
Superior Tyres Company: The Glory and its Untold Story

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Abstract

Designing effective training program has always been challenging task for human resource professionals. Therefore, purpose of this case study is to evaluate nature of challenges and effective process of designing effective training program. Findings of this case study revealed that training environment, appropriate learning techniques and training need analysis are the key components to consider while designing any training program. Findings of this study developed understanding about designing effective training program and suggest that human resource professionals should consider these three components while designing training program. This case study was limited to one organization, future researchers should replicate these findings in different settings to further strengthen the body of knowledge.

Keywords: Training Need Analysis (TNA). Designing training program, Training environment, Superior Tyres.

Organizational Background

Superior Tyres company (Malaysia) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Superior (Japan) who is the fourth largest tyre manufacturer worldwide and one of the world's leading suppliers to the automotive industry for tyre and brake technology, vehicle dynamic control, as well as electronic and sensor systems. Superior in general is structured in six divisions, namely; chassis (a vehicle's main framework) & safety, powertrain (the main components that generate power and deliver it to the road surface), interior, passenger car & light truck tyres, commercial vehicle tyres, and research & technology.

Vision and Mission

Superior Japan is the world's fourth largest tyre manufacturer as was stated before. In order to maintain this status and to perform to the very best the company established a vision and mission and has certain values which have to be pursued by all the employees working in the company's various subsidiaries all over the world. In order to honour Superior Tyres company vision, Superior tyres company Malaysia is constantly aiming at developing highly, intelligent technologies for mobility, transport and processing in order to create their customers mobility. To give their

customers their freedom of choice, Superior wants to provide the best solutions for each of their customers in each of their markets. By achieving this, Superior tyres company aims at becoming the most value-creating, highly reliable and respected partner. Their mission is to be a responsible, leading company and the partner of choice while they invent, develop, produce and market indispensable technological solutions that shape in particular the four mega trends, including safety, environment, information and affordable cars (Superior Tyres Company, 2019).

Nature of Case Study

As mentioned earlier, Superior Japan is the fourth largest tyres manufactures worldwide and their main operation would be the manufacturing. Since it is a multi-national company, the organization employed a huge amount of employees (1156 employees, Superior Tyre Company Malaysia) in order to run their business operation and they are mainly at the manufacturing site. Besides, at Superior Tyres company Malaysia, the employees worked there largely denoted by the Generation X (Gen X). Gen X is the generation who born between 1965 to 1980. The employees' age is between 35 to 53 years old and are male dominated. Interestingly, most of the employees at the manufacturing site are expatriates. The manufacturing site operated 24 hours, 7 days in a week and have two shifts, a day shift and a night

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shift. Few expatriates employees are in the management positions for instance, the CFO's are from Germany and the Quality Manager is from Slovakia.

It is a challenging and yet interesting task especially for the Human Resource Department at Superior Tyres company Malaysia. This is because they need to manage large amount of employees'. At the same time they need to ensure that all the procedures do not violate the laws, preserving and maintaining the harmony in the organization, good employees' welfare and assist the organization to achieve the vision and mission. In order to obtain this, a good training program should be design and implemented. The process of developing and nurturing the employees is pivotal in any organization. The knowledge, skills, and abilities gained from the training program is valuable as it will assist the employees to do their job. As a result, this can help the organization to increase their productivity and be competitive. Furthermore, this process is not the Human Resource Department duty only but all the organization members must join together to make it a successful process.

However, there are several issues need to be address regarding the training and development activities at Superior Tyres company Malaysia. Firstly, is regarding the selecting and preparing the training site whereby the environment is not appropriate to conduct a training program. For example, since their main operation is manufacturing, it involves with large equipment that produce a lot of noise during the day and the night. Thus, when the training program is conducted, it is often interrupted by the noise. Besides that, there were insufficient space for the trainee and trainer to move during the training program. The space was too small and it makes the trainer as well as the trainees move limitedly. The awful situation worsen because due to the limited space, the seating arrangements during the training program is stagnant and cannot be change. This is because the seating arrangements will influence the trainer-trainee interaction and trainee interaction. Although the seating arrangements may seem as not important but it can affect the communication process and the quality of the training program.

