



**THE IMPACT OF A CUSTOMISED MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON A
SELECTED ORGANISATION**

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of a customised management development programme on the senior staff in the Cape Town branch of a logistics organisation. The study analysed the staff's development and determined the challenges that the senior staff and middle managers were facing after the organisation had gone through a number of management changes. The organisation was committed to creating a learning culture. Thus, the organisation had embarked on a clear strategic direction to enhance the leadership skills of the mid-level managers in the business. From an impact and cost-effectiveness point of view, the focus was on the middle management to start creating a learning culture in the organisation.

To gather data, this qualitative study used a questionnaire with open-ended questions sent to the middle managers of the logistics organisation. This gave the researcher the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to ask for clarification. The sample size used was 30 middle managers.

The study found that the customisation of the management development programme aimed at the middle managers played a pivotal role in retaining staff and in increasing the performance of both the employees and the organisation. The findings showed the employees felt they could relate to operational goals and efficiencies much better after the focused intervention. The employees realised that they are an esteemed resource of the organisation, and that the success or failure of the organisation relies on the performance of the management staff of the organisation. Furthermore, in order to get employees to perform optimally and to improve their performance, they required the right tools, equipment and working environment.

Key words: Customised development, Leadership skills, Learning culture, Performance

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my son, Vuyolwethu Olona Mkiva. God only knows you came at the right time in my life. This is just the beginning of great things that we are going to achieve together. Mommy loves you very much.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MDP	Management Development Programme
ROI	Return on investment
T&D	Training and development
USB	University of Stellenbosch Business School

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This chapter introduces the purpose and background of the study to gain an understanding of the research problem. The approach to the literature review is also presented in this chapter, as well as an overview of the research methodology and design.

It is generally understood that there is a lack of management skills in South Africa. Companies in South Africa are doing their utmost to bridge these skills gaps. As a result, universities have designed programmes to enable managers and leaders to enhance their management skills. According to Kraak (2005:2), “high skills” are not sufficient in a developing economy such as South Africa. To address this issue, universities have introduced management development programmes focusing on various levels of competencies and skill sets within organisations.

Before embarking on costly interventions, companies have to evaluate where they want to invest their money and attention. Over the past few years, the organisation used in this study, a maritime supply chain and logistics company based in Cape Town, has not spent much time, energy and investment in the upskilling of its leadership teams. People were promoted into roles based on their technical ability and sometimes simply because they were next in line. The competitive nature of the industry, as well as financial pressure, prompted the company to ensure that its resources are functioning optimally. The outcomes of various discussions, surveys and employee engagement interventions were used to determine where the company should invest its time and energy. After a lengthy discussion with the executives of the target company, the conclusion was reached to focus on middle management as its short- and medium-term strategy for staff development. Hence, this study focused on the middle management level of the target company.

Various academic institutions offer management development programmes (MDPs). According to the University of the Western Cape, MDP students are typically managers who have approximately three years of managerial experience and who have been earmarked by their companies for further development. External programmes are generally offered over a period of six to twelve months. This usually focuses on general marketing and information management, mobilising people, strategy implementation and financial management or accounting. These programmes are designed to assist managers to develop an approach towards managing a department or business unit. Another focus of the MDP is to give managers a broad understanding of the management process. The programme is designed to facilitate an understanding of how to apply the key competences required for each functional area of a business. Another key component of the design principle of the MDP is to

address all areas of the business and to prepare the employees transitioning from managing a department to taking up a more generalised senior management role.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Middle management fulfil a responsible role in any organisation. When middle managers lack the ability to evaluate and interpret information, it has negative influence on senior management. Middle managers are accountable for the realisation of organisational goals by implementing organisational strategies, creating optimal working environments and managing the bulk of the workforce (Delmestri & Walgenbach, 1994). It is generally understood that South Africa has a skills shortage and that there is a lack of managerial skills at all levels. In SA there are two groups of critical skills, firstly occupational skills required for performance on the job. The second set refers to problem solving, numeracy, and working in teams. Closing the skills gap is now critical for organisations to penetrate the market.

The organisation analysed in this study has undergone a number of management changes. A preliminary study in the target organisation indicated that there is a perceived lack of managerial skills in the organisation. This perception is based on consistent feedback from performance management audits and staff satisfaction surveys. The maritime supply chain logistics company also embarked on staff satisfaction surveys and have implemented a performance management system two years ago. Porter (1996) claimed that resources at middle management should be spent on improving the operational effectiveness of the organisation.

RATIONALE

This study will support decision makers to determine whether they want to bring their management training in-house through customised training programs or send their managers to an open course. The perceived value of an in house programme versus an open programme will assist in this decision making. The study is unique and will help organisations using in-house programmes realise that these programmes can help the organisation to maintain its competitiveness and prepare for the future

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research was to explore the impact of a customised management development programme on middle management in the target organisation. To address this aim, the main objective was:

To determine how the choice of customising a development programme instead of using an open programme can improve middle management effectiveness.

Given the primary objective, the secondary objectives were to:

- a) Investigate the thought process behind the decision of the company to focus on middle management first;

- b) Investigate the thought process behind the customised programme route versus the open programme route;
- c) Determine the perception of employees about training and development in the target organisation;
- d) Determine the role that the human resource department plays in developing the customised training programme;
- e) Investigate the perceived value of a customised in-house programme versus a standard open programme;
- f) Introduce guidelines to address the issues that have been raised.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the main research objective, the main research question is:

What would influence the choice between using a customised management development programme versus using an off-the-shelf standard programme to improve middle management effectiveness?

The secondary objectives to address the main objectives were:

- a) What are the thought processes behind the reason the company decided to focus on middle management first?
- b) What are the thought processes behind going the customised programme route compared to the open programme route?
- c) What are the perceptions of employees about training and development in the organisation under study?
- d) What is the role of the human resources department in developing the customised training programme?
- e) What is the perceived value of a customised in-house programme compared to that of a standard off-the-shelf programme?

1.5 OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE REVIEWED

Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons and Kavanagh (2007) are of the opinion that, as a result of the financial investment that organisations make in training, it is important to provide evidence that training efforts are fully realised. In other words, it is important for organisations to ensure that training leads to the desired work outcomes, such as increased job performance. Rothwell, Hohne and King (2007) suggested that in order to increase the value of training and development to the organisation, there is a need to offer training that is strategic, i.e. training that is aligned with the organisation's key business strategy. This means that training should equip employees with the knowledge and skills they need to help achieve the organisation's goals. Effective training programmes should be designed to close the identified skills gaps. More importantly, there is a need

to quantify the impact of training programmes on business results through the performance of employees who have been exposed to such programmes.

A training programme has to be assessed in terms of the programme itself, the behaviour of trainees outside the training environment, and whether or not it has had the desired effect (Wickramasinghe, 2006). In other words, training has to be assessed in terms of training transfer, validation and evaluation. Training transfer ensures that the training has been transferred to the work environment. Wickramasinghe (2006) further indicated that effective training can be gauged by the capacity of trainees to apply the knowledge, skills and abilities gained during training to their work environment and maintain this over time in their job contexts. Hence, there must be a sustainable transfer of knowledge and skills. The post-training environment plays an important role in determining the degree to which the training received is transferred to the workplace.

Kleinhans (2005) is of the view that for training to be transferred to the workplace, it must be accompanied by changes in the workplace, referring to job redesign, incentive systems, supervisor support and new tools. New skills and attitudes acquired in the classroom disappear rapidly if these skills and attitudes are not used and supported in the workplace.

Lingham *et al.* (2006) suggested that the effectiveness of training should be based on the extent to which trainees are able to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they have obtained during the training, which alludes to the importance of the applicability of training programmes in the workplace. They further indicated that training and education are viewed as key ongoing processes in support of organisational growth and advancement, providing a forum for communication about new organisational strategies, new values, new tools, and new and improved ways of performing work. Apart from the need to provide training that is aligned with the organisational goals and vision, training related to career development should also be tailored to the career needs of individuals.

Sofa (2007) added an organisational dimension to the notion of the transfer of training by noting that it is the extent to which the learning, which was acquired during the training sessions, is applied and maintained that increases performance and productivity. According to Sofa (2007), it is generally agreed that the transfer of training involves the application and generalisation of new knowledge and skills.

Training and development programmes help to bring stability in terms of employee turnover, placements and increased quality of work life. Various researchers have suggested that evaluation should form part of the organisation's training strategy. Another benefit of assessment is that, when employees need to move between sections and teams, this can be done with minimum disruption as

they have all received exactly the same training and, where appropriate, have passed tests to assess their competencies.

Velada *et al.* (2007) are in favour of examining all aspects of the training process when conducting research on the transfer of training. They suggested that the transfer of training is influenced by the training design, characteristics of the trainee, and contextual factors such as feedback regarding post-training job performance. They concluded by saying that for organisations to maximise their return on investment (ROI) with regard to the transfer of training and development, they need to focus on three determinants of transfer of training, namely training design, individual characteristics and work environment.

