

An Assessment of an Interactive Online Training Course at
a Placement and Business Service

by
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Approval Page

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Abstract

An Assessment of an Interactive Online Training Course at a Placement and Business Service. Shelley Wynter-Wellington: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Fischler School of Education and Human Services. ERIC Descriptors: Job Interviews, Employment Interviews, Interviewing, Job Application, Job Applicants

The problem was that the general educational level in relation to the job interview process of first-time prospective job applicants who were clients of the staffing agency had been progressively declining over the years. The issue was having an adverse affect on the placement service, as fewer clients were being offered jobs.

The purpose of this applied dissertation study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an interactive online training course for a placement and business service. The extent to which the course assisted client-applicants with the overall understanding of the job application and interview process was examined.

Four research questions were addressed. The questions related to online training courses and the improvement of the existing online training course. The review of related literature revealed that there may be a need for improvement of the interviewing process.

Two questionnaires were created and administered to all first-time interviewees to determine if the online course was deemed to be successful. Formative and summative committees were used as part of the validation process. Findings indicated that the majority of the job applicants agreed that the online training course was excellent or very good and was in line with their expectations of preparation for a successful job interview. There were various meetings with the management of the placement agency on the results, and it was recommended to the director that all eligible first-time job applicants receive the online training course before the interviewing session as a preparation tool.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

A temporary staffing agency was founded in 1970 as a for-profit organization with a niche in a growing market economy. The agency was founded by an enterprising woman whose former background was as a human resources (HR) recruitment officer at a previous Caribbean company. The temporary staffing agency was established because of individual recruiting efforts of employees in the Caribbean area during the 1970s. The purpose of the agency was to recruit, train, and place job candidates in suitable employment positions.

In 1972, 2 years after the establishment of the Caribbean agency, the market was primed for temporary staff recruitment and placement services. As a result, this temporary staffing agency's profits grew by over 60%. The mission statement for the temporary staffing agency was to serve companies that were local, international, and in the Caribbean by providing the most qualified permanent and temporary staff.

The director of the subject company related that, as the Caribbean economy declined in the 1990s, the temporary staffing agency responded to the challenge through innovative means and continued to deliver flawless, excellent service. This agency survived, and in its 37th year, plans were made for further expansion. The agency looks forward to another 35 years of delivering an even higher level of quality service in an economy that has begun to regain lost ground.

The director of the subject company indicated that the problem with the personnel industry was the ongoing difficulty in locating qualified personnel to fill vacancies, particularly office-related positions. In addition, there were problems within the industry due to lack of structure, communication, mobility, and technology. This problem in the Caribbean was different from those in countries such as the United States, Canada, and

the United Kingdom, where the job- recruitment process was structured and organized.

In contrast, according to a study conducted in 2001 by Burgess and Connell (2004) of temporary employment agencies in the United States and Canada, existing agencies were found to have structured and precisely organized regulations. The study was specific and described the types of limitations for hire. The study also included but was not limited to the maximum duration for hire, and the maximum allowable timeframe for renewal of hire, along with the total duration of hire, which was used as a guideline for temporary agencies. Burgess and Connell concluded that, in the terms of rehire, there was no maximum duration for the temporary assignment of workers in Canada and the United States.

However, according to the director of the subject company, there was no such regulatory process in the Caribbean. Instead, prospective employees were introduced to employers through informal means. Positions were filled through referrals from employees or ex-employees, walk-in applicants, or persons who simply mailed in their résumés with the unlikely chance that there might be a vacancy. Hence, Caribbean companies with the intention of hiring staff sought a recruiting agency that offered placement services for permanent and temporary staff but no structured hiring or rehiring policies.

The Importance of Temporary Agencies

Daft (2008) determined that temporary agencies were established in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century and have grown rapidly during the 1990s and the early 2000s, employing millions of workers in temporary placements. Daft explained that temporary workers include positions from data entry to project management and, in

some cases, ultimately the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the company. Daft observed a change in the types of demands for temporary workers. Instead of the traditional clerical or manufacturing positions, the emphasis has become geared towards temporary workers who are interim financial specialists and analysis managers in the field of technology.

Burgess and Connell (2004) noted that agencies intervene as intermediaries for workers by filling orders for clients and organizations. Burgess and Connell reported that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that there were 2.9 million persons employed as temporary workers in 1998 with a projected 53% increase by 2006 with the largest growing segment in the professional and technical sectors. Burgess and Connell indicated that transformational changes in the work organization, particularly in the service industry in the 1990s, were contributing factors and led to the increase in hiring temporary workers in the United Kingdom.

Matthews (2008) noted that in the United Kingdom, temporary workers are sometimes regarded by companies as the stereotypical secretary with little or no work ethic or motivation and few skills. However, in contrast, temporary workers may have superior technological skills and are more adaptable to working in varied environments and cultures. In addition, temporary workers are confident working on new challenges and situations within organizations. Matthews indicated that in 2007, 77% of firms in the United Kingdom hired temporary workers out of necessity.

Burgess and Connell (2004) found that temporary jobs are present in all occupations and industries. Temporary jobs are no longer segregated into seasonal industries such as agriculture, hospitality, or clerical positions. However, the emphasis

has become on hiring temporary workers in the area of technology.

