Employee Training and Development
Course Module in Human Resources Management

Course Modules help faculty select and sequence HBS Publishing titles for use in segments of a course. Each module represents subject matter experts’ thinking about the best materials to assign and how to organize them to facilitate learning. In making selections, we’ve received guidance from faculty at Harvard Business School and other major academic institutions.

Each module recommends four to six items. Whenever possible at least one alternative item for each main recommendation is included. Cases form the core of many modules, but we also include readings from Harvard Business Review, HBS background notes, and other course materials.

1. Overview of suggested content (HBS cases unless otherwise noted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Product Number</th>
<th>Publication Year</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Teaching Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>Aguilar</td>
<td>900019</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>21p</td>
<td>900020</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPERVALU, Inc.: Professional Development Program</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Special Challenges in Training</td>
<td>Barro &amp; Hall</td>
<td>905041 B case: 905042</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>14p</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Force Training at Arrow Electronics (A)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14p</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative: Leading Change at Simmons (A)</td>
<td>Casciaro &amp; Edmondson</td>
<td>406046</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>15p</td>
<td>607144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Developing Employees as Strategists and Innovators</td>
<td>Bartlett</td>
<td>300004</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>19p</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsoft's Vega Project: Developing People and Products</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>4. Growing Leaders</td>
<td>Tichy</td>
<td>R0104C</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7p</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Ordinary Boot Camp (HBR article)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative: Personalize Your Management Development</td>
<td>Griffin</td>
<td>R0303H</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6p</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coaching and Mentoring</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>403019</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>15p</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative: The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's Mentoring Program (A)</td>
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II. Rationale for selection and sequencing the items in this module
The module begins by examining basic employee training programs and progresses through the development of employees as strategic innovators and leaders.

The main recommendation in segment 1 is an especially broad overview of a training program, from conception and creation through later development. The alternative case on the Ritz hotel chain portrays a program exceptionally effective at quickly imbuing new employees with the values of Ritz corporate culture as well as basic job skills.

The cases in segment 2 look at specific challenges to employee training concepts, and each in its way analyzes the question, What is training worth? The main case explores the intertwining of training and retention. Arrow Electronics has been spending valuable company resources in training employees who, having acquired skills and knowledge that are valued throughout their industry, leave Arrow for other employers. In the alternative case, the CEO of the Simmons mattress company must decide whether to invest in a costly training program in the wake of an appalling downturn in business.

Segments 3 and 4 look beyond the training of employees to do their jobs effectively and flexibly; they focus on developing employees into strategists and leaders.

The module concludes with a segment on coaching and mentoring. The main recommendation is an accessible (and inexpensive) overview of the topic from the Harvard Business Essentials line of brief paperbacks; the alternative, a multidimensional case on mentoring.

III. Detailed description of recommended items

1. Introduction
SUPERVALU, Inc.: Professional Development Program Francis J. Aguilar
SUPERVALU examines the creation and implementation of a training program for attracting and retaining college graduates for the nation's largest wholesale food distribution company. It addresses: 1) program design and 2) the management of the design effort and program implementation. The case is appropriate for courses in organizational behavior, human resources management, and general management. Learning Objective: To learn how to manage the creation, introduction, and perpetuation of a complex training program in a large, dynamic business organization with a strong culture. Subjects: Change management; Employee training; Food; Organizational development; Recruitment. Setting: Minnesota; food industry, retail industry; $17.4 billion; 1999.