According to Kleinhans (2005), the impact of learning can be measured three ways: (1) cognitive, which means focused on attitudes and depth of understanding, (2) behavioural, which means supplemented by direct observation and the use of surveys and questionnaires to assess behavioural changes, and (3) performance improvement, which refers to measuring performance in order to provide a rationale for the investment in learning.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study was to use qualitative research, which comprises the revising of literature and conducting empirical research, to answer the research question. Hence, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the executive team of the target organisation. The executive of the Management Development Programme at Stellenbosch University was also interviewed. The findings of the interview questions were analysed and compared with the face-to-face interviews that were conducted. The decision was made to use a qualitative design methodology. “Qualitative research analyses data comprised of direct fieldwork observations, in-depth, open-ended interviews, and written documents” (Cochran & Patton, 2005:30).

Interview questions were designed and emailed to the employees of the target organisation. Face-to-face interviews were not permitted with these employees (which included the middle managers) as it was presumed that it would interrupt and distract interviewees. The open-ended interview questions were therefore emailed to participants of the target organisation. The approach was also a precautionary measure to ensure objectivity and honesty on the part of the respondents. The questions were designed in a manner that prevented bias, leading questions or unethical behaviour on the part of the researcher.

The interview questions were to obtain feedback on how participating employees experienced these training interventions. The questions also investigated the value of the management development

programme, and whether the programme helped employees to understand their impact on the organisation.

1.7 THE VALUE AND BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

1.7.1 Value of the study

The potential value of this research is that organisations using in-house programmes will realise that these programmes can help the organisation to maintain its competitiveness and prepare for the future. This research will help employees to acquire a proper combination of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform their duties.

1.7.2 Benefits of the study

- a) Members will have an opportunity to improve continually.
- b) Benchmarking opportunities will be provided.
- c) An important analysis of in-house training will be provided.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was executed at a single organisation, which inevitably limited the generalisation of the study findings to other companies or industries. This limitation, however, should not influence the validity of the findings of the study. It only focused on a local company, so no international comparison was done.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For data collection, permission was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Approval was also gained from Executive of the organisation under review, as well as the Human Resource Director of this organisation. The participants were made aware of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their identity. No physical expectation was placed on any participants and no participants were placed in potentially harmful situations. The open-ended interview questions were emailed to identified respondents, and this was done at the request of the identified respondents to avoid interruption and distraction of work. The approach was also used to ensure a reasonable response rate from the respondents. The research complied with the ethical code as prescribed by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The names of the participants were not disclosed in any part of the research, to ensure their privacy is respected. All answers from the interviews were quoted and the names of the participants were not disclosed at any stage in the study.

1.10 THE STRUCTURE OF THE REST OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into five chapters, structured as follows:

Chapter One

This first chapter provides insight into the context of the research problem. It is comprised of the problem statement, value of the study, research objectives, main research question, the importance of the study, limitations, ethical consideration, the structure of the thesis, as well as a summary.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two presents an evaluation of the relevant literature, which forms the theoretical framework for this research project. The chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the literature relevant to customised management development programmes and the impact these programmes have in organisations.

Chapter Three

This chapter covers the research design supporting this study. It discusses the research methods, and the data collection process and techniques utilised. The decision to implement a qualitative approach, and the use of open-ended questions as a data collection tool for the study, are also discussed.

Chapter Four

The chapter presents and discusses the findings of the qualitative data collected, and provides an analysis and interpretation leading to recommendations.

Chapter Five

This chapter provides an overview of the research – summarising the research findings, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

1.11 Summary

This chapter introduced the background of the study. The literature review, problem statement, research objectives, and the research design and methodology were also outlined. The significance, value and benefits of the study as well the limitations were discussed. The chapter concluded by presenting an outline of the remaining chapters. Chapter 2 will present the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the background of the study, narrated the problem statement and research objectives, and provided an overview of the literature review and the research methodology to be applied. The significance of the study as well limitations were discussed. The chapter also provided the outline of the remaining chapters. This chapter discusses existing literature on the assessment of management development programmes and their perceived effectiveness. Therefore, the literature review for this study is presented according to research themes derived from the research objectives and questions presented in Chapter One. The chapter covers existing literature on management development programmes to provide context for the problem being studied.

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN ORGANISATIONS

The success of any organisation, whether in the private or public sector, depends mainly on the quality of its human resources. Literature confirms that the training of manpower is a major prerequisite for any organisation that wants to achieve maximum productivity through the effective performance of its employees. Employees can indeed perform better through the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and abilities provided by training programmes.

Altarawneh (2009) stated that training and development is the most important subsystem or element of human resource development, as it involves increasing, improving and modifying employees and managers' skills, abilities, capabilities and knowledge, enabling them to perform current and future jobs more effectively. These desirable outcomes are likely to enhance the growth and performance of both individuals and the organisation.

Training and development is a vital activity for any organisation aiming to improve the productivity and competitiveness of its operations. The need for training and development has increased dramatically due to the rapidly expanding use of technology within industries and businesses, and the continuous threat of knowledge and technology obsolescence. The growing emphasis on quality and customer satisfaction has compelled organisations to recognise the importance of training and development in terms of job satisfaction, productivity and overall profitability (Mathafane, 2007).

It is accepted that improved productivity in organisations depends on efficient and effective training. The advancement of the modern world depends on investment in training. This emphasises the role played by staff training and development. Oribabor (2000) explained that training and development should be aimed at developing competences such as technical, human, conceptual and managerial

skills for the furtherance of individual and organisational growth. Isyaku (2000) postulated that the process of training and development is a continuous one. The need to perform one's job efficiently and the need to know how to lead others are sufficient reasons for training and development.

Staff development means increasing capacity through training, introducing new skills, and improving work processes or methods. According to Armstrong (2012), training is a systematic development of the knowledge and skills required by an individual. Training is also an act of increasing the knowledge and skills of the employee, according to Flippo (2007). The organisation, by providing this opportunity to employees, encourages performance, job-related skills and competencies. Through training and development, companies plan for the future and develop young workers for senior management positions (Moses, 1999). Organisations also ensure that employees feel they have been given job security and opportunities for promotion (Bartlett, 2000). In addition to this, effective training will lead to job satisfaction, improved job performance and less difficulty with skill inadequacy (Grugulis, 2007).

Taking the aforementioned into consideration, training and development should be evaluated to see whether there is an improvement in skills, abilities or employee performance. In this context, evaluation can be seen as the process of appraising something carefully to determine its value (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). The company needs to ensure that the training is job-oriented and that the competencies include knowledge and skills that are critical for successful job performance. Training can also be aimed at developing competencies, such as technical and managerial skills, for the growth of the individual (Oribabor, 2000).

Training physically, socially, intellectually and mentally is essential to facilitate both the level of productivity and the development of personnel in any organisation. However, knowledge is the ability, skill, understanding and information that every individual needs to acquire in order to function effectively and perform efficiently. Training is the systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of employees to perform adequately on a given task or job. "It can take place in a number of ways, either on the job or off the job; in the organization or outside organization" (Craig, 1987:165).

Adeniyi (1995) observed that staff training and development is a work activity that can make a significant contribution to the overall effectiveness and profitability of an organisation. He therefore provides a systematic approach to training that encases the main elements of training. It follows therefore that for employees to be able to perform their duties in an organisation and to make meaningful contributions to the achievement of organisational goals, they need to acquire the relevant skills and knowledge. The organisation receives certain benefits from developing staff, such as the decreased need for supervision and increased efficiency, resulting in financial gains (Ofosu-Appiah, 2012). Employees become more confident and feel valuable in the organisation. The training is done

to benefit the organisation and increase competitive advantage, and not to rely solely on utilising existing skills.

Organisations often outsource the training of employees to ensure the personal fulfilment of employees and the future of the organisation (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). Identifying the need for training can resolve the issue of who needs training. The need exists when the individual lacks the skill required to execute a given task. Training is an attempt to improve the current or future performance of an employee, and it is important for both new and current employees (Ivancevich, 2010). Ivancevich cited Clifton and Fink (2006:23) as follows: “Training is a systematic process of altering the behaviour of employees in a direction that will achieve organizational goals.” Training is related to present job skills and abilities. It has a current orientation and helps employees to master specific skills and abilities. According to Asare-Bediako (2002), the purpose is to identify the gap between required and actual competencies in order to determine what training will help bridge the gap. Determining training needs and analysing the job and the organisation will provide information on the following:

- a) Organisational vision
- b) Short-term and long-term goals
- c) Future strategies
- d) Present and future economic, political and technological environment.

A gap analysis will help to identify the gap between what people know and can do, and what they should know and should be able to do (Asare-Bediako, 2002). The analysis of the corporate needs will lead to the identification of learning needs in various departments.

Various methodologies can be used to determine what a company needs to develop its people. McGehee and Thayer (1961:305) recommended the following steps to determine such training needs: “Organizational analysis, to determine the training emphasis for the organization. Operations analysis to decide what the training should include, research of what the person should know to perform the task with maximum effectiveness. Determine who needs to be trained and what skills, attributes that should be improved.”

2.3 THE PURPOSE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN AN ORGANISATION

A key feature of any training and development programme is that “trainees are provided with the right sequence of experience and are helped to understand and learn from that experience” (Armstrong, 1991:415). Such a planned experience must be preceded by clearly identifiable aims of training and development for an organisation. According to Gerber, Nel and Van Dyk (1995: 462), the purpose of training and development is, among others, to:

- a) Equip the workforce, including disabled persons, with the skills, values and attitudes required to support the development of the economy in the formal and informal sectors;
- b) Optimise the training capacity of the employees by means of bridging training, the teaching of reading, writing, numeracy, job and learning skills as well as further training.

