

Assessing Learning Requirements

Description:

This tool provides a description of a learning organization and a learning assessment tool.

How it can be used:

Being a learning health organization is more than having a vision, offering incentives and providing a variety of training. It is also about knowing the health system context and understanding its employees' competencies and skills. Essentially, a learning organization creates an environment where employees are encouraged to become learners.

Consider the features of a learning organization and use the assessment tool to help you understand your employees better. This will help you plan your organizational training needs and establish priorities.

Employees who enjoy learning are fostered in a learning organization. But what does a learning organization look like?

- Employees are skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge.
- The organization cultivates tolerance, supports open discussion, thinks holistically, and operates systematically.

There are three building blocks or characteristics that an organization must put in place to become a learning organization.

1. A supportive learning environment with four distinguishing characteristics:
 - a. Psychological safety
 - b. Appreciation of differences
 - c. Openness to new ideas
 - d. Time for reflection
2. Concrete learning processes and practices:
 - a. Knowledge must be shared in systematic and clearly defined ways
 - b. Sharing can take place among individuals, groups or the whole organization
 - c. Knowledge can move vertically and laterally within the organization
3. Leadership that reinforces learning:
 - a. Leaders actively question and listen to employees
 - b. Leaders prompt dialogue and debate
 - c. Employees feel encouraged to learn

Organizations that are deliberate and strategic in their approach to employee learning are seeing improved organizational effectiveness. They are benefiting from improved recruitment and retention of employees, higher employee satisfaction, and overall improvements in operational performance. How does your organization compare to the description of a learning organization?

A training needs assessment tool can help you determine the general competencies and behaviours of your employees. This provides useful direction when planning learning activities and prioritizing training resources.

Sample Learning Needs Assessment Tool

This tool provides a list of sample competencies and skills which can be tailored to your own requirements.

1. Provide each employee a list of the competencies and skills, and request that they assess themselves.
2. Then you assess each employee against each competency or skill, where 10 is high and 1 is low.
3. Note any discrepancies and establish a numerical value that represents each competency or skill for each employee.
4. Record the number for each employee in their column (for this tool, initials were used).
5. Total the scores for each competency or skill and calculate the average.

This provides a snapshot of where the learning needs are the greatest.

When planning your learning and training priorities, the competency or skill with the lowest average score could become the highest training priority (depending on the relative importance of the competency or skill). This underscores the importance of listing the competencies and skills that are most relevant to your organization.

COMPETENCY OR SKILL	DT	CP	EP	DL	LW	SG	Sub total	Ave
Decision-making	7	9	4	9	2	5	36	6
Integrity in decision-making	3	7	5	8	3	6	32	5.3
Problem-solving	4	6	3	8	7	7	35	5.8
Planning and strategy	3	3	3	4	3	5	21	3.5
Developing solutions	6	5	4	6	5	6	32	5.3
Being responsible for decisions								
Taking initiative								
Managing time								
Working productively								
Being reliable and effective								
Understanding and applying ethical practices								
Cultural competency								
Seeking personal development								
Managing stress								
Compassion								
Communicating (face-to-face, phone, email)								
Listening and interpreting								
Establishing rapport								
Speaking and presenting to groups								
Creating relationships with people								
Dealing with conflict								
Working as part of a team								
Visioning and inspiring others								
Researching and investigating knowledge								
Using information/communications technology								
Financial competency								
Health system awareness								