

## **Contemporary Trends In Outbound Training -Its Impact On Corporate Employees**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Today's organizations are so dynamic that they seek for the most flexible and positive employees who are young at thoughts and mind. In the contemporary business environment, it is imperative for the employees to possess various traits such as interpersonal skills, team working, and positive attitudes. Training and learning are the two activities which can build such traits among employees. But just conventional and formal training is not sufficient as it only serves few purposes. As the competition in the business climate is becoming cut-throat day by day, the requirement for human competencies is also growing at the same pace. This can be addressed by providing such learning for the existing employees which is fun-based through playful ways, backed up by strong ethics and morals. This is called Outbound Training. Rickinson et.al, 2007, states that, Outbound Training results in cognitive outcomes such as improvement in self-efficacy, self-confidence and a trait of enhanced concern towards environment. Nayak, 2007 opines that, Outbound Training provides concrete experiences and develops risk-taking attitudes among employees.

There is a need to identify and explore new trends in Outbound Training activities today so that the upcoming changes and challenges in the business world can be encountered successfully. This research paper aims at exploring such OBT programs so that the current human capital matches with the requirements of the Industry at large and build up a strong human force in particular.

**Keywords:** Outbound Training, Fun-Based Learning, Ethics, Human Force.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Dr. Kurt Hahn, (1886-1974) who was known to be a charismatic educator has advocated the concept called "Outbound Training". He was born into a cultured Jewish Industrialist family and believed that a person's academic achievements should also include development of character. In the year 1930, when he exiled from Germany for opposing Hitler and the Nazi regime, he developed the idea of Outbound learning and training. He refined his philosophies and ideas into a practical learning curriculum. The history of Outbound training dates back to the times of World War-II. The Hahn's school has become a hub of experiential learning in the post-war period. It was found that those employees who were put in the most adventurous and challenging outdoor situations redefined their perceptions of their difficult situations, gained confidence developed a spirit of camaraderie with their peers and demonstrated compassion.

### **OUTBOUND TRAINING DEFINED**

Outbound Training refers to the various activities conducted for the employees to encourage and motivate them, develop team spirit and enhance overall performance of the team and its individual members. A team cannot be expected to perform on its own. It needs a motivating force that can guide them towards better levels of performance. Then activities such as team building which consists of various tasks grooms the team members Team Building activities consist of various tasks undertaken to groom a team member, motivate him and enable him perform to his best.

Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992), said that learning of trainees is needed but some more training is needed to bring in behavioral change among trainees. Further research could be carried out to understand as to how training can be linked to behavioral aspects.

The **Outbound Training** is a tool or technique used to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of employees through **Experiential Learning**. For ex: A group of employees can be taken away from the actual work environment into the outdoors and are assigned some challenging activities or tasks that they need to accomplish within a given time frame.



As the name suggests, the outbound training is conducted outdoors i.e., at a place away from the actual work places and aims at improving the communication skills, interpersonal skills and leadership skills of the workforce.

**OUTBOUND TRAINING HELPS IN**

- Enhancement of Leadership qualities
- Intragroup conflict resolution
- Strengthens interpersonal skills and intra group relations
- Polishes communication skills
- Alliances and partnerships are Strengthened
- Teambuilding

**ETHICS IN OUTBOUND TRAINING**

Ethical training promotes awareness of the **ethical** practices in the company and boosts up the morale of employees so that they work more harmoniously and effectively with better performance outcomes. Being **ethically** aware reminds the employees of their core responsibilities from time to time and enables them to maintain a positive and healthy corporate culture and upholds a strong image in the business environment.

**NEED FOR THE STUDY**

As the need for the competent workforce is increasing day by day, there is a necessity to explore new methods of transforming the existing employees into a more dynamic and adaptable. Outbound training activities for the employees cater to the required skill and knowledge development among the employees. The functional areas in which outbound training could be provided are:

- Communication skills
- Leadership Skills
- Conflict Management
- Change Management
- Emotional Intelligence
- Interpersonal skills
- Decision Making Skills
- Problem solving Skills
- Goal Setting
- Confidence building
- Listening Skills
- Giving Feedback

- Team Working
- Trust Building
- Delegating Skills
- Stress Management
- Negotiating Skills etc.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the Contemporary Outbound Training activities being conducted in some select organizations.
2. To analyze the importance of Outbound Training in today's business scenario.
3. To suggest new modules of Outbound Training Programs for the corporate employees.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The present study is undertaken to identify the importance and implications of Outbound Training in the select organizations. As the data collected is not exhaustive, there is always a scope for further study to explore and devise more methods and tools of Outbound training.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study is confined to employees working in select IT companies in Hyderabad.
2. The sample size is limited to 100 as the employees work schedules could not permit them to respond.

**HYPOTHESIS**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The Outbound training activities are not conducted in IT companies.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Outbound training activities are an integral part of IT companies.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant importance to Outbound Training in today's Business Scenario.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Outbound training is very important in today's Business Scenario.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The sample is randomly selected from the select IT companies in Hyderabad through direct field visit. Equal number of employees are selected from each of the select companies.

The study is conducted to understand and analyze the data collected through a structured questionnaire.

**Sample Size:** 100

**METHOD OF ANALYSIS**

The analysis is divided into two parts. Part I deals with general information and basic demographic information about the respondents, Part II with the research variables as identified through literature review and exploratory research to ascertain the effect of outbound training on performance. The structured questionnaire was divided into two parts:

1. Part I of the questionnaire includes the demographic profile of the respondents.
2. Part II deals with
  - i. The employee understanding of Outbound Training
  - ii. The views and opinions of respondents about the factors that are critical to Outbound Training
  - iii. The effect of Outbound Training on employee performance through the identified research variables.

