


LEARNING TO TRAIN
A TRAIN-THE-TRAINER
PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

In this research paper the researcher will be addressing the creation of a Train-the-Trainer program for Silver Spring Gardens. The opportunity to create this program came about as a result of a contracted agreement to do so as part of the researcher's responsibilities as a Quality and Leadership Instructor for Chippewa Valley Technical College. This paper will be divided into five chapters. What follows is a brief summary of each chapter as it is arranged now.

Chapter One will introduce the topic of Train-the-Trainer programs and the importance of using them within organizations. The research problem states, "The problem of this study is to create a Train-the-Trainer program for Silver Spring Gardens to improve the quality and consistency in the training of both new and existing employees."

In Chapter Two the researcher will be conducting a review of literature. There are three aspects of Train-the-Trainer programs that need to be understood in order to

effectively design curriculum that will aid an organization in their on-the-job-training (OJT) efforts. The first aspect is related to OJT itself. The second aspect is related to adult learning. The third aspect focuses on learning styles. In this chapter the researcher will examine each of these aspects individually in order to show their importance in creating a well-rounded and useful Train-the-Trainer program.

Methodology will be covered in Chapter Three. The timeline established with Silver Spring Gardens will be shown in order to see the progression of events. A program overview of the Train-the-Trainer program is included in this chapter. A brief discussion of the survey used to measure the effectiveness of this training will also be included.

Chapter Four deals with the survey used in this study. The survey measures the transfer of training from the classroom to the frontline where training is being done. There will also be an analysis of the results.

All of the research will be pulled together in Chapter Five. The problem will be restated, followed by a discussion of major findings and a conclusion to this study. The researcher will finish with recommendations to Silver Spring Gardens.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Silver Spring Gardens is a food-grade manufacturing organization located in the Chippewa Valley. Silver Spring Gardens has been creating their line of products for the past sixty-nine years. This organization produces their own line of horseradish sauce and relishes as well as package such condiments as catsup, mustard and various jellies. This organization has two manufacturing facilities located in the Chippewa Valley and several farms throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota. Silver Spring Gardens is a non-union organization employing 170 workers within their two manufacturing facilities.

In the past, training had been done by whoever had the greatest knowledge of the work being done, and the time to spend on training an employee. Very often this fell on the shoulders of the Team Leaders within the organization. The turnover rate among new-hire employees was higher than the company wished, and the reason often given for leaving related to issues surrounding the training process. Employees did not feel adequately or consistently trained in the jobs they were expected to perform. There also existed a great inconsistency between the various shifts on how training was being administered and evaluated. This added to the problem, as people were often sent to a different shift after their training was completed. Standard operating procedures (S.O.P.) were being developed for all of the different lines that were being run, and it became apparent that both new-hire and existing employees needed to be trained using these standards to insure consistency in the product being made. Management and Human Resources determined that a more consistent and reliable process for training needed to

be developed. It was at this point that the researcher had his first opportunity to talk with the Human Resource Manager and the S.O.P. coordinator to begin formulating a training process that would be of benefit to their organization.

Need Statement

By creating an effective Train-the-Trainer program for Silver Spring Gardens, it will enable the organization to better equip its new employees for the tasks the trainees have in front of them, and acclimate new employees into the organizational culture in a shorter period of time.

Research Problem

The problem of this study is to create a Train-the-Trainer program for Silver Spring Gardens to improve the quality and consistency in the training of both new and existing employees.

Research Objectives

This project will attain the following objectives:

1. There will be a documented procedure for training Dedicated Trainers at Silver Spring Gardens.
2. The Trainers at Silver Spring Gardens will have a training process to follow to insure consistency in training.
3. The researcher will have delivered the Train-the-Trainer program to all of the dedicated Trainers at Silver Spring Gardens.
4. A survey, given to all participants, will measure the effectiveness of the Train-the-Trainer program created for Silver Spring Gardens.

Purpose and Importance of Train-the-Trainer Programs

As a Quality and Leadership Instructor / Trainer for business and industry throughout the Chippewa Valley, this researcher has the opportunity to witness firsthand what is happening within organizations in the area of training and employee development. Many organizations are coming to the realization that the best widget maker or number cruncher is not always the best trainer for those positions. While someone may be extremely knowledgeable in a particular job, the individual may lack the necessary “knowledge of training” skills needed to deliver training effectively. By using job-smart “knowledge of training” weak individuals, organizations run the risk of getting inconsistent training, frustrated trainees and negative impact on the “bottom line.” To combat this, many organizations are creating Dedicated Trainer positions. These employees have the sole responsibility of delivering consistent dependable training to all employees within an organization. Train-the-Trainer programs are used to give these Dedicated Trainers the “knowledge of training” skills that they need to successfully guide adults through the learning process, whether the people are new-hire or existing employees. The greater confidence a trainer has in her/his abilities, the greater positive impact the trainer can have on a trainee.

Assumptions of this Study

1. Silver Spring Gardens contracted with the researcher, through Chippewa Valley Technical College, to create and deliver a Train-the-Trainer program for their organization. This was arranged prior to the researcher’s decision to use this as the basis for this Masters Thesis.