The Effect of Technology on the Temporary Agency

Daft (2008) indicated that the workforce has altered because of changes in technology, new software, and web-based programs, combined with on-demand subscription services that facilitate companies with more efficient technologies. The challenge for placement managers is to match an adequate candidate with the appropriate job, and the use of technology is an important part of this process.

Daft (2008) contended that technology is transforming human resources management in meeting the needs of today's global environment. Daft suggested that the transition from HR to electronic HR (e-HR) was established because Internet and information technology is significant and has affected every area of HR management, including training, recruiting, and career development.

Daft (2008) indicated that one of the most effective approaches for recruiting employees is the use of the Internet for training job applicants, primarily the website www.Monster.com. Companies should disregard using traditional ways of recruiting and training strategies, as the Internet gives HR managers new tools for searching the world in order to find the best available talent. Additionally, Daft stressed the importance of online learning and training for the purpose of recruiting on a global basis. For example, many corporations, particularly high-tech companies, are looking specifically for qualified workers in foreign countries. The major reason, according to Daft (2008), is the technological shift in recent years and the shortage of specific technological skills in the United States.

Burgess and Connell (2004) suggested that agencies have transformed methods of training workers because of changes in communication and informational technologies.

Burgess and Connell indicated that in 1998, more than 2% of workers in the United Kingdom working for British Telecom were trained and recruited by agencies. This was significant because the placement agencies increased revenue in the United Kingdom as a direct result of the rising need for technology. Burgess and Connell declared that 1998 was the start of the use of placement agencies to fill technological jobs.

Nature of the Problem

The general manager of the subject placement agency stated that the general knowledge level has been progressively declining over the years for first-time prospective job applicants who were clients of the staffing agency. This knowledge decline was having an adverse effect on the placement service as applicants were not being offered jobs. When clients were sent on a job interview, corporations conveyed to the agency that the applicants were unprepared. In addition to consuming time, the result was added costs for the staffing agency and the client.

In response to the problem, an interactive online training course was created to prepare job applicants for interviews, and it was implemented for clients of the staffing agency. The online training course was designed to improve client success rates with the overall job application process. The purpose of the online training course was to provide a method by which unprepared clients could acquire effective interviewing skills, thereby increasing the likelihood that they would be hired.

According to the general manager of the placement agency, the placement rate declined 38% over the past 3 years, and a significant problem existed with the effectiveness of the online training course. Insufficient information was available to support the effectiveness of the course. The online training course was unique, as it was the first to be implemented in the Caribbean specifically for job applicants. However, the

lack of evaluative information was impeding the decision as to whether to continue to use the course.

Statement of Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of the study was to evaluate an online interactive training course for an employee placement service. The course was designed for prospective job applicants at a temporary staffing agency in the Caribbean.

Based on the literature review on the importance of online training as a learning method and the need for appropriate training courses in the workplace, several reasons were found as to why the training course should be assessed. Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) indicated that any assessment program works best when that which it seeks to improve is clear and explicit and the end result may foster change. This change should compare and assess the educational purpose with the expectations of what the trainer is trying to achieve with a goal of positive results. Mujtaba and Preziosi also stressed the importance of training courses as an educational benefit for the trainees.

Daft (2008) reported that \$5.1 billion were spent on training for workers in 2005 to facilitate organizations with developmental training. Computer-based training, also known as electronic learning, is also used for training purposes with interactive instruction. Formal training methods are classified as structured and planned and, above all, current. In recent years, the fastest growing means of delivering training is electronic training or online training, which enables delivery of material from anywhere at any time, and it also seems to be a fast and efficient way for workers to allow employees to take advantage of what the training courses have to offer.

Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) stated that online education is synonymous with distance education, which can be an avenue for students to explore varied learning styles.

Mujtaba and Preziosi are university professors who believe that the convenience and the utilization of technology is an avenue to support distance education, specifically, training programs. Company management-development trainers will need to know how to assess or evaluate the learning objectives of their trainees in order to provide evidence that demonstrates the overall learning outcomes. The purpose of this assessment was to determine if the existing courses will be offered in the future. From the company's perspective, the integrity of the learning assessment and institutional evaluation are essential and integral for the continuation of improvement of how the training programs can be enhanced.

Definition of Terms

Several terms are germane and specific to this study as defined.

Distance education. This term refers to the use of Internet technology as a support rather than the main mode of educational delivery and, according to Similien (2006), can be used as a consideration for students who have flexible schedules. The online distance educational process is offered to all first-time job applicants.

E-learning. This takes place by the worker using interactive technology in a classroom setting or on a self-directed basis via the Internet. Daft (2008) reported that e-learning was established because many HR management aspects were affected in a positive way, including training, recruitment, and resource-management systems.

Online education. This process encompasses courses that rely on technology as a main mode of educational delivery and can be considered interactive. This assists the student with overall learning and can be considered effective for the disciplined student (Similien, 2006).

Temporary workers. This term, as used in the placement agency business, refers

to individuals who are sent on job assignments from the temporary agency to clients. The duration of the assignment can range from less than a day to an indefinite amount of time as specified in the hiring contract.

