

Designing a Standardized Employee Development Program

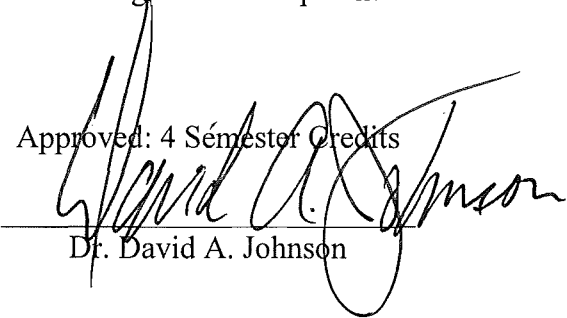
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**Abstract**

Many companies struggle with deciding on the best method of training their employees to ensure that at the end of the training process employees are competent to fulfill their job responsibilities. It is also important for the organization to standardize training so the process creates the same level of competence in every employee attending the training program. To ensure that these objectives are met many training instructional designers utilize the ADDIE model (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) as a structure for the design process. The ADDIE model focuses on collecting data to make the best decisions for the specific training program that is the most effective for the employees and the organization.

This paper follows one company's desire to improve the current employee development programs using the ADDIE model as a foundation. This paper will go through the analysis and design steps, gathering data, making decisions, and creating the template for the development

program. The ADDIE model was used to design a standardized employee development program for the company.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

Belmark Incorporated is a mid-sized packaging design and printing company based in De Pere, Wisconsin. They are unique in that they print three different types of packaging (pressure sensitive labels, foldable cartons, and flexible film packaging) for their customers. Belmark's customer base is smaller companies with a majority of them in the food industry. The type of printing they do varies, but the majority is flexographic printing.

Quality is an important part of maintaining customer loyalty in the printing industry, so to ensure the highest quality for their customers; Belmark uses a standardized printing process that provides a consistent product. A key position to the high quality is the Graphic Coordinator position. The Graphic Coordinators review all the graphics that the customers submit for printing and suggests changes to the customer to ensure the end product will look the way the customer intended. Graphic Coordinators are assigned specific territories and customers always report to the same Graphic Coordinator to maintain a very high quality customer service. The Graphic Coordinator is a relatively new and complex position to Belmark and the quality department is looking for a development path to get new Graphic Coordinators trained quickly, while maintaining the highest quality. This project will serve as a pilot study for Belmark to create standardized training for all the positions in the company that are focused on continuous improvement.

The current training process at Belmark is separated into four levels which the employees learn about during the first day of new employee orientation. In this session, employees are brought through all the Human Resource policies and paper work, given a tour of the facility, and are taught about Belmark's training requirements.

Level one is General Skills Development conducted by the CEO and the Director of Operations. All new employees are required to attend this session and it is scheduled every three months. Attendees must sign a sign-in sheet to verify their attendance. Level one training, gives employees an overview of the organizational culture at Belmark. This level is consistent in its content, presentation method, presenter, and schedule of presentation, which makes it the strongest level in the development program.

Level two is Interdepartmental Skills Development, where employees are taught about each department. They specifically work with a manager in the department to learn what each department does for the company and how they do it. The purpose of this level is to give employees information about specific functions of each department. The schedule for this training is established and maintained by the quality department. When employees complete each training session, they sign-off a paper stating they've completed the department. Unfortunately, the intentions of this level are not always carried out during execution. The managers are supposed to be the one's doing the training, but they are typically the busiest in the department, so the schedule isn't always followed.

Level three is Job Specific Training. Each employee has a number of documents to read through and then sign-off that they have completed the job instruction. These training documents are all online and when major changes are made to a module, all previously trained employees are required to go through it again and update their certification on that content. The modules have to be completed by a certain time and when each employee completes them, their certification is updated online. The issue with level three is that there is no measurement in place to find out if employees are learning the content or if they are using what has been learned back



on the job. Even further, there are no measurements to see if the training is affecting the profitability of the company.

After the employee completes the first three levels of development, the employee and the hiring manager discuss the progress made during the training. This step in the development process at Belmark is to evaluate the development process by completing a critique form that allows the employees to provide feedback to the quality department about the development process. These critiques, provide good intentions for improving quality, but are not always taken seriously enough by the employees to offer information that will make the development program more effective.

