

White Paper

January 2007



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Solution Focus Areas:

Training/ Development
Engagement / Morale
Productivity
Leadership / Supervision

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A.D.D.I.E.:

A Proactive

Approach to

Employee

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A.D.D.I.E.: A Proactive Approach to Employee Training & Development



If you are a Stephen Covey fan, then you probably know – or have even memorized – his *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The very first habit that Covey touts is to “Be Proactive.” In other words, to be thoughtful and prepared, focusing attention and efforts on the long-term results rather than just reacting to the things that life throws at you. Proactive people believe in their hearts that the choices they make can positively influence their current and future circumstances. Reactive people, on the other hand, believe that they are victims, trapped, and that nothing they do can change their circumstances.

If we agree with Covey that being proactive is one of the habits that highly successful people practice, then it would make sense that an organization as an entity would be more successful if it were proactive versus reactive. Of course, a proactive company mindset would have to come from the leaders first, and then be reinforced in the organization’s culture so that all employees value and exhibit proactivity. It is truly unfortunate, however, that this habit is so often overlooked by the people in leadership roles, and companies end up merely existing in a reactive mode, worrying only about the day-to-day operations instead of focusing on the future of the company.

When an organization functions from a reactive paradigm, employee training is usually neglected or addressed in a haphazard fashion. This makes sense since the short-term training picture involves time away from work stations and a monetary investment. Training is seen as an annoyance or a necessary evil in reactive organizations. Only those who value the long-term, positive impact of offering training to employees will take the time and energy needed to design and implement training to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Who are the people who would be in charge of developing quality training for companies? These could be the training directors or specialists, the human resource directors or generalists, managers or supervisors, project leaders, consultants, or even presidents or vice-presidents. If these individuals are proactive (or at least want to stop being reactive in their roles) there is a simple process that will assist them in developing quality training. This process is called the ADDIE Model.

ADDIE stands for Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate. It is a process for program development that has come out of the world of instructional systems development. ADDIE was not originated by any one person or company, but rather has been a term used and passed along informally in the oral tradition for about 20 years (Molenda, *Performance Improvement*, 2003). There are other program development models out there that have a similar structure to ADDIE, which is why this is considered “A Proactive Approach,” rather than “The Proactive Approach.” It just so happens that ADDIE is among the easier acronyms to remember, so it is more user-friendly than some other approaches.

The steps of ADDIE are successive, yet they are flexible. One step leads to the next, but at any time the project leader can reach back into prior steps to tweak the process. The results can be a single workshop, an entire training program (orientation, certification, succession, etc.), or creative, alternative learning opportunities. This process can even be used for non-training program development. However, for the sake of this discussion we will keep our focus on employee training.

ANALYZE

The first step in the ADDIE process is “**Analyze.**” If we consider Covey’s habits again, the one that would be most appropriate for this step is “Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood.” This is the stage when asking questions of stakeholders is the primary task so that we can completely understand the current situation (reality), the desired situation (goals), and then to determine what the gaps are in employee knowledge, skills and attitude. The outcome of this stage is a report that summarizes these issues known as a *training needs analysis*. Below are a few key questions that can be asked during this phase of the process:

- What are the organizational goals?
- What are the training program objectives?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Who is the audience and what are their characteristics?
- What does the audience need to learn?
- What is the extent of participant knowledge/skills prior to training?
- What resources are available for the planning and implementation of the project?
- What are the constraints?
- What are the delivery options?
- What approach will be used for transferring learned skills to the workplace?
- What will participants do to determine their competency?
- When should the project be completed?
- What are the project risks?
- What will be the project costs?
- What are the anticipated benefits of the project?

DESIGN

The second step of the ADDIE process is “**Design.**” The primary tasks in this stage are to take the information gathered during the Analysis stage and do some further questioning of stakeholders in order to establish a framework for the training program in question. The end product of this stage is a *program design outline*. This document would contain all the strategies for the training program, but not the content of the topic(s). Below are a few significant factors to take into consideration when designing a program design outline:

- How do the organizational and program objectives translate into specific learning objectives?
- Based on the learning objectives, what content must be developed?
- What will be the program structure?
- What will be the program sequence?
- What will be the program duration?
- What will be the pace of the program?
- What will be the mode(s) of delivery?
- What type(s) of skill assessment process and instruments will be utilized?
- How will the training program itself be evaluated?
- What are the specific expectations for transfer of learning?
- What support will be in place in the workplace to reinforce transfer of learning?

DEVELOP

The third step of the ADDIE process is “**Develop.**” During this stage, the training topics identified during the first two steps are researched and the training program content is determined. This content is then translated into a variety of products. It is important to remember that it is not only important to come up with the content that addresses the true learning needs, but it is also just as important to put thoughtful consideration into *how* the information will be presented. Below are the products that should come out of this step:

- Communication packets for program stakeholders
- Training lesson plans
- Trainer guides
- Participant workbooks & handouts
- Trainer and participant resources
- Training and job aids
- Coaching/mentoring guides and resources
- Technology infrastructure and software (if needed)
- Participant Knowledge/Skills/Attitude assessment tools
- Program evaluation instruments
- A pilot to test if the program meets the organization’s expectations/requirements
- A review of implementation and evaluation costs, effort required and schedule

IMPLEMENT

The fourth step of the ADDIE process is “**Implement.**” It is during this stage that all the work up to this point is put into action. If the planning in the first three steps has been done well, then the implementation stage should also go well. The actual hard-copy products of this stage are the completed knowledge/skills/attitude assessments, attendance records, and completed participant feedback forms. Below are the tasks to be completed in this phase of the process:

- Rollout program communications to stakeholders.
- Produce program materials and aids.
- Prepare coaches/mentors/trainers.
- Install technology infrastructure and services (if needed).
- Set up administrative databases and systems.
- Install job aids.
- Set up venue(s) for the program.
- Schedule participants.
- Conduct training sessions.
- Implement training transfer strategies.
- Conduct participant KSA assessments.
- Collect participant feedback.

EVALUATE

The fifth and final step of the ADDIE process is “**Evaluate.**” Many people misunderstand this stage. They think that if you evaluate the learning experiences by collecting participant feedback forms, then you are done. This is far from accurate. Remember that this is a proactive process. Once and done evaluations are not proactive as they do not consider the long-term impact of the training.

People who do this stage well collect participant feedback and take the information to learn how to improve the program – and then they make the changes necessary for that improvement. They also continually assess the impact that the training is having on the employees, the department, and the organization as a whole. They do this to ensure that the training is achieving the desired results. If it stops doing this, the training must be changed or replaced with something more appropriate.

The products of this stage are completed evaluations and reports that summarize the implications of the evaluations. Sometimes the evaluation results indicate that the ADDIE process must be started over because a different direction is needed. Proactive project leaders will be open to starting over from scratch if they believe it is necessary. Below are the primary tasks found in this ADDIE step:

- Collect training program evaluation data.
- Collect project evaluation data.
- Review training program performance.
 - number of employees trained
 - percent participants passed (if applicable)
 - participant satisfaction
- Review project performance.
 - cost
 - schedule
 - scope
 - stakeholder satisfaction
 - project team satisfaction
- Report program and project performance results.

According to the American Society of Training and Development's *2005 State of the Industry Report*, the 29 top learning organizations (those that won the ASTD BEST Award in 2005) take a proactive approach to employee training by having formal processes in place to align short- and long-term business strategies with competency and learning needs. ADDIE is just such a process, and the results are well worth the effort put into it.