Heneman, Schwab, Fossum and Dyer (1983: 348) regarded the following as some of the more immediate goals of particular training programmes: “To orientate new employees to the organization and their jobs, to improve employees’ performance levels on their present jobs, to enable employees to maintain performance levels as their present jobs change, and to prepare employees for new jobs.”

According to Ghosh and Kumar (1991), one of the reasons for undertaking training and development is for the organisation to ensure that it achieves the best possible return from its investment in its most important (and frequently most expensive) resource, which is its employees. To this effect, the main aim of any training and development will be to achieve some kind of change in knowledge, skills, experience, behaviour and/or attitude, which enhances the effectiveness of the employee. Specifically, training and development will be used to:

- a) Develop individual skills and abilities to improve job performance;
- b) Familiarise employees with new systems, procedures and methods of working; and
- c) Help employees to become familiar with the requirements of their particular jobs and of the organisation.

It is essential to base any training and development programme on a systematic analysis of its contribution to the effectiveness of the organisation. This process can be depicted by the model shown in Figure 2.1.

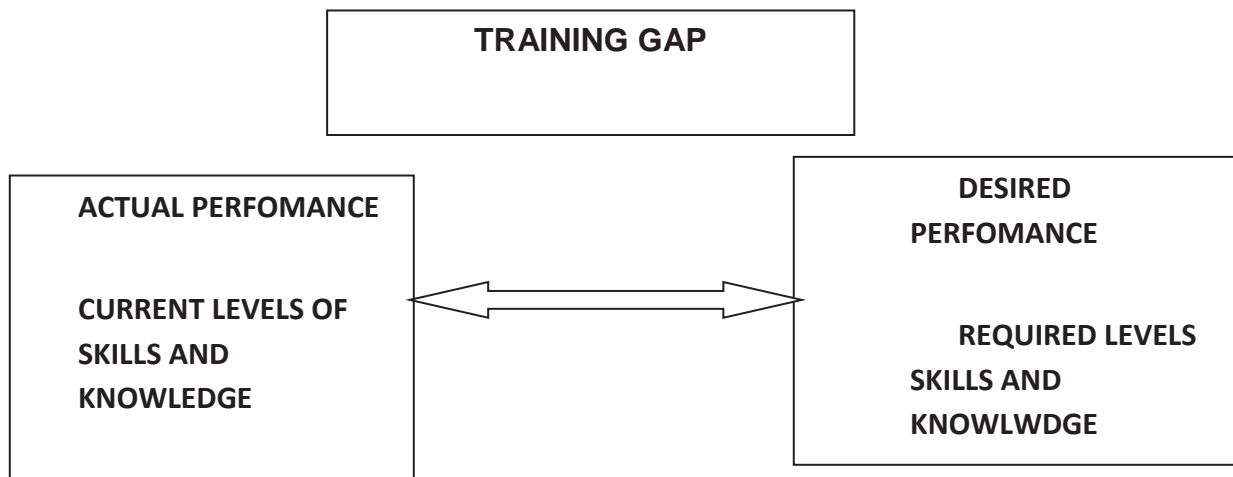


Figure 2.1: Training and development model based on an analysis of its contribution to the effectiveness of the organisation.

Source: Ndevu (2006:11).

2.4 BENEFITS OF A TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Training provides employees with the knowledge, abilities and skills required for the job. According to Mathafane (2007), in a successful training programme, “the intervention acts not as a treatment for organisational ills, but rather as an instrument of change. The training function holds valuable intelligence regarding employees’ core skills, and an effective training intervention can move people in the right direction.”

Training provides employees with the knowledge, abilities and skills required for the job. According to Del Valle, Castillo and Rodriguez-Duarte (2009), a training investment first generates a negative effect on results, which later becomes positive as far as the transfer of knowledge to the employee is concerned. Training plays a major role in equipping staff with the required abilities. According to Kenny and Read, as cited by Sewdass (2004), the following contributions can be identified:

- a) Training helps employees to learn their jobs quickly and effectively, thereby minimising or limiting the costs involved in learning.
- b) Training can assist existing staff to improve their work performance and keep up-to-date in their field of specialisation. Furthermore, present and future work standards required by the organisation are more likely to be achieved if employees are well trained.
- c) A greater volume of work can be expected from staff, as they will work more quickly and be less likely to make mistakes.
- a) The reduction in work errors can benefit the organisation, as management will have more time to spend on planning and development activities, instead of correcting mistakes. The cost incurred by errors will therefore be eliminated.

- b) Labour turnover among new staff due to ineffective learning and inadequate training can be reduced. Staff supported by induction and training learn to do their jobs more rapidly and are more likely to achieve a high level of job satisfaction.
- c) Retention of staff can be an advantage to the operations of an organisation. If staff members are retrained, new abilities can replace obsolete ones.
- d) Training in safe working practices reduces accidents, resulting in social and financial benefits to employers, employees and society.
- e) An organisation with a reputation for providing good education, training and development tends to attract better applicants for its vacancies.
- f) Employees are less likely to become frustrated if training and development opportunities are available to further their careers with their present employer.

Judging from the above, recent changes in the macro business environment have made the human resource function even more important in helping the organisation maintain its competitiveness and prepare for the future. The pressure of global competitiveness is also changing the way in which organisations operate, and the skills that their employees need. Training and development is considered to be very important as a means to help businesses overcome capability gaps and ensure that employees are up-to-date and adaptable. The beneficial effects of training include the skills, knowledge, cultural and role changes, as well as the attitudes and work behaviours in the workplace. Other such benefits are increased employee motivation and commitment (Mathafane, 2007).

2.5 EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The evaluation of training has become one of the most important practices in the field of human resources as there is more pressure today than ever before to prove the results and effectiveness of an investment in training. Although this evaluation of training programmes is both necessary and critical for organisations (in order to leverage the learning experience and ensure the efficient use of resources), and although numerous studies have highlighted the importance of evaluation, few studies have focused on whether or not such evaluations yield useful information to the organisation and its employees (Mathafane, 2007).

Training is a key human resource practice and, as such, clearly deserves and necessitates systematic monitoring and evaluation. According to Kirkpatrick's hierarchical model of training evaluation, learning refers to the extent to which new learning is transferred back to the job and results in new forms of behaviour at work, while changes in behaviour refers to the extent to which the new job behaviour results in improved individual and organisational performance. According to Mathafane (2007), learning only takes place when it is accompanied by changes in behaviour. Interestingly, a change in behaviour is largely dependent on an attitude change, increase in knowledge and skills, and

self-efficacy. When the desired behaviours are practised, this will have an impact on the quality of performance or results.

2.6 IN-HOUSE TRAINING AND OPEN TRAINING PROGRAMMES

An open programme is an activity that either enhances learning opportunities within formal education systems or broaden learning opportunities beyond formal education systems (Peschel, 2002). The in-house training approach is referred to as a service that is provided by a dedicated resource directly employed by the client organisation, where monitoring and control of performance is normally conducted under the terms of a conventional employer, although internal service-level agreements may be employed as a regulating mechanism (Barrett & Baldry, 2003). Further to this, Atkins and Brooks (2002) emphasised the retention of the organisation's employees because the delivery of estate-related and facilities services is considered an in-house service provision. Wise (2007) provided the following insight into the benefits of in-house training:

- a) People who are in-house own their work. In-house employees usually perform better than outsourced employees who make decisions based on how they will affect their own employers.
- b) The results of long-term financial analysis usually support in-house training rather than the outsourcing option.
- c) The in-house training option can improve the satisfaction levels of employees as well as customers.
- d) In-house training offers the organisation the opportunity to grow people instead of hiring outside, and as a result provide career prospects that reduce staff turnover.

Figure 2.2 below compares in-house programmes with open programmes:

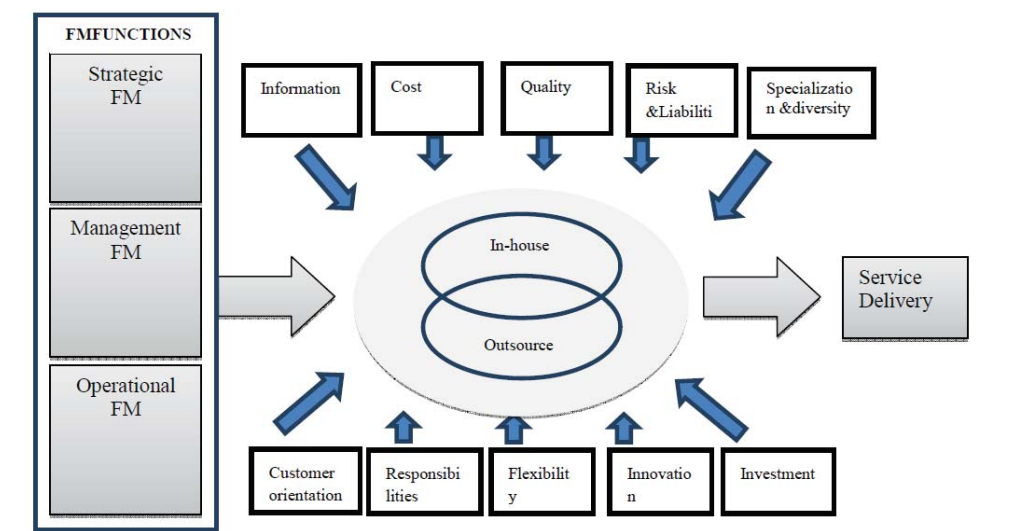


Figure 2.2: Framework for value-adding selection between outsourced training and in-house training

Source: Ahamed (2013:304).