Chapter 2: Review of the Related Literature

Introduction

The literature review provided the conceptual basis for this study. The initial investigation of the literature revealed various sources on evaluation methodology. The review of literature referenced the basic tenets of HR management regarding learning, distance learning, technology, application, and the interview process, as well as temporary staffing agencies.

Research Methodology

Research methodology, according to Alexakis (2005), includes two steps: the identification of a broad problem area to be researched, preliminary data gathering through literature reviews and interviews, and how the problem can be contained. Alexakis specifically indicated that the term *problem* is related to the research methodology, as a situation where a gap exists between the actual and what the research is trying to achieve and the reality of what the ideal states. Alexakis stressed that the next step in the research methodology process is a literature review to provide primary and secondary resources for the data to be collected.

Evaluation Methodology

Trochim and Donnelly (2006) indicated that the evaluation methodology depends on the object being evaluated, and the overall purpose of the evaluation. Formative and summative committees play important roles in strengthening and improving the product to be evaluated. The formative committee's tasks are to assist with the form and content, the delivery of the program, and the technology of the product. The summative committee examines the outcomes and estimates the relative cost, if any. The formative committee determines the needs assessment and the criteria. The next step in the

evaluation process is the implementation, which monitors the credibility of the program as it relates to the technological delivery. The final role of the formative committee is to investigate the process of delivering the program.

Questionnaire Development

Fink (2003) suggested that a detailed analysis is essential on how to interpret, manage, and analyze data from questionnaires. Fink outlined these details with the compilation of 10 books on how to conduct research that specifically detailed the development of a questionnaire. Fink outlined how to collect raw data scores as well as how to interpret them. Gorman (2003) described how to word questions and noted that, when writing the objectives for the questionnaire, all ambiguous terms should be defined and clarified because alternative terms might not exist.

Bourque and Fiedler (2003) recommended that the questionnaire should end by inviting the participants to comment on its content. This will help the researcher improve on any questions that might need revision. Bourque and Fiedler believed that this allows respondents to indicate their feeling about the topic of the questionnaire. Chen (2005) indicated that feedback from the respondents is very important in the success of an evaluation of any program. Feedback is vital to determine whether target groups are reached and clients receive quality services.

Varcoe (2004) warned that the descriptions of the evaluation procedures must be explicit for the validation of the instruments' criteria. Proper evaluation of the research design should detail data, findings, and recommendations. Data gathering is an important component in developing a study. Ornstein and Hunkins (2003) related that an evaluation is a process or cluster of processes to gather data that will enable them to accept, change, or eliminate something. Varcoe indicated that the evaluation methodology is designed as

an approach to research. In this approach, there are procedures that are implemented to assess the worth of a product. If the procedures are properly applied, they will enable the evaluator to improve or change the product.

Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) indicated that the purpose of a comprehensive evaluative educational assessment process is vital to the educators' responsibility to the online student. Two characteristics are found in the student-outcomes assessment process: Evidence is produced to (a) measure the learning outcome of the student and (b) to show where the course could change and any possible improvements needed. Mujtaba and Preziosi specifically indicated that the assessment process works best in relation to learning when it is ongoing and not episodic, that is, by tracking the performance of the student. Performance tracking should include a comparison of educational purpose and expectations to learn.

Adult Learning Theories

Knowles (1980) stated that the application of learning principles is based on andragogy. Knowles defined andragogy:

It is the normal aspect of the process of maturation for a person to move from dependency toward increasing self-directedness, but at different rates for different dimensions of life. Teachers have a responsibility to encourage and nurture this movement. Adults have a deep psychological need to be generally self-directing, although they may be dependent in particular temporary situations. (p. 43)

Knowles confirmed that the primary mission of every adult educator is to help individual learners satisfy their needs and goals. Neufeldt (1990) advised that adult education is an important component in future learning. Elias and Merriam (1995) added that the behavioral approach concerning adult education developed as roots in modern philosophies and modern movements. In the modern behaviorist adult movement, the emphasis is on concepts such as control, behavior and modification, learning through

reinforcement, and management by objectives.

Wlodkowski (1999) asserted that the instructor has to treat the learning styles of children differently from that of adults. Adults have experience that might at times surpass the background of their instructor. It is, therefore, important for instructors to respect the experiences of their adult learners. Adults desire to learn for specific reasons and are pragmatic learners; they want their learning to help them solve problems. The learning process should build professional skills and advance them in their jobs.

Wlodkowski observed a group of adult students at a training seminar, noting their body language; it was interpreted as “please don’t waste my time,” “who are you kidding,” and “I wish I could get out of here now” (p. 26). With these kinds of observations, a definite conclusion could be drawn that adult learners are justifiably demanding. The same could be applied to a traditional classroom format as well as an online class. In similar research, Linderman (1961) concluded, “Education is life and therefore education can have no endings” (p. 3). Vella (1994) concurred, pointing out that adults need to be treated with respect and must have a purpose to their learning. Vella believed that instructors should recognize that need and plan their classes accordingly.

