

# Businesses shouldn't skimp on cost of training employees

By Rick Radners  
Guest Columnist

I recently conducted a training class where I was able to interact with various professionals from a multitude of backgrounds. For the most part, I enjoy finding out where people are from and what makes them think, more so what makes them tick. As the class concluded, most if not all the participants approached me and thanked me for leading the class. They were more thankful for the opportunity to attend training as it had been some time since their last. I had to ask myself why that was or better yet, ask some of the attendees why that was. To summarize the responses, many if not all responded with, "When times are tough, training is usually the first to go."

I had to scratch my head for a minute and ask why. Why is it that many companies are so quick to pull training programs during tough financial times? This subject triggered me to look at the relationship between the lack of training and tough financial periods. What I found is that many successful business leaders prefer to do the opposite. In times when companies begin to tighten the belt, effective leaders maintain or strengthen their training and development budgets, and here's why.

Dr. Edward Deming brought the concept of training into his principles

of management. He is noted for commenting that training is for everyone in the



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company, from the top down and from the bottom up. Employees must be trained on new and improved processes continuously while management or leadership must train themselves on what blocks employees from effectively doing the best job possible; day in and day out.

Jack Welch is noted as speaking towards a "relentless focus" on training and development while he was working through a restructuring of GE. He noted that training is a motivator, and in many ways can be accomplished by "in-house" executives during good times and by outside agencies when times are tough. Either way, it is never dismissed.

Finally, even the ancient proverbs allude to training as an essential part of day to day life. Confucianism believes that giving a person a fish will feed him or her for a day but training them how to fish will feed them for a lifetime. The concept of training is vital to the growth and well-being of any company and here are a couple of reasons why.

First, training someone during a difficult period will allow that person to perform during profitable

times. When a company turns the corner and finds themselves in a financial upswing, trained employees will be able to optimize processes, which in turn will optimize profits. A company that reaches profitability with an unskilled workforce creates a profit performance that mimics a good roller coaster ride.

Next training, as mentioned by the leaders above motivates people to new levels. The employee who is armed with new skills or a new skill set usually has a desire to apply that skill set. With the proper guidance and application, the combination of motivation and skill is a powerful team. A company who doesn't capitalize on that arrangement puts profit and customers at risk.

Training is essential to any company that hopes or plans to operate profitably. The last thing that any company wants to do is turn its back on training and development during difficult financial times. More so, a company should make the most of training opportunities and continue to develop employees and the governing leadership. I guess if I were headed into a financial battle with a group of employees, I would want the most skilled and proficient team I could get my hands on. I would want the same team during the good times as well!

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