Training is a costly and time-consuming exercise. Hence, it is crucial for the organisation to design its training interventions carefully (Armstrong, 2000). The design of the training should be based on the needs of the employees as well as the organisation (Ginsberg, 1997). Organisations that develop a good training design based on the needs of employees as well as the organisation always get better results (Boudreau, Gefen & Straub, 2001; Partlow, 1996; Tihanyi, Daily & Dalton, 2000). It seems that training design plays a crucial role in employee as well as organisational performance. Poor training design can lead to a waste of time and money (Tsaur & Lin, 2004).

2.7 METHOD OF DELIVERY WITH IN-HOUSE AND OPEN TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Companies often use their own in-house managers to assist with the design of programmes to ensure that the delivery is fit for purpose. This is often one of the reasons why companies go in-house with their training programmes. In-house programmes allow companies to customise the way in which training is delivered, the style of training, the amount of blended learning and the practical applications of the content.

Once training has been developed, it is critical to decide which methodology will be used to deliver the training material. Delivery style is a key part of training and development (Braga, 1995). Employees are very conscious about the delivery style (Armstrong, 2000). If the trainer or facilitator is not delivering the training in an impressive style and is not capturing the attention of the audience, it means he is wasting their time (Griffin & Neal, 2000). It is necessary for trainers to engage their audiences during training sessions (Seamen & Eves, 2005). The trainer must be able to connect with the audience and speak in a language that is understandable to the audience. The audience must be able to relate to the trainer, as well as to the examples that the trainer provides.

2.8. IMPLEMENTING CHANGE IN THE ORGANISATION

The organisation should have a clear vision. Managerial skill is required to help manage change in the organisation. Successful change management is needed to survive the highly competitive and continuously evolving environment in which businesses operate (Burnes, 2004). It was also argued that it is important for people to undergo change to improve performance.

There is no clear, practical approach on how to implement organisational change (Burnes, 2004). The planned approach explains the process that brings about change. Organisational change is an underlying process to match the strategy of the organisation with the people, processes and structure (Senior, 2002). Leadership plays a key role in organisational change.

According to Lick (2006:9), for organisations to implement change, they need to follow these phases: “a) relating the external environmental realities to real potential crises and opportunities facing the organization; b) forming individuals that embrace the need for change and who can convince the other to support the change; c) creating the vision to achieve the end result and communicating the

vision through different channels; d) publicising the success to build momentum for continued change.”

The organisation has to provide support and information regarding the change. Guiding and planning require goal setting, time allocation and money for development experiences and organisational insight, information and advice. The organisation should carefully analyse the employees that need development. Employees should be encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes (Evans, 2000).

2.9 INTERNAL BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

It is important for staff to clearly understand the objectives of the organisation. This is supported by Nickols (2003) and Fort and Voltero (2004) who mentioned that the factors that are closely related to levels of performance include clear goals and objectives, as well as intrinsic factors such as self-perception, values and benefits. These responses support the findings of Hicks and Adams (2003) regarding the link between internal rewards and work motivation. Internal rewards include aspects such as self-actualisation, recognition and a sense of achievement, and are increasingly viewed as important motivators. Huselid, as cited by Storey (2002), indicated that individual elements such as training make a statistically significant contribution to performance.

2.10 LEARNING AND GROWTH PERSPECTIVE

According to Booyesen, Swansburg and Swansburg, as cited in Awases (2006), continuous education is usually part of the self-development responsibility of employees. However, organisations may need to accept this responsibility in order to ensure that their staff members are kept up-to-date with new developments. This may take the form of workshops, conferences, seminars, self-learning modules, individual studies or degree courses. Continuous education programmes in organisations are aimed at updating employees' knowledge and competencies in order to increase their capacity to analyse complex problems, deliver and maintain services, and sustain professional interpersonal relationships. Staff development is a management intervention that helps staff members to acquire skills and knowledge that enhance their professional goals and at the same time increase their value as employees (Swansburg, as cited in Awases, 2006).

The task of any worker is to bring about a desirable process or change to the organisation. This requires that the worker should possess adequate technical knowledge of the subject matter at hand, as well as the ability to carry it out. In other words, employees should be trained in both the subject area and communication techniques.

The relationship of the individual to performance is very important. The view of “company performance” as an additional matter of interest to the employee is more than relevant in a modern, knowledge-based organisation; it should be integral. Performance management must engage staff on a

personal level to move from top-down implementation to active engagement in a virtuous cycle of performance improvement (Jain, 2004).

Schiama and Lerro (2008) emphasised the fact that through performance improvement, an organisation is able to better satisfy the wants, needs and expectations of its stakeholders. In order to improve performance, an organisation needs to continuously improve its effectiveness as well as efficiency. This requires the ability to design, implement, manage and develop the organisational processes on which the production of an organisation's output and outcomes is based. This is possible only through the continuous development of organisational competencies. These competencies are rooted in the organisational knowledge assets which build the intellectual capital of the organisation.

Moustaghfir, as cited in Schiama and Lerro (2008), highlighted the role of dynamic capabilities in creating and sustaining a competitive advantage. This increases our understanding of the theoretical foundations of knowledge assets and how knowledge management practices improve the quality of business processes through the shaping and renewal of organisational competencies. It also increases our understanding of the role of dynamic capabilities in providing a sustainable competitive advantage to improve performance and increase profitability.

Personal training and development plans should be included in an appraisal, as well as job-related plans. Personal development is important and often leads to a greater willingness to undertake further development. The knowledge of every individual in the organisation has the potential to contribute to the organisation's goals and to ensure that the objectives of the organisation are successfully achieved (Shahabudin, 2003). Nowadays, companies are required to compete in globalised and turbulent markets. In order to survive in such a dynamic environment, they need to satisfy all their stakeholders while excelling along all performance dimensions (Neely, Adams & Kennerley, 2002).

2.11 SUMMARY

The literature review indicated the impact of training on job performance and company performance, and explained the differences between open and in-house training programmes for employees. The literature emphasised the importance of ongoing training and development. The value of open programmes is undisputedly supported by the literature. This study will review the value of customised in-house programmes as indicated in this chapter.

The next chapter will focus on the research methodology and design of the study. It will also describe the research methods used and why they were selected.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a description of the concepts of training, development and job performance. A literature review on the importance of training and development practices was presented, and the role of training was described. This chapter will outline the research process that was employed to explore and analyse the impact of the customised management development programme in the selected organisation. The research data was collected from both primary and secondary sources, which included interviews and questionnaires. Due to time pressure and the availability of respondents, the interview questions were emailed to them.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:36), “research methodology is the pronouncements that the researcher has to embark on in order to execute the research project by focusing on the research process”. Thus, Henning *et al.* (2004) stated that a research methodology is a group of coherent processes that counter each other. In this study, the research approach and methodology will guide the researcher to obtain and analyse accurate data from employees who are involved in management development programmes. To avoid confusion, it is important to differentiate between research design and research. Table 3.1 differentiates between design and methodology as follows:

Table 3.1: Research design and methodology

Research design	Research methodology
Focuses on the end-product, what kind of study is being planned and what kind of results are aimed at.	Focuses on the research process and the types of tools and procedures to be used.
The point of departure is the research problem or question.	The point of departure is the specific tasks (data collection or sampling) at hand.
Focuses on the logic of the research: what kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately?	Focuses on the individual (not linear) steps in the research process and the most suitable procedures to be employed.

Source: Babbie & Mouton (2001:79).

The next step, as illustrated by Table 3.1, explains the approach that was taken to answer the research question. The research methodology chosen determines the outcomes of the study.

3.3 THE CASE

The logistics company used in this study was established in 1969¹ and is based in Cape Town. The company has several well-established and distinguished brands, allowing the group to offer services across the dry and wet bulk as well as liner agency spectrum. This logistics company provides full supply-chain command structures, exceptional vessel and procurement services, along with reliable staffing and offshore/onshore solutions.

A management development programme was introduced in the organisation with the intention to create a learning culture in the organisation. A clear strategic direction was embarked on to enhance the leadership skills of all the managers. A preliminary investigation with the Head of Human Resources of this company in September 2015 indicated that from an impact and cost-effectiveness point of view, the company agreed to focus on its middle level management to start creating this learning culture.

It was established during the preliminary investigation that customising a management development training programme will play a pivotal role in retaining staff and will be highly beneficial for both the organisation and the employees. The company then embarked on staff satisfaction surveys and implemented a performance management system prior to this study. The company further embarked on a process of deciding how the leadership gap will be addressed and which training providers will be used. Based on consistent feedback from the performance management audits as well as the staff satisfaction surveys there was a perceived lack of managerial skills in the organisation.

The University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB) was subsequently, through procurement processes, contracted to assist with the development of the programme. This decision was validated by an article that appeared on the website of Fin24 which stated that “the University of Stellenbosch Business School is ranked the top business school in the 2015 Professional Management Review annual survey.”² The article further indicated that the respondents, who are employees, are either studying or have graduated from USB and considered themselves as highly regarded in the work place.