Knowles (1980) ascertained that the learning and the orientation processes of adults are different from that of children and that educators should take note. A different approach or orientation is required on the educator’s part. Adult education is concerned with the logical development of the course content. Knowles further affirmed that the organization of the curriculum is important when dealing with specific problem-solving components with regard to adult learning.

The central factor Knowles (1980) observed was that adults can learn. Knowles recognized that learning is an internal process and does have important implications for

the adult education practice. There are however, superior conditions to learning and teaching. The process can be described and outlined for cohesive growth and development in relation to conditions of learning:

1. The learner wishes to learn.
2. The learning environment includes physical comfort, mutual trust, a level of mutual respect, helpfulness, freedom of expression, and the acceptance of differences among others.
3. The learners perceive a goal for their learning experience.
4. The learners have a commitment to their learning experience.
5. The learners want to participate actively in the learning process.
6. The learning process is related to the experience of the learner.
7. Progress should be made by the learner towards a goal.

Knowles (1980) indicated that teachers should encourage their students to respect their feelings and ideas about learning. The goal of the teacher has to be specific with the material covered so that it is applicable to the learner. Knowles contended that conventional wisdom indicates that the learning process is an internal one and the assumption is that all knowledge can be gained only in this manner. Knowles concluded that learning is essentially an external process in the sense that what the student learns can be influenced by outside factors.

Knowles (1980) also indicated that how succinctly and concisely the educator presents the material can be determining factors in how the student gains knowledge. In addition, the qualities of the reading materials are a factor in the learning process. The effectiveness of an adult's self-discipline can also have an effect on the overall learning process.

Wlodkowski (1999) indicated that frequent use of formative evaluation should be included when evaluating student learning. Formative evaluation can include how to use testing measurements that are not graded. Wlodkowski outlined the objectives of learning that should include (a) quality instruction that assists learning, (b) evidence that what the student is learning makes a difference, and (c) continual feedback regarding the progress of learning. These steps have a positive influence on the learning process and will also assist in evaluating students' learning: "Ensuring successful learning is an effective strategy and breeds interest and motivation for further learning" (p. 141).

Distance Learning

Similien (2006) affirmed that online courses are an alternative method or medium of education for the more educated, mature, and self-motivated student. Online learning can also be an inappropriate learning environment for the dependent learner who needs the support of the traditional classroom environment. Online asynchronous education gives students control over their learning experience, which allows for flexibility of study schedules for nontraditional students. However, this places greater responsibility on the student. For students to participate successfully in an online program, they must be well organized and self-motivated and possess a high degree of time-management skills to keep pace with the course. For these reasons, online education may not be appropriate for younger students or other students who may have difficulty with the demanding and detailed responsibilities required by an online program.

The term *distance education*, according to Similien (2006), is similar to *online education*. There are, however, some differing characteristics. First, distance education courses and programs use Internet technology as a support rather than as the main mode of educational delivery. Second, computer conferences can be used as a means of

delivery in distance education, whereas online education uses the Internet solely as a method of delivery. Online learning has the advantage of being offered to students of a diverse population and can be flexible.

Chaker (2007) indicated that many leading institutions and universities are utilizing online learning for lecture notes, sample tests, and availability of audio and video files. Some universities offer distance-learning courses with the view of democratizing education, thereby making the best resources available to more students.

Florez (2006) related that online continuing education is a cost-effective delivery mechanism for improving a staff's knowledge base. Even in the fitness industry, teachers can take advantage of online training programs to improve their knowledge and skills without distracting them from their important duties. Florez acknowledged that online education can be accessed anywhere and at any time.

The preservation of job security is of importance in the distance-learning process (Fretty, 2006). Online training programs have gained popularity among companies seeking to find ways to effectively improve employees' skills.

Tyler (2006) indicated that business trainers should gain some multitasking and technological skills so that instructors are comfortable in the classroom and are able to influence the growing e-learning world by using synchronous online training. This type of training involves students logging on to a website at a designated time to watch live presentations. The trainer should interact with the students in real time. Tyler added that two-way online communication can be used to convey sounds, images, or text messages to make use of technological advances in the training session.

Similien (2006) believed that distance learning is finally being taken seriously by educators. It is not the faculty who are at the forefront of the movement to network

education. Instead, university administrators and computer telecommunications and training companies have decided that there is money in the expanding field of distance online education; therefore, educators will invest in the development of online technology.

According to Similien (2006), in 1981, when the first design team created the initial online educational programs at the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute in La Jolla, California, online education was essentially untried. For many administrators, the big issues were not educational, and the fiscal implication of electronic distance learning was what they found interesting. Administrators hoped to use technology to finance the coming crisis in higher education spending. Western Behavioral Sciences Institute tried to accommodate exploding enrollments of new and returning students. Innovations such as video conferencing and automated online courses made it possible to improve the quality of automated online education, which in turn made it possible to improve the use of brilliant professors while cutting the cost of delivery. Similien pointed out that students in virtual classrooms do not need parking structures; further, courses can be packaged and marketed, generating a continuous revenue stream without further investment. The cost-saving feature is particularly applicable to corporations that wish to expand their training facilities and become competitive. Similien observed that technical solutions have been made during the wave of enthusiasm for distance learning.

