

Improvement Cymru Academy Toolkit Guide



Training Needs Analysis

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Introduction

A training needs analysis (TNA) is sometimes referred to as a Training Needs Assessment and is the process to identify the gap between the actual and the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities of staff. This will help an organisation to reach its objectives. Having the right knowledge is important for people to be able to do their job effectively and competently. There are three levels of a training needs analysis which are:

1. Organisational Level

Firstly, training needs analysis needs to be considered from an organisational level. Conducting a training needs analysis from an organisational level helps to align training with what the organisational goals are so that the organisations objectives can be achieved.

2. Team Level

Secondly, an analysis of training needs should be performed at team level so that the teams' level of skills can be assessed, to understand what the team's objective is and how it aligns with the business objective. At this level both individuals and organisations are considered however the main goal of assessing training needs at team level is to identify how teams can effectively work together.

3. Individual Level

Thirdly, performing a training needs assessments at an individual level allows you to analyse how an individual is performing. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of staff is important so that staff can be directed to specific training that will fill gaps in their knowledge.

Rationale

Training needs analysis is an important tool for organisations for several different reasons:

1. Tailors training to the right audience

TNA will help you to identify what individuals need specific training. Tailoring training to teams and/or individuals means that the training will be more

effective and have a successful outcome that meets the objectives identified in the TNA.

2. High Impact Training

A TNA will enable employees to be more productive and efficient in their roles because it can help to prioritise areas where training will have a significant impact on and objectives.

3. Uncovers new approaches.

During a TNA, data may be gathered which can provide insight and reveal other training approaches or courses which may not have been previously considered.

Background

A Training Needs Analysis emerged from a book called “Training in Business and Industry” by McGehee and Thayer in 1961. Since then, Training Needs Analysis has become a cornerstone for many organisations to bridge the gap between the current knowledge and skills of an employee and their actual training needs.

When to use

A TNA can be used in a variety of different scenarios. They can be used when new employees start an organisation to understand their existing skillset and knowledge and identify any gaps their knowledge and skills. It can be used to regularly assess staff members competencies to identify improvements in instances where there is a performance issue, new equipment or technology and organisational restructuring. TNA is useful to ensure that there is compliance with regulatory bodies for clinical and non-clinical staff and can be used as part of performance reviews for career development and for succession planning. TNA can also be needed following a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis which identifies internal weaknesses and external threats. By using SWOT, it can help organisations to strengthen any weaknesses and threats identified. See our [SWOT Toolkit Guide here](#) for more information.

How to use

There are several steps to follow to undertake a TNA.

1. Define the Strategic and Operational Objectives.

Firstly, you will need to assess the organisational context and define why you are undertaking a training needs analysis. For this you will need to define what you need to be able to meet the strategic objectives. See our [SMART Aim toolkit guide here](#) for more information.

2. Define the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours Individuals need.

What do you need individuals to do to meet the operational objectives which will help meet the strategic objectives? You could create something like a 'person specification' of what an individual should be able to do to meet the objectives described in step one.

3. Perform a Gap Analysis

Perform a gap analysis to identify the current level of capability against the desired level of capability that you identified in step two.

4. Identify Training Needs

Based on the gap analysis, what training does the individual need

5. Evaluation

Based on the training identified and undertaken, is the individual now competent to perform in their role to meet the objectives that were identified in step one?

Helpful Tips

To perform a TNA, it is important to have clear objectives and specific goals about what you want to achieve by performing a TNA. Collaborate with stakeholders at all levels of the organisation and communicate relevant findings from the TNA with the appropriate stakeholders. It is important to be realistic about what time and finances are available. There are some practical tools that you can use when performing a

TNA and these include interviews, focus groups, surveys, job descriptions, performance reviews, stakeholder analysis and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

What Next?

Begin by understanding what your organisational goals are and how they align with the work within your area. Consider what you want to achieve when you perform a TNA. Use our Training Needs Analysis Template to undertake your own assessment in your workplace.

Additional resources

If you would like to learn more about making improvement to your workplace, take a look at our webpage for what we offer you [Improvement Cymru Academy - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#) or email us improvementcymruacademy@wales.nhs.uk to find about the improvement courses we can offer.

Further Reading

Coursera Enterprise. (2024). Beginner's Guide to Conducting a Training Needs Assessment. Available at: <https://www.coursera.org/enterprise/articles/guide-to-conducting-training-needs-assessment> (Accessed 02 May 2024)

CPD. (2022). What is a training needs analysis? Available at: <https://cpduk.co.uk/news/what-is-a-training-needs-analysis> (Accessed 01 May 2024)

Management Pocketbooks. (2018) Training needs analysis. Available at: <https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/2018/04/03/training-needs-analysis-learning-needs-analysis/> (Accessed 02 May 2024)

McGehee, W., & Thayer, P. W. (1961). Training in business and industry. Wiley.