Level four is Continued Education; this includes higher education through universities, seminars, vendors, or other professional training organizations. Employees choose what training or education they are interested in and want to attend. The employee works with their manager to discuss what the training will bring to the employee and the company; the manager and the employee also need to set up logistics if the training is going to interfere with the regular work day and the payment for the training. There are no set requirements for the employees as to how many Continued Education credits the need to fulfill in a year and it is also up to the employee to locate the training on their own.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Employee Development at Belmark relies on assumptions rather than data to determine if employees and trainers are carrying out the employee development program according to company standards. This makes it difficult to know the level and quality of training each employee receives.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to improve and standardize training methods, techniques, and overall design for all of the positions at Belmark by designing an employee development program. This will be supported by the organization's continuous improvement culture and the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) model of instructional design.

**Assumptions of the Study**

The assumptions of the study are that not all of the Graphic Coordinators:

1. May take part in the needs assessment survey.
2. Have gone through the same type of training in the past.
3. Can evaluate the employee development program that is in place at the time of the needs assessment.

**Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study are:

1. The small population of Graphic Coordinators working for Belmark Inc. at the time the needs assessment was conducted.
2. Graphic Coordinator participation in the needs assessment survey is voluntary.
3. The recommendations made are for Belmark Inc. based on their culture, mission, and vision.
4. Needs Assessment results are based on individual's training experience. Depending on when the Graphic Coordinators were hired, they may have gone through different training programs.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### **ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) Model of Instructional Design**

Creating an instructional program for employee development requires specific expertise in instructional design. Many times organizations train employees when training isn't necessary or they don't train employees on the materials that cover areas in which they are not competent. The end result is wasted money for the organization. The key is to create training that is learner centered and focused specifically on improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the learners. The ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) model for instructional design provides training designers a map for creating reliable training programs that are centered on collecting data (Peterson, 2003). The ADDIE model is named for the five necessary steps to designing instruction: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (Peterson, 2003). The analysis step is focused on collecting data about the need for training and if there is a need, determining the areas that need to be trained on. Analysis gives the trainers an understanding of the direction the training should be headed. The design phase entails choosing the best methods to deliver the training and also setting up the training learning objectives. The development phase consists of creating the training instructional content and preparing the necessary materials to be utilized during the training. The implementation phase is presenting the training material to the trainees. The final step, evaluation, is important because it allows the trainees to evaluate the training as well as the instructor. Further, it allows instructor to evaluate trainee performance, both in the classroom and back on the job. More significantly, evaluation considers organizational results (Shiang-Kwei, & Hui-Yin, 2009). Each of the steps of the model ensures that the instruction created will benefit the employees, the customers and clients of the organization, and the organization's profitability.

## **Analysis**

The analysis phase of the ADDIE model is designed to locate the gap between what is expected and employee performance. Once a performance gap is located, the analysis phase will reveal to instructional designers the extent of the performance gap (Sleezer, 1993). There are various methods for determining performance deficiencies, such as performance analysis, needs assessment, needs analysis, and others (Sleezer, 1993). Performance analysis asks the customers or clients how the organization and employees are meeting their expectations to find the gap in performance (Newstrom & Lilyquist, 1979). Needs assessment, another form of analysis, looks at the expectations of how things are supposed to be done and how they are actually being done (Sleezer, 1993). A needs analysis shows the root cause and base for each need that is found in the assessment (Sleezer, 1993).

Completing the needs assessment as a part of the analysis phase of the ADDIE model is the most important because it identifies if there is a need for training, what the need is, how large the need is (Brown, 2002). Training is not necessarily the proper solution to every organizations performance problems, therefore the entire system needs to be examined to determine if the employees are lacking knowledge, skills, and abilities (Sorenson, 2002). Completing a needs assessment allows the organization to see the problem and a map to the solution before attempting to solve the problem blindly. It is also important during the analysis phase to analyze the learners that will be attending the training. In this way, training can be designed to best fit the needs of the learners and their competencies.

There are a variety of techniques used during analysis. Questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, and observations are among the methods for collecting data (Martin, 2000).

Questionnaires are the most common and widely-used tools for gathering opinions in the field of human resource development because they are reliable, affordable, and customizable to the researchers needs. Also, questionnaires can be convenient for the participant, non-intrusive, and avoid interviewer bias (McClelland, 1994).

