

Companies wasting training resources by not asking the right questions

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Many companies are wasting money on expensive staff training programs that deliver poor returns, but are not investing in improving efficient workplace operations to improve revenue and productivity, according to a leading business analyst.

Business Efficiencies Australia (BEA) founder and director, Felicity Sarah Law, said it's not unusual for companies to spend thousands of dollars on training without knowing why or even being aware of the suitability of training options. In addition, often there is no value placed on the down-time of staff and the impact on workplace productivity.



Law is aware of one company that recently spent \$9,800 on training for five managers, with feedback being that the course was "a waste of time - it was pitched at Grade 9 level".

"When you consider that five staff each took two days to do the course, the company's outlay was very high. Did it deliver a return? Did the company even ask the question? They should have, because time is money," Law said.

"With each organisation varying in size, resources, purpose, culture, values, workplace issues etc, how can a standard program address the myriad of expectations, situations and issues which may or may not even exist? Chances are, it won't - and there goes your investment."

Law said the quality and efficiency of business administration, communication and processes are fundamental to the success of any organisation.

"Regardless of the strength of the product or service, inefficient workplace operations will, at the very least, affect customer service standards, reputation, and revenue with loss of productivity," she said. It's no surprise that tailored training approaches are favoured by organisations working to the mantra that 'time is money'. "Prompt resolution of issues means that staff are able to use their time to do the job intended rather than distract themselves or others with concerns," Law added.

Leslie Howard, executive director and co-joint professor, AGSM Executive Programs, said that any L&D initiative needs to have clear objectives in mind. At AGSM, Howard said the ROI motto is: start with the outcome in mind. This means that - logically - if an organisation looking to invest in people, it needs to be clear what business outcomes are to be achieved.

"What gap is there? You may need to lift the sales level or lift the speed of producing a new product - you must be very specific about what the tangible, measurable business outcome that you want to achieve. Then you ask what leadership or other capability development do I need in order to better enable that," she said.

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