2. Full approval has been given by Silver Spring Gardens to use their organization and name in this thesis.
3. All survey results and information gathered will be shared with Silver Spring Gardens.

Limitations of this Study

1. Monitoring of the training process will be done on an ongoing basis by Silver Spring Gardens.
2. Due to contractual limitations, the researcher was unable to do a “pre-survey” of participants.

Definition of Terms

- Andragogy: The study of how adults learn
- Dedicated Trainer: An employee who’s primary responsibility is to train other employees
- Extrinsic: Not inherent to the person
- Group Leader: Employee who assists the Supervisor in the day-to-day operation of a department or work area
- Intrinsic: Inherent to the person
- Knowledge of Training: Possessing the skills to be a trainer, and knowing how to train an employee as well as what to train them
- Multiple Intelligence Theory: Dr. Howard Gardner proposes seven different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults

- On-the-job Training: Training that occurs in the actual workplace. It is a combines observation with hands-on learning
- Paradigm: A pattern or model for how things get accomplished
- Pedagogy: The process of educating children
- Standard Operating Procedure: A journal that explains, step by step, how to complete various tasks in a process
- Train-the-Trainer: A training process that focuses on giving employees knowledge of how to train
- Transfer of Training: When knowledge moves from the trainer to the employee and they are able to perform the learned task

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

There are three aspects of Train-the-Trainer programs that need to be understood in order to effectively design curriculum that will aid an organization in their OJT (on-the-job-training) efforts. The first aspect is related to OJT itself. What is OJT? Is it looked upon as being an effective means in which to train employees? Can it be made more effective? The second aspect is related to adult learning. Are there differences between the way adults learn and the way children learn? Are there specific methods that trainers can use to enhance the learning process for adults? The third aspect focuses on learning styles. Do people learn differently, or do people all learn the same way? Do trainers need to incorporate methods of training that take into consideration the different ways people might learn? In this chapter the researcher will examine each of these aspects individually in order to show their importance in creating a well-rounded and useful Train-the-Trainer program.

On-The-Job-Training

There are some impressive figures surrounding OJT in the United States. Employer expenditures on OJT are estimated to be between \$90 and \$180 billion annually (Carnevale & Gainer, 1989, as cited in Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994). That amount is between three and six times more than employers are spending on classroom training (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994). It does not necessarily follow, however, that people universally feel OJT is effective. Very often OJT resembles a “survival of the

fittest” exercise. It becomes a euphemism for a sink-or-swim mentality (Summers, 1996, p. 531). Pressed for time, the training is “created” by whoever might be available regardless of their qualifications or know-how in constructing training programs. The responsibility for delivering the training often follows one of two undesirable directions. It is given to the best “widget” maker even though this employee may not have any training skills, or it is given to a worker who is not a high performer so removing this person from the line temporarily won’t hurt production (Filipczak, 1996, p. 44).

In spite of these problems, OJT can be a tremendously valuable asset to any organization. Transfer of training is an issue that is important to any training effort. This transfer is probably the single most touted advantage of OJT (Filipczak, 1996, p. 44). The time between learning how to do a job and actually doing it is the shortest using OJT. The trick becomes making sure the information transferred is of benefit to the trainee. To do this, organizations should select trainers based not so much on job-content expertise as on the skills necessary to being a good trainer (Summers, 1996, p. 531). The trainers that are most competent are the individuals that have a thorough understanding of the training process. Characteristics such as patience, mentoring skills, teaching and communication skills are the necessary traits for effective trainers (Filipczak, 1996. p. 44).

Trainers who conduct OJT must understand that training is a process and, like any successful process, must incorporate structure and planning (Cannell, 1997, p. 26). It has always been understood that when a trainer creates and delivers effective classroom training, issues such as preparation, atmosphere, comfort level of participants, and motivation of trainees are all major considerations in addition to the material being presented. These same considerations have not, however, always followed in the training

of employees directly on the job. In examining a traditional OJT procedure, what generally occurs is what the British refer to as “sitting by Nellie” (Filipczak, 1996, p. 44). It basically involves watching someone else do the job and then jumping in. Trial and error or “20 questions” are also types of OJT (Lawson, 1997, as cited in Schmuckler, 1998, p. 774). These haphazard approaches usually fall short of effectively training employees on the job (see table 1).

These methods are a default mechanism for organizations that have no formal training programs or trained trainers. The results can be a real detriment to an organization. Such issues as high turnover, frustrated workers, difficulty in getting new employees, and ultimately, loss of productivity from a lack of competent workers can occur.

