EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR AKROMA PLAZA HOTEL

A CAPSTONE APPLIED PROJECT

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Applied Project Report is the result of my own work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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Candidate's Name: Nadine Majdoub

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the Applied Project Report were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of applied projects laid down by Ashesi University College.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Akroma Plaza Hotel has had to step up its service delivery efforts to be able to adequately deliver on its core mandate of service delivery as a hospitality establishment. The purpose of this project is to aid the hotel in the provision of unparalleled service delivery in the face of increasing customer expectations by proposing a structured employee training and development strategy. Ghana's hospitality industry has been described as one of the major emerging markets in Africa and the atmosphere of the country encourages its development with a relatively conducive political atmosphere. However, aside being plagued with utility shortages and taxes, the industry faces the issue of a poorly qualified pool of labour, from which all hospitality establishments must recruit personnel. Located in Takoradi in Ghana's Western Region, Akroma Plaza Hotel is one not excluded from this issue as it strives to attain heights in hospitality.

Results of a needs assessment conducted on the establishment showed that employees were aware of their high-paced working environment and how uniquely work is carried out at Akroma Plaza Hotel. Accordingly, they felt training was extremely necessary. Although other issues such as inventory management and staff motivation were raised, it was recommended that a training and development strategy be proposed in the hopes that it would help curb some of the issues. Literature reviewed ascertained that training and developing employees resulted in reduced business costs and increased motivation of employees. The proposed solution is a two-part training and development strategy based on the works of Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994) and Noe (2010). Limitations of the project included distance barriers and it was recommended that an inventory management system be developed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

"*Five-star service in a two-star hotel.*" Akroma Plaza Hotel is situated in

Takoradi in the Western Region and has been operating for over a decade. However, in

its efforts to continue attaining heights in its line of work, it has encountered certain

challenges such as the quality of workforce in the Oil City (Takoradi), which it aims to

overcome. Moreover, the hotel has a high staff turnover due to staff mainly being

unqualified to handle the job positions they signed up for, a characteristic common in

Ghana's hospitality industry (Mintah, Commey, & Kuuder, 2014). This is contrary to

Crain's (2009) assertion that the human resources of a firm are the firm's strategic assets,

in that, the unqualified human resources of the Akroma Plaza Hotel are a form of

impediment to achieving the firm's vision of becoming a major player in the hospitality

industry. The purpose of this project, therefore, is to contribute to the achievement of the

hotel's goals by formulating a training and development strategy aimed at improving the

skills and competencies of the hotel's workforce.

1.2 Rationale for The Selection of Akroma Plaza

Having resided in Takoradi all my life, I have witnessed Akroma Plaza's growth

from its establishment in 2002 into the industry giant it is currently. I have had the

pleasure of working there several times in different job roles including kitchen staff,

waitress, accounting intern and finally, temporary accountant. In all my periods of work

in this establishment, I have been able to observe not only the prevailing organisational

culture, but also the persistent situation of employee turnover. Upon further enquiry, I

was informed by both the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer

(CFO) of the challenge they are facing concerning poor employee performance.

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Accordingly, I became greatly interested in taking it up as an applied project due to the interest I have in the field of Human Resource Management and my firm believe that a firm's human resources are its greatest source of competitive advantage. In this regard, my aim for this project is to aid in the creation of a situation at Akroma Plaza Hotel where its employees are the greatest force behind its competitive advantage and success, rather than impediments.

1.3 Company Profile

Established in the year 2002 by the late Mrs. Gladys Ansah, Akroma Plaza Hotel started operating as a restaurant dedicated to serving popular and palatable local and continental dishes at comparably affordable prices. It is strategically situated close to important locations in Takoradi such as the central police station, harbour, airport and business centre. Essentially, after the introduction of infrastructural improvements, Akroma Plaza Restaurant became Akroma Plaza Hotel in 2008. Currently, the hotel features 61 well-appointed rooms, 4 conference halls, a gym and swimming pool exclusively for lodgers, a restaurant and a café, as well as a play area for children (Images found in the Appendix i). The conference facilities range from 25 seating capacity to 1000 capacity to accommodate a large variety of events. Having commenced in 2003 with 35 staff members, the institution presently operates with 118 staff members due to expansion. There are four main departments in the organisation, namely the Administrative, Food and Beverage, Kitchen and Housekeeping departments.

Akroma Plaza Hotel brands itself as the 'pinnacle of hospitality' and dedicates every facet of its work to living up to this assertion by offering all its visitors a taste of proverbial Ghanaian hospitality. It offers a stimulating environment for diverse occasions, be it lodging, outing with family and friends, parties and conferences, among others. Although its doors are open to all groups and categories of people, the hotel's

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main target market is members of the middle class, as well as business travellers. As a

reward for its persistence in service delivery, the establishment has been awarded on

several occasions by the Ghana Hotels Association, among other bodies.

As part of corporate social responsibility efforts, Akroma Plaza has over the

years, initiated feeding programs in schools for disabled children within the Sekondi-

Takoradi metropolis. Also, the company has been benevolent to both the female and male

prisons in Takoradi. Aside all these efforts, the Ama Akroma Foundation was set up in

honour of the hotel's owner who passed on to help patients who cannot afford certain

complicated medical procedures with the funds to do so.

1.4 Mission and Vision of Akroma Plaza
Mission

- To provide affordable luxury for locals and travellers for all purposes of visit.

- To attain heights in the provision of services in the hospitality industry.

Vision

To become an institution and brand recognized and renowned throughout Ghana and

internationally as a formidable destination based on hospitality.

1.5 Industry Analysis
The purpose of this analysis is to shed light on Akroma Plaza Hotel in terms of its

background and context, including external forces governing its operation. Specifically,

the PESTLE analysis is used for this purpose.

1.5.1 Overview of Ghana's Hospitality Industry
The hospitality industry is divided into three parts namely, the Food and

Beverage division, Tourism division and Hotel division (Madison, 2018). The tourism

industry in Ghana is the country's third most prominent earner of its foreign exchange

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(Turkson, 2012), implying the relevance of the hotel industry to the functioning of its

economy. Membership as at May 2017 comprises 2,723 across all the ten regions of

Ghana (Bamgbose, 2018) and includes hotels and lodges, ranging from budget hotels

(rating below one star) and one to five-star hotels (Ghana Hotels Association, n.d.).

Ghana's hospitality industry has been described as one of the major emerging

markets in Africa (PWC, 2017). Boosted by new government policies such as better

airport and transportation infrastructure coupled with political stability, the industry has

been predicted to grow by 2.1% in 2018 and 2.3% in the year 2019. It has been reported,

however, that there is a greater industry wide focus on securing 'hardware' such as

attractions and transportation as opposed to concentrating on the training and

development of personnel (Mintah, Commey, & Kuuder, 2014). Consequently, there is a

dearth of locally hired skilled personnel in Ghanaian hospitality business (Mintah,

Commey, & Kuuder, 2014).

1.5.2. External Context of The Problem

Here, the PESTLE analysis, is used to map out external factors influencing the

operations of Akroma Plaza hotel in Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal

and Environmental spheres.

1.5.2.1. Political

Ghana's system of governance is one which thrives on both the country's citizens

and institutions having wholly accepted democracy as the ideal system of governance for

the country. This is because of the country's rocky experience with less favourable

systems such as military dominated rule (Annobil, 2016). Consequently, political

stability is a feature of the country, seen especially through peaceful transitions and

changes in governments, the most recent of which was seen in the year 2017. Such an

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environment is essential not only for businesses to thrive, but also to attract investors, tourists and other travellers for patronage of the businesses in the hospitality industry.

Ghana's environment is one which not only allows both local and foreign businesses to thrive, but also enables them to have a say in how their activities are regulated (Annobil, 2016). However, Ghana's lenient system has brought about the influx of foreign hotels which have capped great market share and serve as great competition for locally owned hotels, guest houses and lodges. On a more positive note, however, the generally exorbitant prices charged at these foreign hotels enables the local ones to capitalize on their lower prices (News Ghana, 2016). This tactic is noticeably employed by Akroma Plaza, where customers can get a good level of luxury and comfort at a much more affordable price.

1.5.2.2. Economical

Ghana's economy is regarded as the second-largest in West Africa and has seen its Gross Domestic Product shoot up from boosts such as the commercialisation of its oil and gas reserves (PWC, 2017). Having realised the contribution of the hospitality sector to Ghana's economy as a major earner of foreign exchange, the current government of Ghana under President Nana Akuffo-Addo has begun implementing the 'Sectors 15-year Development Plan' through means such as improving road infrastructure (PWC, 2017). However, the country is still struggling to pay debts to the tune of over $1.6 billion which requires measures such as taxation, reportedly hindering the progress of hotels (Arthur, 2016).

