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ABSTRACT

This document discusses how a company may assess its need for a training program. Two tables, one listing occupational data such as number and age of employees and turnover rate and one making a manpower forecast for management and staff, are included. A list of training guides is given. (CK)

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**Knitting, Lace and Net Industry Training B**  
TRAINING GUIDE SERIES



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## ALL FIRMS HAVE TRAINING NEEDS?

If you feel that training is something you don't need to bother about, just see if you can really answer YES to all the following questions. If you cannot or if, in some cases, you DON'T KNOW, then we suggest your company has a TRAINING NEED.

QUESTION	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Have you made up your mind that you don't want to make a bigger profit and that you don't want your business to grow?			
Do you get your fair share of the market you are in?			
Are you in the right market?			
Have you made a plan showing how you will achieve, next year, a specific profit level?			
Is it evident, from factual information available, that your company's performance is better than most in your section of the industry?			
Do you deliver at least 90% of your orders on time?			
Are all your lines really profitable?			
Can your staff cope when you are away for more than a few days?			

**All firms have training needs?**

QUESTION	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Have you planned to fill vacancies in key jobs which will arise in the foreseeable future?			
Do your managers and supervisors really know what results you want from them?			
Are they capable of getting them for you and do they know regularly whether they are doing so?			
Do you discuss their performance with them, and ways in which they might be helped to improve it?			
Is employment with your firm attractive to school, college or university leavers?			
Do you lose less than 25% of your average total number of employees each year?			
Had most of the people, who left you last year, more than 3-6 months service with you?			
Are you getting any of the benefits of the modern aids to scientific management such as work study, cost control, quality control?			
Do your sales per employee compare favourably with those of your competitors?			
Are you satisfied that your costs per dozen, per yard or per pound cannot be reduced?			
Can you meet your own requirements for trained people without having to rely on competitors?			
Are you satisfied that your machines cannot be run, controlled or maintained better?			

## **All firms have training needs?**

Perhaps you hadn't thought of training needs in this way. Every 'NO' or 'DON'T KNOW' indicates a need to think about the ways in which MAN-POWER, from top to bottom in your firm, can be trained to help make better use of MACHINES, MATERIALS or MONEY.

Better profits, bigger business and better utilisation of capital don't just happen. Plans have to be made to get them; their achievement depends on an effective, integrated, properly motivated and well trained team of people.

What company, therefore, can afford to say 'we have no training needs'?

Of course, training is not a panacea for all a company's ills. Working conditions, rates of pay, the state of trade and other internal and external factors will all contribute.

The important contribution which systematic recruitment, selection, training and development can make to a company's prosperity is, however, so great that it pays to assess needs regularly. The aim of this booklet is to give guidance on how to do just that.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON YOUR TRAINING NEEDS

Assessing training needs involves considering:

- numbers of people to be replaced
- numbers of additional people required
- the types of training needed by replacement and by additional staff
- problems arising from deficiencies in the performance of existing staff
- changes, in the company's plans, methods or structure which will call for training or retraining of staff

A good deal of this information can be extracted from PERSONNEL RECORDS; the rest of it has to be obtained by consulting PRODUCTION and OTHER RECORDS and the INFORMED OPINION of directors, managers and supervisors in the firm.

Personnel records

Whilst information about manpower in the company may be readily available in relation to the immediate present, much of what is required for a training needs assessment is historical information. Personnel records are, therefore, essential. These records need not be elaborate and should be designed to give you most help. They should provide information on personal particulars, employment, experience, training given and performance. Records of past employees will also be helpful. If you have none of these records we suggest you give some thought to starting them. The Board's training advisers will be glad to help you.

We suggest that personnel records should be designed to record the following information in confidential form:

1. Name, date of birth, marital status
2. Present address
3. Experience before joining company
- Present job
- Date joined company

6. Jobs held in the company
7. Special training given (internal and external)
8. Progress during internal training
9. Results of performance review
10. Date of leaving company
11. Reason for leaving (preferably obtained from interview before leaving)

Notes

1. An example of a training record card (in this case for operatives) is given as an Appendix

Other records

The sales, production, quality, maintenance and cost records which most companies find necessary in order to manage their affairs are adequate as sources of additional information. No special extra records need to be kept, as long as the performance of individuals can be identified.

Informed opinion

The assessment of a company's training needs can very profitably be conducted as a team effort in which the special contributions of managers, supervisors and others are sought. If people are informed about the assessment process at an early stage, this will go a long way towards establishing the right attitude towards it. It will also lay a firm foundation for the eventual acceptance of line responsibility for systematic training.

