Directors Corner Article
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Small Businesses – Why the Need for Training

As a business owner you’ve probably heard these comments, “Do we have a training program” or “If I knew more about my job I could do better”.

Whether you are a new or experienced business owner, most factors why a business fails or is successful involves the business owner’s knowledge and that of their employees to meet the essential needs of the business. In this article we wish to highlight several ways that as a business owner you may want to focus on continuous training and the role it can play in the government acquisition business environment. The government agencies have their own acquisition guide such as the Federal Acquisition Regulation for the Federal Government and the State Vendor Manual tailored to each individual State Procurement process. Like participating in any program or business environment it is essential for business owners and their employee to learn the rules of engagement. This is best accomplished through training in the duties they perform and training on their various market place procedures.

Having said this, the most common response from business owners is, “having a training program isn’t that important, it requires money and time the business can’t afford”. That comment is understandable, however in reality, not only is a business training program important, it is a necessity for business performance and to enhance employees’ abilities by avoiding common mistakes resulting from a lack of knowledge.

One of the main objectives of every business owner is to have the best and the most qualified employees. Achieving this objective requires the business to have a training program in an effort to attract the best and most qualified people as employees. Further it should be noted that training is a continuous process developed according to the requirements of each business with a primary focus on the development of knowledge and skills to assist the employees in improving performance, lead to positions of greater responsibility and a long and successful career with the business.

There are two primary types of training programs normally utilized by small businesses. I.E., on-the-job training and off-the-job training. We will begin with on-the-job training, which is simply training provided by business personnel and compiled of procedures associated with the performance of a particular job the employee is or will be performing for the business. Some of these methods include job orientation, business approved apprenticeships, in-house step-by-step job performance instruction and job rotation. Some positive aspects of on-the-job training program are they tend to be more practical and there is minimum loss of operating/production time when employees are trained under this process. Another aspect of on-the-job training is that it tends to be the responsibility of the business management or the more experienced co-workers.

On the other hand there is the off-the-job training program, which describes the types of training that are provided to employees outside of the business in lieu of their work place, normally during their work schedule. Some these types of training agendas include attending chamber of commerce programs, business conferences, lectures, long distance video presentations and in certain instances taking college or technical school classes to name a few. It should be noted that off-the-job training has a few issues to be considered for instance, outside sources are usually better informed as to effective training processes above the company supervisors, however they also may have limited knowledge about the particular business company’s products, services and competitive market position. In addition, the cost of some off-the-job training methods may be too high for many small businesses to afford.

In many instances government regulations require agencies to request businesses to provide their experience and past performance if they are proposing on one of their acquisitions. For a business to meet this requirement they need to have an effective training and development program that relates not only to the specific items the business does plus individual employee assessments, but also to the overall goals of the business required to be competitive and provide outstanding job performance for every client. As you can visualize, “why the need for training”, it should now begin to be clear that if all of the business’ personnel know what behaviors or skills they need to have and how they relate to how they perform their jobs, that having trained employees enhances the overall potential of the business to be successful.

In reference to the business owner’s concern that training employees is expensive, the response to that concern is an overwhelming yes. There is a cost to being successful and training is one of the most essential costs. However, the small business owner can minimize some control over training expenses by utilizing careful consideration in deciding which employee(s) should receive training. This decision should be based on the employee(s) ability to learn and the likelihood the employee(s) will be motivated by the
training, because if the employee(s) selected do not benefit from receiving the training or perhaps leaves the business shortly after completing the training, then the monies spend on that employee(s) training becomes a loss or none productive expense.

Simply explained; regardless of the cost and time factors, it is important for small businesses to educate their seasoned employees. Whenever a business invests in training their personnel it sends a message to the employees that the business values them. It has been shown that employees who feel they are appreciated feel more satisfaction toward performing their jobs.

Despite any potential downturns, training and development of a business’ employee(s) provides both the business owner and the employees with improved efficiency and motivation, leading to gains in both productivity and job satisfaction. All of aforementioned benefits of training can contribute to the small business’s fundamental financial health and vitality, thusly justifying the training cost and time as a worthwhile investment.

APAC sincerely hopes that you will evaluate the information from this article. Take the information in this article and use it as deemed necessary, because knowledge and learning comes from a deep understanding of what you know and how it is used.

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