Secondly, the climate around Superior Tyres company also is a major concern. This is because, lack of supportive and encouragement from the top management has an effect to the employee's in order for them to perform their job. In addition, there were no rewards and incentives for acquiring and using new knowledge and skills in the job. This

has made the employees stress and feel demotivated although they have perform well upon completing their job. Moreover, most of the work assignments do not include the opportunities to learn new techniques and procedures for improving performance. This is because, even though they have learn new knowledge and skills from the training program, they cannot fully utilizes it due to the lack of opportunity for them. For instance, maybe the training program designed is not related to their job or the information taught during the training program is different from the real working environment. As a result, the knowledge cannot be transfer to the job and it fade away from the memory as time goes by. Thus, it is a loss to the organization.

Accounting managers in the head office complain to human resource manager that new accounting employees take longer time to perform given task as compare to time required to perform specific tasks. Another issue raised by the manager about organizational hierarchy, specifically new employees are not highlighted in the organizational hierarchy which influence their job task because they don't know to whom they need to report and take guideline about job task. Moreover, even though new hires possess good mathematical skills but many are struggling to solve accounting problems. In addition, few new hires are equip with computer skills whereas others are struggling to reach basic level such as Microsoft word, Excel, accounting software etc. Managers highlighted that many new hires possess good communication and presentation skills.

In recent staff meeting, Accounts manager Abdullah requested human resource manager Ahmed to design training program for new hires to equip them with accounting skills so that they can actively participate in the operation. Ahmed was agreed to design the training program after investigating the current situation and approached Mr. Lee who is experienced trainer in the area of accounting and finance and joined Superior tyres company 2 years ago. Ahmed (HR manager) requested Mr. Lee (Trainer) to conduct training need assessment (TNA) and submit the report so that they can discuss in next staff meeting.

Mr. Lee started collecting data from different sources like conducting interview with Abdullah (accounts manager) to share strengths and weaknesses of the new hires, contacted recruiter to provide all background information of the hires in last 5 years such as university from where these hires are graduated, grades they obtained, number of courses they have taken related to computer and

accounting area. Based on the collected information, Mr. Lee found that all new hires have good educational background including higher marks, number of accounting and computer related subjects studied, university rank in the country etc. In addition, Mr. Lee also collected the information related to job description of the new hires, information provided to new hires during orientation day to understand whether or not new hires understand organizational hierarchy, department and organizational goals, mission and vision of the company. Unfortunately, Mr. Lee found that little information was shared with new hires in orientation about company goals, vision and mission.

After collecting all required information, Mr. Lee was sitting in his office with hot cup of coffee and started visualizing whole picture, arranging and evaluating the collected information, thinking about different alternatives and planning to design training program for new hires based on the collected information. Would you like to help Mr. Lee to design effective training program based on the given situation? Mr. Lee may need your help to answer the following questions:

Case Study Questions:

1. What do you think about good training environment? What factors Mr. Lee should consider at training design stage to provide pleasant training environment? Please suggest.
2. What suggestion Mr. Lee should give to superior tyres company management to support learning process in the company? Suggest action plan.
3. Considering training need assessment process, Please review the information collected by Mr. Lee and suggest if any information is missing which is important to design training program?
4. Please suggest if Mr. Lee has done any mistake in executing Training need assessment process. Do you think Mr. Lee used appropriate strategies and methods to perform training need assessment? Please justify your answer.

Approach to Solve the Problems

Employee training and development is important part of human resource development which helps employees to perform their job task effectively. However, there are some problems faced by HR in Superior tyres company Malaysia to ensure that the training program can be carried out effectively. The first problem is on the selecting and preparing the training venue whereby the environment is not appropriate to conduct a training program. Since their main operation is

manufacturing, it involves the use of large machinery and produce a lot of noise even when the training program was conducted. This situation will interrupt the training session. Besides that, the size of the training room was too small and cause insufficient space for the trainee and trainer to move during the training program. Due to the limited space, the seating arrangements during the training program are stagnant and cannot be change. Although the seating arrangements are seem not important, but it can affect the communication process and the quality of the training program.

