Analysing the Current Trends in Learning and Development

–Suruchi Pandey*, Preeti Kerni**

Abstract

Present paper is an attempt to understand the growing need for nurturing employees to build up human capital and adding value to business. Quality of employees, their development and retention are major factors in determining long-term profitability of business in today's scenario.

Though researchers have observed such studies but this research helps to understand the current practices and changing trends which are prevailing in different sectors in Pune region and also demonstrates best practices being carried out in industries.

A survey was conducted on 20 different companies and a questionnaire was administered to HR managers. Data was collected through personal interviews, focused group discussions with top management and employees. Statistical tool IBM SPSS 20 was used to analyse data more analytically. Tests performed were chi-square and correlation. In the course of study, it was found that most of the high technology companies prefer online training and low technology companies prefer classroom learning. Companies allocated a percentage of HR or total turnover budget towards training and development. Most of the companies tracked their cost of training through overall cost or budget expended and not for a particular participant or employee attending the training program or expected to attend.

Keywords: Learning and Development, Training, Online Learning, Best Practices

INTRODUCTION

A Recent study of managerial attitudes about HRM practices in different countries found that training and development is perceived as the most

* Faculty SIMS, Symbiosis International University, Pune, Maharashtra, India.
E-mail: suruchi.p@sims.edu
** Dy. Manager (HR), Axis Bank, Dehradun, UttaraKhand, India.

important HRM practice (Jennings & Moore, 1995). The article published in economic times in 2012 said that the size of Learning & Development (L&D) industry, currently is at $3.5 billion and is expected to treble in next two years due to growing demand for experienced professionals, according to the global talent management firm Development Dimensions International that is (DDI).

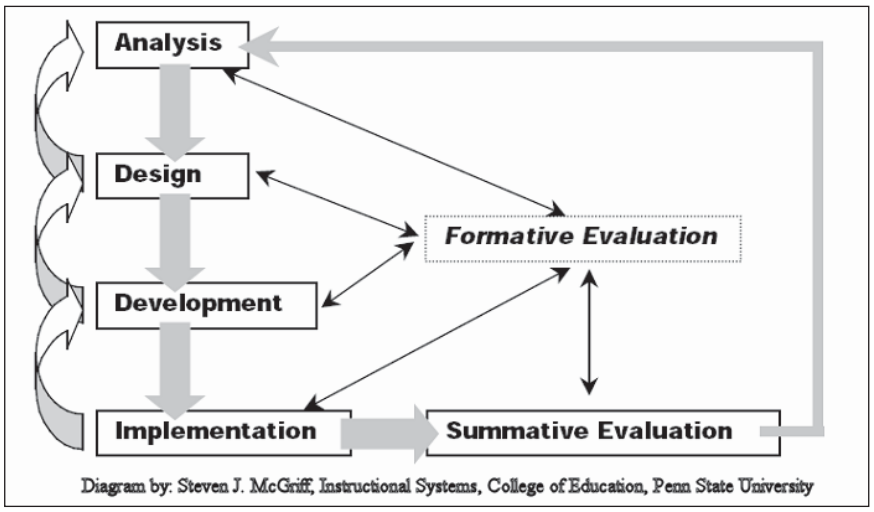
A survey conducted by Future think white paper in October 2009 said that 74% of the respondents see the influence of L&D expanding in the immediate future (0-2 years), almost 50% believe their training offerings will grow in the next two years, online learning is set to take centre stage, with e-Learning (62%), collaborative training (62%) and webinars (55%) being the formats identified as necessary for success (Future Think, 2009). In ASTD 2012 *State of the Industry Report,* 461 organizations reported their commitment to learning and development. ASTD estimates that U.S. organizations spent approximately $156.2 billion on employee learning in 2011. Companies having large operations in India and MNCs exhibit planned approach to corporate training with full-fledged in-house corporate training cell.

The core function of this cell is to identify the training needs of the employees, formulating and designing the training plan and execution and implementation of the programme. There are various methods organisations adopt in training and development includes role playing, job rotation, on-the-job training, vestibule training, public classroom training, onsite training, conferences, technical seminars, instructor-led online training and mentoring. The Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) defines training as "all the various processes by which an individual develops the competencies required for employment-related tasks" (OECD, 1997). Extent to which the "competencies are actually gained in any instance depends on the level and the quantity of the inputs, also the innate abilities of trainee and the motivation to learn" (OECD, 1997). Training enables employee to do his/her present job more efficiently and also prepare himself for a higher level job (Rao, 2010). There have been many different versions of the model published for training, but the common model has been the ADDIE model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study analyses ADDIE model, which is a term synonymous with *Instructional system development*, which not only generates practical

application of skill level improvement, but also is useful for training and development. The origin of the ADDIE instructional development model can be traced to the United States armed forces in the 1970s. The name ADDIE seems to have been spread by word-of-mouth, beginning maybe in the 1980s (Rothwell & Benkowski, 2002). Model explains about analysing, designing, developing, implementing and evaluating the training process. ADDIE model for instructional design provides training designers a map for creating reliable training programs that are centred on collecting data (Peterson, 2003).



