teacher-coach-facilitator, given that the leadership qualities of managers have a significant impact on individual and group learning and the transfer of acquired knowledge to the work environment.

5. CONCLUSION

The success of modern organizations depends on their employees who perform their jobs in conditions of a continuously changing market. This implies the need for changing employees' characteristics, such as their knowledge, skills and competencies. Education and training of employees are one of the basic functions of human resources management and indispensable activities for matching their present characteristics with those required by a modern business system.

A successful training requires careful preparation, guidance and control, i. e. training management, which is performed through: (1) training planning phase, in which the disparity

between the current situation and the goals that the organization strives for is determined, which includes training needs analysis, definition of training goals, selection of appropriate learning content and activities, identification of the most effective teaching methods and techniques, creation of working schedule, determination of available resources etc; (2) training implementation phase, in which elements defined in previous phase are put into practice; and (3) training evaluation phase, in which the effectiveness of the training program is evaluated, with a recommendation to perform both formative (during the training, on the basis of which the necessary modifications are made “ad hoc”) and summative evaluation (after the training is completed, on the basis of which the “critical points” are reviewed, and which serves as a basis for future training planning), as well as to periodically check the achieved results when it comes to the achievement of the set objectives and employee productivity.

An integral part of the management strategy in the modern business system is the training transfer, which refers to the practical implementation of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired/upgraded through training into the working environment. The basic prerequisites for a successful training transfer, such as trainer’s competencies, the involvement of managers in the training with their employees, the creation of business situations that will facilitate the immediate application of what has been learned, the creation of a positive atmosphere with a clear definition of the expectations and advantages of training, etc., lead to the conclusion that training transfer has to be considered during the entire cycle of training management, i.e. that the training transfer is associated with each of the previously described phases. Thus, in training planning phase it is necessary to design the activities in a way that would be as closely related as possible to what the employees may encounter in practice; during training implementation, it is important to provide trainers who will clearly indicate where, when, and how the employees can use what they learn and why it is significant; and training evaluation can focus on determining the extent to which the knowledge that was acquired during the training is applied in the business environment. Therefore, it can be said that the training transfer is a basic prerequisite for the organizations’ “survival” in the modern business system, which is characterized by continuous changes, and a continuous need to update the competencies acquired during the employees’ formal education.

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TRENING MENADŽMENT U SAVREMENOM POSLOVNOM SISTEMU

Pokretačku snagu razvoja savremene organizacije čine ljudski resursi ili ljudski kapital u organizaciji. Pritom, trening zaposlenih posmatra se i određuje kao neophodna pretpostavka njihovog razvoja i realizacije kako ličnih profesionalnih tako i organizacionih ciljeva. Štaviše, savremeni autori smatraju da konkurentna prednost organizacija u globalnoj ekonomiji i industriji 4.0 zavisi od kompetencija, znanja, veština i spremnosti zaposlenih da odgovore na izazove turbulentnog privrednog okruženja i naučno-tehnološkog razvoja. Posebnu pažnju zaslužuju obaveze i odgovornost organizacije koja sa svoje strane treba da stvori materijalne i organizacione uslove za savremeni pristup obrazovanju i učenju, obezbedi odgovarajuću klimu podrške učenju, stimuliše i motiviše zaposlene da permanentno uče, podržava i stimuliše primenu naučenog, posebno zahteva i podstiče kontinuirano obrazovanje rukovodilaca i dr. Organizacije koje uvažavaju ovaj koncept promovišu učenje kao fundamentalni element aktuelne poslovne strategije i kao temeljnu osnovu svog razvoja i poslovne efikasnosti u budućnosti. Međutim, relevantni izvori ukazuju na to da savremeno poslovno okruženje pati od brojnih slabosti i nedostataka u organizaciji i realizaciji treninga zaposlenih. Polazeći od toga, u radu su elaborirane osnovne karakteristike i faze trening menadžmenta sa posebnim osvrtom na transfer treninga kao sastavni deo menadžment strategije u savremenom poslovnom okruženju.

Ključne reči: *trening, menadžment, znanje, privreda*