The second problem is regarding the climate around Superior Tyres company. Lack of supportive and encouragement from the top management was caused ineffective training transfer to the employee's in order for them to perform their job. At certain circumstances employees does not have an opportunity to utilize their new knowledge and skills learned from the training due to the training program designed is not related with their job or the information taught during the training program is different from the real working environment. Furthermore, there were no rewards and incentives for acquiring and using new knowledge and skills in the work process. This has made the employees feel demotivated although they have performed well upon completing their task.

The last problem was about the performance of the new accounting employees. Their performance did not meet the expectation. Managers reported that although many new hires possess good mathematical skills but struggling to solve accounting problems. Many hires have good computer skills but many are struggling to perform basic computer task including working on Microsoft excel and accounting software. In addition, new hires have good communication and presentation skills but problem still arises even though training program had been conducted by the management. By investigating the step by step, management will ensure what kind of solution they need to do by revising the training and HRD process as the whole or otherwise the same problem will happen in near future.

Question 1

What do you think about good training environment? What factors Mr. Lee should consider at training design stage to provide pleasant training environment? Please suggest.

Environment is one of the most important elements, which can affect the effectiveness of training. Sounds like it is not a subject reason, but

we also cannot ignore it. In this case, the first issue mentioned from the report is *environment*. Unpleasant environment has made some negative influence on training process. As we know, Superior Tyres company Malaysia is a manufacturing company, there are too many equipment to produce lots of noise during day and night. So it is not an appropriate environment to conduct the training program which is on the job training within working hours only. Thus, when the training program is conducted, it is often interrupted by the noise. As we all know we cannot focus on study if the environment is too noisy. We will feel boring by the noisy. Not only mental but also feeling is effect negatively. Both trainer and trainee will be effect by the noisy environment.

Besides that, there was insufficient space for the trainee and trainer to move during the training program. The space was too small and it makes the trainer as well as the trainees move limitedly. The awful situation become worse because due to the limited space, the seating arrangement during the training program is stagnant and cannot be change. This is because the seating arrangements will influence the trainer-trainee interaction and trainee interaction. Although the seating arrangement is seem as not important but it can affect the communication process and the quality of the training program. According to Matt (2014), creating an effective employee training system is important to the long term achievement of any business. Training projects give different profits to employees and the organization, yet just in the event that they are carefully arranged and appropriately actualized. Clear understanding of approaches, occupation capacities, objectives and organization reasoning lead to expanded motivation, confidence and productivity for employees, and higher benefits for your business. Training is an intends to a particular end, so remembering objectives amid the development and usage phases of your training system will aid in the development and execution phases of your training project will aid in making an obviously characterized and effective system.

In the initial stage of the training need analysis, it is important to determine what type of training required by the employees. In fact the basic purpose to perform training need analysis is to determine what type of training can be helpful for employees to perform their job task effectively so that they can help organization to achieve organizational goals. There are several reasons behind performing training need analysis before designing training program such as identifying

organizational issue for which training is required, taking management on board by explaining how training will solve the problems faced by the organization and enhance job performance of the employees, collecting required information to design training program and evaluating cost and benefit to justify training cost because if overcoming the problem do not significantly contribute towards organizational performance, training cost will be consider waste of resources (Nike, 2014).

After training needs assessment, the next step is to evaluate available training resources and acquire those which are not available such as training material etc. Important consideration is if acquired training material is suitable to address the company needs or modification is required. After finalizing training material we need to schedule training program which might take some time to finalize based on duration and nature of training content. Make sure that the schedule is suitable for the most trainers and trainee's. For example, if the training process will take 2 months, and the training time is at every weekend, or we will ask our employees to be trained after one day's work every day. They will not willing to attend the training program. Another consideration is find a suitable trainer. Experienced trainer might help team members during orientation and overcome any problem. For this purpose, those managers currently working with the company can be useful since current manager have experience about organizational culture and system.

Effective communication is another important consideration in which it should be communicated to trainees about training objectives, training content and targeted outcomes of the training program. For this purpose, managers can conduct meeting before training session and explain training objectives, methods, management expectations and listen to trainees as well and address their issues. At the end of the training session, feedback should be taken from each trainees in order to understand the effectiveness of the training program and areas of improvement. Meeting one on one is perfect in light of the fact that you're liable to get more legitimate and fair feedback. From that point, your HR division can spot examples and know whether anything needs to be tended to. This data ought to help to tweak your system later on.

