TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn"
- Benjamin Franklin

The above quotation summarizes the salience of the methodology of training and development in the organizational context. Training and development are important components of most capacity building initiatives. For many organizations training remains the main approach to address capacity issues. However, formal training is but one tool in the organization's arsenal which can be used for capacity building.

The organization, the supervisor, and the employee all play important roles in making training and development a success.

Role of Organization, Supervisor, and Individual

The Role of the Organization
The organization plays a key role in providing a learning environment. Just as a student finds it difficult to study at home when there is a party going on every day, an employee finds it difficult to learn and more importantly apply the learning at the workplace without a proper environment. One crucial aspect in the creation of a proper environment is the attitude of leaders in the organization.

Two factors need to be considered while studying the role of the organization. First, capacity building of the individual employee irrespective of any felt need by the organization, and second, development of competencies at the work-group and individual level depending on identified needs. The first factor is a broader affirmation of the organization in developing an employee. The organization may or may not provide resources for the same but if it provides encouragement and support for the first factor, then employees go that extra mile to develop competencies needed for the organization's development, growth, and excellence.

The Role of the Supervisor
Supervisors have a crucial role to play in the training and development of the employees. Providing information and support to facilitate the employee's development is what is most important. The things the supervisor MUST do include:
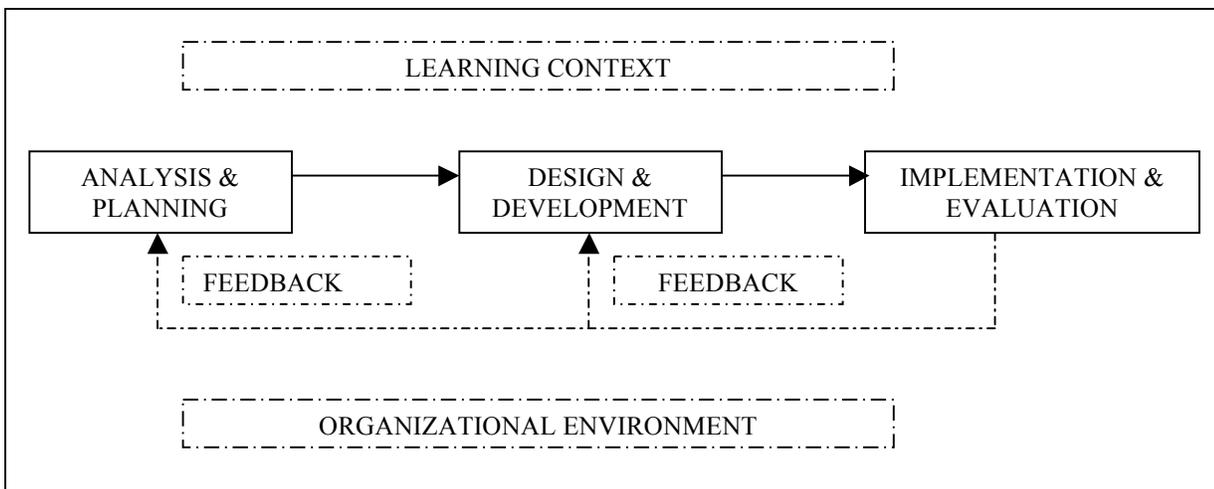- guide employees to help them determine what they need for development
- provide both positive and corrective feedback
- offer organizational insights, information, and advice
- guiding the planning through goal setting and checking back over time
- allocate resources and time for development experiences
- ensure opportunities for application of new learning
- Be tolerant of genuine mistakes. Mistakes provide great learning opportunities if they are factored in as part of the learning process.

The Role of the Employee

The success or failure of training and development initiatives are ultimately dependant on the employee. A learning environment, proper design and conduction of training programs, opportunities for transfer of learning can all be provided. However, ultimately the onus of learning and its transfer to the workplace is on the employee. If an employee is not willing to learn or transfer the learning to the workplace then there is very little that the organization or the supervisor can do about it.

There are many organizations that go way beyond the requirements of providing training and development opportunities to their employees. The promoter and chairman of an organization was asked, 'Why are you investing so much in providing training to employees who leave your organization for better opportunities?' and his apt reply was 'What happens if I do not train them and they decide to stay?'.

Training is defined as the systematic acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities that result in improved performance in another environment. Therefore there is an increasing stress on a systemic and systematic approach to training and development. The systemic approach outlines a clear delineation of the inputs, process, and outputs with proper emphasis on each of the three. The training framework is represented schematically below.

FIGURE: Training Framework