

COMMENT

Public Sector Executive – November 2008

Context: Magazine covering issues relating to central and local government including urban management, finance, housing, recruitment, education, leisure services, e-government, conferences and exhibitions, risk and facilities management, products and services, human resource and development.

Target Audience : Aimed at senior managers and executives in local and central government and the health services. Circ: 6,500

Feature: Management and Leadership Training

Why you should protect your training budget and what elements should you put in it in a difficult economic climate? Why is training so important in the current economic climate to keep a focus on training, what kind of ROI can businesses expect? Important for staff motivation, continual development and harnessing skills that can give your business greater productivity.

Public Sector Executive – continued...

BSI comment:

Taking a strong leadership approach is a key part of thriving during these times. Leaders need to instil the ability to re-energise, re-think, and re-focus the business, using realistic targets. In parallel, a cohesive and motivated workforce is an essential tool in the business armoury when faced with an economic challenge. Providing training shows that you recognise your team's importance in the company and look to develop their skills to improve performance.

Mike Bailey, Director of BSI Learning highlights 10 core reasons why training is invaluable during tough times:

1. Training helps maintain and improve quality and productivity
2. Training helps keep pace with a changing business - you need to stay on top of new developments in order to stay competitive
3. Trained workers perform more efficiently with less errors and delays
4. Training fosters employee loyalty and encourages development
5. Employees taking on extra work can get up to speed more quickly with the proper training
6. Training shares the good habits of your staff and reinforces your best work. If you can only send one person to a workshop, have him or her lead a session for other staff when they return.
7. Training improves morale and employee confidence
8. Training emphasises priorities - needs of the current staff can be directed toward specific training
9. Training is a stimulant, while eliminating training can enforce mediocrity.
10. A well trained employee is your best asset

Public Sector Executive – continued...

“Companies that deal with the recession by cutting back on talent management practices may find themselves woefully unprepared for the long term,” says Mike. “Such moves would be short sighted, because the need for talent has never been greater. Developing key talent is crucial to business performance - attracting, developing and retaining people should be a top priority for any organisation. The bottom line is that while the recession will eventually end, the competition for talent is going to be a business challenge for the foreseeable future. “

BSI Learning offers the following tips to make your training budget recession-proof and improve business performance ...

- Prioritise training based on needs analysis and business issues.
- Ensure a more rigorous approach to post course evaluation and effectiveness. BSI is supporting clients who want to have “real” evidence that the course has delivered for the delegate and the business. Historically the focus has been on the course experience and the ability of the tutor to deliver. Now it is much more about the change in performance of the individual and the ability of the delegate to perform at a higher level than prior to the course.
- Consider training delivered on site to encourage team building, tailored delivery and more effective use of time. BSI Learning has an In-Company option as a cost effective solution for companies looking to send multiple attendees on a specific course. Onsite courses offer considerable savings in time, travel and accommodation costs to organisations.
- Identify courses that show a tangible outcome such a Six Sigma and process improvements. Six Sigma is a methodology designed to streamline business processes by eliminating defects. The implementation of Six Sigma aims to improve and sustain quality, eliminate waste and increase profit. Demand for process improvement course over traditional management training is flourishing as organisations are able to quickly

Public Sector Executive – continued...

see and understand benefits of targeted learning that is reflected quickly in the bottom line of their business.

- Focus on customer satisfaction. To keep your customers satisfied, you must continue to deliver great products and services , which means continuing to build your employees' skills.

Higher skilled employees → Happier customers → More business for you

Competitors' lower skilled employees → Unhappier customers → More business for you!

“Creating a “learning organisation”, one in which everyone is constantly learning and applying their learning to bring about improvements, will help create a more dynamic and competitive entity,” continues Mike Bailey. “Increasing the skills levels in your business is beneficial to all concerned. There is the benefit of personal and professional development for people being trained and productivity gains for your business. It is a mistake to think that training should be the obvious casualty in a recession. On the contrary, new managers want and need more training to help them achieve even more.”