Elaine (2014) suggested that trainer should focus on conducive learning environment before starting any training session in order to make sure participants feel comfortable and ready to learn. In this regard, Bhatti et al., (2013) tested learning

readiness in the context of training transfer and suggested that learning readiness play important role in training transfer which is one of the most effective component of training effectiveness. Furthermore, Elaine (2014) also suggested that training place should be prepared effectively by considering space in training hall (not so big or so small), easy access to restrooms, comfortable chairs which support learning environment trainer wish to develop, training hall is noise proof and distraction free, telephones, snacks, lunch accommodations, and so on help ensure that participants return on time following breaks or lunch. In conclusion, effective training program is the one which motivates employees to achieve certain goals. In this regard, Fishman and Newman (2014) suggested that long term effects of effective training are higher performance, maximum profit and positive organizational culture.

Question 2

What suggestion Mr. Lee should give to superior tyres company management to support learning process in the company? Suggest action plan.

This phrase is commonly used by managers to their subordinates as an appreciation due to an excellent performance they did at the organization. It is a part of to say thank you and giving motivation to the employees in enhancing their effort to continually work harder, smarter, creatively and always look forward on innovation and improvement. But it is not necessary to give some promising on giving rewards, present or token to the employees which are not confirmed yet by the management. In this phrase, it is just sufficient to give compliments and words of encouragement to the employees. Kate (2014), *"How to say thank you at work: a guide to showing gratitude to peers, managers, and employees"* indicate that every employee needs to hear that they are appreciated by their manager, and the more effectively the manager can do that, the better results they achieve from the people on their team. Saying thank you to the employee on own team is all about tailoring it to the person, their accomplishments, and helping them to use those accomplishments to grow in their career. By consistently and sincerely practising this culture at the organization, it can create a harmonious relationship among the employees and the employer and it also can be a part of success strategy to the organization in order to achieve the organization's vision and mission. Appendix 1 showed on other examples of thank you words that can be given to the employees. With this kind of culture, it can encourage employees to

continuously learn and improve their knowledge and skills.

It is really important to the organization on planning and implementing training programs to the employees for enhancing their skills and knowledge that can increase organization's labour productivity, work efficiency, number of innovative and creative worker. The organization's management should highly support the training programs to ensure that this learning process no matter whether it is conducted at classification type of Classroom which can be conducted by lecturing/ case study/ role play/ simulation, On Job Training (OJT) such as job rotation, coaching and mentoring which usually the method is hands-on which mean face to face or one person to one person training and advising. Management support is so important to ensure the learning process can be implemented successfully. It must be supported at all stages of the process that are before, during and after the process. Before the process which mean at the planning and design stage, management should conduct needs assessment in order to identify what kind of learning program should be carry out to their employees to strengthen and enhance their skills and knowledge as a result they can perform effectively and productively in completing their work process. In need assessment process, management can do analyzing the training need with three (3) different levels that are organizational analysis, task analysis and person analysis. At all levels of analysis, the management can carry out several methods respectively such as conducting survey through giving questionnaire to the employees, interview the supervisors, managers or Head of Department, analyze the job description and requirement, define the gap from the employee's performance appraisal report, observe and benchmark the other excellence organizations. After getting the result from the need of assessment process, management should design on the type of learning process need to be implemented. At this phase, management should determine the objectives of the learning process or training, prepare the employee to attend the training program, set-up the method classification of the learning process which are either OJT, Classroom or Self-paced, identify an effective trainer, suitable venue and environment, determine the result or outcome from the training and developed the training evaluation criteria. All activities at this earlier stage is the most important factor in ensuring the success or the failure of the learning process, it is as the backbone of the Human Resource Development (HRD) at the organization.