According to Lee and Roadman, 'needs assessment' is the systematic process of determining goals and identifying the discrepancies between actual and desired conditions, and establishing priorities for action. DeSimon and Harris in (1998) stated that "need can either be a current deficiency, like poor employee performance or new challenge that demands the change in the way the organization operates". Dessler (1999) said that "teamwork doesn't just happen, instead employees must be trained to be good team members". Under this perspective, training will be highly relevant to the job and will be effective through enjoyable practical exercises, which will add value to all employees. Teamwork is excellent way of enhancing effective communication, innovative thinking and problem solving (Dessler, 1999).

Benchmarking is a technique often used by organisations seeking to lift their organisational performance. It involves "comparing one's own organisation's practices against best practices employed by organisations

anywhere in the world" (Isaksson, 1997). However, as noted by Isaksson, the use of the term best practice does not imply that practices can be duplicated uncritically between firms. Instead, they need to be evaluated in terms of the organisation's specific strategy, complexity, stage of development, and use of technology. "The most valuable asset of a 20th century company was its production equipment but the most valuable asset of the 21st century institution will be its knowledge Workers and their productivity" (Drucker, 1999).

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR PRESENT STUDY

Data Collection-

The questionnaire was self-designed with consultation form domain experts like faculties and HR professionals working in the area of training. It contained 29 items and was administered to HR at manager and above level of different companies. Personal interviews with the senior managers, general managers and employees working in learning and development department were also conducted. Various manuals on learning and development initiatives were studied in order to understand different practices being carried out in the industry. Inputs through interactions with trainers were also considered. A sample size of 20 companies across various sectors were covered for the survey. A detailed study of various reports and journals on different practices being followed in learning and development in different companies was undertaken in order to understand the basic structure in this field. Research papers, journals and internet were also used in order to understand the concept more clearly.

Scope of the Study:

The study involves various kinds of trainings imparted in a company, the training need analysis, the framework, content and how it is evaluated. It also involves analyses of different sectors/ industries and the best practices they follow in learning and development.

Limitations of the Study

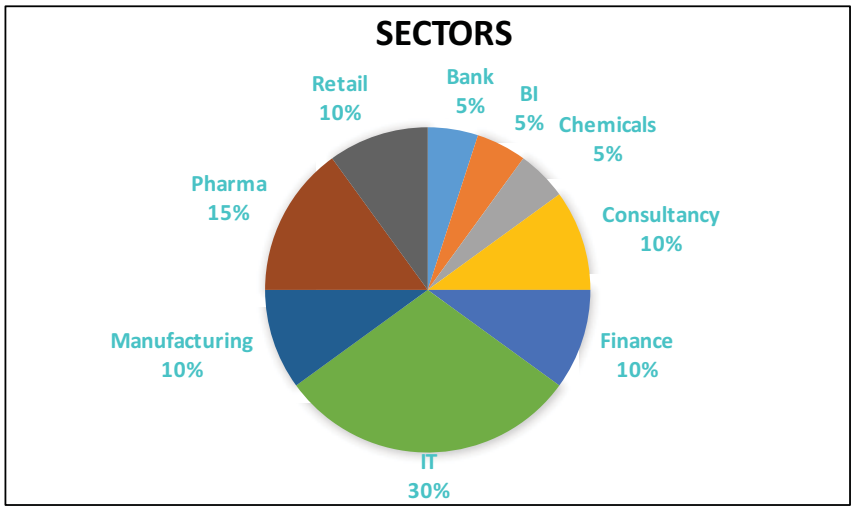
The responses have been solicited from the HR of the companies in Pune region only. Certain major sectors operating in Pune region were

considered for the study. The questionnaire was self-designed hence reliability test could not be performed. The sample size was restricted to 20 only. The survey responses do not include the trainers or the content developers or the evaluation teams for the training programme. Having a qualitative and quantitative balance was difficult for the researcher. Statistical analysis test like T-test could not be performed as the sample size was small hence confidence level was less.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

Sectors Surveyed

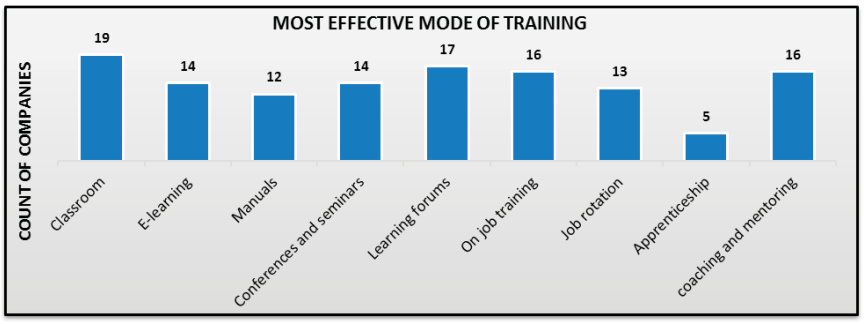
SECTORS	TOTAL COUNT OF COMPANIES
Bank	1
BI	1
Chemicals	1
Consultancy	2
Finance	2
IT	6
Manufacturing	2
Pharma	3
Retail	2
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the above figure it can be seen that majority of the respondents fall in the IT sector (30%) followed by Pharmaceutical sector about 15%. The least being banking sector, chemical industry and business intelligence companies of about 5% each. One HR from each company was surveyed and total companies surveyed were 20.