In the past decade, one of the main challenges to the smooth functioning of Ghana's economy has been access to utilities, specifically electricity. The lack of this resource has caused challenges in daily production activities amounting to about $2.1 million and hence a great barrier to doing business effectively despite the politically

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stable environment created in the nation (Kumi, 2017). Businesses such as Akroma Plaza

which require constant access to electricity have had to spend large amounts of money on

procuring alternative sources of power such as generators and solar panels.

1.5.2.3. Social

Currently, Ghana has a population of over 28 million people. There is the

growing trend where Ghanaians have shifted away from patronizing local dishes to

embrace alternatives from foreign fast food outlets such as the Kentucky Fried Chicken

(KFC) company (Searcey & Richtel, 2017). However, the unique selling point of KFC is

that it manages to merge flavours that caused it to become famous in the West and merge

it with contextual flavours of the countries it penetrates, with Ghana being no exception

(Searcey & Richtel, 2017). In this way, KFC's products become in a way, irresistible.

Consequently, there have been reports of rising obesity in Ghana due to the consistent

patronage of these fast food meals full of salt, sugar and fat and hence, the rejection of

purely Ghanaian dishes which are relatively healthy. Even local dishes are being

'modified' to conform to the new and sophisticate palate of the consumer. The

emergence of these cheaper fast food joints in Ghana conversely affects the operations of

restaurants, cafés, hotels which serve relatively healthier food such as Akroma Plaza

Hotel.

1.5.2.4. Technological

The hospitality industry is one which has benefitted greatly from technological

advancements in communication infrastructure. There have been improvements in

communication, reservation systems and coordination through the usage of both

simplified and sophisticated computer infrastructure, all of which are of great benefit to

both the customer and the business. Worldwide, the most prominent of these

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advancements may be said to be the internet which aids immensely in marketing a

business's services and offers, done through the creation of websites, blogs and social

media, among others (Sharma, 2016).

Currently, companies can make their presence known and advertise their

offerings through the usage of channels and social media platforms such as Twitter,

Instagram and Facebook, and put up pictures and images of their establishments. These

high definition pictures are also taken using technological instruments such as high

definition cameras and subjected to editing tools such as Photoshop to further enhance

the appearance of these images. Worth noting also is the use of computer systems and

internet to coordinate the running of hospitality institutions in different areas, where

records of different branches are synced and monitored by owner and managers (Smith,

2018). This makes expansion and establishment of more branches easier. Reservations by

customers may also be made very easily through websites or simple phone calls.

Akroma Plaza Hotel has benefitted immensely from the technological

advancements mentioned. The institution has managed to create an online presence

through the creation of a website and reviews of customers posted on the internet of the

hotel, which is retrieved and used to improve upon its service delivery and offerings, if

need be. Arising from the need for connectivity in this day, Akroma Plaza has also had to

focus a lot of effort in acquiring enabling infrastructure in the form of Wi-Fi, especially

to ensure that business travellers are able to work from the hotel as well.

1.5.2.5. Legal

In Ghana, certain laws guide the functioning of businesses, especially service

delivery businesses such as Akroma Plaza Hotel. Examples of these laws are the Labour

Act, 2003 delineating the guidelines surrounding treatment of human resources at the

workplace. Other laws which surround the hospitality industry include Income Tax Act,

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2015 (Act 896) and Ghana Revenue Authority Act 2009 (Act 791), both regarding the

compulsory payment of relevant taxes by employers (Ghana Investment Promotion

Centre, 2018). Employers such as Akroma Plaza Hotel are also required legally to make

monthly contributions to the Social Security and National Insurance Trust on behalf of

employees as pension payments for the respective employees. This is under the National

Pensions Act 2008 (Act 766).

1.5.2.6. Environmental

Firms in Ghana have obligations also to avoid harming the environment in their

line of work. In Ghana, the main institution established to regulate businesses on this

specific mandate is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This work of this

agency is backed by the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1994 (Act 490) (Ghana

Investment Promotion Centre, 2018). With the hospitality industry, the main regulatory

areas of the EPA have to do with energy, water and waste management (Kuuder,

Prempeh, Mumuni, Adongo & Amoako, 2012).   In terms of energy conservation,

features such as installation of energy-saving bulbs are considered and with water

conservation, the use of low flow shower heads and use of recycled water for irrigation

of flower beds are checked (Kuuder, et al., 2012). With waste disposal, environmentally

unsafe methods of disposing waste such as burning are checked.

Akroma Plaza Hotel has managed to stick to a number of these regulations by

installing solely low flow shower heads to conserve water and installing only energy

saving LED bulbs in every part of the hotel. Facing the situation of inconsistent power

supply in the nation, hotels have been driven to consider other cleaner sources of electric

power such as solar and wind to ensure continuance of their business (Bamgbose, 2018).

Akroma Plaza is one of such hotels which has resorted to powering its facilities partly

with solar power to ensure smooth flow of business at the hotel.

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1.6 SWOT ANALYSIS

Presented in Table 1.1 is an analysis of Akroma Plaza Hotel's strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities and threats to optimal operation. It is based on information

acquired from interviews with the hotel's management and staff.

Table 1.1: Summary of SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Strategic location - Affordable, graduated conference facilities (Largest auditorium in Takoradi) - Well-known brand - Moderate hotel rates	- Staff turnover - Poor staff qualification - Absence of key departmental functions - Centralised organisational structure - Poor marketing and online presence
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- Improving technology - Easier and cost-effective marketing methods - Expansion	- Power fluctuations - Poor governmental support - Competition from international hotel brands - Poor training from tertiary institutions

Strengths: Akroma Plaza Hotel is strategically located less than ten minutes away from

many important locations in Takoradi such as the city centre and the Takoradi port and

airport. For the decade and a half that it has existed, the organisation has managed to

build a strong name and brand for itself within the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis, the

entire Western Region and beyond. As part of its facilities, the hotel can boast of a

number of conference and event spaces graduated by size from 25 seater to 1000 seater,

the largest in the entire metropolis. The hotel also offers a great deal of luxury at very

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affordable rates and is perfect for individuals who would like tasty local dishes prepared hygienically with a homemade touch.

Weaknesses: According to both staff and management of the hotel, there exists the persistent situation of staff turnover where members of staff voluntarily or involuntarily terminate their employment. According to management, many staff recruited are unqualified for the jobs they apply for. Because of this, customers complain of poor service delivery occasionally. Akroma Plaza Hotel also lacks certain departments or formal functions within the firm such as human resource management and marketing which have led to some of the staff being dissatisfied with work and a poor online presence, respectively.

Opportunities: Akroma Plaza Hotel stands to benefit greatly from constantly improving restaurant technology such as industrial cooking equipment and storage units. These technologies also come in the form of accounting and stock monitoring software, as well as information infrastructure to aid in storing company records and backing them up. The organisation could also utilise easier and more cost-effective marketing tools such as Facebook and Instagram to promote itself properly even in the absence of a formal marketing function or department.

Threats: Although lessened, there still exists the situation of power fluctuations across Ghana, thus, affecting business across the country. Akroma Plaza Hotel is one of the organisations affected greatly by this due to the need to always have power available for the use of all guests it accommodates. Attempts to combat this problem with stand-by generators prove very expensive; trying to tackle it in an environmentally sound way using solar panels is more expensive due to the high cost of purchasing solar panels in

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Ghana or importing them. In the area of governmental support, impediments come also in the form of taxes and foreign exchange fluctuations. Furthermore, Akroma Plaza faces competition from other hotels, especially internationally recognised hotels such as the Marriot chain of hotels. This is because expatriates who form a large part of Akroma Plaza's customer base are more accustomed to these well-known international hotels and may prefer to stick to what they know and are familiar with.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the project and the rationale behind it, as well as provide background on the firm on which the project is being done, Akroma Plaza Hotel. External context was also provided on the operations of the firm by means of PESTEL analysis and a SWOT analysis conducted to assess the firm internally and externally. The PESTEL analysis showed that Ghana is a conducive environment for carrying business although plagued by utility issues and increasing leniency on foreign firms competing against local ones. The SWOT analysis highlights Akroma Plaza's strategic location, and opportunities for development such as online marketing. However, it also mentions the firm's staff turnover situation as a weakness and utility issues as one its threats. The subsequent chapter presents a needs assessment conducted to ascertain the need for employee training and development at Akroma Plaza.

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CHAPTER 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2.1. Chapter Overview

  The purpose of this chapter is to assess the current situation of Akroma Plaza to obtain insights on the specific and general needs of workers with regards to training and development. Basically, the intention of conducting this needs assessment is to determine whether training needs exist at Akroma Plaza and the specific tasks that require training before it is carried out.