Although customising a programme for the needs of the company had additional cost implications, the company took the view that an in-house programme will offer more need-specific benefits than an open programme. The in-house programme, which cost the company R55 000 per employee, was more expensive than an open programme (R35 000). Furthermore, the in-house programme, as developed and implemented by the company, had additional modules beneficial to the organisation and employees. These additional modules were regarded as critical for the success of the company.

¹ <http://www.sturrockgrindrod.com> 19 January 2019

² <https://www.fin24.com/USB-ranked-top-business-school-in-survey> 14 August 2014

The additional modules focused on the specific needs of the company. The senior management also took a view that by allowing the middle management group to all attend the various study blocks together, it would give them much-needed time to interact and understand the various areas of the value chain. The company operated very much in a silo mode, with management not understanding how their roles and divisions impact the other roles and divisions in the company. Co-creating learning and creating a collective understanding of where the company was heading, was one of the critical outcomes identified by management when they decided on a customised in-house programme rather than an open programme.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

Drawing from Oppenheim (1966:6), the research design adopted provided the basic plan and strategy for the research and established the logic required to draw general conclusions. It is therefore agreeable to view research design as a means to make problems researchable by setting up the study in a way that will produce specific answers to specific questions. Mouton (1996:107) alluded to the fact that the main aim of a research design is to reduce the possibility of not being able to validate the final results of a research project. In empirical research, it is important to have a complete understanding of types of research designs in order to accomplish the research goals, as set to be achieved by the study objectives.

Given that the identified research problem is subjective in nature, the qualitative research method was proposed in the form of a single case study of the selected logistics organisation. Therefore, a qualitative method was adopted to conduct this research in order to achieve the set goals and to analyse data from respondents within a reasonably limited timeframe.

3.5 ADOPTION OF A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Nieuwenhuis (2010:50), qualitative research endeavours to “gather comfortable descriptive data concerning a particular phenomenon in order to understand what has been studied and observed”. The researcher decided to use qualitative research as the research problem is of a qualitative nature and, therefore, a single case study was conducted at the selected organisation.

3.6 THE SAMPLING DESIGN

It is often not practical or possible to study an entire population, so it is necessary to make general findings based on a study of a subset of that population. A subset of a population is known as a sample (Goddard & Melville, 2001:34). Sampling is an empirical survey research method that depends upon a sample that is assumed to represent a population accurately. Therefore, the techniques for choosing the sample are vital for the validity of the research findings.

There are two kinds of sampling techniques: probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling occurs when people constituting a sample are chosen because the researcher has some notion of the probability that they will be a representative cross-section of the whole population being studied. On the other hand, non-probability sampling is conducted without such knowledge about the sample being representative of the overall population.

This study employed non-probability sampling; the approach was adopted in order to select a representative sample of the total population in a single organisation. By applying this method, the researcher selected potential participants from the four departments within the organisation and included top-level to lower-level employees. It was assumed that the participants that were selected within these four departments would be able to provide expressive input into this study.

3.7 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) defined a population as the totality of entities in which researchers are interested – that is, the collection of individuals, objects or events about which they want to draw inferences. It is the collection of elements from which the sample (n) is actually selected. The target population for this was 23 participants in different departments within the selected organisation.

Table 3.2 below summarises the targeted population for the questionnaires in the selected organisation.

Table 3.2: Target population of the study

Department	Number of participants
Logistics	3
Human Resources	1
Maritime	17
IT	1
Construction	1
Total target population	23

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

The collection of data is a critical phase in the implementation of a research project. According to Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2004), data is the basic material with which a researcher works. In order to draw valid conclusions from a study, it is essential that the researcher has sound data to analyse and interpret. The study applied the interview method as the main instrument to collect empirical data, apart from utilising secondary sources such as books, research articles, internet-based documents and journals to obtain theoretical knowledge of the research objectives. Interviews “are

one of the leading methods of qualitative research” (Tamen, 2013:82). This study made use of open-ended interviews and documentary analysis data collection methods. The relevant management development training documents were collected and studied in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the main concepts, theories and impact of customised training programmes.

Open-ended questions were used to guide the interview process, which permitted for an open-ended argument. The interview data was recorded by using a mobile recorder. The questions were emailed to the participants beforehand. The participants were told that the research is for study purposes and would be confidential.

3.9 INTERVIEWS

Qualitative research emphasises the importance of context in analysing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). During the research process and especially during the data collection phase, the participants were able to decide on the venue for their interviews. Interviews were conducted with the CEO and the five executives in the selected organisation to assess their opinions and knowledge. By interviewing the top management, the aim was to find out the motivating factors on customising the training programme and to check if the objectives were met. The staff members that were interviewed and the top management had been with the organisation for a very long time. They had better views of the organisation and understood the values and mission of the organisation. The interviews were conducted to understand their views around the training tool that can help gain a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing environment. (The interview questions are included as Annexure A at the end of this study.)

Notes were taken during the interviews with permission from the participants. Interviews were selected because the respondents give answers right on the spot, which minimises the “I don’t know” and “No answer” responses (Babbie, 2004:263). The emailed interview questions took 30 minutes each, depending on the employee’s level of understanding of the questions posed. The questions were designed in such a manner to prevent bias and to obtain feedback on the interviewees’ experience of the training intervention.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis was used to methodically discover themes and meanings in the content. The facts that were obtained from the research instruments were analysed by using themes. Data analysis allows researchers to acquire valuable information from raw data. Hence, Glesne (2016:15) argued that “data analysis involves sequencing that the researcher has read, heard and seen in order to make sense of the data, and answer the research question”.

The data collected from the interviews was reviewed immediately after collection to ensure that important interpretations were remembered easily. Leedy and Ormrod (2013:19) stated that, “the data analysis process is a time-consuming and complex process”. The researcher used the two steps, which are outlined below, to analyse and understand the massive amount of data that was collected.

The first stage involved data reviewing, which meant re-playing the recorded interviews and making notes at the same time. The researcher read and re-read the notes in order to ascertain themes and to gain a broad understanding of the content. Therefore, comprehensive notes were made during the course of reviewing. As most of the responses were received via email, the researcher had more time to read and gain a deeper understanding of the content.

The second stage consisted of organising the data so that the researcher could become familiar with the content, and also to make the data more controllable and easy to recover. The consequent phase of the data analysis process involved the discovery of emerging patterns, which helped the researcher to answer the research question and research sub-questions. After this process was concluded the data had been collected and analysed in order to advance significant insight into the problem. Data was analysed to gain full understanding of the content of the research. Themes were outlined to organise the data and to fully understand the impact of the customisation of the development programs.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study ensured research integrity and maintained ethical values in order not to compromise the study. The participants were protected in the following manner:

- Privacy and non-participation: Individuals had the right to decide whether or not they wanted to participate and to choose whether or not to disclose certain information.
- The right to confidentiality: This was respected, and access to data was restricted at all times.
- Reasons for the study were provided when the questionnaire was sent to the participants.
- Approval was gained from the executive of the company under review.

3.12 SUMMARY

This chapter explained the research methodology and research process. The qualitative method, using semi-structured interviews to answer the research question, was discussed. The case study methodology was discussed as a means to access data to answer the questions and address the research objectives. This chapter also outlined the scope of the study.

The following chapter presents an interpretation and analysis of the data that was collected for this study and summarises the study’s findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research methodology was explained and the research process was defined. The qualitative research method using semi-structured interviews to answer the research question was discussed. The case study methodology was discussed as a means to access data to answer the questions and address the research objectives. This chapter provides a qualitative analysis of the collected data. A qualitative research method was employed, using interview questions. A questionnaire containing seven questions was used to collect data from the various participants who worked in different departments of the logistics organisation. The objective of this was to identify the opinions and perceptions of the employees towards the management development programme offered by the organisation.

The chapter also presents the findings based on the responses of the participants.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was in the form of interviews and content analysis. All returned interview questionnaires were examined for completeness and accuracy. The information was captured using software that allows for the graphical presentation of data. To avoid interrupting work at the study site, 23 questionnaires were sent to participants while direct interviews were conducted with five executives of the selected organisation. The design of the interview schedule was done to accommodate two sections:

Section A: How the training intervention was experienced by the employees

Section B: The benefits of internal and external training programmes.

The design of the interview schedule reflected the desired outcomes of the research and the flow of the questions revealed the main purpose of the research, namely the effectiveness of the employees' training and development.

The incorporation of tables and graphs makes the presentation more accessible.

4.3 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The interpretation of the findings is based on the interview questions that were administered to the respondents. The research approach guided the researcher to obtain and analyse the data of employees who were enrolled on the management development programme. The personal characteristics of the study participants included attributes such as gender and management levels. The analysis of the data

showed that if training needs are identified and programmes are presented to address these needs, it will go a long way to improve the performance of the employees as well as the overall performance of the organisation.

The data that was obtained is presented in graphical form and the responses from the interview questions were summarised. The data is presented in chronological order, according to the interview questions. Each question was analysed individually as this provided a logical progression of questions that eventually led to the main research objective, namely determining the effectiveness of a customised training development programme in the selected organisation. The responses from interview questions have shown that the participants are able to apply the skills that they have learned from the training programme. The responses from the participants clearly show that the skills acquired by them will be applied in the organisation.

Questions from the interviews that were deemed most pertinent to the research questions as noted in Chapter Three were analysed as follows:

4.4 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The data for this study was collected during the month of March 2016 using interview questions. The interview questions also asked the participants to indicate their position within the organisation.