The next stage is to implement the learning process effectively as per design. This will depend on the well preparation at the earlier stage. It is also requires considerable preparation, creativity and flexibility to make the session more interactive and effective. An excellent trainer, creative training module, appropriate training's kit/ tool/ equipment and suitable environment and venue are most aspects to be concerned in order to achieve the learning process objectives. These factors also will maximizing the learning transfer from the trainer to the trainees and will increase the understanding of the trainees to the training subject and content if it is done with nice and proper arrangement. After the implementation, management should provide a platform and encourage the employees to share their new knowledge/ skills to their peers and make them practice to their work process. Make the training transfer become effective. Beside the well preparation and implementation of the learning process at all the three stages (before, during, after) of the learning process, there's another important thing that can show the management support which is the budget allocation from the management to make all the learning process to be happened according to the planning. From this action by the management, employees will see the commitment contributed from the management to make their employees become knowledge workers and they also will find themselves valued by the employer and they will be more loyal to work with the organization.

Regarding the case study, it was mentioned that the management did practising some proper steps in order to performing their learning process. In was stated that Mr. Mr. Lee, who is the company's Accounting Director and as former training analyst had requested Ahmed (HR Director) to create a training program called 'New Accounting Analyst Training Program'. This training need to implement due to get their new

hires account officers become more effective in performing their duties. Then after that, Abdullah start to investigate the current situation of the problem happened at the Finance and Account Department. At the planning and designing stage, Mr. Lee started getting the information on the strengths and weaknesses of the new accounting analyst. He also conducted an interview to the accounting managers and supervisors to get information and feedbacks on the current problems occurred at the related department. Next, he reviews the background information of the hires for last five years such as university they graduated, grades obtained, number of accounting and computer course taken etc. Mr. Mr. Lee also requested the job description of the new hires and details of the orientation like wither or not company goals, vision and mission was communicated to new hires etc. Through all the information he collected and received, Mr. Lee carrying out the needs assessment process as he believe that this process is really important to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process according to what he read from the training website on needs assessment link.

Clark and Harrelson (2002), *Jurnal of Athletic Training Designing Instruction That Supports Cognitive Learning Processes* had mentioned that the goal of instructional programs for professionals such as athletic trainers is to build knowledge and skills that can be transferred to the career field after learning. To achieve this goal, instruction must be designed to maximize human cognitive processes that result in learning and minimize those that disrupt learning. Pan and Hawryszkiewicz (2004), *A Method of Defining Learning Processes* indicate that the learning environment is constructed to provide a variety of support services for a learning process and the learning goals are what to be achieved through the learning. Figure 1 showed an approach by the writers for managing the learning process.

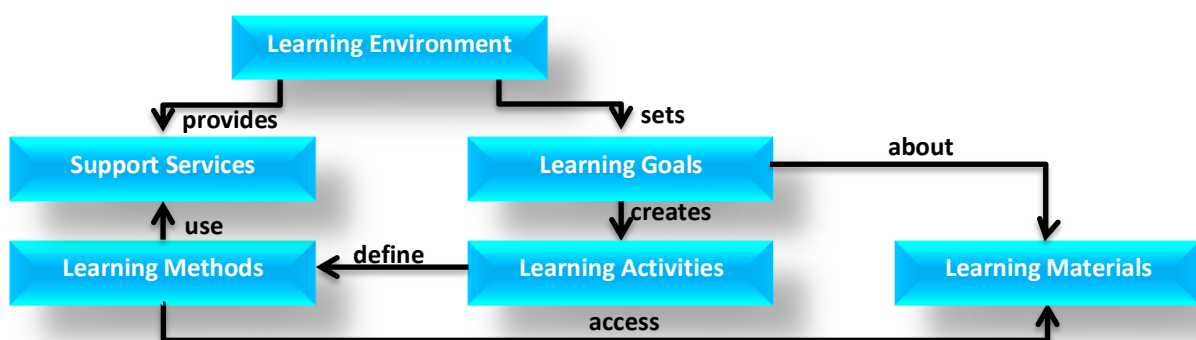


Figure 1: The Underlying Model for Managing the Learning Process

At the other aspect, the case study indicate that in Superior there were no rewards and incentives to the employees for acquiring and using new knowledge and skills in their work process and it made the employees stress and feel demotivate although they have perform well upon completing their job. This mean there is no support and encouragement from the management to the employees in making the learning process become effectively. In this case, Superior should consider implementing the rewards program to the employees as part of supporting the learning process to the employees. For those employees who are continuously improve and practising their new skills and knowledge to their work process thus enhancing their work performance could be rewarded with suitable award as an appreciation and motivation from the management to the employees.