Marks, Sibley, and Arbaugh (2005) confirmed that web-based courses have become popular and thousands of courses are offered by educational institutions. Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) agreed that much has been accomplished in the 21st century regarding Internet technology. Distance learning and online education have transformed and redefined the field of education.

Similien (2006) asserted that distance education poses both opportunities and challenges. All educators can approach this new paradigm of online learning with varying degrees of enthusiasm and concern. Similien was of the opinion that most educators are very optimistic about this new style of education. Other educators, however, are equally skeptical about online learning. The optimists are interested in knowing how delivering courses online can improve opportunities for their students. On the contrary, pessimists are wondering about the various barriers that they encounter as plans are made to deliver classes online. Similien contended that either way, it is imperative to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of online learning. Educators must be better prepared to face the challenges of working in the new online environment, and should be willing to embrace the new opportunities offered by online education.

Abram (2002) discussed the methods of students doing research online. Students who have their instructions online will tend to do most of their research in this way as opposed to using the traditional method of going to a library. Abram said that many students overuse electronic sources because they are simpler and more accessible.

Van Sickle (2003) articulated that although Internet-based education has many advantages over the traditional classroom, it is important for the first-time instructor to be aware of the drawbacks in designing any online course. The first-time instructor must be aware of the issues and give attention to several factors to combat the challenges of operating a computer effectively: (a) technical frustration because of overreliance on technology, (b) increased time taken on tasks due to slow computer systems and feelings of information overload, and (c) frequency of miscommunication because of the loss of visual clues. In addition, online instruction relies heavily on the students' motivation to learn. It can be argued that, often, problems can be better resolved via face-to-face

communication rather than through the Internet or e-mail.

Similien (2006) indicated that online programs can have significant strengths and offer unprecedented accessibility to quality education. Weaknesses are inherent in the use of this medium, and there are potential threats to the success of any online program. Before any online program can be deemed successful, the content should allow students to have access to the online learning environment. Lack of access, whether it is because of economic or logistics reasons, could exclude otherwise eligible students from an online course. Internet accessibility is not universal. In some areas of the Caribbean, for example, Internet access has a significant cost, thereby disallowing students from pursuing online learning. According to Mujtaba, Griffin, and Oskal (2004), this is a significant issue in the rural and lower economic and socioeconomic areas of the Caribbean. Mujtaba et al. (2004) discussed that technology has become a convergence of various cultures in the world. The use of technology can result from good causes but does have negative effects on those in society who use it recklessly.

Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) commented that international schools and universities have extended their distance education programs. Nova Southeastern University, for example, has operated a distance learning program in the Caribbean for almost a quarter-century. Caribbean students have always been attracted to diverse educational institutions with the intention of wanting to be globally competitive and economically prosperous. Additionally, the Caribbean has strong historical ties to West Africa and Great Britain. Mujtaba and Preziosi noted that, historically, the population has been a diverse blend of many races with the majority being of African descent. As a result, the Caribbean people have adopted a fair tolerance of diversity among races and cultures. The advent of the information age, aided by the World Wide Web and cable

television, has exposed the Caribbean to various cultures. The majority of Caribbean peoples are of African descent with a strong British influence on their culture. Caribbean people have very distinct ideas on social issues and educational systems. However, they seem to take their cues from the outside world. Caribbean people are also greatly influenced by North American culture. They tend to mirror American norms, beliefs, and values increasingly as the years progress.

Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) stated that the difference of the British system, which had greatly affected Caribbean and the United States educational systems, should not be ignored or disregarded. One major difference is that global trends have shifted towards the removal of cultural, geographic, social, and economic boundaries that provided educational options and opportunities to individuals worldwide. The influence of cyberspace technology and its practical applications are now being used in academia.

Technology

Similien (2006) asserted that technology can effortlessly transform education, but any productive reform will require sustained attention to curricular and instructional change within various colleges and universities. Technology must be built around a significant and meaningful curriculum. Therefore, efforts to integrate technology into schools must be combined with professional development for teachers along with effective curriculum design and instruction.

Salimi (2007) suggested that distance learning has huge promise for instructors and universities by offering students quality courses in a flexible format. Distance learning has grown in popularity and is here to stay. Salimi indicated that for colleges and universities, there is the challenge of realizing the goal of distance education. The primary aim is to offer online courses that are as good as or better than courses in the

traditional classroom format.

Van Vark (2007) acknowledged that students have been taking correspondence courses for many years, but it is only recently that this form of learning has developed as an industry. Any successful training course should be modified to accommodate participants who lead mobile lives. Correspondence courses should be incorporated with training courses with the view of implementing and accommodating flexible work patterns for participants. Technology is now recognized as an acceptable form of learning; therefore, distance learning courses are no longer considered a poor substitute for the traditional class format. Van Vark indicated that tutors can be available online, and students can meet virtually, through conference calls, or in person.

Rossett (2007) analyzed how technology in the workplace improved the performance of employees. Positive technological changes can present an opportunity for managers to rethink the ways that technology can close the gap between learning and work. Buchanan (2000) indicated that corporations can strive to make training sessions successful in the marketplace. Buchanan clarified that training programs for employees must be applicable to adult learning and must concur with adult learning and retention. Training sessions could also lead to employees being prepared for the application process for new and existing jobs.

