

Transformation

By Mark Samuel

Since Accountability-Based Training is still a relatively new concept within the organizational Training and Development community, we thought that it would be helpful to clarify its purpose, characteristics and application.

It is important to note that Accountability-Based training is not intended to replace traditional skill-building, which is used for the enhancement of skills to improve one's effectiveness on the job. This is still necessary and very valuable. In fact, participants do develop skills during this implementation approach.

There are two purposes that are interconnected for the use of Accountability-Based consulting and training. First, is the application for each individual.

Currently, organizational change is perceived by many employees as a negative experience that one has to avoid or survive. Our view is that organizational change is an opportunity for self-growth and personal transformation in areas of our life that we may have been able to avoid in our past.

On a personal level, Accountability-Based training is specifically designed to assist an individual in making the transformation that's necessary to respond to societal and organizational changes.

At the same time, organizations are also struggling to make changes that shift its paradigm of operation. This usually implies a culture change that will provide a new and higher level of functioning. Yet while many organizations implement Total Quality and Continuous Improvement efforts, these remain as separate programs, rather than emerging as culture change. Accountability-Based training and consulting is specifically designed to deal with dysfunctional operational areas and the environmental conditions that contribute to those areas. Typically, this approach is best used with Total Quality Implementation, implementation of self-directed teams, and redefining the role and functioning of leadership. It is not used to develop technical skills.

Accountability-Based training has five characteristics which differentiate it from skill-building:

1. **Outcome-Driven**

It is designed and delivered to achieve specific business outcomes measured by quantitative performance results and by permanent environmental/cultural changes that support these results.

2. **Focus on Systems**

First, a system for achieving the performance results and culture change is developed. Then, the skills necessary to implement the system are identified and integrated together rather than taught as separate courses. This ensures that the

strategies and techniques are practical and measurable for attaining desired business results.

3. **Real-Life/Real-Time Implementation**

Rather than having participants learn or practice new strategies and techniques on made-up role playing, situational exercises and case studies, all learning is done with their own real-life problems, systems and functions of their normal work routine. This way, they will be ensured of the practicality and the comfort of the new approaches presented, as well as reaping a high return on investment for time spent in development.

4. **Accountability Linkages**

Part of the system is to link the participants with other people in the organization who will provide two functions: Accountability and Support. This could be either a manager or a teammate. This is a critical part of Accountability-Based training since the focus is on recovery, not perfection. We know that people are going to make mistakes; the question is whether the person or team has a system for quickly getting back on-track.

5. **Ongoing Measurement**

Another part of the system is the ongoing measurement of improvement; it is a function of the continuous improvement and learning that is at the foundation of this approach. Here measurement is the means, not ends, for recognizing people and their progress, correcting areas of dysfunction, and communicating meaningful results to others in the organization.