Modes Of Training

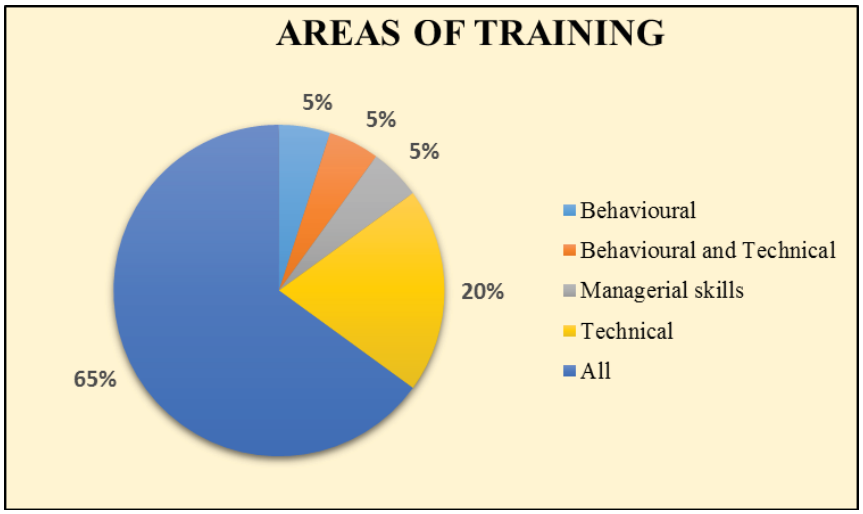
MODES	MOST EFFECTIVE MODE OF TRAINING
Classroom	19
E-learning	14
Manuals	12
Conferences and seminars	14
Learning forums	17
On job training	16
Job rotation	13
Apprenticeship	5
coaching and mentoring	16



Discussion: From the figure it can be seen that majority of the companies prefer classroom trainings followed by learning forums and on-job trainings. Most of the companies are now preferring coaching and mentoring. The least preferred mode of training used is apprenticeship. This observation implies that classroom training is still preferred by companies as compared to any other training technique.

Areas of Training

AREAS OF TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
Behavioural	1
Behavioural and Technical	1
Managerial skills	1
Technical	4
All	13
Grand Total	20



Discussion: Majority of the respondents (65%) focus on all types of trainings like only technical, behavioral or managerial and very less companies about 5% prefer only behavioral training.

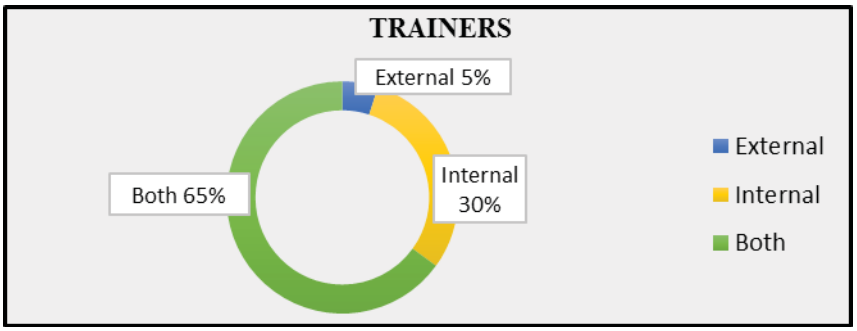
Frequency Of Training

FREQUENCY OF TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
Annually	1
Half yearly	2
Quarterly	2
Monthly	11
Daily	2
Need based	2
Grand Total	20

Discussion: From the figure it can be seen that majority of the respondents (11 out of 20) did their trainings on monthly basis and very few companies did annually or half yearly.

Trainers For Training Program

TRAINERS	TOTAL COUNT
External	1
Internal	6
Both	13
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the figure it can be seen that 65% of the companies have both internal and external trainers. Whereas very few companies around 5% give their training program to external trainers.

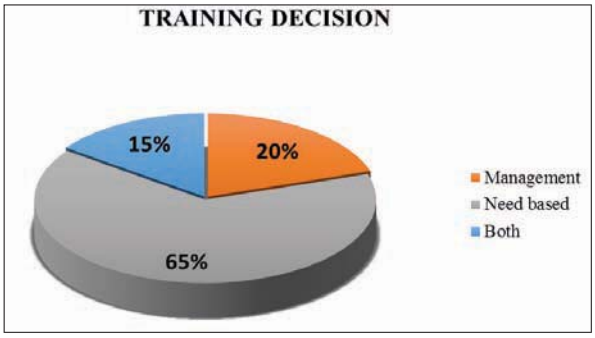
Tracking Of Training Program

TRACKING OF TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
100% coverage	13
Per man hours	5
Both	2
Grand Total	20

Discussion: From the figure it can be said that 65% of the companies track their trainings by 100% coverage of employees and not per man hours for each employee.