When administering a questionnaire, there are a number of questions to consider regarding the method of delivery, whether a customized survey will be created, or an existing standardized survey will be sent to participants (McClellan, 1994). Common delivery methods for surveying are electronic or on-line surveys, or paper based surveys. The web based surveys produce a higher response rate than the paper Questionnaire. However, when the two methods were mixed, the response rate was the highest but also the most costly and time consuming to analyze the results (Greenlaw & Brown-Welty, 2009). Standardized questionnaires have been tested thoroughly for validity and reliability and are commercially available for the human resource development field. A customized survey requires more time in creating and testing than the standardized survey; however, it can address more defined issues specific to an organization (McClellan, 1994). When creating a customized questionnaire, it is important to understand how the data will be analyzed and the most appropriate way to ask questions when choosing the appropriate question format. Close ended questions are one of the more common of the questionnaire formats. Some examples of close ended questions are those that require a yes/no answer, multiple choice, rating on a scale, or ranking the options from most desirable to the least. Close ended questions are easiest for the researcher to analyze but can force participants to choose responses that are not truly reflective of how they feel. Another question format is open ended; these questions provide respondents an opportunity to answer the question with no restrictions. Examples of open ended questions are short answer and essay questions. These

responses are more difficult to analyze but offer rich qualitative data that can give a researcher more insight (McClellan, 1994). Once the data collection and results have been compiled, the process moves to the design phase.

## **Design**

After a need is identified and analyzed, then the design phase begins. The design phase relies heavily on the completed analysis to make decisions about training methods and techniques. The most important task in the design phase is creating the performance objectives or goals of the training program to ensure that the training content is transferable to the job (Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons & Kavanagh, 2007). Another function of the design phase is to determine the training delivery methods. (Velada, et al. 2007). The instructional designer needs to rely on the completed analysis to choose the best training methods and techniques that allow for the highest rate of transferring training back to the job (Velada, et al. 2007).

Research has shown that only about 20 percent of training investments made by corporations result in improvement of performance on the job (Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000). One possible explanation for the low results is that the training is not designed to enhance the transfer the training. Transfer equates to the knowledge, skills, and abilities taught in the training applied back on the job (Lee, 2010). For training to be successful, the trainees need to enjoy the training, learn the material, apply the material, and have the increase the company's profitability (Kirkpatrick, 2007). When choosing the methods and techniques during the design phase, it is important to consider the success of the training. The desired end results for the company is to have the highest rate of transfer of learning from the training back on the job.

There are three primary training delivery methods: classroom, on-the-job (OJT), and self-paced (Lee, 2010). Classroom training is classic instructor teaching in front of a group of students in a classroom, most consistent of the methods but the transfer of information back to the job is more difficult. On-the-job training is when students learn while working. OJT training is not always conducted the same for each trainee; however, there is high transfer back on the job. The last method, self-paced training, is when the trainee is given learning modules and they are responsible for learning the content and they are tested on the material in the module. Self-paced is the most inexpensive; but the quality of learning as well as the transfer of learning is at a much lower rate than the other two methods of training. Each method has definite advantages and disadvantages, but it is important for the instructional designers to choose the best method for the organization and the trainees.

Lee (2010) conducted a research study to determine whether traditional classroom training or on-line self-paced training offered trainees the highest ability for transferability on the job. The research study also studied a mixed methodology where both classroom and self-paced training were used in the training design. The results of the research showed that the trainees learned the most from the mixed methodology and had the highest transferability rate back on the job than either method on its own (2010).

## **Chapter III: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

Belmark Inc. is a small to mid-sized printing company that is rapidly growing and changing to meet the needs of their customers. One of the changes that Belmark made was in the Graphics Department position formerly titled Pre-flighter. This position has evolved into a Graphic Coordinator that now works with the art files sent to the company by the customers. The position is fast-paced and provides the overall quality check to ensure that customers will receive the desired product when it is printed. This position was chosen as the pilot for changing and standardizing Belmark's employee development program. Employee development at Belmark relies on assumptions that the employees and trainers are carrying out company standards. This makes it difficult to know the level and quality of training each employee receives. This chapter will discuss the methods used to collect data for the needs assessment and the participants that were involved. The needs assessment data will be used to make decisions in creating the training design for the Graphic Coordinator position.

### **Data Required**

The data necessary to design the new employee development program were an analysis of the current development program and analysis of the Graphic Coordinator position. The data were collected for the position analysis by an observation of a sample of Graphic Coordinators conducting their job duties. The observation lasted approximately one to two hours for each of the five Graphic Coordinators selected and included informal interview questions. The analysis of the training model was collected by an electronic survey of the Graphic Coordinators. The purpose of collecting the data was to give the instructional designer knowledge of the job duties and skills necessary to be successful and knowledge of the current state of the training program.