Question 3:

Considering training need assessment process, Please review the information collected by Mr. Lee and suggest if any information is missing which is important to design training program?

Training program can be divided into five different phases for example, training need analysis, training objectives, training design, training evaluation and training implementation. The training needs assessment is a critical activity for the training and development function. This is why training need assessment is become the first steps to be focus on in designing training program (Leigh et al., 2000). Training need analysis might be helpful to determine what kind of knowledge, skills and attitude is required by the employees to perform their job task successfully, solve work related problems, improve employees performance and prepare them for future changes. Furthermore needs assessment allows the training analyst like Mr. Lee in this case study to determine training objectives based on two factors like being fundamental of training need assessment which are who, if anyone, needs training and what training is needed so that the organization can determine the gap between employees skill and the skill needed in future and too organizations' goal and its effectiveness in reaching these goal (Kaufman, 1998). Hill (2004) highlighted that mostly companies feel reluctant to perform training need analysis due to complex nature of TNA process, time taking and insufficient resources.

Generally, training need analysis are based on three tasks such as task analysis, organizational analysis and individual analysis. Task analysis

required trainer to collect data about what type of knowledge, skills and attitude is required to perform job task effectively. Whereas organizational analysis required trainer to understand what are the available resources in the organization. Lastly, individual analysis will determine the list of employees who need training and type of training needed by the employees.

For task analysis the source of Mr. Mr. Lee may use more appropriate source to collect the information. Therefore, we suggest that Mr. Mr. Lee should use task matrix to perform job analysis. In addition, Mr Mr. Lee main source of collecting the information was accounting recruiter but there are many other sources are available to collect more reliable information such as senior managers, other supervisors working in accounts department. In addition, with reference to data collection methods, Mr Mr. Lee collected data from interviews, questionnaires and organizational record but Mr Mr. Lee may use structured and un-structured questionnaire to collect more reliable data.

Human resource development professional use training need analysis as a tool to determine the level of knowledge, skills and attitude among employees, resources available in the organization and competences required for perform job task effectively. In this regard, Abdullah (2009) pointed out that training need analysis is complex task to perform which required certain level of expertise which discourage trainers to perform this important task.

Question 4:

Please suggest if Mr. Lee has done any mistake in executing Training need assessment process. Do you think Mr. Lee used appropriate strategies and methods to perform training need assessment? Please justify your answer.

Velada (2007) suggested that training need analysis might differ based on the organizational goals. In this regard, Martin (2009) suggested that it is important to conduct training need analysis in the planning stage in order to understand the gap between current skills and required skills, selection of appropriate training methods and acquire sufficient resources to maximize the results. Based on case study, the organization already executed all steps under training need assessment but there are still some lacking area which not covered in term of improper sources of information and also the way of they done the need assessment process. Firstly, it is obviously that the management focuses training decisions that are made according to

training information obtained only through surveys and ignored many other important elements of training need analysis.

Performing training need analysis is important in order to enhance training transfer and return on investment (Goldstein and Ford; 2002) Training need analysis also helpful to determine purpose of the training, selecting those employees who need training, determining training contents etc. In term of analysis, the management is suggested to use different methods such as structured and un-structured interviews, focus group method, survey technique, process mapping and observation method to perform training need analysis. Others sources might be useful to collect required information for training need analysis such as 360 degree performance evaluation report, managers feedback about employees and employees career development plans as suggested by past researchers (Bhatti et al., 2013; Holton, 1998).

In order to perform training need analysis, managers should determine current performance of the employees, targeted performance objectives and available resources such as available budget and facilities. In the organizational analysis, managers should highlight major issues in the organization such production cost, cultural and communication issues, rapid changes in technology and workforce demographics, changing organizational goals based on globalization, financial situation of the organization, inventory status and support available for training. All this information can be collected from various sources such as organization vision, mission, long term and short term goals, strategies, expansion planning, human resource planning, organizational approach toward technology adoption, globalization, diversity approach etc.

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