The data analysis for the study has been done quantitatively by the help of descriptive statistical analysis.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Tracey, J Bruce, Hinkin,** Timothy R, Tannenbaum, Scott I, Mathieu, John E (1997), said, Pre-training motivation leads to better outcomes and manifested as self-efficacy and motivation.

**Narendra M. Agrawal (2000)**, studied the human factor, their issues and challenges in Software organizations in India. He emphasizes the importance of soft-skill training programmes for the employees.

**Aradhana Khandekar and Anuradha Sharma (2006)**, conclude in their paper which is based on three Indian global firms operating in National Capital Region of Delhi, India, that the role of organizational learning is progressively becoming more crucial for organizational performance.

**Beryl Badger, Eugene Salder-Smith, Edwin Michie (1997)**, in their study proposed a systematic and detailed oriented research to stress the effectiveness of Outbound/Outdoor Training Programs.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The study included 100 professionals working in Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Deloitte and Wipro.

**Table-1 Allocation of Respondents**

| Sl.No | Company name  | Sample Population |
|-------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1     | Infosys       | 25                |
| 2     | Tech Mahindra | 25                |
| 3     | Deloitte      | 25                |
| 4     | Wipro         | 25                |
|       | Total         | 100               |

**Table-2 Respondents and Organization**

| Sl.No | Name of the Company | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1     | INFOSYS             | 25                 | 25%        |
| 2     | TECH MAHINDRA       | 25                 | 25%        |
| 3     | DELOITTE            | 25                 | 25%        |
| 4     | WIPRO               | 25                 | 25%        |
| TOTAL |                     | 100                | 100        |

**Table-3 DATA ANALYSIS**

| OBT Programmes               | Name of the company |       |               |       |         |         |  |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|---------|--|
|                              | Companies 1 &2      |       | Companies 3&4 |       |         |         |  |
|                              | Means               | S.D   | Means         | S.D   | t-value | p-value |  |
| Communication Skill Training | 3.50                | 0.746 | 3.34          | 0.718 | 0.894   | 0.374   |  |
| Leadership Skills            | 2.54                | 1.006 | 2.67          | .816  | .008    | .993    |  |
| Behavioural Training         | 4.16                | .805  | 3.62          | 1.019 | 2.846   | .005    |  |
| Emotional Intelligence       | 2.89                | 1.233 | 3.75          | 1.164 | 0.663   | 0.509   |  |
| Problem Solving Skills       | 3.98                | 1.014 | 3.45          | 0.903 | 1.626   | .107    |  |
| Goal Setting                 | 3.98                | 1.160 | 3.50          | 0.990 | 0.540   | 0.590   |  |
| Decision Making              | 3.71                | 0.967 | 4.07          | 1.149 | 1.672   | .98     |  |
| Team Building                | 3.41                | .058  | 3.84          | 1.010 | 2.059   | .042    |  |
| Conflict Management          | 3.48                | 1.191 | 3.43          | 1.169 | -.211   | .833    |  |

**INTERPRETATION**

The results in the table-3 indicates that the mean score for companies 1&2(Infosys and Tech Mahindra) is 3.50 and the companies 3&4 (Wipro & Deloitte) is 3.34 and the standard deviation is 0.746 and 0.718 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is 0.894 and 0.374 respectively. This clearly states that Goal setting is one of the major areas where IT employees seek for outbound training. The other areas of training identified such as problem solving skills( mean scores 3.98 and 3.45, SD 1.014 and 0.903), Leadership skills (mean scores 2.54 and 2.67, SD 1.006 and 0.816) Team Building Skills ( mean scores 3.41 and 3.84, SD 0.058 and 1.010) Decision Making Skills ( mean scores 3.71 and 4.07, SD 0.967 and 1.149)Emotional Intelligence ( mean scores 2.89 and 3.75, SD 1.233 and 1.164) , Conflict Management (mean scores 3.48 and 3.43, SD 1.191 and 1.169), respectively for Companies 1&2(Infosys and Tech Mahindra) and companies 3&4 (Wipro & Deloitte) indicate that the apart from the regular training provided to the employees, there is a need to provide such types of training which are more practical and experiential in nature. This means there is a requirement of Outbound training to the existing employees to polish their existing skills and learn more promising skills demanded by the cut-throat corporate world.

By the above analysis, it is evident that the Alternate Hypotheses drawn were proved to be true.

Today the types of jobs and their nature have changed drastically when compared to previous years. The requirement of skill sets to sustain and succeed in the current business scenario also have changed accordingly.

As the market has become globally competitive and the business environment is becoming volatile, there is definitely a demand for such soft skills apart from technical skills to understand the objectives of the given projects and the ability to accomplish them within the given resources as rightly said by Kumar and Hsiao, (2007).

Therefore, the organizations should get inclined to transform the employees and come up with pragmatic approaches to provide them Outbound Training facilities so that they not only get enhanced and enriched with their existing skills but also explore their tacit potential and learn better ways of carrying out their jobs with more enthusiasm and commitment.

**NEW OUTBOUND TRAINING ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE ADOPTED:**

- Virtual Training and Webinars
- Experiential Learning
- E-Learning
- Executive Coaching along with long term leadership
- SEED
  - S – Share Creative & Positive Ideas
  - E – Ensure Openness & Transparency
  - E – Ensure to Keep up the Commitments with Prompt Service
  - D – Develop and Educate People Willingly for their Growth
- Activities which enable the employees to reconnect with nature
- Feedback based Training

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