Table 1: Ineffective OJT methods (Lawson, 1997, as cited in Schmuckler, 1998, p. 774)

<u>Method</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Difficulty</u>
Shadowing	observation / imitation	no opportunity for interaction
Trial and error	performance tryout	frustration / development of bad habits
“20 questions”	verbal instruction	may have lack of training skills / trainee may not respond well

For the OJT process to be effective, it needs to be designed to meet the needs of a diverse group of people. The background of new-hire employees can range from home makers entering the workforce for the first time to skilled individuals making job changes. Along with training new employees, OJT also aids in updating the skills of existing employees. It is necessary for OJT to be created with a similar structure used in more formal classroom training (Filipczak, 1996, p. 44). That is to say, there needs to be

a greater degree of communication beyond the “sitting by Nellie” approach. If the purpose of instruction is to cause learning to occur (Gray & Herr, 1998, p. 67), then a basic model of instructional effectiveness should be used. Here are Gray and Herr’s (1998) eight-step model for effective workforce education instruction (p. 67):

1. *Motivate the learner*: Explain how the content will be important for success on the job.
2. *Present the behavior objective*: Describe the skill to be taught, how it connects to those skills previously learned, what level of performance is expected, and how this performance will be assessed.
3. *Provide information*: Using any one of the number of different instructional methods (lecture, reading assignments, video, guest speakers) the relevant information is provided.
4. *Demonstrate*: Using any number of instructional techniques, the skill or procedure is demonstrated.
5. *Check for understanding*: Students / trainees are assessed, typically informally, by asking questions randomly to determine if rudimentary learning has resulted from Steps 1 through 4. If not, these steps are repeated before going on to Step 6.
6. *Provide supervised practice*: Students / trainees are engaged in guided practice of the material taught, meaning that close supervision is provided while they attempt to master the skill.
7. *Provide independent practice*: When the instructor or trainer is confident that the material has been mastered to the point at which error, particularly error that is a risk to safety, is unlikely, then students are engaged in independent practice of the skill or

procedure, using equipment and materials as similar to those in the workplace as possible.

8. *Assess mastery*: Assessment is conducted to determine mastery, which is defined as meeting the performance criteria in the learning objective.

In examining the above model, it is important to notice that the trainee does not begin to physically do the job until step six. The first five steps are laying the foundation for the transfer of knowledge. It is vitally important that an atmosphere of learning is created in which the trainee feels comfortable with the process. This model helps to create that atmosphere by providing information important to adult learners before the trainee is expected to perform. There is no disputing that following this type of model for OJT is going to take longer, initially, than following a less communicative method and that is why it is not used as often as it should be. However, the apparent timesaving in using a “sitting by Nellie” approach is short-lived due to errors, frustration on the part of the trainee and loss of productivity. Taking time in the beginning to execute training correctly will develop better employees and a better working atmosphere for everyone.

Adult Learning

Malcolm Knowles once stated that adults confronted with a classroom and 30 chairs facing forward know exactly how to act: like bored 12-year-olds. Knowles’s theory of pedagogy and andragogy placed children and adults on opposite ends of the learning spectrum (Knowles, 1980, as cited in Zemke & Zemke, 1995, p. 32). Lives are filled with learning experiences beginning at the moment of birth. Progressing through life a person discovers that past experiences become useful in learning new things. By the time adulthood is reached a person has accumulated a great many experiences that

can aid in the learning process. This experiential learning is what separates adult learners from younger learners. If trainers are to be successful this bank of skills must be recognized and incorporated into the learning process.

So what is it that motivates adults to learn? This researcher knows from practical experience that you can force an adult into a classroom or learning situation, but this does not necessarily equate to a learning experience. It appears that the key to using adult motivation to a teaching advantage is to tap into the most teachable moments, “those points in life when people believe there is a need to learn something new or different” (Zemke & Zemke, 1995, p. 32). Points in life can be recalled when the paradigms people have been functioning in began to change. It may be a major life change like marriage, divorce, or layoff. Or it might simply involve becoming disillusioned with the current situation or direction a person’s life may be taking. Often within a work environment an employee is presented with opportunities to advance or take on new responsibilities that require additional knowledge. These are examples of teachable moments when adults will be most motivated to learn. In addition to these moments, there are other ways for trainers to enhance a trainee’s reason for attending training. The following shows four primary motivators for adult learners (Wendt, 1999, p. 30):

1. *Social relationships*-to make associations and friendships
2. *External expectations*-to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of someone with formal authority
3. *Social welfare*-to improve the ability to serve humankind, prepare for service in the community, and improve the ability to participate in community work

4. *Personal advancement*-to achieve higher status on the job, secure professional advancement, and stay abreast of new developments in the field

In a “perfect world” trainees enter into learning opportunities with internal motivations already in place. However, as most trainers have experienced, this is simply not the case in many instances. Adult learners may resist training for any number of reasons. Employees may not feel a need for training. Veteran employees may feel fully qualified without training and believe it is a waste of valuable time. It is important for the trainer to understand that, very often, they have little control over some of the things that cause learner resistance (Ganzel, 1998, p. 42). Trainers find themselves in the position of training displaced workers who may not be too thrilled at the prospect of “starting over” with a new organization. While the trainer can’t change that reality for the learner, there are many important concepts the trainer can use to keep the adult learner from gaining additional resistances. The most effective way to offset negative feelings toward training and to create an atmosphere that is conducive to adult learning is to keep in mind the five basic rules of adult learning theory. These rules, numbered below, offer simple but highly important concepts necessary to creating an atmosphere where adult learners can find what motivates them (Taylor, 1999, p. 23):

1. Adults want to know why they should learn something
2. Adults also need to be self-directed
3. Adults have a wide range of life experiences that enrich the classroom
4. Adults expect training to have immediate applicability to their lives
5. Adults prefer intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivators

Rule One: Adults want to know why they should learn something. Most people have heard of the “what’s in it for me” syndrome. It is imperative for adult learners to understand the purpose for the training they are going through. By understanding the purpose the adult learner can more easily begin the process of relating the information to her particular situation. This will aid in the transfer of knowledge from the training room to the work setting.

