Twirl of Dexterity: 
A Gamut to Prevail in the Current Times in the Information Technology Industry

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript extracts an exhaustive list of employability skills and subsequently uses them to develop an empirical model termed as the ‘Twirl of Dexterity’ using a set of eight well defined skills. These skills form the core of the model along with 24 attributes of each skill, which form the periphery. These together help organisations decipher the trainability of the employee. The employees can be judged on these 24 attributes of employability with some benchmarking indicating the Proficiency/ Sufficiency/ Deficiency levels and training programs can be framed accordingly. The 24 attributes have been worked out after performing the factor analysis of the responses gathered from around 400 respondents. The Twirl of Dexterity can be subsequently used as a ‘skill meter’ to analyse the skill set of the employees and synchronised with the Johari Window concept to further enhance a trainee’s perception and reaction to training. The manuscript further proceeds to empirically validate the use of the combination of The Twirl of Dexterity and the Johari Window for improving the effectiveness of training and subsequently leveraging it for better results.

Keywords: Employability Skills, Johari Window, K-Means Clustering, Skill-Meter, Twirl of Dexterity

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning is the most sustainable source of competitive advantage in any industry. As the war for talent continues, leveraging and optimizing learning for stronger performances is critical. For decades people are complaining about the right kind of learning programs, learning materials, learning schedules, and the kind of motivation level of employees along with the level of learning transfer at work, and the success or failure of the learning programs. Many attempts and models have been developed to make learning programs more effective. Kirkpatrick Learning and Training Evaluation Model (1959), CIRO Model of Evaluation (1970), Cost-effectiveness Analysis, Jack Phillips Model (1996), Robert Brinkerhoff Model (2006) etc.

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are some of the few models which have tried to successfully evaluate the learning programs and to make them more powerful. But, the expected results are yet to come!

This article is an attempt to gauge various Learning & Development programs being followed in the Information Technology industry administered to the employees to refresh their knowledge, to make them more competitive, more flexible, and more compatible with the internal & external organizational environment. Learning programs are not only aimed at enhancing the intellectual levels of the employees rather they aim at the overall development of the employee’s skills, building up individuals with a high degree of perseverance, patience, commitment, and apprehension.

The most important entity of any learning program is their “Learners” or “Employees” in this case. A lot has been discussed about the characteristics of the learners, intrinsic motivation, acceptability, reaction to learning programs etc. (B. & Steidlmeier, 1999). At the end of the day, the success or the failure of any learning program depends upon the amount of ‘learning transferred to work and work-place’. It’s an old and true saying “A cup which is already full has no room to receive”, so it’s important to know the details of the cup before putting some more tea into it. At the same time it’s important to know “Do you have the right cup full?” this is one of the major issues concerning any learning program “Is an organization administering the right kind of learning to the right candidate?”

This article is an attempt to give a unique learning road-map to the trainers and to the reporting managers to choose the right kind of learning path by identifying the needs of the employees. Not every finger in the hand is same, similarly not every person has the same need, be it physical, emotional, esteem, intellectual etc. So “One size can fit all” does not apply.

We have broadly classified the Employability skill set under the eight heads of Communication, Team-work, Work Psychology, Critical thinking & Problem solving, Initiative, Enterprise & Self-management, Learning & Adaptability, Planning & Organizing and Technology which are the pre-requisites of the Information Technology industry to hire the employees. This employability skill set is further classified into various factors, where every factor represents the dexterity needed at the work-place.

Every individual has their respective strengths and weakness; learning is an attempt to sharpen his existing prowess, to make a master out of a jack, to create the learning environment that helps to address the talents, generate ideas and ultimately building up of an engaged workforce resulting in higher productivity and retention.

Learning and Development programs are aimed to suffuse the employees with adequate levels of expertise, know-how, versatility and adeptness. Many of the Indian IT companies like Infosys, TCS, IBM, Intel, HCL, Accenture, and others have their own Learning and Development centres to prepare the new recruits and the existing workforce to take on the formidable challenges that lie ahead. So programs should not only be structured to align individuals with the goals of the organization rather they should also focus on individual’s growth and success. This paper aims to make the learning programs SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) and SIMPLE (Self-monitoring, Interesting, Magnetic, Purposeful, Lively and Effective).

1.1. Learning and Development

Learning and Development is one of the most jabbering phrases of the 21st century. Every industry has “Learning & Development” or “Training & Development” departments of its own. Highly investing in terms of ‘Man, Money and Minutes’, experimenting with different kinds of training and development programs, incentive-based, e-learning, traditional learning, etc. to develop organizational employees, creating synergy and honing the employee skills etc. Many of the theoretical models of training effectiveness (J.E., Salas, Tannenbaum,
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