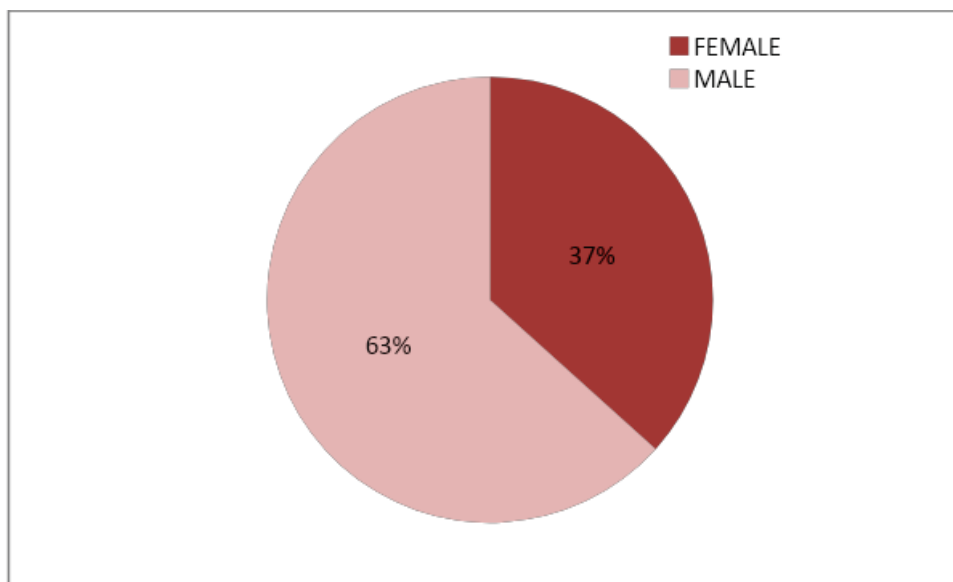


Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondents

The analysis of responses in relation to gender shows that the male respondents dominated the study with 63% while the females constituted 37% of the target population. The ratio of male to female is

almost 63:37, meaning that the organisation takes into consideration the male balance when hiring staff.

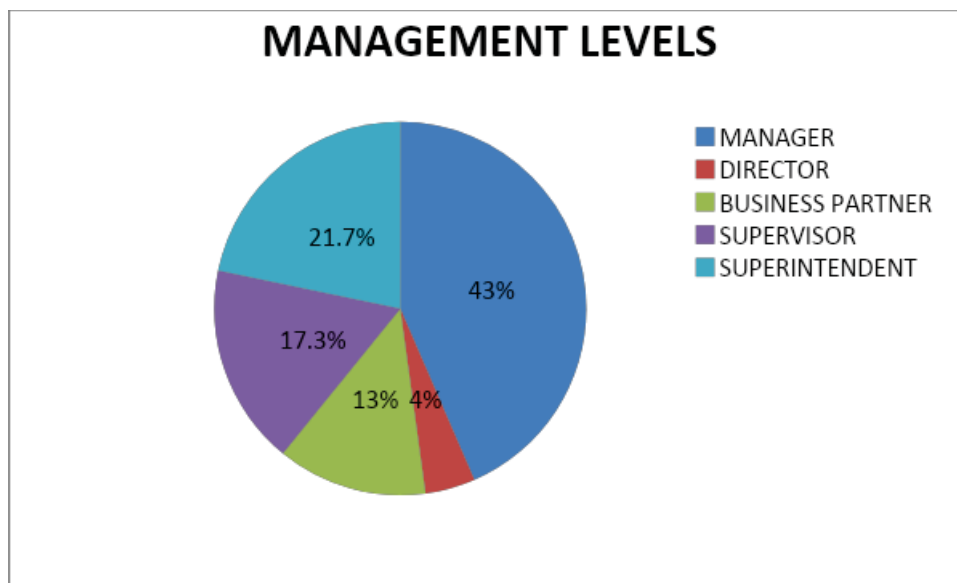


Figure 4.2: The respondents' job levels in the company

According to Hellriegel, Jackson and Slocum, (2005), staff development is designed to improve the effectiveness of staff in their present positions and to prepare them for greater responsibilities. The above diagram (Figure 4.2) shows that the organisation, through the management development programme, is preparing its employees for present and future jobs.

The interview questions (see Appendix A) comprising seven questions were designed and administered to employees. The purpose of the interview questions was to investigate the effectiveness of the management development programme journey that the employees embarked on and the impact and value of the training intervention.

The questions took into consideration issues related to objectives of this study. The following section discusses the questions posed to the respondents and the conclusions made after each question was analysed.

4.5 THE ORGANISATION AND PARTICIPANTS

This study focused on the impact of a customised management development programme in a logistics organisation in Cape Town. Respondents from four relevant departments – Maritime, Logistics, IT and Construction – responded to the interview questions. A total of 23 interviewees (from a population of 30) participated in this study. The participants were a mix of managers, supervisors, technicians, superintendents, a director and general workers. The questionnaires were emailed to each

participant to help maintain confidentiality. This allowed for a diverse representation of employees across the organisation.

The number of years of experience among participants within the organisation varied. This is important as they are able to contribute to current and historical changes that took place. The information that was gathered from the participants from various departments and positions permitted the researcher to gain insight into the impact of the management development programme. The researcher identified the themes outlined below.

4.6 THEMES IDENTIFIED

4.6.1 Effectiveness of training and development

The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two stated that staff training and development is a work activity that can make a significant contribution to the overall effectiveness and profitability of an organisation (Adeniyi, 1995). Furthermore, in response to this question, most of the respondents who took part in the questionnaire mentioned that the in-house management development programme created an understanding of the different departments, how they all linked together, and what each department does. According to Iftikhar Ahmad and Sirajud Din (2009), training and development is adopted by organisations to fill the skills gap of employees. Cheng and Ho (2001) said employees are more concerned about their own productivity and are increasingly aware of the accelerated obsolescence of knowledge and skills in their turbulent environment. One of the respondents in this study, summarised this feeling when he said, “The programme has been put together specifically to address and cover certain priority areas applicable within our business. This you will not get externally.”

The organisation can achieve more when working together and feeding off each other’s respective strengths than working individually. A platform was therefore provided to learn more about the different divisions within the organisation. The management development programme created a platform for the employees to share plans and ideas, and to create a culture of working together. This was also the first forum where various staff members could meet, exchange knowledge and talk about what they actually do. The management development programme has encouraged staff to visualise the organisation’s vision and work ethics that will bring consistency to the organisation.

4.6.2 Employee training

In line with the literature review, the survey findings showed that training impacts performance partly through improving employee skills, which enables employees to know more and do better in their jobs (Harris, 2000; Swart et al. 2005; Wright & Geroy, 2001). One of the organisation’s directors commented that, “Training created benefits to the company in identifying and filling the gaps with the

organisation”. One of the five general workers felt that middle managers “... were responsible for strategy and motivating staff”. In reviewing the results, 18 of the 23 respondents were overwhelmingly positive towards “the tools they learnt in the programme to improve the communication within the departments which resulted in a positive staff morale and increased productivity in the departments”.

One of the five managers responded by saying the following:

“Growing talent across all divisions utilising development is key to the growth of the organisation.”

This was confirmed by one of the eight supervisors when making the following comment:

“The in-house training programme enables the company to drive desired results and elevate the organisation to the next level.”

The eight supervisors confirmed that the training led to skills enhancement, as shown in the comment below:

“... evident that most of the participants agreed that the training enhanced the skills of the participants in the divisions.”

The five managers also agreed on the benefits of the programme, as evidenced by this comment:

“The programme gave the employees self-confidence by networking and becoming one.”

From the findings it is clear that the management development programme helped to give the employees a bigger picture of where they fit in, to understand their positions and to realise what is expected of them.

The eight supervisors agreed with this, with one of them stating:

“They got a better understanding of their divisions and the challenges experienced which helped opened up communication challenges to ensure that the managers do not perform their management functions isolated.”

One of the supervisors also made the following comment:

“... that coaching and the development has benefited the organisation and has encouraged systematic thinking.”

Five managers suggested further courses following the management development programme, using external educational service providers to obtain a different perspective on communal issues faced in the workplace, to ensure that the organisation does not work in isolation and to understand common problems in the current economy.

Three business partners commented on the value of the programme, with one respondent commenting as follows:

“The employees have a better understanding of the work they do, and creating company that is more knowledgeable, proactive and responsible. Through the development training programme, the employees have felt valued and have gained confidence in their ability to make the right decisions.”

One of the two superintendents made the following comment on cooperation:

“The interaction between the managers has allowed for the immediate cooperation between the divisions ... During networking the discussion has allowed the managers to highlight the strengths of the delegates and what their capabilities are.”

This has encouraged teamwork and created a strong, positive working environment that supports the organisation’s objectives. Employees gathering in one space created opportunities to discuss the departments and divisions, and to learn more about the business in a less formal environment.

One of the five general workers said the following about the organisation’s future orientation:

“Internally, the training aligns individuals with the company’s objectives. Employees understand where the organisation is heading and how they can best support its goals.”

This was confirmed when one of the five managers said:

“Training has educated the managers more about the organisation and has put them in a better position to impart knowledge.”