Rule Two: Adults also need to be self-directed. Adults generally have a certain amount of control over what happens in life. It becomes difficult to relinquish all control when a person enters a training setting. Training curriculum should be developed in a way that allows for flexibility in decision-making on the part of the adult learner. A self-directed learner will potentially have greater buy-in to the training because he will have some control within the established parameters of the curriculum.

Rule Three: Adults have a wide range of life experiences that enrich the classroom. In creating an ideal atmosphere for training, a trainer must take into consideration the knowledge and experiences of the trainees. What have the trainees done in the past related to the training topic, and to what degree of success or difficulty? Sharing stories and anecdotes among trainees allows the learners to relate new information to what may already be known. It also gives the trainer additional information as to the level of knowledge or interest in a given topic. Many times trainers have learned new ideas and approaches from trainees that the trainer had not considered.

Rule Four: Adults expect training to have immediate applicability to their lives. How is the trainee going to use this information after the training is over? To assist in the transfer of knowledge, help the trainees to see how the learned information can be used

within their own work setting. In the absence of applicability the trainee can be left with a feeling that this is just training for the sake of training, rather than training that is purposeful and necessary.

Rule Five: Adults prefer intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivators. Motivation is a function of the internal self. A trainer needs to create an atmosphere that allows the trainees to find their own motivations. The trainer can assist by pointing out benefits and advantages to gaining the knowledge from the training being offered.

Understanding the basic rules of adult learning allows trainers to create curriculum that will be of most benefit to the intended audience. Trainers need to recognize and build on the competencies adults bring to the classroom or training center rather than treating them like a blank slate (Tice, 1997, p. 18). By tapping into these competencies trainers can incorporate learner knowledge in a way that allows the adult learner to actually help teach other people, thus adding a new level of responsibility and buy-in for the learning process (Suzik, 1999, p. 76).

A trainer cannot always control what causes learner resistance or some of the attitudinal issues adult learners may bring into the classroom. However, a trainer can almost always control the response to these problems (Ganzel, 1998, p. 42). Trainers cannot ignore the fact that adults will have resistances to learning that younger learners may not have. If trainers acknowledge these concerns as well as establish the proper atmosphere for learning, and work toward the basic rules of adult learning theory, trainers will have a far better chance of reaching the target audience and lowering the resistances that many adults bring into the classroom.

Learning Styles

In the research of learning styles there is a quote that states the following, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results” (Sullivan, 1998, p. 54). This same notion applies to much of the failed training processes that still exist in some organizations. There still is a tendency to ‘tell em how to do it’ and if that fails then ‘tell em again’. There is a better way to train. It does, however, require being open to changing some paradigms trainers may have toward training and learning.

Brain research shows there are two different and complementary hemispheres of the brain; a linear, step-by-step side known as the left hemisphere, and a spatial, relational side known as the right hemisphere (Visser, 1996, p. 38). For education and training to be most effective, trainers need to create curriculum that stimulates both hemispheres. There are twelve principles of brain-based learning and teaching that should be understood when creating a curriculum (Caine & Caine, 1990, p. 66).

Principle One: The brain is a parallel processor. The brain continuously performs many functions simultaneously. Thoughts, emotions, and imagination interact with other brain processes like health maintenance and general knowledge. Effective teaching or training should orchestrate these interactions.

Principle Two: Learning engages the entire physiology. The brain is a physiological organ. Anything that affects the physiological functioning affects the capacity to learn. Physical movement and stress management need to be a part of the learning environment.

Principle Three: The search for meaning is innate. Making sense of experiences is basic to the human brain. The brain registers the familiar while simultaneously searching for and responding to stimuli. The search for meaning cannot be stopped, only channeled and focused. While the learning environment should provide stability and familiarity, it must also satisfy the brain's enormous curiosity for discovery and challenge.

Principle Four: The search for meaning occurs through "patterning". Designed to perceive and generate patterns, the brain resists having meaningless patterns imposed on it (meaningless refers to isolated pieces of information that are unrelated to what makes sense to a particular learner). Educators and trainers can influence the direction of these patterns. For instance problem solving, critical thinking, and daydreaming are all types of brain patterning.

Principle Five: Emotions are critical to patterning. Emotions and mind-sets influence what people learn. The emotional impact of any lesson may continue to reverberate long after the specific event that triggered it. Feelings and attitudes will be part of the learning process. The emotional climate should be supportive and marked by mutual respect and acceptance.

Principle Six: Every brain simultaneously perceives and creates parts and wholes. The brain has separate but simultaneous tendencies for organizing information. One reduces information into parts; the other perceives it as a whole or series of wholes. These parts and wholes are conceptually interactive and derive meaning from each other.

Principle Seven: Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception. While the brain absorbs information it is directly aware of, it also absorbs

information that lies beyond the immediate focus of attention. For instance, gray or unattractive walls, certain facial expressions or gestures, or even noise will all play a part in focusing attention.

