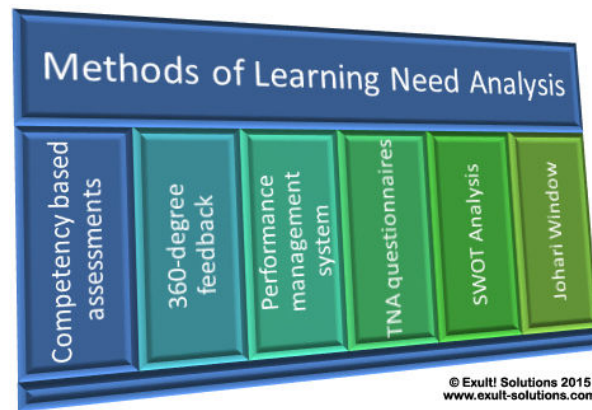


# A Concept Note on Training Need Analysis



Training Need Analysis (TNA) is the systematic process of determining and ordering training goals, measuring training needs and deciding on priorities for training action. We identify a gap as a training need when there is a difference between the actual and required human performance in some specific areas of operations and where improved training is the most economical way of eliminating the difference.

Not every performance gap qualifies as a training need. The gaps could be due to:

- Business environment: Where the changes in the business, such as recession or retrenchment lead to lower performance
- Motivational needs: Which is caused due to lack of morale in employees or inaccurate recruitment
- Work environment issues: When the work environment does not facilitate performance owing to factors such as inadequate resources, poor leadership, adverse policies, etc.

## Benefits of TNA

Here are the benefits of doing a systematic TNA:

- It demonstrates the organizational focus on performance.
- It clearly identifies the routes to close organizational performance gaps.
- Through involvement, it builds internal commitment to achieve organizational targets.
- It throws light on non-training issues, thus falsifying the assumption that training can fix all performance gaps, and in the process saving costs for the organization.

## Common methods of TNA

### Competency based assessments

These involve identifying competencies relevant to the roles in question through multiple methods including reference to the key result areas, interview with the incumbents, job diaries, focus groups,



etc. After identifying the key competencies that enable the person to do well in a role, there are the following steps:

- Create the competency dictionary that describes every competency and the observable levels of performance therein
- Develop an assessment process to check for presence of the identified competencies (through assessment centre, online assessments, hybrid assessments, etc.)
- Run the competency assessment process
- Map the results to the competency dictionary and identify the gaps between demonstrated performance and desired performance
- Outline the training needs based on the gaps derived through the assessment process

Advantage of this process is that it is a scientific method to approach TNA and gives credible performance-oriented results. The online or hybrid model of assessments also makes it feasible in terms of time.

### 360-degree feedback

These is a powerful way of deriving training needs based on a system of comprehensive feedback. Every person whose training needs have to be derived is identified and a feedback mechanism is designed to capture responses about functional and behavioural performance. A comprehensive 360 degree feedback would include responses from a person's superior, peer, subordinate, customer (internal/external) and any other person directly affected by the incumbent's performance at work.

These responses are compiled and viewed in the context of the person's role and career path in the organisation, after which training gaps are identified. An interview with the person is also a part of the process to understand if there is a gap between the self-image and the perceptions of the person by others. This gap can be corrected through coaching and dialogue.

This approach is advantageous because it gives a balanced view and a fair analysis of every person and can lead to correction of conflicts, if any, within teams. If this is being implemented for a large group, it can be relatively time-consuming. People will also need to be educated on the scope of feedback using the 360-degree approach.

### Performance management system

A popular way of deriving TNA is through the performance management system. During appraisals, the performance gaps can be identified through discussions between the supervisors and subordinates. It is possible to integrate a questionnaire focussed on training needs in the appraisal process, which gives a structure to the discussion and ensures that both subjective and objective inputs are captured.

This method is widely used since it is logistically feasible and does not consume too much time. However, depending upon the relationship between the supervisors and subordinates, the data captured may sometimes be too subjective. Also, the training needs gathered through this process



may not necessarily align with the growth needs of the organisation since it may include personal aspirations of the people involved.

### TNA questionnaires

This method is useful if the organisation is clear about the general areas of training needs. For example, if everyone in the organisation needs to undergo training on core competencies, this method is useful to identify the levels of needs. TNA questionnaires can be designed to capture data about what employees think are their learning needs, how these trainings or other interventions can improve their performance on the job and benefit the organisation.

TNA questionnaires work well if the questions are focussed on a particular area or competency. If the questionnaire is too broad-based and allows respondents to think of learning needs in any area, then the responses are likely to be extremely varied and hence not very helpful to derive specific needs.

### SWOT Analysis

This method is an alternative when an organisation does not have a competency framework in place. The L&D department or a consultant can facilitate a SWOT analysis of a team/department/unit that has performance issues and help to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to that area. The leaders can then focus on areas of weaknesses and threats and develop learning interventions to mitigate them.

### Johari Window

This tool can be used for TNA when a small group of people (team/department) have a performance issue. The facilitator can ask the group to look at the team/department as a person and then use the Johari Window as a tool to identify the areas of strengths and improvements. The blind spots in the Window can also point towards human capital readiness in the organisation.

