**Capacity Development Needs Analysis**

Capacity is developed on three different levels — individual, organizational, and enabling environments. All people function within each of these levels, therefore, capacity development needs to be addressed on each of these levels. A capacity development analysis is about asking which behavioural practices we would like to see, understanding if it is happening, and determining why not.

It is imperative to first identify the problem, or the need. This can be done by asking some important questions, and then checking assumptions about the answers.

Questions to ask:

* How do you know the problem you have identified is the real problem?
* Who needs to be consulted to confirm this is the problem needing attention?
* What is the actual need?
* Who have you consulted?
* Will training solve the problem? If not, what are the other options?
* What is already being done to address this issue?
* What do we know about the target participants?

**Step 1: Understand the audience**

When there are several stakeholders, deciding who to focus on can be difficult. First, identify stakeholders who have a key role to play in the success of your program. Consider which of them needs further support to make sure the program runs smoothly. Taking time to assess the target audience cannot be skipped. This will guide your decisions.

* Determine if the capacity development level is an individual, organizational or enabling environment issue. It is possible the target audience is the enabling environment.
* Determine your ideal audience. Consider behaviours, motives, age, gender, income, and other relevant factors.
* Collect data about your target audience by asking questions and observing.
* Validate assumptions about their needs, motives, behaviours.
* Determine where they are likely to hear, or access your message, and activities.

**Step 2: Identify expected performance or ideal situation**

Investigate policies, guidelines, procedures, international standards, and speak to human resources, management or government officials to confirm how the task is expected to be performed.

* What standard or procedure is the target audience expected to follow?
* Consider how an expert would perform the task.
* Evaluate which factors contribute to the gap.

**Step 3: Identify current performance or situation**

Interviewing and observing those performing the behaviour is one way to collect data. Reviewing performance records, reports or other metrics and documentation can also help.

* Identify the current behaviour, or how a task is being performed.
* Ask why a task, or systemic action, is not being performed.
* Determine if it is a task considered relevant to the functioning of the whole

**Step 4: Perform a task analysis (skip for situations)**

A task analysis is the assessment of how a task is performed and accomplished. It can include detailed descriptions of the activities, durations, frequency, and complexity, necessary or unique to performing the given task. The steps needed to perform the analysis are:

* Consult with an expert (a person, organization or environment that are already performing the task or behaviour)
* Identify the broad tasks or steps required to perform the behaviour
* Break down the tasks into subtasks or the smaller steps required to perform the behaviour.
* Generate a chronological list of the steps needed to perform each subtask

**Step 5: Identify if there is a performance or situational gap**

Compare and contrast the expected behaviour with the current performance to determine any gaps or a difference between the current and expected performance.

**Step 6: Determine the cause of the performance or situation gap**

Re-evaluate your basic assumption level of the capacity development need. Is it still an individual, organizational or enabling environment? If the level has changed then reassess each section to assure you have not missed any details based on the primary decision.

Speculate which factors or motives might be driving the performance or behaviour gap, such as:

* Enabling environment (resources, policies)
* Motives (nurture, comfort, justice)
* Knowledge and skills

Conclusion:

This capacity development process will need to be repeated for each stakeholder identified and will be longer or shorter depending on who the stakeholder is, and the capacity development level. Remember capacity is developed on three different levels — individual, organizational, and enabling environments. Each level must be considered.

It is a common mistake to assume that training will change behaviour. Remember, training can only solve a performance problem if it’s caused by a lack of knowledge and skills. Otherwise capacity development gaps will need to be approached by improving or changing attitudes, and the enabling environment.

References:

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