Principle Eight: Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes. Most of the signals that we peripherally perceive enter the brain without our awareness and interact at unconscious levels. Teachers and trainers may facilitate active processing by creatively elaborating procedures and theories through metaphors and analogies to help learners reorganize the material in personally meaningful ways.

Principle Nine: We have two types of memory; a spatial memory system and a set of systems for rote learning. The spatial memory system allows for instant memory of experiences. The counterpart of the spatial memory system is a set of systems designed for storing facts and skills. In the past the focus was placed heavily on the memorization of facts and skills. In order to optimize learning, there also needs to be emphasis placed on the learner's experiences related to a given subject.

Principle Ten: The brain understands and remembers best when facts and skills are embedded in natural spatial memory. Learning is enhanced when specific items are given meaning in ordinary experiences. Spatial memory is best invoked through experiential learning. Trainers and teachers should use a great deal of "real life" activities such as demonstrations, field trips, visual imagery, stories or metaphors.

Principle Eleven: Learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat. When people feel threatened a narrowing of the perceptual field occurs. People literally lose access to portions of the brain. Trainers need to provide an atmosphere that is low in threat but still high in challenge.

Principle Twelve: Each brain is unique. Teaching should be multifaceted in order to allow all learners to express visual, tactile, and emotional preference. Education needs to facilitate optimal brain functioning.

Having this basic understanding of brain-based learning allows trainers to take newer and more effective approaches to educating our workforce. Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory provides a rich framework for using this information. Gardner proposed that all humans have at least seven intelligences and are capable of developing the competency necessary to meet the intellectual demands of their cultures (Brougher, 1997, p. 28).

By combining brain-based learning with Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory workforce educators can create curriculum that stimulates as well as educates the learner. An atmosphere of learning can be created that allows the adult learner to find motivation in the given topic or topics. In designing train-the-trainer curriculum, trainers should be conscious of incorporating as many different learning styles as possible within the process. A discussion of learning styles should also be included in the training itself so those responsible for training will begin to think along those same lines. Following are Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (Brougher, 1997, p. 28):

1. *Verbal/linguistic* – Allows communication of highly complex ideas relatively quickly. Examples in teaching would include oral presentation, word games, flash cards, journal writing, and interviewing.

2. *Logical/mathematical* – Enables people to analyze and engage in higher order thinking. Examples in teaching would include analysis of given topics, following problem solving processes, logic puzzles, and prioritization of information.
3. *Musical/rhythmic* – Allows people to communicate from the soul and respond to tonal patterns, rhythms, and beats. Music can modify moods, sharpen focus of thought, and deepen insight. Examples in teaching would include background music during activities, conducting oral or visual reviews to music, or even just singing.
4. *Visual/spatial* – Enables people to learn through graphic images such as pictures, diagrams or maps. Examples in teaching would include the use of mind maps, peripherals related to content, or making posters related to content.
5. *Bodily/kinesthetic* – Highlights the fact that some people think best when their bodies are active. Examples in teaching would include physical games related to content, physical stretches, hands-on demonstrations, or walking tours.
6. *Interpersonal* – Our ability to accurately read, interpret, and respond appropriately to the feelings and behavior of others. Examples in teaching would include conducting role plays, small group discussion, or having learners teach each other.
7. *Intrapersonal* – Allows us to make sense of our lives by inward reflection. Examples in teaching include reflective writing, personal vision or mission statements, or asking learners to assess their own progress.

Before designing and implementing a Train-the-Trainer process for Silver Spring Gardens a great deal of time was spent talking to the people within the organization. It was necessary to fully understand where the organization stood on the issue of OJT and what had been done in the past. It was also necessary for Silver Spring Gardens

to understand the concept of adult learning and learning styles as they related to the type of training being recommended. The literature reviewed emphasizes the importance of creating OJT that goes beyond the “sitting by Nellie” approach, by combining solid brain-based learning with an understanding of the different learning styles that people have. By creating the right atmosphere, training becomes less like a punishment and more like a benefit for all involved.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Process Used to Develop the Program

Working from the understanding that job-related experience alone is not enough to insure that an employee will be a good trainer, the focus of this Train-the-Trainer program is strongly communication based. That is to say how a message is delivered is as important as the message itself. The first step in creating this program was to meet with the Human Resources Manager and the S.O.P. Coordinator at Silver Spring Gardens and discuss the current training situation, desired outcomes, and the current state of communication throughout the organization. For trainers to be most effective, they need to feel empowered to communicate information.

The next step in this program was to assess management and supervisory support of the training process. It is imperative to get the full support of the leadership within the organization. The recommendation should always be that leadership goes through the Train-the-Trainer program either ahead of, or with, the trainers themselves. This assures consistency of the information delivered and everyone starts out “on the same page”. When trainers begin to use the program, leadership is fully aware of what the trainers are doing, and the process they are using, to achieve the desired goal.