Training Decisions

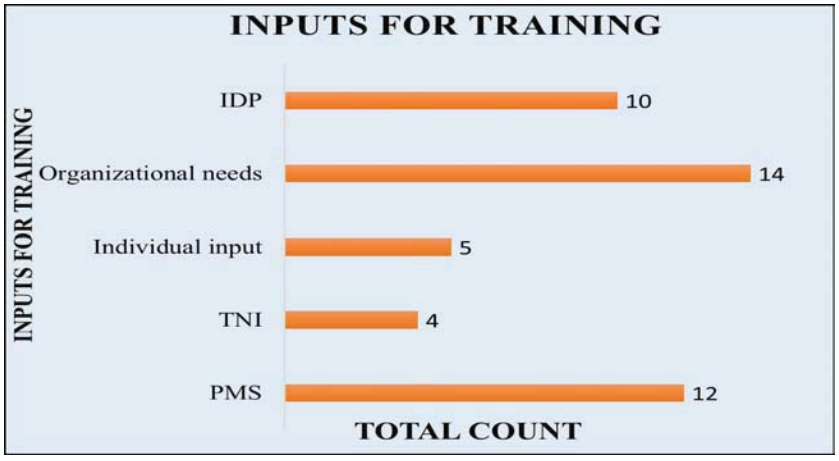
TRAINING DECISION	TOTAL COUNT
Management	4
Need based	13
Both	3
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the figure it can be said that 65% of the companies have their training decisions need based and 20% have management based.

Inputs For Training

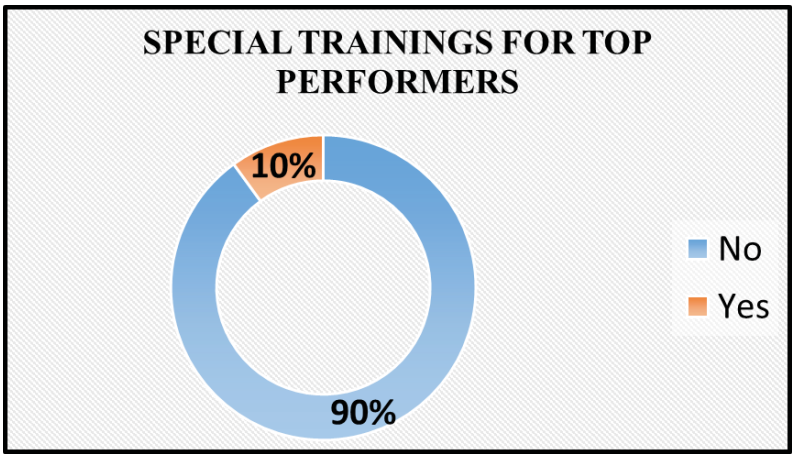
INPUTS FOR TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
PMS	12
TNI	4
Individual input	5
Organizational needs	14
IDP	10



Discussion: From figure it can be seen that most of the companies had their inputs for training from organizational needs, PMS (Performance Management System), IDP (Individual Development Plan) and least from individual inputs and training need identification.

Special Training Programs For Top Performers

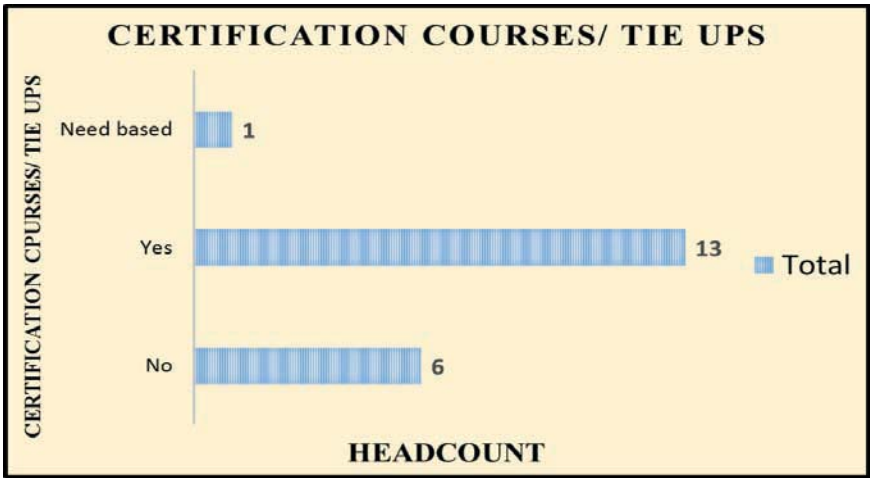
SPECIAL TRAININGS FOR TOP PERFORMERS	TOTAL COUNT
No	18
Yes	2
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the figure it can be seen that 90% of the companies do not have a special training program for the top performers and only 10% of the companies have it.

Certification Courses Or Tie Ups With Universities

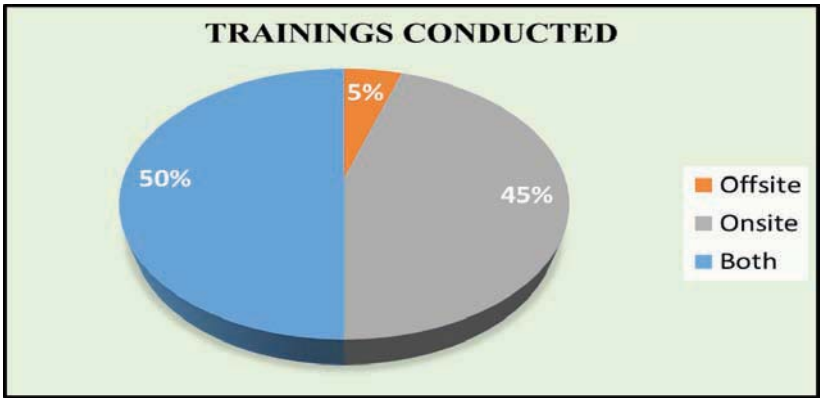
CERTIFICATION COURSES/ TIE UPS	TOTAL COUNT
No	6
Yes	13
Need based	1
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the figure it can be said that most of the companies do have a tie up or certification courses available with them and very few do not have it.