2.2. Description of Needs Assessment

  A needs assessment may be defined as a process conducted with the purpose of examining how business is being carried out in an organisation as opposed to the way it should be done properly to attain the organisation's objectives (University of Minnesota, 2018). A needs assessment therefore considers factors such as resources in the form of knowledge, abilities and procedures, and how they contribute to the goals of the firm. The goal of the assessment is to determine what needs are being met and which ones are not being addressed. Methods to be used in conducting a needs assessment may include focus group discussions, interviews and surveys, as well as using information from organisational documents. Using organisational documents may be a more secondary and indirect form of conducting a needs assessment. More direct and formal methods would be using interviews and focus groups discussions to obtain necessary data. The decision as to whether to employ a direct or indirect method would rest on the type of problem that needs to be solved.

  Conducting a needs assessment on training and development requires several considerations. Noe (2005) addresses these considerations in his book on training and development where he talks about three main assessment points: organisational, person and task analyses. Organisational analysis has to do with how appropriate training and development is, given an organisation's strategy, resource endowment to enable the

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training as well as the level of support from peers and managers for the training. Person

analysis is basically used to determine which person or group of people need training in

the firm and hence considers the deficiencies which merit the training and how ready

employees are to receive the training.

Task analysis is the aspect which sheds light on the important tasks within the

firm and hence, the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to be able to accomplish

these important tasks. To be able to capture all these considerations effectively,

managers, trainers and employees would all have to be involved in the needs assessment

process (Noe, 2005). Assessment questions must be designed to accommodate each

group based on what information they can offer. For example, the CEO of Akroma Plaza

will be in the position to provide information on the strategic goals of the firm as

opposed to a waitress at the establishment. In the case of Akroma Plaza Hotel, topmost

level managers who are the CEO and the CFO will have to be included in the assessment

due to the centralized nature of affairs at the hotel.

2.3. Methodology

The research objective for this needs assessment is to find out what training and

development practices are being used at Akroma Plaza Hotel to improve customer

service delivery and grow the business and their effectiveness thereof. To accomplish this

objective, data is gathered by paying attention to the following specific objectives are

outlined as to find out:

1. the criteria used in selecting employees for training and development programs

2. if training and development processes are tailored to address employees' specific
   needs for peak performance

3. if opportunities are created for trained employees to exhibit skills acquired during
   training

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    4.   the role appraisal systems play in determining the performance of trained

          employees

It should be noted that these specific objectives were formulated using ideas from

organisation, person and task analyses, discussed previously.

       The method of data collection employed for this descriptive study is the

qualitative method to capture the perceptions of workers on the current state of the

organisation. The specific tool used was the interview method. The interviews, of a semi-

structured nature, were partly conducted over the phone due to distance barriers. Being

semi-structured or guided means that a set of open questions were predetermined to allow

for further probing especially when answers provided for the questions are unclear

(Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Three groups identified for the needs assessment were

employees, management or departmental heads and employers or executive officers.

Questions were set for each group and are provided in Appendix ii.

2.4. Data Collection Process

       The interviewing process began on 8th February 2018 and ended on 12th March

2018. In total, 34 people were interviewed across all the three groups. The convenience

sampling method was employed for the data collection exercise. With this method,

employees who were available during working hours were asked to participate in the

study, if they so wished. It should be noted that in choosing this method, participants

were sought from each department and the size of the respective department played a part

in determining the number of employees to be sampled from it. Presented in Table 2.1

below are some statistics on the interviewees and departments covered.

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Table 2.1: Breakdown of Interviewee Categories by Department

Administrative	Kitchen
• 2 Employers • 1 General Manager • 2 HODs • 1 Employee	• 1 HOD • 1 Supervisor • 18 Employees
Restaurant	Housekeeping
• 1 HOD • 2 employees	• 2 Supervisors • 3 employees

2.5. Employer Insights

One interview was conducted for both employers, that is, the CEO and the CFO. The purpose for interviewing them was to gain information privy to them due to their job descriptions on how Akroma Plaza functions, the nature of the workforce and their training needs, if any. Key insights from their interview are summarised below:

Nature of working environment

According to both of employers, the working environment at Akroma Plaza Hotel may categorised as both cordial and stressful due to the apparent low level of critical thinking applied on the job by staff.

Link of training to strategic goals of the organisation

Employee training and development was agreed by both employers to be tied into the strategic goals of the hotel to a large extent. This is because training and developing employees yields improved standards, increase sales and raise the status of the hotel. It was also mentioned that further development of employees was warranted due to increasing awareness of the hospitality industry by clientele and hence, increasing expectations with regards to service delivery. Both employers concurred that although Akroma's target market is middle-income earners, it serves low and high-income earners

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as well. The CEO also noted that the hotel seemed to be offering a level of service delivery high above that typically attributed to a two-star hotel. In her own words, "*five-star service in a two-star hotel.*" However, despite all this, she felt it necessary to revamp the hotel's training efforts.

Training programs offered

Employee recruitment at Akroma is done in batches. Training programs are organised by the CFO for each new batch of workers for the purposes of orientation, induction and preliminary interaction. The hotel employs mainly on-the-job training (OJT) in acquainting employees with their job responsibilities. It was said that the need for training at Akroma has increased and gotten more structured over the years for several reasons including the increasing sophistication of clientele. It was mentioned that a professional had been called to organise training sessions one time.

Determining training needs

The process of determining the training needs of employees at Akroma begins from the recruitment stage where during the recruitment process, deficiencies are determined from the interview process and resumes. These deficiencies are addressed using the two types of training identified at Akroma namely, OJT and classroom form of training. However, sometimes, employees do not become properly accustomed to their responsibilities. In some cases, these defaulters resign or are sacked. When asked about training resources, the CEO commented that the hotel was lacking in that regard. However, she mentioned that there have been some instances where supervisors and HODs have attended external workshops and conferences organised by the Ghana Tourism Authority. L'AINE HR services and Ghana Standards Authority. These sessions were paid for by Akroma Plaza.

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Employee Turnover and the expressed need for training at Akroma Plaza Hotel

There exists a situation of employee turnover at Akroma Plaza according to both employers who both conduct recruitment processes at the hotel due to the lack of a formal HR function in the organisation. Reportedly, most employees do not perform as expected despite the qualifications they provided in their resumes and the attached testimonials. A lot more is expected especially of employees in managerial positions because of their higher qualifications and the responsibilities attached to their positions. A number of employees are sacked as a result of insubordination, laziness and dishonesty; there have been a few cases where guests have been overbilled by dishonest workers. Others leave also because they are unable to meet the nature of work schedules at Akroma.

Recruitment to replace those who leave takes place every other month and is tedious for both employers due to the already over burdening nature of their work. Majority of applicants are school leavers. However, all employees must be able to read and write except for cleaners, dishwashers and gardeners. According to both employers, the situation exists of unqualified labour due to the nature of training given to these people by educational institutions in Takoradi. In this regard, the employers both make the best decisions they can out of the pool of unqualified labour available to them and hence, their desire for a better way to train them to meet the hotel's standard of service delivery. Reportedly, there have been a lot of complaints from customers regarding poor service delivery, poor interactions, an occasional lack of toiletries in the hotel rooms, among others. Due to these prevailing situations at Akroma Plaza Hotel, both employers and management are unable to organise developmental sessions for employees as they are concerned that these employees may leave and utilise the knowledge they gain elsewhere.

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2.6. Management and HOD Insights

Eight people from this category were each interviewed in separate sessions. Interviewees were from four different departments, as shown in the breakdown in Table 2.1 above. The demographics of interviewees in this category are presented in Appendix iii. Almost all interviewees admitted that their job descriptions and roles had been altered over the course of their employment at Akroma Plaza. The few who admitted that their positions were the same were newer staff who had not been employed for more than two years. Purportedly, training at Akroma Plaza is mainly one-on-one with HODs and on the job, aside orientation training done in a classroom format with the CFO and CEO. Interviewees also spoke about having weekly meetings with the CEO and CFO to discuss any problems going on in their respective departments, as well as their departmental performance levels. Training materials and resources for employees were reported to mainly be provided for only on-the-job training in the form of ingredients, cooking equipment, cleaning materials and so on. However, for the orientation sessions, supplementary training sessions and weekly management meetings, no resources were provided as said by the employers in their interview.