Silver Spring Gardens then began the process of interviewing potential Trainer candidates for the Train-the-Trainer program. During this phase an outline of the Train-the-Trainer program was created and presented to the management team for review and approval. Upon its approval, the Training Guide was created. What follows is the outline approved by the management team at Silver Spring Gardens:

Outline of the Train-the-Trainer Program

Session One: The Foundation

- Participant expectations – Each participant is given a chance to state what they want to see as an outcome to this program.
- Defining the Trainer's role – A discussion of what, specifically, the role of a Trainer for Silver Spring Gardens entails.
- Characteristics of effective Trainers – Brainstorming followed by a discussion of the characteristics and the difficulties faced in trying to achieve them.
- The role of the adult learner – Gaining an understanding of the role of the trainee in an OJT situation, and the necessity of discussing this role with the trainee before the training starts.
- Creating a supportive atmosphere – A discussion surrounding the importance of putting the trainee at ease from the beginning of the training session.
- Understanding the effect of perception in training – A discussion on the importance of making the right word choices and being conscious of the use of organization specific jargon with trainees. This is followed by a discussion dealing with the alignment of perceptions for better communication.
- How we use paradigms – How paradigms can affect our ability to explore new ways of doing our jobs, and affect a trainee's ability to effectively learn a new job.
- The S.E.L.F. Profile – A look at the importance of the diversity in our personalities. This is accomplished through taking a basic personality style profile and then discussing the relationship between the different styles.

Session Two: The Six Step Process

- Learning styles and training – There are seven dominant learning styles that learners use. As Trainers, we need to understand these styles and be able to tap into them in our training. We will discuss these learning styles and how to incorporate them into the training process.
- The Trainers Six Step Process – Here we outline the six important steps to bringing about successful training. There is great emphasis placed on communication and creating a comfortable atmosphere for training to occur.

Session Three: Feedback and Evaluation

- Giving Feedback – Why is it important? Why doesn't it happen as often as it should? What are the difficulties in delivering feedback? We discuss the five critical elements of feedback, as well as a process on how to effectively deliver feedback to our trainees.
- Building rapport with Managers and Supervisors – It is vitally important to maintain strong relationships between trainers and managers. Open and ongoing communication is essential. We will discuss how to build and maintain this crucial relationship.
- Trainer/Trainee evaluation – There needs to be an effective way to evaluate your trainees if we are to have a strong training program. We will discuss the necessary criteria and delivery methods needed to accurately evaluate a trainee's performance. We will also discuss the need for a mechanism of self-evaluation for trainers.

Session Four: Communication Roadblocks

- The basic Sender/Message/Receiver model – It looks good on paper but somewhere between the paper and reality it can break down. We will discuss what needs to be added to the basic model to make it more effective.
- Active listening – There is tremendous difference between hearing a message and truly listening to one. As trainers it is imperative that we truly listen to our trainees when they are trying to communicate with us. We will discuss the various techniques needed to move beyond simply hearing a message.
- Asking appropriate questions – Sometimes getting good information from our trainees is just a matter of asking the right kind of questions to provoke a response. We will discuss the different types of questions that can be asked, and under what circumstances you would use them.

These sessions are designed to be highly interactive, and to incorporate people's different learning styles. Each session is four hours in length for a total of sixteen hours. A program evaluation is given at the end of the sixteen-hour program and turned in to the Human Resources Manager at Silver Spring Gardens.

Timeline

What follows is a timeline of the documented meetings and training sessions held with Silver Spring Gardens during the creation and delivery of this training program:

May 13th – The first contact with the organization following a request by Silver Spring Gardens to discuss the possibility of creating a Train-the-Trainer Program. This meeting was held with the Human Resources Manager and the S.O.P. Coordinator. A basic

overview of the organization was given along with a discussion of the current training situation and problems associated with it.

May 27th – A rough-draft outline was presented to the H.R. Manager and S.O.P.

Coordinator followed by a preliminary discussion of delivering the program on each shift or delivering it to one large group on first shift.

June 8th – An in-depth tour of the facility was given and process flow was discussed and demonstrated. Following the tour we discussed the alignment of the program to the procedures being done or being implemented within the organization, such as the development of the Standard Operating Procedures.

June 23rd – A meeting was held with the whole Management staff to discuss the creation of this program. A formal outline was presented for review and approval. A discussion of the criteria for choosing trainers followed along with identification of concerns in the relationship between the shifts and how this training program might help that.

July 29th – A meeting was held with the potential Trainers to give them a brief overview of the program and answer any preliminary questions they had relating to the position or the program. Dates for delivering the program were established.

August 21st – A meeting was held with the H.R. Manager, S.O.P. Coordinator and the Production Manager to discuss final details for the training of the Trainers.

August 22nd – Session One (The Foundation) was delivered to the joint group of Trainers and Supervisors.

September 2nd – Session Two (The Six Step Process) was delivered to the joint group of Trainers and Supervisors.

September 16th – Session Three (Feedback and Evaluation) was delivered to the joint group of Trainers and Supervisors.

September 21st – Session Four (Communication Roadblocks) was delivered to the joint group of Trainers and Supervisors. In addition to this session, an evaluation of the program was filled out by all participants and turned in to the H.R. Manager.

October 2nd – A debriefing was held with the H.R. Manager, S.O.P. Coordinator and the Production Manager. The program evaluations were discussed and future dates were established to meet with the Trainers as a large group and discuss the effectiveness of the program and any areas of concern or questions they may have had.