Training Program Conducted

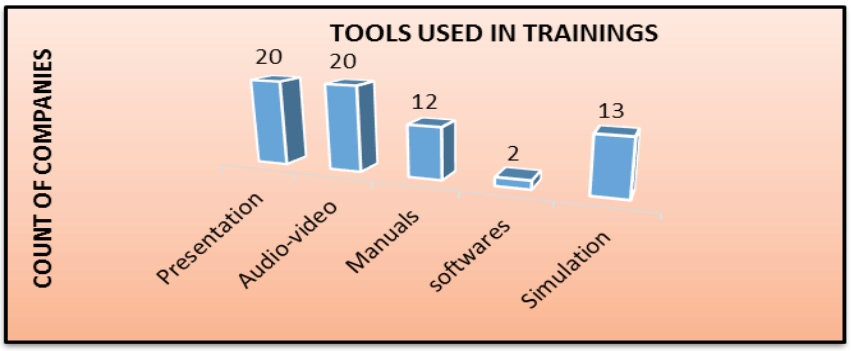
TRAINING CONDUCTED	TOTAL COUNT
Offsite	1
Onsite	9
Both	10
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the figure it can be said that 50% of the companies conduct trainings both onsite and offsite and 45% of the companies conduct training onsite.

Tools Used For Training Program

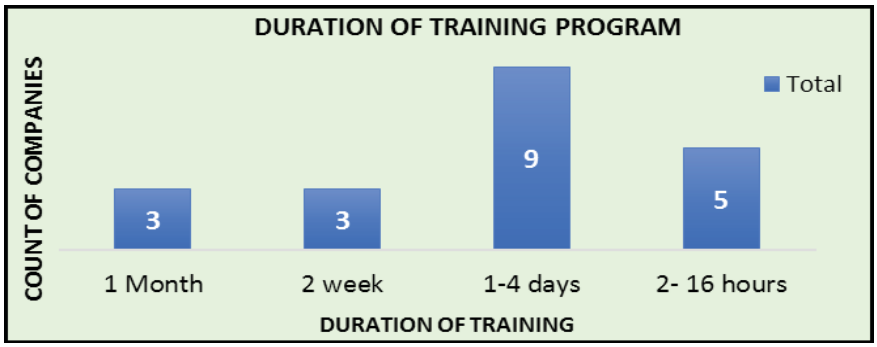
TOOLS USED IN TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
Presentation	20
Audio-video	20
Manuals	12
softwares	2
Simulation	13



Discussion: From the above figure it can be seen that companies mostly prefer presentations, audio visuals and simulations for training and mostly IT companies use softwares as well.

Duration Of Training Program

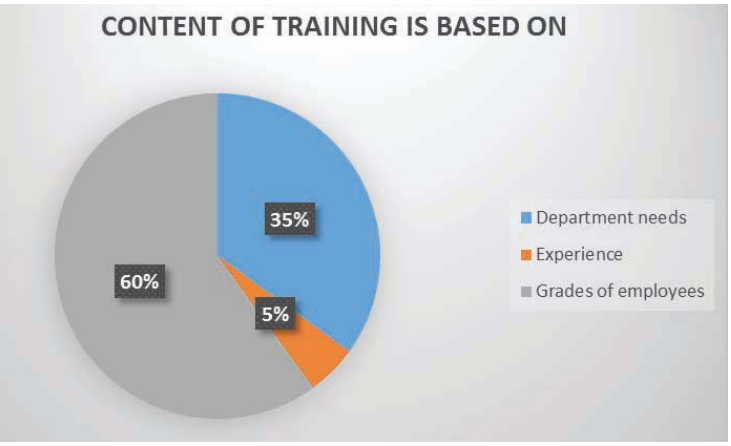
DURATION OF TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
1 Month	3
2 week	3
1-4 days	9
2- 16 hours	5
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the figure it can be seen that the companies mostly keep the duration of training about 1-4 days or between 2-16 hours.