Alternative: The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company Sandra Sucher
In just seven days, the Ritz-Carlton transforms newly hired employees into "Ladies and Gentlemen Serving Ladies and Gentlemen." The case details a new hotel launch, focusing on the unique blend of leadership, quality processes, and values of self-respect and dignity, to create award-winning service. Learning Objective: Allows students to examine innovation and improvement in a service industry. Raises questions of when and how to innovate in a successful service operating system and the challenges of innovation for a brand built on customer experience. Explores the role of leadership and values in creating a culture of service and the need to manage the tension between standardized quality procedures and the cultivation of empowered employees who can customize each interaction to meet the needs of their customers. Subjects: Brands; Change management; Human resources management; Innovation; Operations management; Organizational behavior. Setting: Washington, DC, lodging industry, $1.5 billion; 1999.
2. Special Challenges in Training
Sales Force Training at Arrow Electronics (A) Jason R. Barro and Brian J. Hall
In the mid-1980s, Arrow, the world's largest electronics distributor, implemented a college recruiting program to hire salespeople. The program was part of an effort to increase the professionalism and skill set of the sales force in an industry where few salespeople had college degrees. After an expensive and thorough training program, many of the new college grads hired were poached by Arrow's competitors for higher salaries. Arrow was ultimately unsuccessful in persuading the college grads to stay, and the recruiting program ended after five years. In 1997, CEO Steve Kaufman decided to start a new college recruiting program, determined not to repeat the mistakes of the past. A rewritten version of an earlier case.
Learning Objective: To explore the issues of expectations and compensation in hiring and training employees. To consider the cost of providing them with general skills that are useful elsewhere. Subjects: Electronics; Employee retention; Employee training; Incentives; Recruitment; Sales compensation. Setting: U.S., electronics industry, $5 billion, 1984-1997.

Alternative: Leading Change at Simmons (A) Tiziana Cascaro and Amy C. Edmondson
Explores the challenge of managing large-scale organizational change at Simmons, an old and established company that manufactures and distributes mattresses. The new CEO, Charlie Eitel, hired to turn the organization's performance around, considers whether to implement an untraditional training program that includes outdoor experiential team-building activities as a central element of his change strategy. Asks participants to consider the decision of investing in the expensive training program following the loss of the three largest customers--retailers that together had contributed a third of Simmons' revenues. One central theme is the role of leadership in engaging and motivating employees to implement changes that improve product quality and operational efficiency and cost.
Learning Objective: To introduce challenges facing general managers in turnaround situations; to discuss the role of "soft skills" training in organizational change initiatives; and to examine leadership strategies for creating effective, sustained organizational change in which employee empowerment is a central aim of and vehicle for change. Subjects: Change management; Corporate culture; Employee empowerment; Employee training; Human resources management; Leadership; Motivation; Organizational change; Team building. Setting: Atlanta, GA; furniture industry; $869.9 million; 2001-2005.

3. Developing Employees as Strategists and Innovators
Microsoft's Vega Project: Developing People and Products Christopher A. Bartlett
With a focus on Matt MacLellan and his careful development as a project manager under his boss and mentor, Jim Kaplan, the case describes the evolution of Microsoft's human-resource philosophies and policies and illustrates how they work in practice to provide the company with a major source of competitive advantage. It looks at employee development, motivation, and retention efforts in one of Microsoft's product groups. Dissatisfied with his project management role, MacLellan decides to become a developer despite the fact that he has never written code professionally. Kaplan is faced with the decision of whether to support his protege's radical career shift, and if so, how to do it not only to MacLellan's satisfaction but also in the organization's best interest.
Learning Objective: To illustrate the role of senior management as developer and coach of scarce human assets and the role of human-resource policy in supporting an organization's development of competitive advantage. This is a decision-oriented implementation case. Subjects: Corporate culture; Human resources management; Motivation; Organizational behavior; Software; Strategy implementation. Setting: Redmond, WA; software; $20 billion; 1975-1998.

Alternative: Best Buy, Co., Inc. (A): An Innovator's Journey Dorothy Leonard
The CEO of Best Buy, a hugely successful retailing company, has hired consulting firm Strategos to imbue the company with an improved innovative capability. The six-month program of experimental learning yields new business ideas and also trains Best Buy employees as innovation coaches. However, this kind of learning is expensive and time consuming. The case details the learning journey as experienced by Best Buy employees and raises the question of when such development programs are appropriate. Focuses on the learning process and stimulates debate about how people and organizations learn in general, as well as how an innovation capability can be fostered.

Learning Objective: To address innovation from the perspective of senior management and to discuss various approaches toward creating and integrating a sustainable innovation capability within a large organization. Also, to highlight this kind of experiential learning. Subjects: Creativity; Employee development; Innovation; Learning; Organizational learning; Strategy implementation. Setting: U.S., retailing, $20 billion, 2002-2003.