It was reported also that employees identified as slow learners during training were retrained and taken through one-on-one sessions with heads of departments if need be. However, there have been instances where some employees were unable to perform even after being retrained and corrected severally. These employees usually resign or are sacked in extreme cases. Evaluation of the training administered by HODs on the job and in the one-on-sessions is done solely by observing the conduct of the trainee post training. Trainee feedback is not requested on how training might be improved. However, trainees are welcome to request further training and understanding. Trainees are also given the chance to exhibit skills and knowledge acquired after each instance of training. In the housekeeping department, after training is administered, trainees have to go

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through practical tests to ensure they are ready to be assigned a floor of the hotel to work on. Lastly, interviewees felt that management of Akroma Plaza were ready to teach and instruct in a non-condescending manner at all time and this made them approachable and improved the working experience at Akroma Plaza. However, some of the interviewees admitted that there was more room for improvement with regards to staff motivation and service delivery.

2.7. Employee Insights

Interviewees in this category were sought from all departments except for the security and maintenance departments. Interview questions and relevant graphs and percentages for this section are found in Appendix ii and Appendix iii respectively. Data collected from the interviews revealed that almost all employees had an educational background of a sort. However, it was realised that out of the ten employees interviewed from the local division of the kitchen department, only one had received training from a vocational school, as against seven out of nine interviewees from the continental and pastry divisions.

Most of the older respondents from the kitchen had received up to junior high school level education and had acquired skills and knowledge in hospitality from work experience. Out of the 24 interviewees, 25 percent mentioned that they had never received training at Akroma. Of the 75 percent who agreed they had been trained at Akroma Plaza, all of them reported that after each instance of training, they were given the opportunity to show off what they had learnt on the job. They all had positive feedback about the training they had received. However, some of them related that they were scared to give feedback on the training and asked that an avenue be created for this. On how their working experience could be improved, respondents provided answers such as improved transportation to work, improved maintenance of work gadgets and

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equipment and reduced instances of ingredient stock outs and shortages. The waiters

interviewed also felt that their jobs would be easier if food preparation times in the

kitchen were quicker, so they could serve customers faster and more effectively. Lastly,

some interviewees also recognised the need for a greater communal spirit among workers

at the hotel.

2.8. Summary and Analysis of Insights

The needs assessment results revealed that Akroma Plaza Hotel is a high-paced

working environment whose customers expect consistent five-star service. However,

management and heads of departments have realised a gap between what they feel is

optimal performance of staff and what the actual performance is. They recognise the

generally poor qualifications of staff in Ghana's hospitality industry and hence the

increased need to equip them with all the skills and knowledge necessary for the

employees to meet the increasing expectations of the hotel's clients. This was revealed as

a characteristic of the hospitality industry in the industry analysis conducted in Chapter 1.

Table 2.2, shown below, reveals issues mentioned during the needs assessment.

Table 2.2: Issues identified during the needs assessment

Issue	Functional Area	Implication
Stock outs of working materials	Inventory Management	Inability to satisfy customer orders and carry out duties effectively.
Slow food preparation times	Operations Management	Loss of restaurant customers Loss of revenue
Inadequate staff motivation	Human Resource Management	Low job satisfaction Inadequate performance Turnover

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Substandard service delivery	Human Resource Management	Dissatisfied customers Reduced revenue Reduced popularity and patronage

Throughout the needs assessment process, certain issues cropped up and are said to have triggered the need for changes to be made in at Akroma Plaza. These have been classified as pressure points and are follows:

- ✓ Changing levels of client sophistication and demand.

- ✓ Inadequate performance of staff in all departments.

- ✓ Lack of basic skills necessary to fulfil job responsibilities.

- ✓ Unique and different way in which business is carried out at Akroma Plaza.

2.9. Problem Selection, Justification and Conclusion

Although all the issues presented in the Table 3 are very pertinent, the issue selected to be tackled for this project is substandard service delivery. This is because as a hotel, its main purpose is to provide great service to clients. As such, the issue is going to be tackled from the angle of employee training and development and how this process already employed at Akroma could be revised and made more effective. Also, a number of the issues realised from the needs assessment may be tackled under service delivery using training and development. The subsequent chapter presents a review of literature on training and development programmes and their effect on employee and organisational performance.

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CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a review of literature on employee training and development under the human resource management discipline, identified as a need at Akroma Plaza Hotel. The objective of the literature review is to provide information on the following:

- The relationship between training and development strategies and organisational performance.

- The factors surrounding training and development in an organisation.

- The extent to which training, and development reduces employee turnover.

3.1. Training and Development

Training may be generally defined as efforts planned and designed by a company to cause employees to acquire knowledge, behaviours, attitudes and skills related to their jobs (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, Training, 1994). According to Amissah, Gamor, Deri & Amissah (2016), the service-oriented nature of the hotel industry is such that it immensely depends on employees' behaviours and attitude to render proper service to customers. Hence, employees require training to be able to deliver in their very important roles, which are core to the functioning of this industry. Employee development is mainly structured along the same lines of training in that it concerns also the acquisition of related knowledge, skills and behaviours. The difference between the two lies in training being directed at equipping employees to perform their current jobs whereas development focuses on equipping employees to prepare them for a wide range of jobs in the firm and even jobs that may not exist yet (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 1994).

According to Noe (2010), to be effective, training and development ought to play a strategic role in aiding the business to grow and be successful. This strategic role pertains to training and developing employees in a firm to reach set targets. In this way,

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the firm can maintain a competitive edge in the industry in which it operates. Crain

(2009) asserts in an article that '*only the right people are the strategic assets of a firm*'.

He goes on to include that these strategic assets may only be attained if new recruits are

selected to match the core strategy and values of the firm. Having monitored key players

in several industries, Crain (2009) observes that inevitably, a firm's employees form a

part of its strategic assets not only as a result of strategic recruitment but also through

taking them through appropriate training and development programs. It is noticed that

both authors place great emphasis on strategically and deliberately utilizing training and

development, bringing about congruence in their arguments.

3.2. The Impact of Training and Development

The nature of hospitality organisations is such that their core product is service

delivery, making the service encounter and outcome of service the most vital principles

of success in this industry (Furunes, 2005). Consequently, it is very important that all

systems and resources in hospitality organisations be geared towards the accomplishment

of proper service delivery as a core objective. In this regard, the human resource function

of training and developing employees has been noted to be one of the ways of achieving

good service delivery, consistent levels of excellence and ultimately, reduced costs of

doing business (Chiang, Back, & Canter, 2005).

According to Chatzimouratidis, Theotokas & Lagoudis (2011), employee training

and development causes a lot of positive outcomes among employees such as increased

motivation, drive and job satisfaction. In this way, employee morale is increased even

without having to render benefit packages and so on. It also allows employees to adapt

better to new environments and technologies they are exposed to. In addition, employee

training and development contributes an increased capacity to cater to the needs of an

identified target market (Chiang, Back, & Canter, 2005). Chatzimouratidis et al (2011)

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also conclude that eventually, training and development programs reduce turnover and enhance company image and competitiveness. In summary, one of the main ways to attain great customer service and lengthened employee employment is through having a well-defined employee training and development strategy (Chiang, Back, & Canter, 2005).

3.3. Structuring Training and Development Programs

Essentially, a training plan should feature a specified training site, objectives, method of instruction, selected training resources, designated trainer, and lastly a framework for evaluation (Tanke, 1990). For training to be effective, it should be done in accordance with job descriptions and feature training manuals (Chiang, Back, & Canter, 2005). A lot of companies tend to adopt what has been described as a broader perspective to training by Noe (2010) known as high-leverage learning. This type of learning or training utilizes a form of instructional design approach to training and also marks the firm's training programs against those of other firms- a type of benchmarking. In this regard, employing high-leverage learning in firms ties training to performance improvement and hence consistent redesign and evaluation of training programs in firms to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency (Noe, 2010).

Traditionally, training should encompass four steps namely identifying employee training needs, determining learning objectives, choosing training methods and lastly evaluating the training administered (Furunes, 2005). However, due to the changing times and circumstances, these steps have been broken down further to include other necessary steps. Figure 3.1, provided below, shows a summary of all the components of instructional design in training programs obtained from Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994) and Noe (2010).