One of the eight supervisors made the following comment about collaboration among employees:

“The internal programme gave the employees the chance to interact amongst each other, coming up with ideas, creating contacts and networking which at the end will benefit the organisation.”

In reviewing the results, 18 of the 23 respondents were overwhelmingly positive towards the training. According to them, the programme educated the managers and informed them about the organisation, putting them in a better position to impart knowledge.

One of the directors said the following about the quality of staff members:

“The organisation will focus more on the direct aspects of the organisation and staff retention, whereas externally the competition of successful candidates is so much greater.”

One of the five managers said the following about enhancing the employees’ knowledge of the organisation:

“The internal programme also gave the employees the opportunity to learn more about the organisation, management skills as whole and learn about the business itself.”

In reviewing the results, 15 of the 23 respondents said the programme created an environment in which the employees can learn from their own business cases to identify gaps that need improvement.

One of the three business partners said the following about the value of a customised programme presented in-house:

“The internal programme was put together specifically to address and cover certain priority areas applicable within the organisation which you can’t do externally.”

One of the general workers felt that the in-house programme offered more value because it was finely targeted according to their needs:

“The advantage of doing a course internally is that it is tailored in a manner that is focused on the organisation and the challenges, thus getting value out of the programme.”

One of the eight supervisors said the following about the clarification of roles in the organisation:

“The programme has given the employees better understanding of their roles.”

One of the eight supervisors said that the ability to directly apply what they have learnt was a benefit:

“The organisation allowed the staff to apply what they have learned to see how the learning will affect or influence the organisation positively.”

One of the directors mentioned the role of mentoring or coaching going forward:

“Mentoring or coaching with senior person in the organisation is one of the items the organisation has to focus on.”

One of the five managers was overwhelmingly positive about the outcome of the learning intervention:

“The benefits of this in-house training in the future with the collaborations of the different divisions, relationships established will allow the organisation to have the same vision and have the same drive.”

The training has brought the employees up to date with current practices in their industry and prepared them to take action in new and unique circumstances.

Detailed interview findings

The interview questions and responses can be summarised as follows (for more information, see Appendix A):

Question 1: In your opinion, what value does this in-house course have in establishing the culture of “One Company”?

The majority of the participants said that this study allowed for the different divisions to come together, to meet colleagues within the group and to find out what exactly they do. One participant said that, “the MDP is the perfect platform to change the habits and groom the future leaders and understand the group and drive the group as one”.

Question 2: In your opinion, what is the value of conducting an in-house MDP?

The participants fully agreed that the in-house MDP offered value, referring to the development of talent across divisions that could impact them collectively and optimise the use of resources and talent, all of which are key to the growth of the organisation. The 23 participants praised the management development programme as it helped to build an efficient, effective and highly motivated team that enhanced the company’s competitive position. The in-house training brought change awareness and an understanding the company’s direction. The managers also responded by saying that development of talent across all divisions was key to the growth of the organisation. The MDP helped the managers and employees to have the same mind set, understand the organisational values and culture, and made it easier to develop teamwork. The in-house training programme enabled the company to drive the desired results and elevate the organisation to the next level. The respondents also cited that management skills are often obtained in external training programmes. The training focused on tackling topics that needed attention and pushed staff in the direction they need to go to achieve their goals.

Staff members also highlighted that the in-house training will enable the company to leverage opportunities. The organisation will have capable people to take on these challenges and have talent ready and available to take on such positions. The training programme was tailored for the organisation's requirements and incorporated learning with business needs and desired results. This is a good succession plan for the organisation.

Question 3: What benefits do you think the company will get for conducting this programme internally and not externally?

Different answers were given to this question, like the growth and satisfaction that comes from learning, knowing that the company wants you to be part of its future, and the role and responsibility of the middle management to enact the vision of senior leadership and to motivate staff accordingly. "The MDP taught us to think outside the box and provided the tools to think more strategically and in more forward-thinking leadership terms."

Question 4: In your opinion, which areas would have benefitted you more on the MDP?

The answers included the following: Identifying the gaps internally and working to cover these gaps. The company can benefit from exposing top talent to each other. The internal programme gave the employees the chance to interact with one another, come up with ideas, create contacts and network, which at the end will benefit the organisation. The training has increased the managers' knowledge of the organisation and has put them in a better position to impart knowledge. The employees understand where the organisation is heading and know how best to support the goals. The organisation will focus more strongly on the direct aspects of the organisation and the industry, and will benefit from staff retention, without having to recruit candidates externally where the competition is much fiercer.

The newly created collaboration platform allows for critical situations to be discussed live in order to find resolutions. Unity was created among the divisions and various groups, and capabilities were discovered. The internal programme also gave the employees the opportunity to learn more about the organisation, management style as whole and the business itself. The programme created an environment in which the employees could learn from their own business cases and identify gaps that they can learn from and improve.

The internal programme was put together specifically to address certain priority areas applicable to the organisation, which cannot be done externally. External programmes tend to be broad and generic, while the internal programme was very specific. The participants could easily relate to the internal programme because it included examples from the organisation for they are working. The advantage

of doing the course internally was the strong focus on the organisation and its challenges, thus getting value out of the programme. Also, external programmes are attended by employees from different organisations. Conducting the training internally allowed the organisation to build strong relationships internally. The discussions during the training are related to real-life situations in the employees' work context and assisted the employees to think differently about their work. The programme has given the employees a better understanding of their specific roles in the organisation.

Question 5: Do you think an externally organised programme would have benefitted you more?

The survey participants commented that the coaching and performance skills benefitted them, highlighted areas for personal development and provided basic coaching skills and an awareness of non-directive methods to achieve favourable outcomes. The employees with an operational background gained a far better understanding of the systems and logistics. The mindset shifted to much more control over the finances of the business to limit risk for the organisation. The Strategic Thinking Module was one of the most mentioned modules with the most benefits. As one participant said, "Strategic thinking is not something that you can automatically start implementing and understand. However, it confirmed that every decision has consequences." It allowed the employees to see the bigger picture, gain perspective and then break down the picture in parts in order to re-inforce wherever was required, to strategise better and to improve their problem-solving skills. The programme encouraged the employees to learn more about the financial part of the organisation and to better manage it as whole.

The employees said they have a better understanding of the entire supply chain and the vital role it plays in delivering first-class service to customers. The modules covered have created a culture for the employees to think differently and out of the box. The leadership skills can be applied in finance or operations. The employees realised that decision making impacts not only their divisions and the organisation, but the operation as a whole.

Question 6: As participants in this programme, what would you recommend the company do differently in conducting this programme in the future?

The fact that they had access to colleagues from other divisions allowed for practical and organisation-specific discussions that are aligned with the company's strategy and goals. The internal programme was beneficial to the employees as it gave them the bigger picture of the organisation and an understanding of where their day-to-day work fitted into the whole. The MDP used company-specific examples and case studies, which made the training more interesting as staff members actually learned how to solve their own organisation's existing issues. During the training, the employees were able to absorb more and get much more value out of the training. Learning from an

external programme would have been difficult to implement. The discussions during the internal training were relevant to what they do on a daily basis. It was easy to apply their skills and ensure that what they have learned was not forgotten when went back to their daily activities. The internal programme is close to home. The modules covered the industry in which the organisation operates. The organisation feels that it is playing bigger role in the development of its employees. The organisation allows the staff to apply what they have learned and to see how the learning will impact the organisation. The internal training allowed the trainers to adapt their material to fit different situations. As a result, all the participants could relate to the issues and talk openly about sensitive issues at work.

Question7: Would you recommend that the company continue with in-house programmes such as this or go the external programme route for middle managers?

It was brought to the researcher's attention that the middle managers would like the training to add a section on presentation skills. This will allow the middle managers to gain confidence in this area. The employees would also like a stronger focus on mentoring or coaching with senior persons in the organisation. According to the employees, mentoring and coaching will help them with their thought processes, discussions about their career aspirations and the planning of their career paths. The organisation must create a platform where participants can discuss the challenges that may arise after the completion of the management development programme.

The employees agreed that the organisation should continue with the in-house training as it was valuable and created stronger teamwork than an external programme. The training has given the staff insight into the organisation. A great network platform was created where colleagues could meet, network and actually get to know the challenges of each division. The management development programme created networking opportunities which are fundamental for the organisation. However, the successful candidates should be given opportunities within the organisation to showcase their talents and development. The candidates that attended the course should use real projects within the organisation for their MDP assignments. The management development programme has proven its worth. There is no doubt that these middle managers will take over the upper leadership roles in the future.

The in-house training also enabled the organisation to monitor progress directly and to rectify problems that managers experienced immediately before being impacted. The participants agreed that the customised training programme is the route to take because the whole purpose of the training was to benefit the employees and the organisation. An external programme would not have allowed them to implement what they have learned to the same extent that the internal programme did. Going forward, the organisation will see the benefits of this in-house training in stronger collaboration

between the different divisions and stronger relationships, allowing the organisation to drive its vision in a focused way.

The training has brought the employees up to date with current practices in their industry and prepared them to take action in new and unique circumstances. The training was linked to the outside environment, thus exposing employees to new and challenging concepts that support professional growth and organisation goals.