Training Content

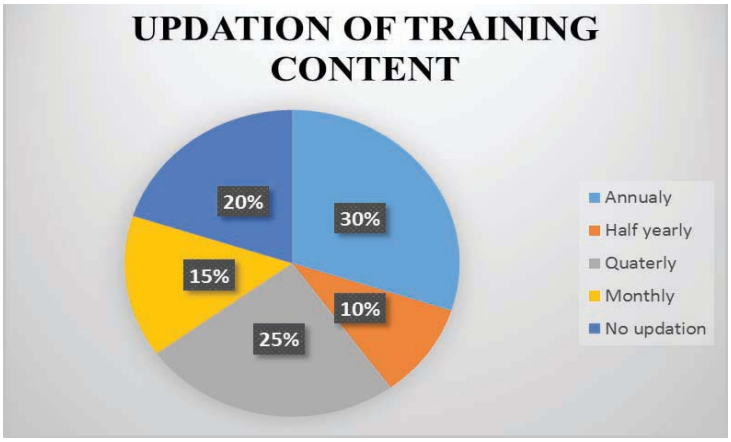
CONTENT OF TRAINING IS BASED ON	TOTAL COUNT
Department needs	7
Experience	1
Grades of employees	12



Discussion: From the figure it can be said that 65% of the companies consider grades of the employee's for designing the content of the training followed by the departmental needs.

Updation Of Training Content

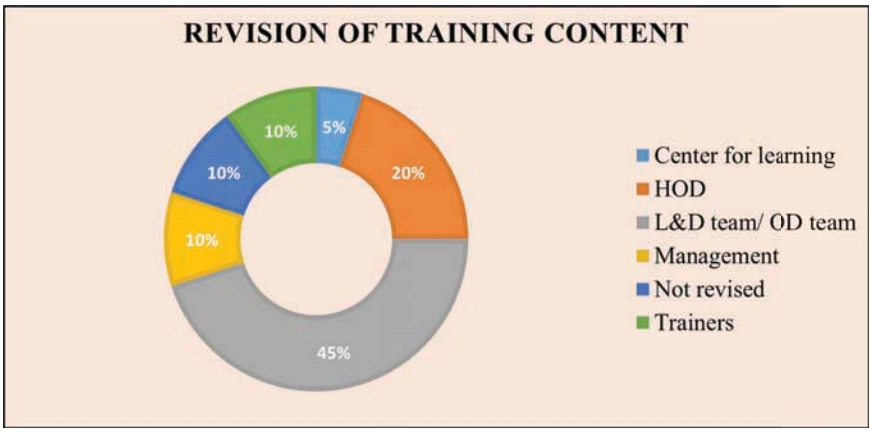
UPDATION OF TRAINING CONTENT	TOTAL COUNT
Annually	6
Half yearly	2
Quarterly	5
Monthly	3
No updation	4
Grand Total	20



Discussion: Figure signifies 25% of companies update their training content quarterly and 30% do it annually. Very few companies update their content half yearly and monthly.

Revision Of Training Content

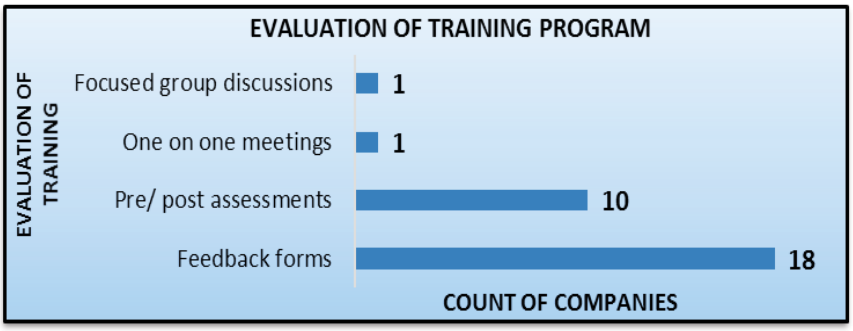
REVISION OF TRAINING CONTENT	TOTAL COUNT
Centre for learning	1
HOD	4
L&D team/ OD team	9
Management	2
Not revised	2
Trainers	2
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From above figure it can be seen that in 45% of the companies training content is revised by the L&D team or OD team and in 20% companies by the departmental heads.

Evaluation Of Training

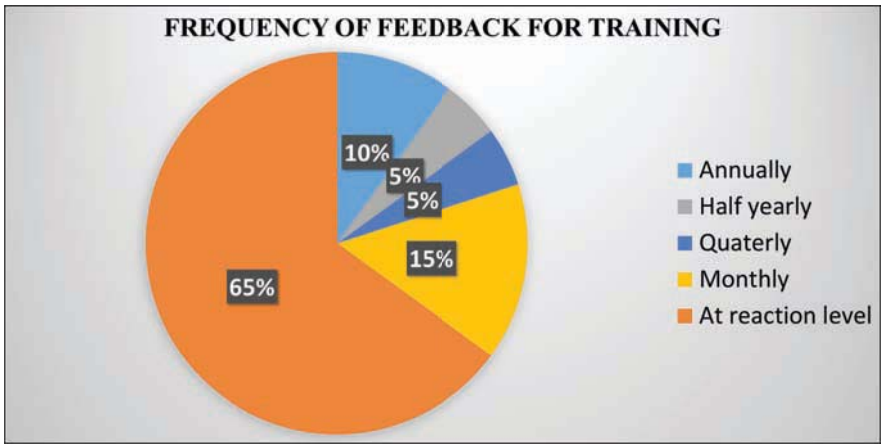
EVALUATION OF TRAINING PROGRAM	TOTAL COUNT
Feedback forms	18
Pre/ post assessments	10
One on one meetings	1
Focused group discussions	1



Discussion: From above it can be said that most companies carry out evaluation of trainings through feedback forms followed by pre/post assessment test and rarely through one to one meetings.