Employee Training and Development Strategy
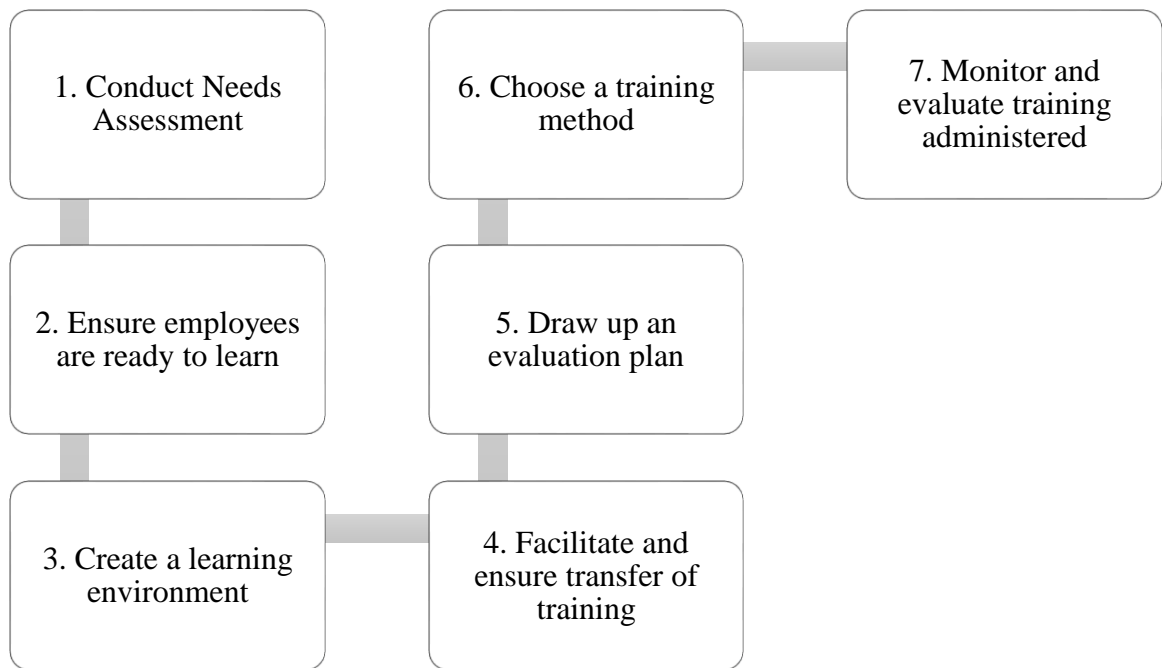
Figure 3.1: Components of the Training Design Process (Source: Noe (2010), Noe,

Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994))

3.4. Choosing Training Methods

According to Chiang, Back and Canter (2005), employee training in the hotel

industry requires constant updates and improvements and hence, there is the need to

accommodate employee expectations and perceptions of training programs employed at

the firm. Chatzimouratidis, Thetokas and Lagoudis (2011) argue that the techniques,

methods and procedures used in training and developing employees vary based on

modern or current needs. Hence, it is important for an appropriate set of criteria to be

developed for evaluation of these training methods in order to promote good decision

making regarding which method should be selected based on the criteria

(Chatzimouratidis, Theotokas, & Lagoudis, 2011). Examples of these criteria include

"*cost, time, applicability, efficiency and employees' motivation"* (Chatzimouratidis,

Theotokas, & Lagoudis, 2011).

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The rise in technological endowment and influence across the globe is notable and comes with an increase in the usage of technologically inclined methods of employee training and development (Lee & Bugler, 2016). According to Wills (1998), these new methods have been realised to bring about high productivity during training in adding to adding depth and making training more versatile. Computer-Based Training (CBT) has been deemed necessary due to the nature of current millennial school leavers employed into the hotel industry who have expectations of being trained using technology as they were used to in their schools and universities (Chan & Choi, 2012). However, this method should not be utilized just for the sake of using it or because another firm or facility has attempted it; CBT should only be used if it fits the firm's objectives and brings about reduced costs in relevant situations (Goad, 1997). Forms of CBT may include using software on CD-ROMS, simulations, virtual reality and online learning.

On-the-job-training (OJT) has been described one employed throughout history and is one of the oldest training methods with traces seen in apprentice setups of ancient cultures (Lee & Bugler, 2016). Essentially, OJT is the kind of training that takes place when a person conveys the skills and knowledge required to perform a certain task to another while both persons are on the job. A study by the Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Motel Association revealed that OJT is the most required by line employees who form about sixty-four percent of a firm's workforce (Lee & Bugler, 2016). In this regard, it is advised that OJT, a method employed as well by Akroma Plaza Hotel be maintained in any training and development strategy taken up by a firm.

Another practical method aside OJT is the role play method where trainees are assigned to act out characters based on a given situation for the purposes of learning from them (Noe, 2010). Using the principle of blended learning discussed previously, role playing could be coupled with other methods such as OJT, as well as an amount of CBT.

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All of this depends on the training objectives and targets established. Role plays are often used in another method known as Behaviour Modelling. According to Noe (2010), this method exposes participants to key behaviours required to perform their respective tasks using models who exhibit these key behaviours. The models may be shown exhibiting these key behaviours through video tapes, after which employees discuss and practice the behaviours through role plays and on the job. Other employee training methods include one-to-one training, team training, lecture or classroom settings, audiotapes and games, among others (Furunes, 2005). All in all, the choice of training method is not as important as matching the chosen method to learning outcomes desired (Noe, 2010). As such, objectives of training and desired outcomes should match training methods always.

3.5. Transfer of Training

According to Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994), transfer of training refers to the application of kills, behaviours and knowledge acquired from training programs in carrying out jobs at the workplace. They propose that one of the ways to ensure effective transfer of learning is to allow trainees to participate in drafting action plans for how they are going to execute what they learn from training on the job. Noe (2010) also presents the cognitive theory of transfer where the occurrence of transfer of training takes place depending on trainees' abilities to retain all that they were taught. In this regard, it is important that training be structured in such a way that the material presented is accepted by the trainees and is easily assimilated by them.

3.5. Factors Surrounding Employee Development

Employee development may be determined by certain outcomes in organisations. These may include the integration of business units, the firm having a global presence, arising business conditions such as mergers, staffing strategies and unionization (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 1994). Also notable among these outcomes is human

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resource planning which refers to the process of identifying, analysing and forecasting

possible changes to enable the organisation to meet these changes in effective and

efficient manners (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 1994). Thus, human resource

planning may be used to identify the skills needed at each point in time in the

organisation and the employees who possess them. The importance of employee

development is realised here because this function prepares employees with the requisite

skills to meet future challenges. Succession planning programs may be tools used for

human resource planning.

According to Campbell (1988), there are four approaches to employee

development namely assessment, job experience acquisition, formal education and the

formation of interpersonal relationships. Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994)

provide expositions on these approaches, summarised into the Figure 3.2 below.

Formal Education	**Job Experience**
Workshops	Job enlargement and rotation
Leadership Conferences	Transfers and promotions
Manager development programs	Downward moves

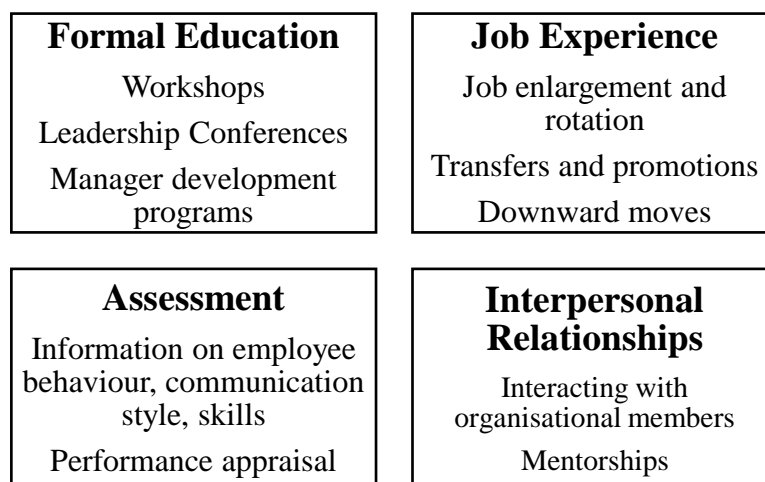| **Assessment**	**Interpersonal Relationships**
Information on employee behaviour, communication style, skills	Interacting with organisational members
Performance appraisal	Mentorships

Figure 3.2: Approaches to Employee Development, Sourced from Noe, Hollenbeck,

Gerhart and Wright (1994)

3.6. Conclusion

This purpose for this chapter has been to give an exposition on employee training

and development strategies in terms of how they are structured, and how they affect

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organisational performance and employee retention. It has been ascertained from the review that training and developing employees is one of the sure ways to improve organisational performance and cut business costs. However, this method is wasteful and unnecessary if it is not aligned to firm strategies and objectives. Akroma Plaza Hotel as an organisation with quality service delivery as its core mandate would definitely require constant training and retraining of its employees in order to accomplish its strategic goals and vision. The proposed solution for Akroma Plaza Hotel as per this literature review would involve a training strategy based on Figure 3.1 in this chapter. It is recommended also that an employee development strategy be formulated around the four training approaches of Noe et al (1994), summarised in Figure 3.2.

