

TRAINING / LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS (T/LNA) - DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK

Level	Internal & External Forces	Competency Needs	Approaches to Learning
	What are the key forces which will drive training & development?	What are the skills, knowledge and attitudes priorities?	What approaches to training & development are there now? What learning methods might best be suited to the organisation and its employees?
Organisation:	<p>What are likely to be the key demands / challenges in the next three years? What pressures or constraints from stakeholders (e.g. customers, suppliers, neighbours) are foreseen?</p> <p>What impact will these forces have on people development needs?</p>	<p>What five qualities are / will be the most important for this organisation to demonstrate, now and over the next three years?</p> <p>What are the top five enduring qualities the organisation expects in all of its employees?</p>	<p>Is there a policy / framework for training & development within the organisation? Is this appropriate for future requirements?</p> <p>Does the organisation support learning? Does it favour one or more methods* in particular? Are other options used / have others been explored?</p>
Function:	<p>What are the objectives for this function (or employee grouping) in the next two years? What challenges are faced by this function from inside or outside the organisation?</p> <p>How will these objectives / challenges affect the people development needs of this function?</p>	<p>What are the five most important attributes required of this function over the next two years by its internal or external customers?</p> <p>What can be singled out as the top five competencies required by people in this function or in this grouping of employees?</p>	<p>Is there a standard training provision (internal or external) for this function or grouping? Is it being utilised? Is it robust for future needs?</p> <p>What development programmes are there in similar functions elsewhere in the organisation? Could comparable approaches be used here?</p>
Team:	<p>What are the key performance expectations of this team in the next year?</p> <p>Might these expectations lead to additional skills being required by the team? Will changes of team members affect the existing skill balance?</p>	<p>In order to meet its objectives for the next year, are there collective attributes required of this team or unit which differentiate it from others?</p> <p>Do these attributes have development implications for the team members either individually or collectively?</p>	<p>What training is there now which is common to all team / unit members? Is this training effective and targeted at needs in the next year?</p> <p>What other opportunities are there for the team to learn collectively? Are experienced members being used to develop their colleagues?</p>
Individual:	<p>What are the key result areas / objectives for this position in the next year?</p> <p>Might these objectives require new skills to be added to the job specification? What changes foreseen for the job role may affect skill requirements?</p>	<p>What are the top five competencies required by the holder of this specific position in order to meet their objectives?</p> <p>In which of these competencies might the job holder require additional development to meet the required / desired standard?</p>	<p>How are individuals prepared for this position at present? Is this the most effective way for them to acquire the skills needed?</p> <p>How do individuals discover what learning options are available? Do they have scope for pursuing their own preferred method?</p>

* e.g. Training Courses (in-house or external), Workshops & Seminars, On-the-Job Training, Mentoring, Job Rotation, Projects, e-Learning, Action Learning, Distance Learning, Further Education etc.

T/LNA DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK: GUIDANCE NOTES

The Training / Learning Needs Analysis (T/LNA) Diagnostic Framework is intended as a starting point for organisations wanting to determine the key development needs for their employees. The word “learning” has been included to complement the word “training” which is frequently interpreted as meaning courses or workshops.

The framework is in the form of a grid. Down the page four levels are shown: Organisation, Function, Team and Individual, the significance of which are explained below. Across the page, three areas critical to the T/LNA process are considered: Internal & External Forces, Competency Needs and Approaches to Learning. These also are explained below.

For each combination of level and area, there are trigger questions. Clearly the grid overleaf is not itself a form to complete. It is intended to provide Human Resources professionals with a framework for analysing learning needs, to suggest the issues which need to be addressed and to offer guidance on the appropriate questions to pose. The framework may be used in a number of ways: simply as an aide-memoire for Human Resources / Training Managers, as a focus for a management discussion / review or as the basis for a thorough survey of training and learning needs throughout the organisation.

The grid has been designed for use in its entirety or for examining any one of the levels or areas. For example, if the user wants to consider learning needs for a specific team, they may focus on the questions across the Team row. If the user wishes to consider development methods across the whole organisation, then they should consider the questions in the column headed Approaches to Learning.

LEVELS
Organisation: A self-standing organisation, be it a business or a public sector body.
Function: A function within the organisation (e.g. Finance, Marketing) or a particular grouping of employees with needs in common (e.g. Graduates, Engineers). This level is perhaps the least familiar of the four but is intrinsically different from the other three. See below: Competency Needs.
Team: This may be a traditional line team / organisational unit or a project team / task force.
Individual: A specific occupation or job role.

AREAS
Internal & External Forces: The key forces which will drive training & development. These forces need to be considered before focusing on the specific attributes required. Internal forces are likely to be goals, objectives and performance expectations but may also be other anticipated demands or challenges. The internal forces may themselves be influenced from the outside: the effect of competition and technological change. Other external forces will be pressures from customers and suppliers, and perhaps from neighbours and lobbyists. Changes to the “physical” environment should also be considered. These may be “internal” (e.g. a new factory) or “external” (e.g. a disaster or scare).
Competency Needs: The skills, knowledge and attitudes priorities. At the <i>organisation</i> level these may be core competencies important for the organisation itself and for employees in all / most functions. They should link to the key forces and may also reflect organisational values. At the <i>function</i> level the competencies are those which are important to a particular function. They are valuable for establishing minimum criteria for staff in a given discipline (e.g. Marketing). They can be especially significant when people are moved outside their main field but still need to keep up to date in that area. They can also be helpful where a standard pattern of development is encouraged for a particular population (e.g. new graduates). <i>Team</i> competencies may have some of the same characteristics as functional competencies but will be those required of a specific working team or organisational unit. <i>Individual</i> competencies are specific to an occupation or job role. These might be set down in a job specification and may be linked to external standards (e.g. National Vocational Qualifications). The development requirements for any one person may relate to the competency needs of their specific job (<i>Individual</i>) but may be competency needs flagged by the other three levels.
Approaches to Learning: Current approaches to training & development and the learning methods which might be considered. Many organisations find that the most successful initiatives build on existing practice. This area seeks therefore to take stock of what is in place before deciding what will be appropriate in the future. This area also looks at how employees learn and encourages thinking on new approaches. Probing here can unearth pockets of good practice in one part of an organisation which can be applied in another. Traditionally approaches to learning have been considered only after training needs have been identified. Research suggests that the learning method is fundamental to successful development and should be considered as an integral part of the diagnostic process.