### **Subject Selection and Description**

The Graphic Coordinators chosen for the observation were selected by management at Belmark using a stratified sampling method. The Graphic Coordinators selected had different experience levels and most importantly, they specialized in the different business units within the company. The largest unit is the pressure sensitive labels. Three Graphic Coordinators were observed from that unit. Two Graphic Coordinators were observed in the flexible packaging unit, and one Graphic Coordinator was observed from foldable cartons. The employees that were observed had varying educational background, years of experience, and had also received different training from Belmark. For the survey, all eleven Graphic Coordinators were selected to participate because their opinions were needed to help in the decision making process for designing the training program.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data were collected through informal observation and the participants were aware they were being observed and also gave their consent to be observed. The participants conducted their daily job duties while explaining to the observer the steps they were working through and why these steps were necessary. The observer asked informal interview questions about their educational and professional background. The observer also asked questions to clarify what the employees were looking for and mental checks they were doing that could not be observed through their actions. The observations took place at the Belmark office and covered two full work days.

The survey used to collect employee opinions on the current state of the Graphic Coordinator was created for this specific study. It contained fifteen questions about the current employee development program and how well it prepared them to be successful in their position.

The survey questions were all open-ended essay to obtain the best information as to what the Graphic Coordinators thought would help train newly hired employees in their position. All Graphic Coordinators were provided consent forms with the online survey explaining in detail the process, possible risks, and how the survey would benefit them and the company. The survey was sent to the Graphic Coordinators through their Belmark e-mail addresses with a link to the survey created using Qualtrics survey software. The Qualtrics software was selected because it allowed respondent anonymity. One of the most important issues the survey asked was what training method the employees thought would be most effective for training new Graphic Coordinators. This question, along with in depth research into instructional design, were key in creating the training design. Surveys were sent out to the Graphic Coordinators and it took another two weeks to receive responses and analyze the data. (See Appendix A)

### **Data Analysis**

A large majority of the data received was analyzed using the interpretive technique of coding. Due to the quantitative responses required for Question 8 and Question 13 was statically analyzed using the computer software SPSS.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of the study are:

1. The small population of Graphic Coordinators working for Belmark Inc. at the time the needs assessment was conducted.
2. Graphic Coordinator participation in the needs assessment survey is voluntary.
3. The recommendations made are for Belmark Inc. based on their culture, mission, and vision.

4. Needs Assessment results are based on individuals training experience. Depending on when the Graphic Coordinators were hired, they may have gone through different training programs.

## Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to collect data about the employee development process at Belmark Inc. to make informed decisions about the future design of the development process. The Graphic Coordinator position was selected to be the pilot position to test out the newly created process. The Graphic Coordinator is a complex job responsible for the overall quality of the end product. An observation was done to create a survey to gain insight from the Graphic Coordinators about training content and methods. This chapter explores the qualitative and quantitative data that were collected; as well as, the employee development process that was designed for Belmark Inc.

### Needs Assessment Analysis

A 15 question survey (Appendix A: Graphic Coordinator Survey) of all the Graphic Coordinators was conducted. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS data analysis software and the qualitative data was analyzed using the technique of theming. This is a technique where similar responses are grouped together to understand the general feeling about the topic.

1. Identify and list five general skills that you feel are important to become a successful Graphic Coordinator.
  - *Knowledge- Design Programs and principles, Printing processes*
  - *Skills- Internal data base, Communication, Customer Service, Attention to details*
  - *Abilities- Multi-task, Time Management, Organization, Trouble Shoot and find solutions, Work with others, Strong work ethic, willing to learn, patience*
  
2. Identify and list five specific skills that you feel are important to become a successful Graphic Coordinator.
  - *Knowledge- Mac Based Programs (Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Quark Xpress), Press limitations and advantages, Knowledge of materials used (i.e. inks, substrate and varnishes), printing terminology, Microsoft Office programs*
  - *Skills- Preflighting art files*
  - *Abilities- Conceptualize the final product, Follow SOPs, use resources*

3. Identify and list any of the skills stated above that you needed to learn to be successful after you started in the Graphic Coordinator position at Belmark.
  - *Knowledge- BERT data base, Flexographic printing process*
  - *Skills- Detailed and accurate*
  - *Abilities- Patience*
  
4. What ere the three most difficult skills for you to learn to become a proficient Graphic Coordinator?
  - *Knowledge- BERT, Materials, Specifications to material type, Front End process, workflow, flexo-friendly art files, Mac programs, printing method*
  - *Skills- BERT, know how to find information, label entry, graphic order, approval process, Flexo-friendly art files, detail oriented*
  - *Abilities-Find answers, Patience, Multi-task*
  