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CHAPTER 4: SOLUTION GENERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the proposed solution of this project based on an understanding of Akroma Plaza Hotel's training and development need and a thorough review of literature on the subject matter. The suggested solution is a strategy in two parts, where the first aspect concerns training and the second one, development. For employee training, the solution suggested involves using the training framework drafted in the literature review from the works of Noe (2010) and Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994) illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.
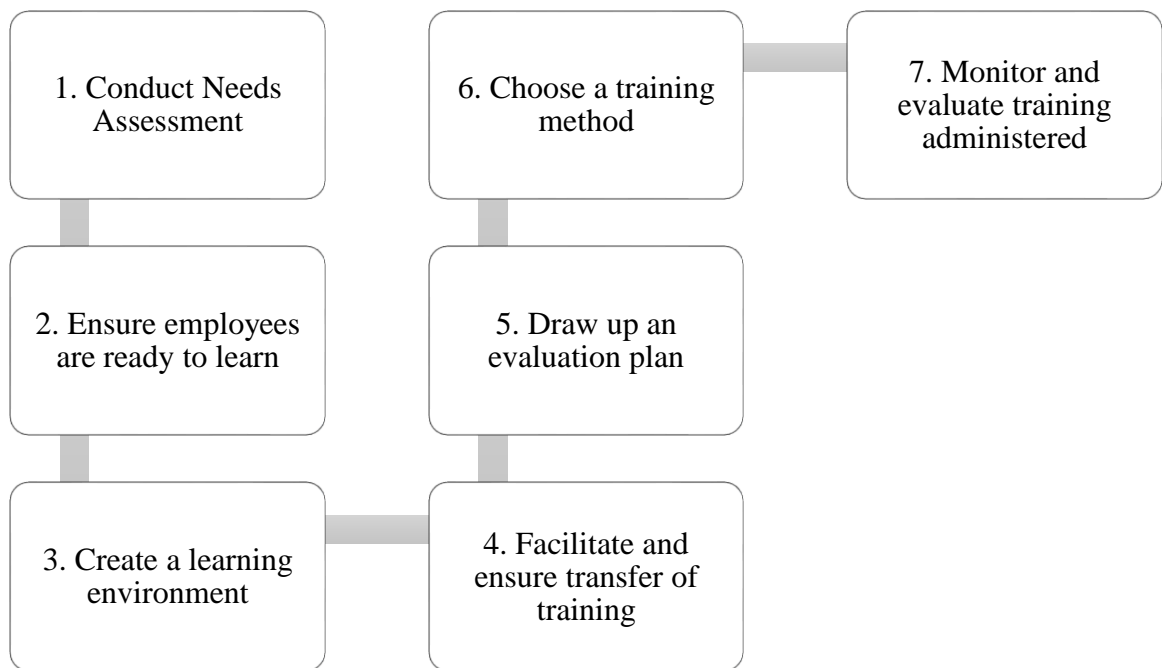

Figure 4.1: Components of the Training Design Process (Source: Noe (2010), Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994))

Drafting a strategy for employee development at Akroma Plaza Hotel will be done using the framework or steps proposed by Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994) provided in the literature review.

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4.2. Training Strategy

The purpose for using the training framework is to provide Akroma Plaza Hotel with a more formal and structured way of training employees, which goes beyond the actual training to include preparing employees to receive training and encouraging feedback in order to improve. The training strategy suggested for Akroma Plaza, however, will collapse the components of the training framework, as seen in Figure 4.2, into three steps illustrated in the diagram below:
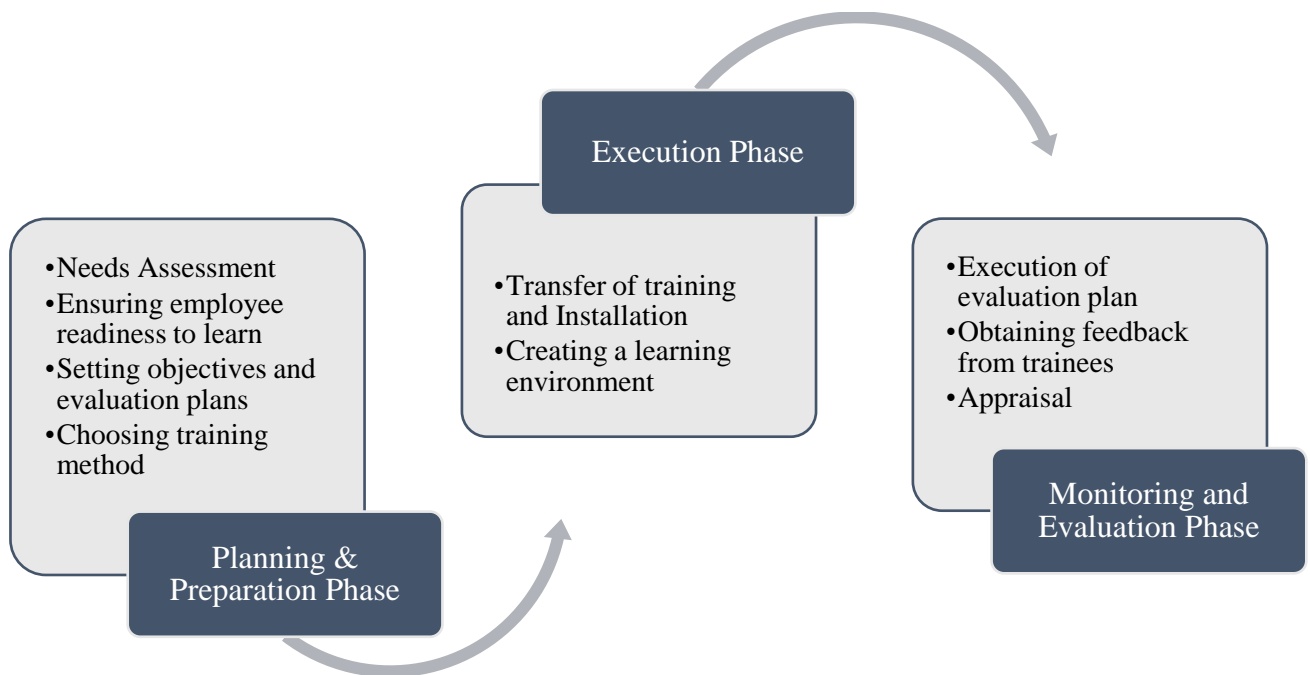
Figure 4.2: Proposed training strategy for Akroma Plaza Hotel

Usually, as identified in the needs assessment, formal group training at Akroma Plaza Hotel is carried out by mainly the CEO and the CFO and on-the-job training (OJT) is carried out by supervisors and heads of departments. However, the proposed training strategy suggested by this project identifies heads of departments and supervisors as the main providers of this information. However, there will be a moderator and co-trainer (most likely a member of general management) at every training session to ensure that the right training is being administered. Also, it is recommended that all managers, heads

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of departments and supervisors be taken through professional workshops on how to train

employees effectively or take courses online. Adding these training roles to their work is

a form of job enlargement under employee development mentioned in the literature

review.

4.2.1. Planning and Preparation Phase

This is the preliminary stage of the training strategy which involves mapping out

how training programs will be conducted in the organisation. It will commence with a

needs assessment involving managers, trainers and employees. As conducted in the

second chapter or phase of this project, a needs assessment is a process conducted to

deduce which needs are being met in a firm and the ones not being catered to. From the

needs assessment, it will be determined whether any issue identified is training related or

may be solved using training and retraining. If it is found that training is necessary, the

specific area of training required and the availability of resources to be devoted to such

training will be identified from the needs assessment using person, organisation and task

analyses. In this way, a needs assessment prevents wasted effort and resources. A list of

questions which may be used in the needs assessment process has been provided in

Appendix iv of this document. The questions were generated from the work of Noe,

Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (1994).

Ensuring employees' willingness to be trained

The second step under the planning stage is ensuring that employees are ready to

receive the training to be administered. This stage would involve making employees

aware that they will be receiving training and getting them to understand and appreciate

the benefits the training would bring them and the firm, based on its strategic goals. In

this vein, employees or prospective trainees should be sensitised on their weaknesses or

deficiencies and how training would bridge any gaps present. This may be done

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constructively through heads of departments and supervisors conducting performance

appraisals and discussing the results of each employee's appraisal with him or her in a

one-on-one session. Also, it is important that basic skill levels be assessed such that

employees may be divided into sub-groups based on these respective skills levels if need

be. This will enable training to be structured to each segment of employees. However,

with more general topics such as first aid training, training may be done in larger, loosely

defined groups.