December 10th – A meeting was held with the trainers to talk about the program as a whole and its effect on the training process.

February 25th – A meeting was held with the H.R. Manager and S.O.P. Coordinator to discuss delivery of this program to another group of potential trainers. Dates were established to deliver this program.

March 10th – Session One (The Foundation) was delivered to the new Trainers

March 17th – Session Two (The Six Step Process) was delivered to the new Trainers.

March 24th – Session Three (Feedback and Evaluation) was delivered to the new Trainers.

March 31st – Session Four (Communication Roadblocks) was delivered to the new Trainers. An evaluation of this program was filled out by all participants and turned in to the H.R. Manager.

April 4th – A debriefing was held with the H.R. Manager, S.O.P. Coordinator and the Production Manager. The Program evaluations were discussed and future dates were

established to give Trainers an opportunity to evaluate the transfer of this information to the training situations they were engaged in.

December 16th – A survey on the effectiveness of the Train-the-Trainer Program was given to all participants at Silver Spring Gardens.

Eight months after the implementation of the Train-the-Trainer Program at Silver Spring Gardens, a comprehensive survey was given to all participants to determine the effectiveness of the program and the transfer of knowledge to the Trainers. The survey questions and results are outlined in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Survey Analysis

At a predetermined time after implementation of this training process, a survey was given voluntarily to all participants in the Train-the-Trainer program. This survey was given to find out whether the training the trainers received was beneficial to their efforts to train employees. The following tables show the results of these surveys. Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation for the applicable questions. Table 7 shows the number of responses to answers for applicable questions. Table 8 shows the number of yes-no responses to applicable questions.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation

Survey Question	M	SD
1. I understand my role as a trainer for Silver Spring Gardens	4.667	.488
2. I create an effective atmosphere for trainees to learn in	4.267	.799
3. I make sure that my perceptions and the trainees perceptions are aligned	4.067	.799
4. The trainers here are working more as a team than before our training	4.333	.617
5. I use different training methods to compensate for different learning styles	4.467	.640
6. I take the opportunity to first talk with my trainee before starting any hands-on training	4.467	.640
7. The training team meets to discuss training issues	4.800	.414
8. As a trainer I receive feedback as to how I am doing	3.667	1.046*
9. As a trainer I give feedback	4.133	.640
10. As a trainer I have a good working relationship with my supervisor	4.333	.899
11. We have a working process for evaluating trainees	4.467	.516
12. I use active listening skills when working with my trainees	4.400	.507
13. I use different types of questions to check for understanding	3.733	.799
14. The training team meets the training needs of this company	4.067	.593

All questions fell within the acceptable levels for mean and standard deviation with the exception of question eight dealing with receiving feedback. The standard deviation for this question was 1.046. The issue of giving timely and constructive feedback continues to be a problem for Supervisors within this organization. Trainers still feel that Supervisors do not give the constructive feedback trainers need to remain effective.

Table 3: Number of Responses to Applicable Questions

<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Number of Responses (out of 15)</u>
2a. In creating an effective atmosphere, I identify through discussion: (circle all numbers that apply)	
1. Trainee self-esteem issues	9
2. Trainee life experiences	11
3. Trainee circumstances	10
4. Trainee expectations	13
5a. The learning styles I compensate for are: (circle all numbers that apply)	
1. Linguistic	11
2. Visual	13
3. Interpersonal	7
4. Kinesthetic	5
5. Intrapersonal	5
6. Musical	1
7. Logical	13
8a. I receive feedback from...(circle all numbers that apply)	
1. The trainee	11
2. My supervisor	10
3. My training team members	5
9a. I give feedback to ...(circle all numbers that apply)	
1. The trainee	13
2. My supervisor	10
3. My training team members	10

12a. I use the following skills: (circle all numbers that apply)	
1. Awareness of body language	11
2. Making eye contact	15
3. Paraphrasing	11
4. Understanding before responding	12
13a. I use the following types: (circle all numbers that apply)	
1. Open-ended	14
2. Closed-ended	9
3. Feeling	11
4. Summary	10
17. How long have you been a trainer for Silver Spring Gardens?	
1. Less than six months	0
2. six months-one year	4
3. One-two years	7
4. More than 2 years	4
18. What shift do you usually work?	
1. 3 rd shift	0
2. 2 nd shift	2
3. 1 st shift	13

Question 2a-This relates to the Trainer's ability to connect with a trainee during the introductory phase of training. Self-esteem issues seem to be the least discussed, with 60% of the respondents indicating discussion of this issue. This should improve as Trainers become more comfortable in the discussion portion of training that occurs before the more "hands-on" training begins.

Question 5a-The "musical" learning style had only one response, which is not surprising given the nature of the training being done. There is very little opportunity to incorporate music into the training curriculum as it stands now. There is much opportunity to incorporate logical and visual learning into the training curriculum and 87% of the respondents indicated compensating for these styles.

Question 8a-The results of this question show the Trainers feel they do not receive feedback from their team members. Only 33% indicated receiving feedback from other training team members.

Question 9a-Interestingly, the response to this question indicates that 66% of the respondents feel they are giving feedback to other training team members. There appears to be some perceptual differences on what may constitute constructive feedback.