Frequency Of Feedback For Training

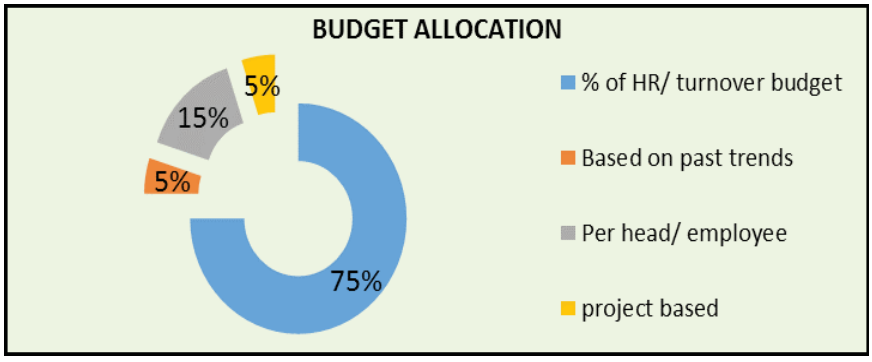
FREQUENCY OF FEEDBACK FOR TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
Annually	2
Half yearly	1
Quarterly	1
Monthly	3
At reaction level	13
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From above it can be seen that 65% of the companies take feedback at reaction level of the training and only 15% companies take monthly feedbacks.

Budget Allocation

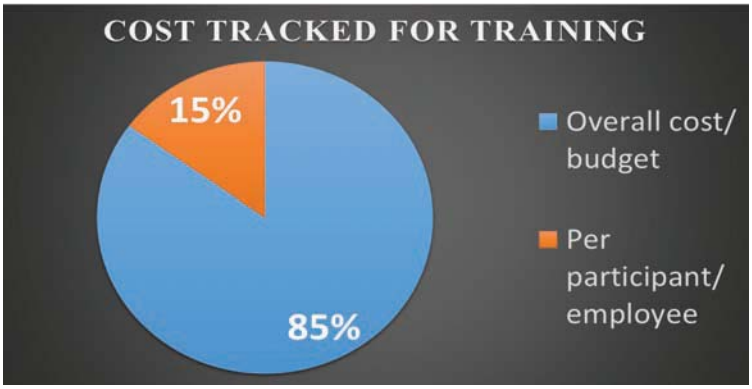
BUDGET ALLOCATION	TOTAL COUNT
% of HR/ turnover budget	15
Based on past trends	1
Per head/ employee	3
project based	1
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From figure it can be said that 75% of companies allocate percentage of HR or turnover budgets towards training and only 5% of companies use past trends to allocate budgets for training.

Cost Tracked At End Of Year

COST TRACKED FOR TRAINING	TOTAL COUNT
Overall cost/ budget	17
Per participant/ employee	3
Grand Total	20



Discussion: From the figure it can be seen that 85% of the companies track their cost of training through overall cost or budget expended and not for a particular participant or employee.

Statistical analysis:

Data was transferred to IBM SPSS Statistics 20 and was codded to make data parametric. High technology (IT) companies were codded 1 and low technology companies (manufacturing) were codded as 2. Training preferred was codded 1 for classroom training and 2 for online learning.

- **Cross Tabs – Chi Square Tests:**

Null Hypothesis: Technology of company whether high or low has no influence on type of training given or preferred that is either classroom or online learning.

Variables: Type of company and Training preferred, P significance (P0): 0.05

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.481[a]	1	.011	
Continuity Correction[b]	4.411	1	.036	
Likelihood Ratio	7.127	1	.008	
Fisher's Exact Test				.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.173	1	.013	
N of Valid Cases	21			

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.86.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Discussion: It is convention that if **value is less than .05**, then statistic is considered to be significant (meaning that it is 95% confident that relationship between the two variables is not due to chance). So the null hypothesis was rejected as here significance value is **0.016** (which is less than .05), so we can say that there is significant relationship between type of company and the training preferred.

- **Correlations:**

Correlations

		type of training	Training conducted	Cost tracked
type of company	Pearson Correlation	-.556**	0.000	.070
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	1.000	.763
certification courses/ tieups	Pearson Correlation	.204	.518*	-.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.375	.016	.712
Budget Allocation	Pearson Correlation	.032	-.115	-.583**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.890	.621	.006

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion: Let us take first the two variable that is type of training and type of company. In this case as the significant value is **0.009** which is **less than 0.01** (that is 99% confidence that the relationship between the two variables is not due to chance), so we can conclude there is some correlation between these two variables as Pearson coefficient is **-0.556** which is between -1 to +1. They are negatively correlated due to the codding in SPSS data sheet which concludes that high technology companies do not prefer classroom learning while low technology companies does.

Next variables are training conducted whether onsite or offsite and certification courses given by company. Here significant value is **0.016** which is **less than 0.05** (that is 95% confidence that relationship between two variables is not due to chance), so it can be said that there is some correlation between training conducted and courses or tie-ups as Pearson coefficient is **0.518** which is between -1 to +1. Therefore it can be concluded that training conducted onsite or offsite is significantly correlated with certification courses as if the training is onsite, most companies do have their own certification courses or tie ups for training so no need for offsite trainings.