5. In regards to level two of the employee development program, (Interdepartmental Training) did learning about other departments help to define your role at Belmark clearly? Why or why not?
  - *Yes- Interdepartmental training helps know where the job came from and where it is going. It helps you understand what other departments are looking for in your work and what your role is in the process to make things easier for them.*
  
6. In regards to level three of the employee development program, job specific training, were the QJI's (Quality Job Instructions) helpful for you to learn your position as a Graphic Coordinator? Why or why not.
  - *Yes- helpful resource, loose guidelines, always available, teach you how to solve your own problems*
  - *No- Cannot cover every situation you can possibly come in contact with, complicated wording, didn't understand the content until hands on experience*
  
7. If the QJI's were helpful, what do you feel is the best method to communicate them to you?
  - *As you are training have the trainer go through and tell you which ones you were just dealing with then read them.*
  - *Organize them on the current Web to Web system in a numerical order for you to read so you are reading things in the order that the process in completed, on the job.*
  
8. Rank the following training methods from 1 to 5 with 1 being the method you feel is the most effective and 5 being the least effective.

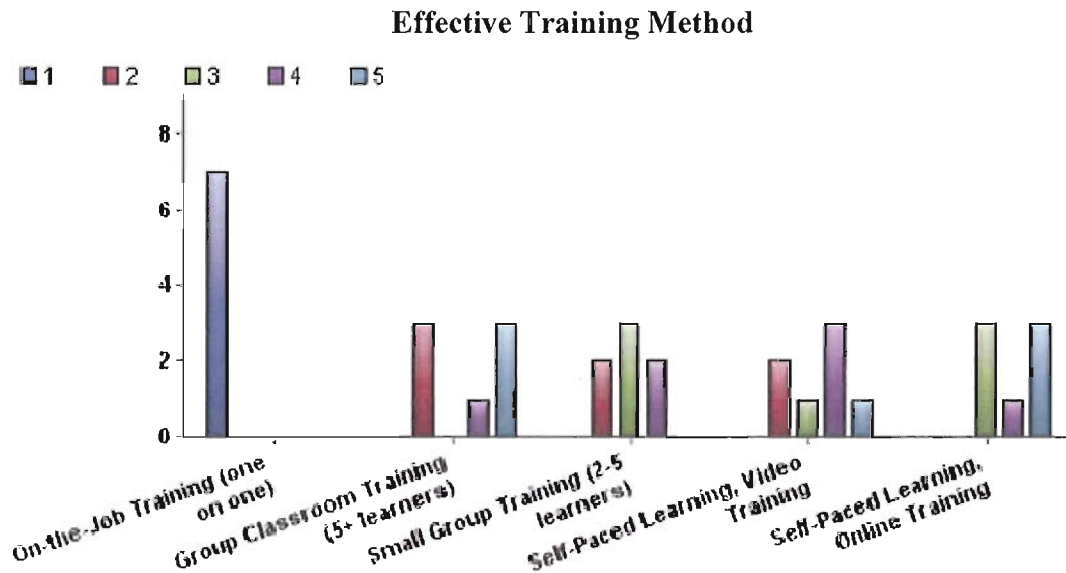
On-the-Job Training (one on one)

Group Classroom Training (5+ learners)

Small Group Training (2-5 learners)

Self-Paced Learning, Video Training  
 Self-Paced Learning, Online Training

*Table 1: Graphic Coordinators Responses to the Most Effective Method for Training  
 Respondents were asked to rank the below methods on a scale of 1-5 (one being the most effective and five being the least effective)*



9. What part of your training was least effective in developing your skills?
- *Sitting and reading through the QJI's before I got any hands-on training. Sitting and just watching others complete processes.*
10. What improvements could be made to make it more useful on the job?
- *Reading QJI's as you train. Train specifically on a few things and then follow up with reading the QJI processes.*
  - *Have someone check your work and that includes, not only reviewing your preflight, but if you are electronically filing things correctly in the GO folder and if your BERT entries are correct. Sitting w/someone and having them watch you enter an order is very different than handing them your packet and letting them investigate what you've done.*
  - *Make it available after the original training is done and a person has been in their job a while that they can go back and re-train with departments.*
11. After completing the employee development program, did you feel confident in completing your job responsibilities?
- *Yes, although you will always have questions depending on the projects you are working on.*

- *I did not feel confident to start my job when it was finished, yet I was held accountable for any error I made. It's too much information all at once, you don't comprehend why everything works together.*

12. Was there anything not covered during training that would have been helpful to learn while going through the development process?