Objectives and Evaluation Plans

This is a very fundamental part of the planning phase of this solution and involves

trainers and management setting objectives and goals of the training programme. The

ideal working situation is determined and considered in setting these objectives and

goals. This stage is important because enables management to make decisions on what

kind of resources to devote to training in their right quantity. Decisions can also be made

on the type of trainer to employ and whether to bring in external facilitators and trainers.

Examples of objectives are provided in a diagram under Appendix v.

Choosing training methods

At this phase, the trainer or manager must decide which method to be used

dependent on factors such as the training objectives. For example, if the objective of the

training is team building, training methods may involve a lot of group work, behaviour

modelling and role play as described in the literature review. On-the-job training (OJT)

shall be maintained as one of the modes of training at Akroma Plaza because it

encourages practicals and facilitates faster transfer of learning. It is recommended that

the training be done in three parts namely administration of theory or training material,

practical application of material during training and lastly, practical application on the

actual job (OJT).

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4.2.2. Execution Phase

This phase of the training strategy is concerned with administering the training programme to trainees. It will be carried out by trainers who may either be managers and heads of departments or supervisors.

Creating a learning environment

To create an environment for the transfer of knowledge and skills at Akroma Plaza Hotel, certain conditions need to be satisfied to ensure there are no barriers to learning. Under this stage, trainers will ensure that trainees are aware of all the objectives of training and what is expected of them after the training. Technological advancements in social media such as WhatsApp could be used to share the training agenda so that employees can familiarise themselves prior to the training. In addition, trainers will ensure that trainees are given feedback on whether they are accomplishing the objectives of the training spelt out to them. Trainers are also expected to allow trainees to incorporate their own experiences during the training programmes to facilitate better learning because these are experiences trainees can better relate with. This is based on the assertions of Noe et al (1994). Lastly, trainers will ensure that the environment for the training is free of tension and confusion.

Ensure transfer of training and installation

Seating arrangements at this stage are very important and reflect the type of interaction required during the training session between trainees and trainers. The fan-type of seating shown in Figure 4.3 below has been selected as the most ideal form of seating for the training sessions under this solution. This is because it enables trainees to switch from paying attention to the trainer to working in groups with the people at their table. This method is also important because this training solution will utilise a lot of team work in order to foster a communal spirit among employees. During training, trainees shall be asked to each talk about what they feel they will derive from the training being offered.

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Also, after training has been administered, facilitators will formulate an action plan with the trainees on how the knowledge and skills learnt at the training programme will be used on the job. In this way, trainees can practicalize the training received and may hold themselves accountable as well. The locations of working tools and materials will be taught by heads of departments and supervisors through on-the-job training. Employees will be taught how to fill stock-keeping and request books.
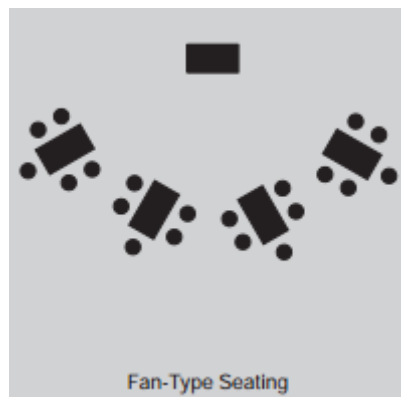
Figure 4.3: Fan-Type Seating Arrangement (Noe, 2010)

4.2.3. Monitoring and Evaluation Phase

This phase of the training involves an evaluation of the training administered. It shall be done in two ways namely immediate evaluation and the one-week-after evaluation, both of which will be done by both trainers and trainees. The immediate evaluation will be one conducted immediately after each training session before trainers and trainees vacate the training premises. The second one, as the name denotes, will be done a week after training has been administered to evaluate how helpful it was to employees in fulfilling their responsibilities. Fortunately, several credible evaluation templates can be found online for free and may be used to assist trainers in drafting evaluation templates for the trainers. In the evaluations, both trainers and trainees will offer information on how well the training was executed and any way in which they feel it could be improved.

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4.3. Training Curriculum and necessary documents

To execute training effectively, certain documents have to be available to serve as training manuals and pamphlets. These documents include job descriptions and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs). Recipes for dishes on the restaurant menu should also be drafted and compiled into a book for use during training to ensure consistency and easily referral in times of doubt. It is also important that pamphlets be drafted on first aid and safety at the workplace so that employees will be aware of precaution to take in times of emergency. Another important document to have is one on how the training will be conducted, with information on purpose of training and designated trainer. The template for such a document is provided in Table 4.1 below, with examples.

Table 4.1: Sample of Training Planner

Training Topic / Purpose	Trainer	Date of Training	Duration of Training	Training Method	Resource Needed	Trainee Description
Safety at the workplace	Health professional from a clinic	25th June, 2018	2 weeks	Classroom Lecture	First Aid Pamphlet	Housekeeping departments
Induction training	HOD of Kitchen	23rd July	2 days	Roleplay and team work	Kitchen SOPs	New employees of kitchen department

4.4. Employee Development

For employee development, the strategy to be adopted will be generated around the four approaches of Noe et al (1994) summarised in the chapter 3, namely formal education, forming interpersonal relationships on the job, assessments and appraisals, and lastly, designing job experiences in a way that maximises the skills of employees.

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Formal Education

This step will involve the acquisition of specialised and tailored knowledge through avenues such as workshops, leadership conferences and development programmes for management. This step seems to be one of a more expensive nature, owing to likely capital investments which will go into taking employees through the workshops and conferences. During the needs assessment, it was said that there have already been a few instances where employees were taken through tailored training which had to be paid for. In this regard, in order to cut costs, only a handful of selected employees may be taken through these workshops and conferences and afterwards be given the opportunity to share what they learnt during training sessions at the hotel.

Forming interpersonal relationships

A mentorship program shall be established where each new employee shall be paired up with either a supervisor or departmental employee. Each month, a 'service star', that is, an employee who exhibited the most impeccable service in each department will be selected and made a mentor. Mentors may also be nominated by employees themselves. The work of these mentors shall be to educate new comers and poorly performing workers on the nature of work at Akroma and serve as their support system. In order to motivate employees to aspire to be mentors, bonuses and benefits shall be awarded mentors, especially mentors who impact their mentees positively and recognisably. It is recommended that a mentorship relationship last at most 3 months.

Improved Work Experience

Employee Development, as defined in the literature review, has to do with preparing employees to serve in a wide range of jobs in the firm. In this way, the firm is able to save on recruitment costs and hiring extra hands to do jobs that could be shared among employees already in the firm. From the needs assessment, it was ascertained

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especially from the HODs that at Akroma Plaza, job enhancement and promotion is

undertaken. Under the development strategy, employees at Akroma Plaza will be

assigned extra roles by management under job enlargement or may be sent to serve in a

different capacity at the hotel as part of job rotation. Before doing this, management shall

obtain the consent of the employees and the assurance of heads of departments and

supervisors that the employee will be able to take on the extra responsibility.

Periodic Assessment

It is recommended that departmental performance appraisals be conducted by

heads of departments each month to ensure that employees are on track. In this regard,

standard evaluation templates will be generated and filled out for each employee by

heads of departments and supervisors. During these appraisal sessions, employee

behaviour, performance and skills shall be assessed, and reports generated. The reports

generated from these appraisals shall be shared with top management so that

performance levels may be assessed for organisational reports to be generated.

4.5. Implementation Plans

Table 4.2 presents a plan drawn up for the implementation of the proposed training

strategy. Table 4.3 also contains the plan for the execution of the employee development

strategy proposed. In both tables, the steps are provided in chronological order.

Table 4.2: Training strategy implementation plan

Stage or Step (What)	Executors (Who)	Implementation (How)	Place of Execution (Where)

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Draw up necessary documents (SOPs, job description, recipe books etc)	Heads of respective departments and supervisors Typing of the documents will be done by a member of the administrative department	Departmental work and roles broken down, analysed and prepared or compiled into documents.	Department premises.
Needs Assessment	Departmental supervisors	Compare performance against goals Ask stakeholders a compilation of relevant questions to determine the need for training on a certain topic.	Respective departments
Planning Phase	Management and HODs	Draft training document, objectives of training and choose training method.	Business premises
Execution Phase	Designated trainer	Drafting of execution plan with trainees Presentation of training materials and objectives of training Practical tests for application	Designated training center
Monitoring and Evaluation		Measuring training as against objectives set Feedback from trainees	Training center

Table 4.3: Employee Development Strategy Implementation Plan

Stage or Step (What)	Executors (Who)	Implementation (How)	Place of Execution (Where)
Formal education	Best performing employees, HODs and supervisors.	Best performing employees and HODs attend conferences and workshops. Sessions organised for participants to share information gotten at conferences.	Conference or workshop location and Akroma Plaza premises.