Application and Interview Processes

O'Donoghue (2006) warned that the job candidate has to be well prepared for all interviews. For an interviewee, preparing includes appearance, knowledge about the organization, anticipating questions which will be asked, and planning for possible answers. Following up on interviews is also important. Networking during the job search is essential, and recent graduates who have gained employment in their field can be a

good resource of knowledge of job availability in the field. O'Donoghue stressed that job candidates must remember that job hunting is a full-time activity. It requires skills, competencies, and patience and must be worked at daily. With a high level of determination, the applicant will land the job that is desired.

Bennett (2005) suggested that the trick to writing a superior résumé and cover letter is to focus carefully on the items that the writer can control. Bennett clarified that a résumé ought not to resemble a template from a generic computer software program. A candidate's résumé should be distinctly individual, as it is very important in the application process. The résumé must be proofread very carefully to make a good impression with the interviewer. For a job candidate, this includes ensuring that the résumé and cover letter are properly written.

O'Donoghue (2006) concluded that the main purpose of the résumé is to reflect skills and competencies of the job candidate. The résumé is also designed to inform the employer of related areas of employment. If the job applicant is offered a position, he or she should be flexible and consider the possibility of relocation to the Caribbean region. The job candidate has to become aware of how to apply regionally. There are opportunities that include the introduction of the Caribbean community and the single market. Job applicants have the opportunity to apply to relevant companies in the Caribbean region. Previously, this was not available to all Caribbean persons, but now there are websites for job postings and regional Caribbean job placement offices.

O'Donoghue (2006) summarized that the job applicant becomes aware that organizations are not just looking for persons who have academic qualifications. Often, the aim of companies is to acquire persons who possess skills and competencies that enhance their academics and, therefore, make them more adaptable for the working

environment. Morem (2007) indicated that it is important to assess what type of working environment is suitable for the job candidate. Morem stressed that organizational cultures vary from corporation to corporation and it is important for the job candidate to do research about the company. By speaking with others within the company, this will help the job candidate determine if he or she wishes to accept the job.

Mintz (2006) pointed out that an executive's résumé can be seen as a testament to the integrity of the candidate. It is important that search committees validate every résumé for any executive position. Marcoux (2006), in contrast, argued that job candidates ought to embellish nonverifiable information on their résumés with the intention of impressing the interviewer. This might give the interviewee a possible competitive edge over other candidates.

Degenhardt-Burke (2007) discussed the candidate's decision on how to write the résumé. Degenhardt-Burke strongly believed that in this age of information technology, there is absolutely no reason for spelling or grammatical errors. It is imperative that all job candidates review all documents and edit all mistakes before submitting them to any company. For candidates to avoid mistakes, they should run a spelling and grammar check on their computer and solicit someone to review the résumé to guarantee that the résumé is clear and concise. Fisher (2006) indicated that a résumé has to give the reader a professional impression. In addition, the cover letter is just as important and candidates should ensure that the cover letter is not generic and is addressed to the correct person and title specific to the job position.

McKay (2004) suggested that when a prospective candidate proceeds with the job interview, the intent should be to highlight personal skills and career highlights. The candidate should provide a list of all accomplishments and deeds and those attributes that

focus on task-oriented results related to the job. This is the time for the candidate to brag about any outstanding performance that is appropriate for the prospective job.

Morem (2007) strongly agreed and indicated that the job seeker has to become a salesperson to portray himself or herself as the best candidate for the job. The job seeker must give attention to how he or she responds to questions that are being asked during the interview. Words should be chosen carefully to portray positive skills and accomplishments. Morem stressed that, before the interview, the candidate must also compile a list of any negative or unflattering words that must not be used during an interview. Candidates must sell their qualities and strengths and use appropriate words in order to convey the right message to be considered for the most suitable job.

O'Donoghue (2006) confirmed that the job candidate has to prepare well for all interviews. This includes appearance, knowledge about the organization, and anticipation of questions that may be asked and possible answers. Following up on interviews is also important. Candidates must remember that job hunting is a full-time occupation. It requires skills, competency, and patience and must be worked at daily. With a high level of determination, the applicant will land the job that is desired.

Morem (2007) expressed that any potential candidate must take account of his or her appearance and take the time and care to make a good impression. When it comes to achieving success, it matters how the candidate presents himself or herself, and being at ease and confident is also an important factor. Image is important, no matter what is said by others, specifically in the job market. Potential employers wearing the appropriate clothes to the job interview can help the candidate have confidence. When applying for a professional position, the candidate must look professional and be wary of not looking too casual. Also, every company has its own image standards, and the candidate should

pay special attention to those requirements and investigate company rules regarding a dress code.

Adler and Elmhurst (1999) believed that for interviews, both parties have to be prepared to face each other honestly and the goals ought to be clearly defined. The interviewer will ensure that the questions asked are specific for the knowledge level of the position. Leading questions have to be asked to get elicited responses that reveal the interviewee's knowledge base. Adler and Elmhurst also explained that there has to be a conscious effort by the interviewer not to disclose a promise that cannot be kept about a job. For example, the employer cannot promise a job before it is forthcoming. In addition, the interviewer must not reveal any confidential information about the job candidate to other employees under any circumstances.