4.7 SUMMARY

Based on the findings from the interview questionnaires, the management development programme enabled the company to drive the desired results and to elevate the organisation to the next level. Oldroyd (1995:14) believed the following to be crucial in terms of the successful training and development of employees within an organisation: the commitment of senior management; positive perceptions among staff; and the assurance that training and staff development support departmental and institutional aims. The identification of needs and the presentation of need-specific programmes will go a long way to improve the performance of workers as well as the overall organisation. The analysis answered the objective of the study, which was to determine whether a customised management development programme or an open programme would work best for the development of middle managers in the target organisation.

In this chapter, the researcher provided an overview of the data that was collected and staff views about the effectiveness of the management development programme. In terms of the quality of the training, the majority of the staff rated it as excellent, very good or good. This, in turn, is an indication of a training programme that has clear objectives, is relevant, and that motivates employees. It is also evident from the findings that the majority of the employees feel motivated to work after training. This is significant because motivation generally seeks to boost employees' morale to work hard and thus increase productivity. The study established a relationship between training and development, and individual performance. The training programme was expensive, but certainly motivated employees and provided them with new competencies. They could have derived value from an open-enrolment programme but the findings clearly showed that the customised programme inspired and motivated the participants to rise to the occasion in order to perform better and achieve desirable results.

Based on the findings of this study, conclusions and recommendations will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research methodology and all the ethical considerations pertaining to the analysis and the interpretation of the collected data were discussed in Chapter Four. The approach followed to gather information and data as well as the identification of the themes were discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter will focus on the recommendations and conclusions of the study, with a specific focus on the findings from the interviews with the employees.

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES REVISITED

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of a customised management development programme in a logistics organisation. What would have been best for the organisation to enhance the effectiveness of its middle managers – a customised management development programme delivered in-house or an off-the-shelf standard programme? The primary and secondary research questions were answered through the following:

- a) *To understand the thought process behind why the company decided to focus on middle management first:* This was achieved as confirmed by the interview with the Head of Human Resources who explained the need to focus on the middle management layer in order to start creating a learning culture in the organisation.
- b) *To understand the thought process behind going the customised route versus the open programme route:* This was achieved as confirmed by the interview with the programme head of the Management Development Programme at the University of Stellenbosch Business School, explaining the positive effects of customising the management development programme.
- c) *To understand how employees were selected for the programme:* This was achieved as confirmed by the interview with the Head of Human Resources on how the selection was made for the participants to attend.
- d) *To identify the perception of employees about training and development in the organisation used in this study:* The data collected indicated that respondents gained new knowledge and insight to help the growth of the organisation.
- e) *Identify what role the Human Resource Department plays in developing the customised training programme:* This was achieved as confirmed by the interview with the Head of Human Resources explaining the positive impact of the customised management development programme.
- f) *To identify the perceived value of a customised in-house programme versus a standard off-the-shelf programme:* The data collected indicated that respondents who participated in the training enhanced their skills and knowledge, and hence improved their performance at work.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THIS STUDY

This study was executed at a single organisation, which inevitably limits the generalisation of the findings of the study. This limitation, however, should not influence the validity of the findings of the study. It only focused on a local company, so no international comparison was done. Therefore, the research findings cannot be considered as illustrative of all organisations in South Africa.

The main challenge was that participants had to be reminded to complete the questionnaire, as they are were mostly based in the field. Time pressure was another challenge for the researcher. Most of the participants have demanding work schedules and it was often difficult to communicate with them. This made it difficult for some of them to make time to participate in this research. However, the researcher succeeded to interview those who were available and willing to be interviewed.

The organisation has created growth and development opportunities for its employees. The system they have in place to develop and support employees allow the employees to find intrinsic value in the work they do. Employee development plans are not simple and cannot be viewed as supplementary to other business practices. Employee development must form part of the overall business strategy. Managers must understand the role they play in developing, mentoring and coaching employees.

DELIMITATIONS

The Organisation has undergone few management changes and also made sense to the researcher to focus on one organisation to get further understanding of the feedback received from the staff satisfaction surveys. Delineation of this study is the middle management group of a large organisation with a specific focus on in house customised accredited training versus attending an open program. The study did not focus on other theoretical approaches. As part of the delineation the researcher chose to focus qualitative research, which comprises the revising of literature and conducting empirical research, to answer the research question. The Parameters set for the population of this study was specifically middle management, as this was the target population identified by management as needing an intervention. The study material was developed with this population in mind and therefore excluded junior and senior management.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, employee training should be encouraged so as to enhance employees' affective commitment. Training provided should be directed towards increasing employee commitment. Specific on-the-job training should be encouraged, as it provides employees with the opportunity to gain specific knowledge and skills needed for job effectiveness, which has been shown to increase their commitment to the particular organisation. This will be of immense benefit to the

organisation as employees with affective commitment are more committed and will remain with the organisation for longer due to their emotional attachment to the organisation. Organisations can enhance employees' affective commitment by creating an environment in which training is supported and encouraged by supervisors and senior management.

Although this study sheds light on the customisation of management development programmes and organisational commitment, it also raises questions for future research (see Section 5.6 below).

5.5 CONCLUSION

Staff training and development has been identified in the study as crucial for organisational effectiveness and success. In the light of the above, organisations are encouraged to train and develop their staff in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Training reduces the work of managers in terms of supervision. At the same time, training improves the drive, initiative and quality of work of employees, thus assisting them to be more committed to achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation. This helps to enhance the effectiveness of the organisation's employees. It was also established in the literature that the fundamental objective of training is to achieve both individual and organisational performance. This was affirmed by the findings of this study as the respondents identified that the basic objective of their training was to improve both employee and organisational performance.

This study focused only on a number of departments in a single organisation. The study can therefore be expanded to other companies as well. This will help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of workers, thus supporting human resource departments to design appropriate training and development programmes to suit their work force. The study concluded that the customised management development programme was mainly concerned with offering learning and development opportunities for mid-level managers, leading to the improvement of knowledge and skills at all levels in the organisation. Also, it can be concluded from the research that the training of the staff can result in efficient performance of their job functions.

Finally, it is vital to monitor and evaluate training in order to assess its effectiveness in producing the learning outcomes specified when the training intervention was planned, and to indicate where improvements or changes are required to make the training even more effective. The basis upon which each category of training is to be evaluated should be determined during the planning stage while considering how to obtain and analyse the information required to evaluate the learning events.

5.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

The following issues may be considered for further research:

- The effectiveness of training in order to measure results, return on investment, behavioural changes, performance improvement, accountability and learning applied on the job immediately after training.
- The use of pre- and post-training measures to determine the effectiveness and change in behaviour as a result of training.
- A potential additional study to evaluate the business outcomes of employees who attended an in-house programme versus employees who attended an open programme.
- Using statistical KPIs and hard-wired business measures to undertake an empirical study on business unit performance pre-intervention versus post-intervention. Was there an increase in revenue, performance or business outcomes, and can this be attributed to the in-house training intervention?
- A potential study on whether some modules, such as a strategy module, can be offered as a customised in-house intervention.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Delegate

The outcome of any training intervention is extremely important to gauge. Often, these interventions cost the company and the individual time, money and resources. For this reason, it is useful to conduct a survey to get feedback on how these training interventions are experienced by the delegates that attend them.

Your input regarding the value of the Management Development Programme that you attended will be extremely useful in understanding its impact on you and the organisation.

Please complete the following questionnaire with specifics regarding the above.

Name of the company you work for:	
MDP Wave 1 (Durban) or Wave 2 (Johannesburg):	

1. The CEO of the company has communicated that we are moving towards 'One Company'. In your opinion, what value does this in-house course have in establishing this culture?

2. In your opinion, what is the value of conducting an in-house MDP programme for:

a) The company

b) You as an employee

c) Your division

3. What benefits do you think the company will get from conducting this programme internally vs. externally?

4. In your opinion, which areas would have benefitted you more on the MDP? Please qualify your answer.

5. Do you think an externally organised programme would have benefitted you more? Please explain your answer.

6. As participant on this programme, what would you recommend the company do differently in conducting this programme in the future?

7. Would you recommend that the company continue with in-house programmes such as this or go the external programme route for middle managers? Please qualify your answer.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT LETTER

Sturrock Grindrod Maritime (Pty) Ltd
Reg No. 196901077/07
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The Dean

Faculty of Business and Management Sciences
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Cape Town
8000

27 January 2016

Dear Prof Binza

Approval to Conduct Study on Sturrock Grindrod Maritime

I hereby confirm that Sisanda M. Mkiya: Student Number 203029704 has permission to conduct her interviews, focus group discussion and related interviews to complete her research for writing her MTech Business Administration dissertation on *THE IMPACT OF A CUSTOMIZED MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN A ORGANISATION* at Sturrock Grindrod Maritime.

She will conduct this research under my direct supervision.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you need any more information.

Kind Regards



Dr Rene Nel
082 889 1420

Dr René Nel
Head: Human Resources
Grindrod Integrated Logistics
Email: renen@grindrod.co.za
Mobile: 0027 82 889 1420



APPENDIX C: ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER



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Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: BUSINESS
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At a meeting of the Research Ethics Committee on 17 February 2016, Ethics Approval was granted to MKIVA, SISANDA (203029704) for research activities

Related to the MTech/DTech: MTech: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION at the
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Title of dissertation/thesis:	Impact of Customized Management Development Program in a selected Organisation Supervisor: Dr R Nel
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Comments:

Decision: **APPROVED**

	17 February 2016
Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	Date

Clearance Certificate No | 2016FBREC336