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Improved Work Experience	HODs and supervisors	HODs to suggest employees eligible for job enlargement or rotation. Employees given the choice to accept recommendation.	Business premises
Performance Appraisal	HODs Supervisors	Draw up appraisal template. Appraisal to be done monthly in one-on-one sessions. Reports to be generated for management to assess employee performance.	In departments on the business premises
Interpersonal Relationships	Selected mentors	Mentors to be assigned to mentees for up to 3 months. Impact of the mentors will be evaluated by mentees at the end of mentorship.	Business premises in departments

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter presents the solution proposed for the issue of substandard service delivery by inadequately qualified staff at Akroma Plaza Hotel. The solution is one in two parts, namely a training strategy and a development strategy. Implementation plans were also provided respectively. The intention of the solution is to provide a formal structure to how employee training and development is carried out at the hotel and was devised from components of training and development from the works of Noe et al (1994). It is recommended that the entire solution be evaluated against growth objectives and goals of the company.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, the nature of Ghana's hospitality industry is such that the pool of labour available for hospitality organisations is substandard, due to the poor quality of education and training offered them (Mintah, Commey, & Kuuder, 2014). In this regard, training and retraining has become one of the mandates of the hospitality establishments which employ from this pool. Akroma Plaza Hotel, located in the Takoradi metropolis, is one of such organisations which faces this problem. The purpose of this project is to support the hotel's training efforts by proposing a structured employee training and development strategy. A step further from training, employee development was identified in the third chapter to equip employees with skills, knowledge and behaviour necessary for future roles in the firm or elsewhere. The strategy is in two parts, that is a training strategy and a development strategy, both complete with an implementation plan.

5.1. Key Insights

A needs assessment documented in the second chapter of this document presented a lot of interesting insights. Notable among these were that due to the ever-increasing expectations of clients, workers at Akroma are pushed to provide 5-star service in a 2-star organisation. On-the-job training is the main form of training provided for employees to strive to offer this 5-star service. However, service delivery remains below the expectations. The literature review conducted in Chapter 3 also revealed important insights such as employee training and development resulting increased motivation, consistency, reduced business costs and increased adaptation to working environments. However, it is imperative that training administered match the strategic objectives and goals of the firm or else it will result in wasted effort and resources.

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5.2. Limitations

Although the project generally went smoothly, a few challenges were encountered such as the long-distance barrier. Interviewees and contacts at the hotel were reached through phone calls but it would have benefitted the needs assessment process if the interviews were conducted in person so that body language and other communication could be analysed. Also, the employee shift system running at the hotel prevented access to all employees. Having access to all employees would have aided the sampling method chosen which was convenience sampling and giving the other workers on the other shift the opportunity to contribute to the data collection process.

5.3. Recommendations

Recommendations are based on issues that could not be addressed by this project and suggestions on how work experience at Akroma Plaza Hotel could be made better provided by the employees themselves. In inventory management, the stock of materials at the hotel should be managed in such a way as to avoid stock outs and instances of overstocking. Staff motivation might be improved also through providing employees with benefit packages. In order to prevent interruptions of work, damaged and faulty equipment should be rapidly repaired or replaced. Also, employees should be oriented on the proper use of equipment to prolong its life.

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APPENDIX

Appendix i: Pictures of Akroma Plaza Hotel
Front View

Auditorium

Employee Training and Development Strategy

Restaurant

Appendix ii: Interview questions

Questions for Employees

1. How has your educational background helped you in your service delivery at Akroma Plaza?

2. Please tell me about any training programs you have attended after joining Akroma Plaza workforce. (If none have been attended, proceed to question 6)

3. If you are given the opportunity to evaluate these training programs, how will you rate them?

4. Tell me about the effect of a training program you attended on your work performance.

5. What opportunities has your immediate supervisor at Akroma Plaza created for you to effectively apply the skills you acquired from training (if any)?

6. Could you tell me about how you feel your working experience at Akroma could be improved?

Questions for Management / Departmental Heads

1. Has your job description changed over the time you have been at Akroma Plaza? If so, were you trained to occupy the new position? (If job description has changed, proceed to question 2. If not, proceed to question 3)

2. Tell me about any training program you attended in relation to any of the positions you have occupied in the establishment?

Employee Training and Development Strategy

3. In your department, what kind of training do employees require? What are the tasks that require training for in your department? (If no training is offered, proceed to question 10)

4. Tell me about how you identify training and development needs of employees in your department.

5. What resources did you provide for such training programs (if any)?

6. After training is completed, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of the training administered?

7. How do employees provide feedback on the training?

8. What happens if despite training, employees are unable to perform as required?

9. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the hotel?

10. In your opinion, what are some of the weaknesses or challenges faced by the hotel (if any)?
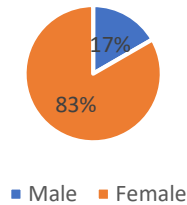
Questions for Employers

1. How would you describe the working environment at Akroma Plaza?

2. Tell me about how employees are trained and developed at Akroma Plaza. How has this process changed over the years?

3. To what extent does training employees tie into the strategic goals and objectives of Akroma Plaza? Please tell me more about that.

4. How do you determine the training needs of employees?

5. What resources have you put in place to ensure that employees are trained to meet the strategic objectives of Akroma Plaza?

6. How often do you have to recruit new employees and why?

7. How would you describe the nature and qualifications of new employees?

8. How often do you receive complaints from customers on service delivery? Please provide examples.

9. Aside training for specific job roles, are employees taken through any kind of developmental programs to grow them on the job (career advancement)?

10. In your opinion, what are Akroma Plaza's strengths?

11. What are some of the organisation's weaknesses or challenges (if any)?
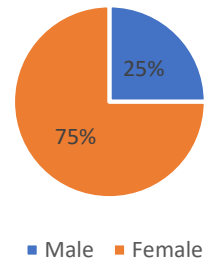
Employee Training and Development Strategy

Appendix iii: Charts from Needs Assessment
General Demographics
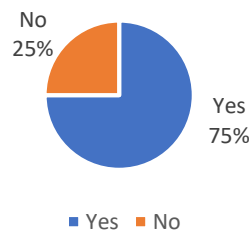
Gender Distribution of Employees

17%
83%

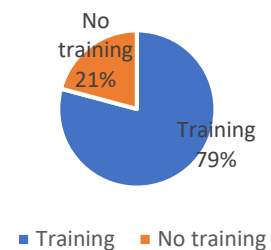■ Male ■ Female

Gender Distribution of HODs

25%
75%

■ Male ■ Female

Employee Responses

Have you ever received training at Akroma?

No
25%

Yes
75%

■ Yes ■ No

Before Akroma Training Gauge

No training
21%

Training
79%

■ Training ■ No training

Training Responses

Other
11%

Vocational School
33%

Work experience
56%

■ Vocational School ■ Work experience ■ Other
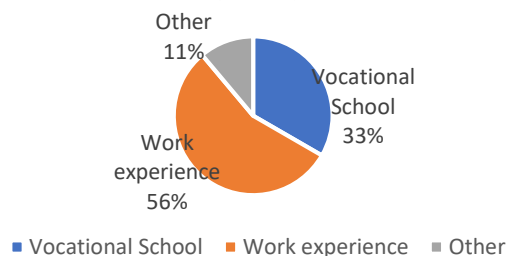
Appendix iv: Sample Needs Assessment Questions

<div align="center">

Sample Needs Assessment Questions

</div>

1. What is the difference between how employees are currently performing and how they should be performing?

2. What is the cause of the discrepancy (if any)?

3. Could the performance discrepancy be traced to a lack of basic skills or a lack of knowledge?

4. Could the performance discrepancy be traced to a lack of working materials and equipment?

Employee Training and Development Strategy

5. Have employees previously been trained in the skills and know-how they seem to lack? If so, was the previously conducted training ineffective?

6. Should the jobs be modified such that they match the employees' lower level of skills and knowledge?

7. Are employees unclear as to what is expected of them?

Appendix v: Examples of training objectives (Furunes, 2007)

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              ┌─────────────┐
              │  Knowledge  │
              │ Acquisition │
              └─────────────┘
    ┌──────────┐         ┌──────────┐
    │ Knowledge│         │ Changing │
    │ Retention│         │ Attitudes│
    └──────────┘         └──────────┘

    ┌──────────┐         ┌──────────┐
    │Participant│        │ Problem  │
    │Acceptance │        │ Solving  │
    └──────────┘         └──────────┘
           ┌──────────────┐
           │ Interpersonal│
           │    Skill     │
           │ Development  │
           └──────────────┘
```

Knowledge Acquisition — Changing Attitudes — Problem Solving — Interpersonal Skill Development — Participant Acceptance — Knowledge Retention