Nierenberg (2005) confirmed that networking is a potential source of information for the employer that could be used to ascertain the best candidate for the job. Networking consists of a referral by someone who knows the interviewee and is willing to provide positive feedback. Also, a former coworker can be considered a method of networking. Superior networking can be termed as making contact with a person who was a former or current employee of a prior company. Bertagnoli (2006) stated that networking can take the form of civic activities with the end result of making connections. Networking can be used in a particular geographic location, meaning the smaller the town, the easier it will be to make friends and develop relationships. Athavaley (2006) suggested that first-time job seekers should make use of technology by submitting video clips as part of the job application process with the intention of supplementing the standard résumé. Many employers welcome video clips from job candidates as a method of recognizing entry-level job seekers who do not have a long list

of accomplishments detailed on a résumé. Rose (2006) agreed and suggested that job candidates should use the Internet as part of the job-seeking process. Job candidates may make use of Internet search engines, as corporations may post their job openings and candidates can use these resources initially and follow up with a phone call.

Ensman (2006) noted that for employers, the hiring process is among the most important business decisions they will make. Consequently, nothing is more crucial than the employment interview. Within the time frame of a brief interview, an employer must learn about the background, skills, and experience of the candidate and what he or she has to offer. The interviewer must discover whether the candidate is able to work effectively with a variety of people in the company and whether the candidate possesses the abilities that fit the needs of the position.

McKay (2004) was specific about the interviewing process and pointed out that it starts with meeting the receptionist. It is imperative that the interviewee is polite and realizes the power the receptionist wields. While the candidate is waiting for the interview, he or she must review the résumé and continue to be prepared. When the candidate meets with the interviewer, he or she should give a brief introduction politely with a first and last name. The interviewee needs to be extremely careful and should not refer to the interviewer by his or her first name unless instructed to do so. McKay advised that the interview is a formal process and should be conducted as such. Sincoff (2004) agreed that existing managers and managers in training must acquire and develop superior interviewing skills that will prove to be critical for their careers in the future.

Morem (2007) was adamant about ensuring that the job candidate makes a good impression by having positive awareness of his or her strengths and capabilities. When there are equally qualified candidates from which to choose, the interviewer has to use

his or her instincts to go on. Amps (2000) specified that if an interviewee is to improve his or her presentation skills, he or she should practice the speech, but a confident and personable job applicant must not memorize the speech. Memorization of the speech will not allow the candidate to communicate with the interviewer honestly and realistically. Effective communication skills—speaking well in an interview—is an art that can be polished through practice.

McKay (2004) indicated that employers have different expectations from their employees. Some jobs may require that employees work long hours during the busy season. For some companies, the busy season can require employees to be on call. An interviewee must be honest about willingness to accept or refuse a position and let the employer know a decision as soon as possible before continuing the interviewing process. Morem (2007) suggested that the job candidate should be clear on exactly what he or she requires from a job and the main motivation factors, such as job location and the ability to be content with the work atmosphere. The job should not be about the paycheck. Morem encouraged the job candidate to be honest about what he or she wants from the job. McKay agreed that as a prospective job candidate, the integrity of the interviewing process must be preserved. Burnell (2006) concurred and indicated that candidates can train themselves to be good at interviews, but that does not necessarily guarantee that individuals will be proficient at the job for which they are hired. Even the best structured interviews can be poor predictors for future job success for the employee. Burnell explained that, at the least, the job interview is a good way of meeting people and exchanging information.

Salary and Benefits

Morem (2007) suggested that any job candidate should take salary into

consideration for any potential job offer. The details regarding deductions for taxes and health insurance should be examined. Any possible benefits should be valued as part of overall compensation; job candidates need to study these factors before accepting a job. Cohen and Rabin (2007) agreed that compensation can be a complicated issue because of several factors to take into consideration. For persons who are recently entering the workforce, it is important to ensure that the job candidate does research to find out what the job is worth.

Temporary Agencies

According to Daft (2005), temporary agencies have grown annually, and are one of the largest industries, employing more than 3.3 million people in the United States. In the past, most temporary workers were employed in areas such as data entry. However, the shift is now towards filling positions as advanced as an interim CEO. As a result of the changes in the market in the United States, there has been a direct impact on the types of requests for staffing in the Caribbean. O'Donoghue (2006) related that temporary agencies give candidates choices in the job application process.

With regard to applying for jobs in the Caribbean, O'Donoghue (2006) indicated that sending out applications is a matter of precise timing. If applications are sent to the HR department too early, there is a possibility that they might end up being lost. O'Donoghue believed there are current difficulties in the Caribbean job market and addressed techniques a University of the West Indies (UWI) final-year student could adopt to survive the grueling job search. O'Donoghue conferred with a senior HR manager for UWI graduates, and they both agreed that students must begin sending out applications in December of their final academic year. The annual graduate recruitment fair at UWI is held in January or February. Organizations, both public and private, visit

tertiary-level institutions at main campuses of UWI and the University of Technology to recruit prospective graduates for their organizations. Therefore, potential job candidates should ensure that recruiters receive all applications before the fair.

