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Training needs analysis: when is eLearning the solution?

A manager discovers a performance problem, so he asks you, as a training designer, to create an eLearning course. Do you take this request on the fly or do you go deeper to investigate the needs?

As a training professional, it is your job to determine if eLearning is really necessary.
The solution to design an effective and successful training is to check if there is a performance gap and, if so, whether this gap can be solved by training (after all, training provides knowledge and skills). If the performance gap is caused by something other than a lack of knowledge and skills, obviously, training can not solve it.
This is why you should always do a thorough analysis of training needs to find out what is really going on.

Here are some simple steps you can follow to complete the analysis of training needs in the workplace.

STEP 1: Check the expected performance

The first step is to identify exactly what are the expected performances of company employees. What is the procedure you should follow? To find out about this information, it may be necessary to interview human resources or managers and review company documents such as standard operating procedures and company guidelines.

STEP 2: Check the current performance

The next step is to understand how employees are actually doing their tasks. How can you find this information? You can interview employees, supervisors and managers. You can review performance data or other metrics and documentation. Another fundamental way to discover current performance is observation.

STEP 3: Check if there is a performance gap

Once you have the expected and current performance, you have to compare them. Observe how employees should do the job compared to how they actually do it. The goal is to identify if there is a gap between current and expected performance.

STEP 4: Determine the cause of the performance gap

It's time to brainstorm to understand what causes the performance gap. There are many factors that affect performance, including: knowledge and skills, motivation, incentives, physical and mental skills, appropriate tools, guidance or planing and control.
Training can only solve a performance problem if it is caused by a lack of knowledge and skills. To find out the real cause of a performance problem you will have to do some research. It is necessary to observe, interview and see what can be discovered through the research to clarify which factor is causing a problem.

STEP 5: Propose the training solution

It is necessary to recommend a training solution. Training can take place in different forms: eLearning, manuals, coaching on the workplace.

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