- *More on press examples of the jobs you were working on.*
- *One thing that was difficult was the steps of the current training. It would be easier to follow a job through the whole process; it may help make more sense of each department.*

13. Do you think you would benefit from further training?

*Table 2: Beneficial to Train Further*

Answer	Response	%
Yes	6	100%
No	0	0%

14. If you would benefit from further training, in what areas of your job would you like further training?

- *I would like to know more about all of the business units.*
- *I would like to follow my project from start to finish.*
- *Any time new procedures are implemented or processes change in any department that we work directly with, we all should be trained in it.*
- *Classes when new versions of software come out.*
- *I think I would like to spend more time with the mac operators. It would definitely improve my preflighting skills.*

15. List below any additional ideas you have for improving the training and development program for Graphic Coordinators.

- *Learning all of the business units would be beneficial.*
- *Spending time with the Electronic Pre-press Operator's to see what helps them when writing up instructions.*
- *I would say give them a mentor buddy for a while who needs to check their work after they are done that needs to include checking how they are filing and entering in BERT.*

- *To be able to re-train or spend more time in a department after the initial training is done.*
- *Maybe get together once every other month and go through some things that the managers have seen pulls for so everyone can discuss and talk about how they would have caught the issue before the pull happened.*
- *Always keep the employees updated on technology changes if it affects them or not; which in turn allows them to inform the customer know the company is changing as the technology is changing in our industry.*

### **The Employee Development Process- Job Specific Skills Training**

Utilizing the information gathered from the needs assessment, a training design template was created for the Graphic Coordinator position at Belmark Inc. The design was set up into four steps: self-paced instruction, one-on-one mentoring, hands on practice with the process(es), and module evaluation. Each new Graphic Coordinator would complete each individual learning module. The steps help the Graphic Coordinators learn the content in the modules by splitting the instruction up into self-paced instruction, one-on-one instruction, hands on practice activity. At the completion of each module, the new Graphic Coordinators will take a module evaluation to determine their learning from that module. When the Graphic Coordinator completed the four steps for each of the ten learning modules, they complete the certification exam to show the new employee and the company, the level of competence that was achieved through the training program. Each of the four steps are described in detail below.

#### *1. Self-paced instruction*

Each learning module begins with a self-paced computer based training lesson that will be either a video or a narrated power point utilizing Jing screen capture software. The main purpose of this portion of the lesson is to explain what the new employee will be learning and the scope of importance to the company. The employee will gain any necessary information such as definitions, acronyms, and background that will help them



understand the process they will be learning how to complete later in one-on-one portion of the module. This portion of the module will also reiterate information from previous modules that is necessary to be successful in the current module.

### *2. One-on-one mentoring*

After the self-paced instruction has been completed, the next portion of the training design is a one-on-one mentoring with an experienced Graphic Coordinator. This portion of the training is designed to provide the new Graphic Coordinator more experience with the content they are learning about, as well as allow them the opportunity to ask questions of an experienced Graphic Coordinator. The mentor will take the new Graphic Coordinator through any processes that were learned during the self-paced instruction to show the new Graphic Coordinator real life examples of what they just read about. The mentor will walk through a list of specified tasks they would need to show the new employee and would then allow them to go through the example while the mentor is observing. This step could include different activities depending on the content in each individual module, but each training module will the new Graphic Coordinator an opportunity to check in with their mentor, see the processes, and ask questions.

### *3. Hands on practice with the process(es)*

Once the new Graphic Coordinator has completed the one-on-one mentoring step, the next step will be hands on practice with the content in the module. The practice activity is a real process that the Graphic Coordinators use on the job and gives them the opportunity to experience the content in a deeper way. This type of interactive learning increases learning and retention of the content in the module. Once the new Graphic Coordinator has completed their hands on practice, the mentor will review the work done

in the hands on practice to give the new Graphic Coordinator feedback on how well they did and some tips on how to avoid confusion later in the process.

#### *4. Module Evaluation*

After the self-paced instruction, one-on-one mentoring and the hands on activity are completed, the new Graphic Coordinator will complete a short ten to fifteen question written quiz based on the content in that module. The purpose of this evaluation is to measure the level of understanding that the new Graphic Coordinator has of the content in the module. The new Graphic Coordinator will have access to the information in the self-paced instruction during the evaluation because they would have the same information available to them in a real on the job situation.

Answering all the questions on the evaluation correctly, will allow the trainee to move on to the next module in the series. Any question the trainee answers incorrectly, will be reviewed with their mentor. The trainee must be able to display to the mentor that they know how to find the correct answer. Then the mentor would initial the questions to signify to the Graphics Department manager that the new Graphic Coordinator understands the information from the module.