Consultation of this kind will be especially meaningful if those consulted have an understanding of the company's general attitude to training and its overall training policy. The vital policy decisions needed in every company are listed in "Determining a Training Policy" on page 7 of the Board's General Training Recommendation published in March 1970.

## HOW TO ASSESS NUMBERS TO BE RECRUITED AND TRAINED

The first and most obvious area of inquiry in an assessment of training needs is the manpower position in the company. This inquiry needs to consider things like:

- numbers employed, by age, sex and occupation
- numbers of starters and leavers
- length of service of leavers
- numbers required in the foreseeable future

**Table A** (on page 7) gives an example of an analysis of the forward operative training load in a medium-sized hosiery and knitwear company. The layout of this table is commended to all firms; it can, of course, be extended to cover all employees and some companies may wish to break down job categories and age figures into more detail than is given in the table. The value of such an analysis is that it reveals recruitment and training implications of which the company might otherwise be unaware.

For example, from Table A, the following implications emerge:

- Only 5, out of a total workforce of 142, are in the under 18 age group. This indicates a need to do something to attract more young people.
- 19 out of 142 people (or 13%) are approaching or have passed normal retirement age.

- Approximate labour turnover for 1970 is 40% (57 leavers as a percentage of 142 employed) and 40 people out of 57 left before they had completed six months service with the firm. A labour turnover rate of 40% is significantly higher than the industry average rate. Better training could reduce it.

- The overall figure of 40%, however, conceals more serious figures for:

Hand flat knitters (78% and probably worsening)

Sorting and countering (65%)

Sewing machinists (83%)

These three occupations present priority problems, especially since the majority of leavers from them left in the first six months of service.

- Improved operative training arrangements are needed in order to help:
  - attract more young people
  - reduce labour turnover
  - reduce numbers leaving in early periods of service



**TABLE A FORWARD OPERATIVE TRAINING LOAD - Medium-sized hosiery and knitwear company.**

Occupation	Number of employees at 31.12.70	Ages					No. of leavers			Length of service of leavers 1970 in months				Forecast number of employees at 31.12.71
		under 18	18-21	22-45	46-60	over 60	1968	1969	1970	under 3	3-6	7-12	over 12	
Hand flat knitters	14	-	-	10	4	-	10	8	(11)	(4)	3	3	1	(16)
Power flat knitters	9	-	-	2	7	-	1	-	2	-	12	-	-	9
Half hose knitters	25	-	-	3	19	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	1	25
<b>Knitwear</b>														
Cutters	5	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	5
Linkers and seamers	14	1	3	5	4	1	6	3	(5)	2	1	2	-	(18)
Sewing machinists	12	-	2	3	4	3	6	9	(10)	(5)	3	2	-	(16)
Menders and hand finishers	12	1	-	3	7	1	3	2	3	1	2	-	-	13
<b>Half-hose</b>														
Toe close operators	9	1	-	4	2	2	4	2	3	2	1	-	-	10
Linkers	3	1	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Menders	10	-	-	2	5	3	2	1	3	-	-	-	3	8
Transferrers and tabbers	5	-	-	2	3	-	2	4	(4)	1	2	-	1	6
Turners, examiners etc.	4	-	-	2	1	1	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	4
Sorting and countering	20	-	4	5	7	4	10	12	(13)	(6)	4	1	2	20
Totals	142	(5)	9	42	67	(19)	48	45	57	21	19	8	9	152

Notes: - brackets indicate problem areas  
 - figures in the last column take account of the estimated effects of changes due to expansion and contraction

## How to assess numbers to be recruited and trained

**Table B** (on page 9) gives an example of a manpower forecast for management and staff. In this field, forecasts must be made over a longer period and account taken as early as possible of the effects of retirements, promotions and leavers. The training implications of the information in Table B are:

- There is apparently no prospect of a replacement for a director who is to retire. The company will have to give serious thought to this matter.
- Over the next five years it will have to fill at least two manager vacancies and will have to prepare appropriate training programmes. In particular, one foreman, who is apparently promotable, will need a development programme to equip him for his eventual managerial responsibilities.
- Two salesmen will be needed over the next five years; perhaps the company should be recruiting young men now and preparing broad-based training programmes for them (see Training Recommendation 5 - Professional Administrative Staff).
- Two mechanics should be given some supervisory training if they are to be made ready for promotion as indicated.

This simple type of analysis is well worth making; planning training for succession in managerial and staff fields needs to be undertaken well in advance. Many companies may well be surprised at the training implications which it reveals.

