

Bhutan: Measuring Employee Training Effectiveness

A Public Sector Case Study

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The public sector of Bhutan—as in many developing countries—budgets substantial funds for capacity building and training, and in the case of one of the ministries in the government, the investment is not evaluated for effectiveness. This case looks at the effectiveness of the existing training programs of that ministry and recommends necessary policy and regulatory changes to improve training processes. The model of measuring training effectiveness developed by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1959 (known as the four level model) was used; the data for the study was collected from two sets of questionnaires. One set was from the employees who have undergone some form of training in the last three years and the other from the manager of these employees. A total of 92 employees and 23 managers responded positively to the survey. The conclusion of the study established that there is ample room for the ministry to improve their training effectiveness – and this point is true for many relatively underdeveloped emerging markets in Asia that are similar to Bhutan.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

A government of Bhutan ministry, which is the subject of this case study, was established in June 2003 and is one of the newest ministries. The ministry has a very important role to play in the socio economic development of the country with the vision to facilitate human resource development for economic development and to ensure gainful employment for all Bhutanese workers. Currently, there are four hundred and forty-three employees working across various departments in the ministry.

According to Vijayabanu and Amudha (2012), the organization's success is directly related to how they use their human capital. Human capital can be developed through providing relevant training and development programs. Organizations develop their human resources to improve efficiency and gain competitive advantage over their competitors. Organizations also find the need to train their employees to adapt to the fast technological change around them. Training is provided to increase knowledge, improve skills and change the attitude and behavior of the employees towards their work. In the case of civil services like the ministry, civil servants are trained to improve accountability of the government to its people.

Most of the employees in the ministry are young and newly recruited from colleges. The need to train and develop these employees in the right field was felt important in achieving the organizational objectives. Even as per the standards set in the National Human Resource Development policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2010, a minimum of forty hours of training per employee per year needs to be implemented in the civil service, which includes the ministry. However, there are no specific guidelines or policies as such for the ministry to train and evaluate such training programs. The employee training at the ministry, like any other civil servant training, is fully governed by Bhutan Civil Services Rules and Regulations (BCSR) only.

The importance that the ministry gives to employee training can also be seen from the amount of funds the government commits for training each year at the ministry. According to the Royal Civil Service Commission's (RCSC) Civil Service Human Resources Master Plan (2008-2013) for the tenth five-year plan, the government has set Euro 0.35 million to meet the training needs of the ministry. However, no assessment of this large investment in employee training has ever been conducted until now, nor have employees who have availed themselves of training reported on the training they received or shared training insights with their managers or colleagues. Therefore, these huge investments will carry little meaning, if it is not evaluated to assess the training outcomes.

Most of the funds for capital expenditure, which includes training programs, are funded by the development partners of the country. As the Bhutanese economy is now doing better than before, most of the donors have also already signaled to the

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