

LEADERSHIP & CULTURE

Training your Staff

By Leyla Hussein • 6 November 2018



I once watched a company promote its best salesperson to train the rest of the team, purely because he was the best at selling. He was hopeless at teaching it. He knew exactly what he did but had no idea how to pass it on, and three frustrated trainees later, everyone had wasted a fortnight. Good training is not just about who knows the most. It is about choosing the right way to hand that knowledge over.

Your workforce drives your business. Whether you have just taken on a new employee or need to grow the skills of an existing team, training people in line with your [company culture](#) supports their job satisfaction as much as their performance.

Why train at all

Training makes your operations run more accurately and more successfully. If you are following a proper [workforce plan](#), you should already know what training is needed and where. The real decision is how to deliver it: internally, externally, or a mix of both. Each has its trade-offs, and none of them transfer neatly to every situation. Start by taking a refresher of your [business plan](#), your budget and your goals, and pair it with your workforce plan. Together those tell you which method fits the company and the employee. Consider what you can afford, whether someone in-house has valuable input and could train, and what [leadership or management style](#) suits the people being trained. In a fast-paced environment training is often outsourced, but if your company does something genuinely unique, in-house may be the only real option.

Is internal training right for you

Training internally has real advantages, the main one being cost, since it is usually cheaper than outsourcing. But it also means the company as a whole learns nothing new, and it limits who can actually do the teaching. If you want to train a salesperson in a particular method, say how to [qualify a lead](#), you are restricted to the person in-house who knows it well enough to teach it. Maybe only one person can, and their teaching style clashes with the trainee. Or maybe that person is buried in high-priority work and the time cost is too high. The upside is that internal training carries your business values and expectations across to the trainee better than any outside provider ever could.

Is external training right for you

Outsourcing to an external provider is the least disruptive to your operations. You send the employee off to a specialist in the subject, which protects the relevance and quality you might lose trying to do it in-house. It is best for genuinely specialist knowledge, and it has the bonus of bringing fresh insight and outside opinion into the company. The catch is cost, because it can be an expensive route. Picture discovering from your business plan that your team needs basic training in a new operating system because the company has changed its tech. You will know who is already familiar with it and who is not. If your budget is tight, train internally using the people who already know it. If budget is not the issue and the training needs real depth, and few of your staff know it well enough to teach, that is exactly when a specialist is worth paying for.

Making the call

In the end, internal or external comes down to your industry, your staff and your budget. Those factors may limit your preferred choice, but they also keep the decision anchored to what the business and the employee actually need. Work through it in order: review your business plan for the skills and knowledge the company needs, review your workforce plan for what your people already have, and the gap between the two tells you what training is required and who could deliver it. Then check that against your budget. Do that, and you will know whether you can afford external training, whether you can safely train in-house without losing quality, and, honestly, whether training is even worth the investment right now.

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