**TABLE B MANPOWER FORECAST - MANAGEMENT AND STAFF**

OCCUPATION	Number		Apparent deficit	Add to apparent deficit			Apparent vacancies to be filled	Deduct possible promotion from within	Total vacancies to be filled
	At present	In five years time		Retire-ments	Possible leavers	Promotions or transfers			
Directors	2	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	1
Managers	8	9	1	1	1	-	3	1	2
Foremen and supervisors	9	12	3	-	1	1	5	2	3
Sales staff	4	6	2	-	-	-	2	-	2
Knitting and sewing machine mechanics	9	12	3	1	-	2	3	-	3
Etc.									

## HOW TO ASSESS TRAINING NEEDS OF PRESENT EMPLOYEES

The second area in which inquiry can prove most fruitful is the training needs of existing employees. These can be revealed in two main ways:

- through an examination of problems which the company is encountering and which may be indication of training needs for groups of employees

• through a study of the performance of individuals in relation to what is expected of them.

Examine problems facing the company

Problems can be identified for examination by considering the points listed below.

PROBLEM	TRAINING COULD BE NEEDED FOR
Absence of company plan Unsatisfactory profit level and capital yield Falling share of market No proper objectives set to managers Inadequate control information Too many different lines Too many small orders Plant working under capacity Uncompetitive prices in some sections of the business Shortage of cash	Directors and senior executives
Labour turnover Excessive manufacturing or processing costs Excessive material usage Too many late deliveries Low morale Production bottlenecks Absenteeism and lateness too high Too many seconds, rejects or re-dyes Too many accidents	Managers and supervisors

## How to assess training needs of present employees

PROBLEM	TRAINING COULD BE NEEDED FOR
Machine breakdowns too frequent Machine downtime too great Too many fabric or garment faults due to mechanical troubles Sampling too slow	Technicians and mechanics
Learning times excessive Too many new entrant operatives leave in early service periods Performance variation between operatives too high Too many fabric or garment faults caused by operatives	Operatives

Many more problems will occur to you. We suggest you give serious consideration to them all and to the part training might play in helping you to alleviate them.

In particular we strongly suggest that, when asking questions about these matters, you should strive to get objective, factual answers.

Impressions which are not based on measurement can be entirely mistaken.

Study the requirements of individuals

Individuals need training

- to help them improve their performance
- to prepare them for new developments and techniques in the company
- to prepare them for promotion

## How to assess training needs of present employees

### Training for improvement

#### Operatives

Do your supervisors examine regularly the earnings or performance levels of your operatives? Frequently they will find persistent low performers who, with re-training, could be helped to improve. If performance variation amongst operatives is high, it could indicate a need for more systematic training of new entrants.

Specific training in fault rectification and prevention could help those operatives who are producing too many faults.

"Training Recommendation 3 - Operatives", could help you to find ways to train and retrain your operatives.

#### Managers and supervisors

Do your managers and supervisors really know what results they are expected to achieve? Do they have control information which really helps them to take action at the right time? Do they get any training to help them in areas of need?

In so many companies the answers to these questions can only be "no". We suggest you attend a Board seminar on 'Improving Management Performance' so that we may discuss this vital subject with you in depth.

Training Recommendation 4 - 'Managers Part 1 - In-Post Managers' and Training Guide 'Improving Management Performance' could be helpful; we suggest you give them serious attention.

#### Administrative, commercial and technical staffs

Do you give trainees in these categories the opportunity to attend courses of further education? How do you arrange for them to be kept up-to-date in their specialist fields?

A written job description could help to determine whether they need further training in order to perform their jobs more efficiently. Their performance should be appraised annually so that vital training needs can be identified and personal development plans laid. These are your potential managers; their training is very important to the future prosperity of your business.

If you are not in the habit of recruiting and training people in these fields we suggest you look carefully at career opportunities you could have to offer. Why shouldn't you have your share of the more able people? They won't come to you unless you set out to attract them.

#### Training for new developments

Are you planning to introduce:- work study? data processing? quality control? cost control? new production planning and control methods?

Many members of your staff will be affected. They will need training to prepare them for such changes.

#### Training for promotion

Are you thinking ahead to the day when key posts will become vacant?

Those members of your staff who, you feel, have potential for promotion will need help in preparing for it. Otherwise they may fail to appreciate the different nature of the job to which they may be promoted; so many people give disappointing service after promotion because they still think of the job in the same terms as the previous one. Training for promotion should be planned. It can take a variety of forms.

The Board's training advisers can help you construct appropriate training and development plans.