#### *5. Certification Examination*

After the new Graphic Coordinator has completed the four steps for each training module, they will complete the training evaluation process. The training evaluation process begins with a rating sheet where the new Graphic Coordinator tells how much they liked/disliked the employee development program they have gone through. The rating sheet would be split up into rating the three levels of the Belmark employee development program. When the Graphic Coordinator rates the third level of the employee

development program (Job Specific Training) they will evaluate the self-paced instruction, their mentor's ability to show them the processes, and the hands on activity for each module. New Graphic Coordinators will also evaluate how effective the module evaluation process was in preparing them for the certification exam.

The next portion of the training evaluation is a certification exam to measure if the new Graphic Coordinator has gained the knowledge that the management at Belmark has decided is necessary to be competent on the job. The new Graphic Coordinator must score eighty-five percent, to be considered competent enough to work alone and check in with their mentor when they have questions. If Graphic Coordinators do not pass with eighty-five percent, then their mentor Graphic Coordinator will work with them for another month to help prepare them to work alone.

The next step of evaluation comes six weeks after the certification exam and is a review of the work the new Graphic Coordinators has done up to that point. The purpose of this review is to determine if the processes and procedures taught during training are being used by the new Graphic Coordinator on job and they are being completed correctly. The review will be completed by the manager of the graphics department with input from the one-on-one mentor.

### **Learning Modules and Learning Objectives**

The content for the Job Specific Training for the Graphic Coordinator position was divided into ten learning modules. Much of the content and the objectives were derived from the company's existing Quality Job Instructions that were previously used as the primary training tool for Job Specific Training. Other content for the modules was material that was added because of suggestions made by the Graphics Department manager and also by the current

Graphic Coordinators. Each of the learning modules is listed below as well as the learning objectives.

### *1. The Printing Industry and Belmark Printing Processes*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Understand the different processes used in the printing industry and the processes used at Belmark Inc.
- Understand how the Graphic Coordinator position affects the printing process
- Identify the equipment and parts used in flexography
- Describe ideal printing jobs for each printing process

### *2. Front End Process*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Understand the process for new and revised labels
- Understand the responsibilities of the Sales Representative, Customer Service Representative, and the Graphic Coordinators in the creation of a new model or new label
- Understand the process for providing a color match sample to a customer
- Identify issues that could affect other departments in the front end process

### *3. 3 Business Units*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Understand the different printing processes in the three business units including materials, inks, and varnishes
- Identify specification differences that are given to customers for printing in different business units
- Identify different issues with the graphics that come up during printing in the different business units

#### 4. *Mac Based Software (Illustrator, Adobe, Photoshop, InDesign etc.)*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Utilize design software to examine graphics received by customers
- Identify possible printing issues with the graphics by utilizing design software
- Understand the purpose of Global Vision Digital Page Comparison Software
- Utilize Global Vision Digital Page Comparison Software when revisions are made to a label, proofs are returned as "OK with corrections" or internal approvals

#### 5. *Customer Service and Professionalism*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Understand the importance of the Graphic Coordinator position to the customer
- Communicate questions or important comments with Customer Service Representative and Sales Representative when information needs to be relayed across departments
- Select proper mode of communication (phone, e-mail, or in person) given a specific situation with customer, co-worker, or supervisor

- Communicate graphic issues and how they will affect the printed product to the customer or designer
- Communicate needs and questions clearly with customers, co-workers, and supervisors
- Formulate e-mails that are grammatically correct and clearly relay the intended message

#### *6. New Project/Model*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Understand and identify the difference between a new project and new model
- Identify the Graphic Coordinators role in the process of creating a new project and new model
- Identify how the new model could possibly affects the graphics

#### *7. Preflight Process*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Understand the creative art process
- Determine if supplied art is workable art or creative art
- Complete the preflight checklist given supplied art and specified model
- Manage and administer new fonts supplied by customers or purchased by Belmark
- Verify barcode is correct given supplied barcode by customer
- Identify revisions to graphics given design software to make graphics print process friendly for the presses and the press operators.