Question 12a-The response to using these listening skills ranged from 73% use to 100% use. Respondents understand the need to use these listening skills in working with their trainees.

Question 13a-The respondents lesser use of closed-ended questions fits with the teachings of this Train-the-Trainer process.

Question 17-73% of the respondents have at least one year worth of experience as Trainers within Silver Spring Gardens.

Question 18-All but 2 of the respondents (87%) train exclusively on 1st shift. Trainees either start on, or move to, 1st shift when a training need is identified.

Table 4: Number of Yes-No Responses to Applicable Questions

Survey Question	Yes	No
15. Is having trainers an important asset to this organization?	15	0
16. Do you feel the Train-the-Trainer program has been beneficial?	15	0

100% of the respondents indicated favorably to both the importance of trainers within the organization and whether the Train-the-Trainer program has been beneficial.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The original Research Problem for this paper is stated as follows, “The problem of this study is to create a Train-the-Trainer program for Silver Spring Gardens to improve the quality and consistency in the training of both new and existing employees.” Since the conception of this study a great deal of time has been spent discussing, creating, delivering, and monitoring a Train-the-Trainer program for Silver Spring Gardens. What follows is a discussion of the major findings, the conclusion to this study, and recommendations to the organization.

Major Findings

Throughout this study a great many discussions were had with people representing many areas of Silver Spring Gardens. The encouraging aspect of these discussions related to everyone (management, human resources, and production) seeing a need to improve upon the training situation that existed at the time, and a willingness to be a part of the eventual solution. By bringing these diverse groups together, people were able to express concerns and begin the process of brainstorming potential direction for improvement. Ongoing discussion of this process kept everyone informed as to its progress and each person or area’s responsibility in making it all work. Communication became a key element in the creation and delivery of this program.

In creating the Train-the-Trainer program for Silver Spring Gardens it was necessary to make it a communication-based process. The more traditional method of merely “showing” a trainee how to do the job was leaving trainees feeling disjointed from the organization and unable to feel a part of the organizational culture. Each focused

section of the Train-the-Trainer process had a component of communication built in to it. This allowed for the reinforcement of the necessity of communicating throughout the training process.

The delivery of the Train-the-Trainer program allowed for the demonstration of incorporating different learning styles into a training session. This allowed for a great deal of interaction and participation on the part of the trainers. It also raised many questions and concerns in trainers on how to adapt these concepts to the type of training they were expected to do. As a result of these discussions, the trainers were able to see the connection between what was going on in the training room to what was going to be occurring when they began to use the concepts being discussed. In addition to this, for the first time, the trainers had an opportunity to talk with each other about difficulties and roadblocks being experienced with the existing training process. By making sure this interaction took place, a transition into the need for a unified training team followed smoothly. Emphasis was placed on the understanding that a great deal of learning could come from discussion and problem solving among themselves, as well as the opportunity for ongoing information sharing related to training issues. The issue of management support was also an integral part of the delivery process. Getting buy-in from management and keeping management informed was emphasized as a necessity for a healthy training program.

Conclusion

Over the course of this study a documented procedure for training Dedicated Trainers at Silver Spring Gardens was created. This procedure was created to insure the consistency of training being done at all levels of the organization. At the time of its

creation, all trainers at Silver Spring Gardens participated in the Train-the-Trainer program. In measuring the effectiveness of the Train-the-Trainer program, all participants were given the opportunity to complete a survey of the program as well as the trainer's ability to use what was learned in the work environment. The results of the surveys indicate an overall feeling that the Train-the-Trainer program has been beneficial to the organization.

The Train-the-Trainer program was a reflection of the processes and concepts being used by many experts in the field of adult learning as indicated in the review of literature in Chapter Two of this study. For a training process to be effective within an organization it needs to be able to reach a diverse group of people. An understanding of how adults learn as well as the expectations trainees bring to the training environment is critical to reducing the amount of time it takes a trainee to feel comfortable in a given job. While it may not be possible to incorporate every learning style into every training endeavor, having an understanding of the different styles and allows trainers to create creative training environments that will aid in the retention of information and help the trainee become acclimated to the unique culture that exists in all organizations. The faster an employee becomes comfortable with the environment, the better chance an organization has of retaining that employee for a longer period of time.

Recommendations to Silver Spring Gardens

After going through this whole process with Silver Spring Gardens there are three recommendations for the organization:

1. To ensure the consistency in the training process, make sure all new trainers complete the Train-the-Trainer program.

2. Management within Silver Spring Gardens needs to support and encourage the use of a Training Team. This forum allows trainers to discuss and improve upon issues related specifically to the training process. This team also becomes a beneficial outlet for learning from each other and creating a stronger bond among the trainers. By supporting the use of a Training Team, management can show its commitment to helping the trainers succeed by empowering the trainers to make decisions and take action on training issues.
3. Management needs to encourage the use of feedback at all levels of the organization. This can only be achieved by participating in the feedback loop as well as coaching trainers on the use of feedback. Managers should be giving ongoing feedback to the trainers. The trainers, in turn, should be giving ongoing feedback to the trainees. At the completion of training, a newly trained employee should be given the opportunity to give feedback on the training process. It is a necessary part of any solid communication process within an organization.

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