Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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Training needs analysis

With a complex discipline like facilities management that has so many skill and knowledge requirements it is important that the facility manager carefully monitor the competency of their team and identifies and plans for their learning needs.

Effective training or development depends on knowing what is required - for the individual, the department and the organisation as a whole. With limited budgets and the need for cost-effective solutions, all organisations need to ensure that the resources invested in training are targeted at areas where training and development is needed and a positive return on the investment is guaranteed.

Training needs analysis involves the monitoring of current performance using techniques such as observation, interviews and questionnaires and the anticipation of future shortfalls or problems followed by the identification of the type and level of training required and analysis of how this can best be provided.

Training needs discovered in the facilities department may exist in other parts of the organisation. So, it may be worth discussing development areas with the HR department or liaising with other managers to aggregate training needs information, so that a range of appropriate training and development activities can be planned and resolved efficiently.

Some training needs can go unnoticed because they creep up on the organisation gradually. Active monitoring systems are essential to spot these and can make a valuable contribution to the process of collecting information on performance gaps and training needs.

It could be that a training need is limited to a single individual or activity but it is more likely to be relevant for a number of people, a whole department or across the organisation. For example, if the organisation traditionally treats customers as a nuisance, it needs to change its overall approach. In this case, giving one or two people training would address the training need at the wrong level; organisation development is needed rather than individual training sessions.

Analysing what the training needs are is a vital prerequisite for any effective training programme or event. Simply throwing training at individuals may miss priority needs, or even cover areas that are not essential. TNA enables organisations to channel resources into the areas where they will contribute the most to employee development, enhancing morale and organisational performance. TNA is a natural function of appraisal systems and is key requirement for the award of Investors in People.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has a useful factsheet on "Identifying learning and talent development needs" available on its website www.cipd.co.uk