### *8. Graphic Order and Label Entry*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Complete the Graphic Order form and Label page
- Determine if labels have an existing model or if they are a new model
- Identify spot colors
- Complete changes to Graphic Orders and Label pages when requested by customer

### *9. Writing Electronic Pre-Press Operators (EPO) Instructions/Scheduling*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Understand what is important for an EPO to know to complete their job on the art files
- Communicate clear instructions on how the graphics are supposed to look

### *10. Contract Proofs, Plate Making and ICRs*

Upon completion of this module, Graphic Coordinators will be able to fulfill the following objectives in accordance with Belmark's standards:

- Complete changes requested externally.
- Complete internal change requests.
- Process when new dies are being ordered.
- Understand the process of preparing contract proofs.
- Understand the processes that follow approved and approved with corrections contract proofs.
- Manage 1 bit Tiff files created internally and externally

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to collect data about the employee development process at Belmark Inc., in order to make informed decisions about the future design of the development process. The Graphic Coordinator position was selected to be the pilot position to evaluate the newly created process. The Graphic Coordinator is a complex job responsible for the overall quality of the end product. Data were collected from the Graphic Coordinators pertaining to their opinions about the Job Specific Skills training methods and content. That data were used to design an employee development program that met the needs of Belmark and its employees.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of the study are:

1. The small population of Graphic Coordinators working for Belmark Inc. at the time the needs assessment was conducted.
2. Graphic Coordinator participation in the needs assessment survey is voluntary.
3. The recommendations made are for Belmark Inc. based on their culture, mission, and vision.
4. Needs Assessment results are based on individuals training experience. Depending on when the Graphic Coordinators were hired they may have gone through different training programs.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the literature reviewed for this study and the needs assessment data, the researcher expected the Graphic Coordinators to be more engaged and involved in the new employee development program than they had been in the past program. They were expected to feel more prepared to complete the job related tasks than they did with the previous development



program. These goals were accomplished using a mixed methodology of training. Self-paced training and OJT methods were combined to help Graphic Coordinators understand their role in the company and to learn how to fulfill that role. This mixed method approach will allow future Graphic Coordinators to feel more competent on the job, and there will be less of a need for them to have to learn from their mistakes.

### **Recommendations**

Using mixed methodologies in one training program is a great idea for organizations to use when training their employees. Using more than one method allows for the training to be more easily understood by all trainees because it accommodates more than one learning style. Another great aspect of mixed methodologies is that the training method can be molded to fit the needs of the training content. For instance, if specific content will rely heavily on the employee needing to know how to do the tasks, the main training method can be more kinesthetic based. This will prepare the trainee for the real work setting.

One suggestion when attempting to use a mixed methodology of training would be to also include classroom training. Classroom training allows for trainees to learn from each other's experiences. Even new employees bring insight from past educational and professional work experiences that are great topics to discuss in the classroom setting. Classroom training also allows the trainees to get to know one another and they get to interact with their co-workers. Depending on specific job duties, learning how to interact with a team member can be crucial for completing job tasks.

Future research is needed to identify which combinations of mixing methodologies will bring the best training results for the trainees and the organization. Utilizing multiple training methods for one development program can allow the trainee to not only learn what they need to

do to complete their job tasks, but also how to do it and why it is important. Multiple training methods give trainees the full scope of their job and how it affects the rest of the organization. From Belmak's experiences, mixing methodologies to design training brings a more holistic view to training employees than the previous employee development program.

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**Appendix A: Graphic Coordinator Survey**

1. Identify and list five general skills that you feel are important to become a successful Graphic Coordinator.
2. Identify and list five specific skills that you feel are important to become a successful Graphic Coordinator.
3. Identify and list any of the skills stated above that you needed to learn to be successful after you started in the Graphic Coordinator position at Belmark.
4. What were the three most difficult skills for you to learn to become a proficient Graphic Coordinator?
5. In regards to level two of the employee development program, interdepartmental training, did learning about other departments help to define your role at Belmark clearly? Why or why not?
6. In regards to level three of the employee development program, job specific training, were the QJI's (Quality Job Instructions) helpful for you to learn your position as a Graphic Coordinator? Why or why not.
7. If the QJI's were helpful, what do you feel is the best method to communicate them to you?
8. Rank the following training methods from 1 to 5 with 1 being the method you feel is the most effective and 5 being the least effective.

On-the-Job Training (one on one)  
Group Classroom Training (5+ learners)  
Small Group Training (2-5 learners)  
Self-Paced Learning, Video Training  
Self-Paced Learning, Online Training

9. What part of your training was least effective in developing your skills?
10. What improvements could be made to make it more useful on the job?
11. After completing the employee development program, did you feel confident in completing your job responsibilities?

12. Was there anything not covered during training that would have been helpful to learn while going through the development process?
13. Do you think you would benefit from further training?
14. If you would benefit from further training, in what areas of your job would you like further training?
15. List below any additional ideas you have for improving the training and development program for Graphic Coordinators.