Next variables are cost tracked for training and the allocation of budget for training programme. Here significant value is **0.006** which is **less than 0.01** (that is 99% confidence that relationship between two variables is not due to chance). Thus it can be said that there is some correlation between the two variables as the Pearson coefficient is **-0.583** which is between -1 to +1. Therefore it can be concluded that cost tracked and the budget

allocation for training are negatively correlated, as if the cost of training is tracked for all employees (overall) then the budget allocate for the training is not per employee, it is also allocated as a percentage of overall budget. Hence it is showing negative correlation due to the codding in the SPSS data sheet.

Thus one can conclude that there is statistically significant correlations between the variables considered which means, increases or decreases in one variable do significantly relate to increases or decreases in second variable which can be positive or negative depending on codding of variables in SPSS tool.

BEST PRACTICES FOLLOWED

The researcher would like to highlight some of the best practices as outcome of the study:

- IT companies like Cognizant had a dedicated learning and KM portal, Virtual training, e modules and training through simulations
- Emergency response team - physical training practices demonstrations
- Banking sector has a specific program called the **Brand ambassador program**- training about all products and how to present to the world
- IT companies like 3D has certain tools which were used to track the complete TNI, evaluation and selection of employees for training
- Track of mandatory Technical and behavioral trainings and making training calendar covering every employee in each band
- Manufacturing and pharmaceutical companies like Wockhardt has a training program called **as Champions program-** training high potential employees and sending them to B schools for skill development
- Wipro has a training program called **Wining managers program-** training for line managers who moved first into managerial role or into the company
- **E- learning** space for the employees who don't have time to attend classrooms or off site training
- **Development interventions competency building** workshops for all levels
- Shoppers Stop has **Assessment centres** for evaluation of training
- Retail companies have trainings on policies and procedures like

Store guru program- for strengthening the SOP implementation and practice

CHALLENGES FACED IN DIFFERENT COMPANIES

Some challenges that companies encounter while structuring learning and development function are mentioned below

- Employees not turning up for the program and less participation
- Explaining to stake holders and acceptance issues of the training
- Difficult to convince people on effectiveness of training
- Trainers are untrained
- Allocation of time for people from different department
- After training employees leave within 2-3 months as no bond is available
- Follow ups
- Difficulties in organizing the training as most of the crowd is travelling
- Employees back out at the end moment due to work schedule
- Action plan formulation for the training

CONCLUSION

From the study it was analysed that most of the companies preferred classroom trainings followed by learning forums and on the job trainings. 65% respondents focused on all areas of trainings like managerial, technical and behavioral. Trainings were conducted monthly in 11 out of 20 companies and 65% of the companies had trainers both internal and external. Companies feel that trainings should be more visible, interactive so that employees can grasp more information. The companies prefer to track their training program by 100% coverage of employees and mostly the decisions for training program are need based. The inputs for learning and development generally come through organizational needs, individual development plan and performance management system. Most of the companies do not have a special training program for the top performers.

Most companies prefer to have certain certification courses of their own or tie-ups with universities for higher education. Companies used different tools for training like excel, presentations, simulations, audio-videos and softwares keeping duration mostly 1-4 days or sometimes 2-16

hours. It is important for the companies to consider grades of employee's who are attending the training for designing the training content. 30% of the companies revised and updated training content annually by L&D or OD team and also by departmental heads for technical trainings. Evaluation of training was generally done through feedbacks and pre/ post assessment tests where most of the companies took feedback at reaction level that is immediately after the training was conducted. Feedback is generally taken from all the employees who attended the training irrespective of their grades.

75% of the companies allocated percentage of HR or turnover budgets towards training and development and only 5% used past trends or project based decision. Most of the companies tracked their cost of training through overall cost or budget expended and not for a particular participant or employee attending the training program or expected to attend. By using IBM SPSS Statistic 20 it can be concluded that type of company whether high technology or low technology has a significant influence on the type of the training given whether classroom or online learning. These two factors also show a correlation, thus it can be said that most of the high technology companies prefer online learning and low technology prefer classroom learning. The cost tracked for training and budget allocated were also correlated, that is if cost was tracked for all employees the budget was also allocated as a part of the total budget and not for each employee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are based on the practices adopted by some companies while not by others and the literature review done by the researchers.

a) Training tracker should be introduced and implemented to analyse and track the man hours for each employee for both behavioral and technical training needs coming from different forums and tracking their implementations
b) Special training programmes for high potential employees which could also help in succession planning and career building with also certain training programmes for the low performers (considering within a year) to build and nurture the talent within the organization
c) Evaluation of both technical and behavioral trainings through feedbacks or discussions and specially for the technical trainings observations and follow ups by respective line managers

d) "Train the trainers" program could also be implemented to train internal trainers as it will be more cost effective, customised as based on needs and business objectives
e) Revision and updation of training content on regular basis by the concerned team
f) Taking action against the employees for not attending a particular training program and linking the trainings to their performance and appraisals
g) Knowledge management, learning forums and other sharing portals can be made available including e- learning modules for certain trainings which could be department specific
h) Post training reminders like emails or desktop cue cards to implement the learnings in routine work may be after a period of 15days or even a month

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