4. Growing Leaders
Noel J. Tichy (Harvard Business Review article)
Many companies now run boot camps--comprehensive orientation programs designed to help new hires hit the ground running. They're intense and intimidating, and new employees emerge from them with strong bonds to other recruits and to the organization. But at Trilogy, organizational consultant Noel Tichy discovered one program that's a breed apart. In this article, Tichy gives us a detailed tour of Trilogy's boot camp, Trilogy University, to demonstrate why it's so different--and so effective. Like the best boot camps, it serves as an immersion in both the technical skills new recruits will need for their jobs and Trilogy's corporate culture, which emphasizes risk-taking, teamwork, humility, and a strong customer focus. But this is a new-employee orientation session that's so fundamental to the company as a whole that it's presided over by the CEO and top corporate executives for fully six months of the year. Why? In two three-month sessions, these top executives hone their own strategic thinking about the company as they decide what to teach the new recruits each session. They also find the company's next generation of new products as they judge the innovative ideas the recruits are tasked with developing--making the program Trilogy's main R&D engine. And they pull the company's rising technical stars into mentoring roles for the new recruits, helping to build the next generation of top leadership. After spending months on-site studying Trilogy University, Tichy came away highly impressed by the power of the virtuous teaching cycle the program has set in motion. Leaders of the organization are learning from recruits at the same time that the recruits are learning from the leaders. It's a model, he argues, that other companies would do well to emulate. Subjects: Change management; Employee development; Employee training; Executive ability; Knowledge transfer; Learning; Management communication; R&D.

Alternative: Personalize Your Management Development Natalie Shope Griffin (Harvard Business Review article)
Most organizations struggle with leadership development. They promote top performers into management roles, put them through a few workshops and seminars, then throw them to the wolves. Managers with the ability to survive and thrive are rewarded; those without it are disciplined or reassigned. The problem is, an alarming number of people fall into the second category. This happens not because managers lack skills but because companies fail to realize that there is no single kind of leader-in-training. In this article, Natalie Shope Griffin, a consultant in executive and organizational development at Nationwide Financial, describes four kinds of managers-in-training, each embodying unique challenges and opportunities: reluctant leaders, arrogant leaders, unknown leaders, and workaholics. The author outlines specific training approaches tailored to each type of prospective leader. By focusing on the unique circumstances of individual managers, investing in them early in their careers, offering effective coaching, and providing real-life management experiences, Nationwide's leadership-development program has produced
hundreds of successful leaders. Subjects: Coaching; Executive ability; Human resources management; Leadership; Organizational development.

5. Coaching and Mentoring
Harvard Business Essentials: Coaching and Mentoring (HBS Press Paperback)
Effective managers know that timely coaching can dramatically enhance their teams' performance. Coaching and Mentoring offers managers comprehensive advice on how to help employees grow professionally and achieve their goals. This volume covers the full spectrum of effective mentoring and the nuts and bolts of coaching. Managers learn how to master special mentoring challenges, improve listening skills, and provide ongoing support to their employees. The Harvard Business Essentials series is designed to provide comprehensive advice, personal coaching, background information, and guidance on the most relevant topics in business. Drawing on rich content from Harvard Business School Publishing and other sources, these concise guides are carefully crafted to provide a highly practical resource for readers with all levels of experience and are especially valuable for the new manager. To assure quality and accuracy, a specialized content adviser from a world-class business school closely reviews each volume. Whether you are a new manager seeking to expand your skills or a seasoned professional looking to broaden your knowledge base, these solution-oriented books put reliable answers at your fingertips. Subjects: Career advancement; Careers & career planning; Coaching; Managerial skills; Mentors.

Alternative: The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago’s Mentoring Program (A) David A. Thomas
Describes steps taken to implement and manage a successful employee mentoring program at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. A cultural change at the bank provided the context out of which the program grew. The case describes the development of the program, highlighting design principles key to the program's success and its implementation and initial results after nine months. Program manager Amy Rubinstein and executive sponsor Jack Wixted considered how to expand the successful program to include more employees while maintaining the key aspects that contributed to the program's success. Learning Objective: To discuss how human resources can implement a successful mentoring program, including the key design principles of a successful mentoring initiative. Subjects: Careers & career planning; Diversity; Human resources management; Mentors. Setting: U.S., 2001