## **HOW TO ASSESS YOUR NEED FOR TRAINING FACILITIES**

When training needs have been identified in the ways suggested earlier, it will be possible to identify priorities and to make plans to meet them.

Effective training presupposes, however, qualified trainers, adequate administration and, in some cases, accommodation and equipment. The roles of company training officer and instructor are outlined in Training Recommendation 1. We suggest you consider whether you have adequate provision to meet your needs. Similarly, it may be worth considering the setting aside of space and equipment for operative training (see Training Recommendation 3).

For many smaller companies a group training scheme may provide a solution to these problems.

Again, the Board's training advisers can help you decide on these matters.

## **HOW THE TRAINING BOARD CAN HELP YOU**

We hope that, after reading this guide, many companies will undertake regular assessments of their training needs; certainly those companies which employ a training officer ought to place high on the training officer's list of duties the carrying out of regular assessments.

Other companies may prefer to have outside help at the start. There are several ways in which help might be provided, viz:

- the Board's training advisers can give guidance, through a limited number of visits of short duration, covering the gathering and interpretation of information, the preparation of recommendations and plans for action
- the Board may be able to suggest alternative sources of help.

## **ALL FIRMS HAVE TRAINING NEEDS**

The Training Board's aim is to encourage and help all firms to carry out such training as is necessary to them - and only to them. There is no point in training in excess of one's needs and there is certainly no point in training for training's sake. But the firm which claims to have no training needs at all may well be deluding itself. In whatever market situation a firm is placed it must need training if it is to survive. A regular and objective assessment of training need cannot but pay dividends.

Firms which do have training staff and training facilities and do operate up-to-date training schemes are also advised to make regular assessments of needs in order to provide a proper basis for ensuring that:

- training staff and facilities are fully and effectively employed
- training needs, in order of priority, are met
- training standards are not allowed to deteriorate.

Managements are entitled to the best results that modern training methods can bring. Are you getting them?



## THE BOARD'S PUBLICATIONS

The principles of systematic training and their application to particular occupational groups in the industry have been set out in a number of publications.

When you have assessed your training needs and want to think of ways to meet them, have a look at the appropriate training recommendation, training guide or training manual. In fact it might pay you to look at some of them before you make your assessment; they could give you some helpful tips.

Copies of publications are available from:

The Information Officer,  
Knitting, Lace and Net Industry Training Board,  
4 Hamilton Road,  
Nottingham.  
NG5 1AU. Telephone: Nottingham 61075

Training Recommendations

Published

1. Operator-training instructors
2. Office personnel - non-professional
3. Operatives
4. Management, part 1 - in-post managers
5. Professional administrative staff
6. Technicians and technologists

Forthcoming

7. Management, Part 2 - Potential managers

Training Guides

- Group training schemes
- Improving management performance
- Assessing training needs

Instructor's Manuals

- No. 1 - Full-fashioned knitting operatives
- No. 2 - Knitting mechanics (Zodiac 8-feed machines)
- No. 3 - Knitting mechanics (Monk Samcomatic machines)
- No. 4 - Office occupations  
(Covering purchase ledger clerk,  
calculating machine operator,  
wages clerk)

**APPENDIX 1**

**K.L.N. TRAINING BOARD**

**OPERATIVE TRAINING RECORD CARD**

<b>TRAINEE'S NAME AND INITIAL(S)</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>NATIONAL INSURANCE No.</b>				<b>DATE STARTED TRAINING</b>	<b>Age at that time</b>	<b>SURNAME AND INITIAL(S) of INSTRUCTOR</b>	<b>K.L.N.I.T.B. REGISTRATION OF INSTRUCTOR</b>
<b>JOB FOR WHICH BEING TRAINED</b>							<b>WEEKLY TRAINING WAGE</b>	<b>DATE TRAINING WAGE EARNED</b>	<b>TOTAL TRAINING DA</b>
<b>PREVIOUS EMPLOYER AND EXPERIENCE</b>									

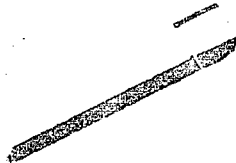
**Record of Progress from commencement of Training to point at which Training Wage is earned**

<b>Week No.</b>	<b>Week Ending</b>	<b>Performance achieved or Work Produced</b>	<b>Equivalent Earnings</b>	<b>Week No.</b>	<b>Week Ending</b>	<b>Performance achieved or Work Produced</b>	<b>Equivalent Earnings</b>

## **KNITTING, LACE AND NET INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD**

### **THE BOARD'S OFFICES**

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London and the South of England	7 Amersham Hill, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Telephone : High Wycombe 23431



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