O'Donoghue (2006) advised that job applicants should send their résumé and cover letter by e-mail rather than by postal mail because the document is easier store and retrieve by an HR department. O'Donoghue was very specific with his advice to job applicants and recommended that they attend the World of Work seminars held during the first semester. The seminar is organized and presented by the office of placement and career services on campus and is designed specifically for final-year university students. Therefore, O'Donoghue suggested that graduating students should schedule an appointment to visit the office of placement and career services to acquire assistance in developing skills and competencies required for a job search. Job applicants should maintain contact with the job placement office and participate in all remaining and relevant training programs. The job candidate should sustain a close relationship with the placement office, which will assist with the developing of a résumé and cover letter. This is a primary strategy in the job searching process: to affirm all that documents sent to employers are properly planned and organized.

Morrison (2006) recommended specific ideas to applicants:

1. Suggest to an employer the idea of becoming a substitute for any suitable position.
2. During the busy season, retailers put many of their full-time back-office people out on the floor. That opens up temporary back-office positions. In addition, the company may need help for staff persons on vacation.
3. Frequently, stores might need someone to work on a temporary basis. Any

potential job candidate should converse and befriend store managers and employees. The enthusiasm for patronizing the establishment will pay off in the future.

Morrison (2006) also suggested that job candidates should not overlook any behind-the-scenes jobs, as not all employees are out on the sales floor. There are many other opportunities for a job seeker, such as shipping, receiving, warehousing, accounting, information technology, security, transportation, and marketing. Job candidates can offer to become a floater for chain stores with several location that may be interested in fill-ins for employees who call in sick or are on vacation. The hiring manager has to be aware of potential job seekers. This awareness can be gained through inquiries of persons in the company suggesting potential workers wherever needed. Morrison was clear about the job candidates' promotion of their computer skills. A job candidate has to be comfortable and competent with computers, which is a major selling point to the employer.

The prospective job candidate should look at companies that traditionally have increased revenues during the holiday season (Morrison, 2006). According to www.resumedoctor.com (2004), traditional companies include retail stores, shipping companies, hotels and resorts, and restaurants. Morrison listed conference centers that host holiday parties, manufacturing companies, gourmet foods and specialty products, and distribution centers for manufacturing companies. It is important for the job candidate that the position is suitable for his or her needs. Morrison stressed that if the employee is spending time away from family and friends, especially during the holidays, the job must be liked.

Placement firms are a good resource for job seekers, and using a placement firm can be a critical part of the job-seeking process (Gagne, 2006). Cohen and Rabin (2007)

indicated that placement firms may offer a variety of careers and are in virtually every business arena. Placement firms give the job candidate the opportunity to receive training for both short-term and long-term assignments. For the candidate, this is an opportunity to gain experience and knowledge about the job market, and to accommodate those job seekers who are undecided about their career. Gagne noted that a company will do the necessary research on behalf of the job prospect to ascertain if the career is worth pursuing according to the viability of the job market. This also gives the employers a chance to evaluate the employee.

With regard to the global marketplace, Boone and Kurtz (2005) informed that it is increasing as newly industrialized nations are developing. Kotabe and Helsen (2004) observed that developing nations gain wealth through the affluent, educated, and cosmopolitan middle class that has emerged in recent years. Therefore, developing Caribbean countries closest to the southern point of the United States should allow these countries to take advantage of globalization. Kotabe and Helsen believed that all Caribbean countries could expand their hiring programs to compete with developed countries.

Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) concurred and said that global trends are now moving towards the removal and elimination of cultural, social, and economic boundaries and are providing educational opportunities to students worldwide. The field of academia is growing, such as online technology as a viable product to market. A global strategy is important when an organization chooses to embark on a new product (Daft, 2005). Moreover, going global allows the company to become more competitive in international markets, and they may choose to standardize their product.

Boone and Kurtz's (2006) position was that for the company wishing to generate

additional revenues for itself, expanding operations outside of the home country is advantageous. It is invaluable for the company to gain insights by increasing the awareness of consumer behavior. The development of alternative marketing strategies might include new and clever approaches of promotional activities with a view to business expansion. Kotabe and Helsen (2004) indicated that if any company expands ventures abroad, it may find the international marketplace far different from that of the domestic one with positive and negative challenges. Going global will involve training programs that will enable the company to become competitive globally.

Kotabe and Helsen (2004) acknowledged that profound changes in globalization are a result of the Internet. They indicated that compared to business-to-business commerce, electronic commerce is larger and growing faster. There are advantages to the increased and rapid movement of goods and services. Whether a country enjoys a share of the global market depends on the country's population size, the availability of credit, venture capital, telecommunications, and the logistical infrastructure.

An online program could allow employees to become more competitive with their skills and thereby make the corporation more marketable. Daft (2005) confirmed that in the implementation of global strategies, managers need to adopt a global mindset. Flexibility and openness are important, and so are the recruitment and training process, transfer, and promotion. To be effective internationally, managers have to apply a global perspective to strategy implementation.

Morrison (2006) indicated that the Public Sector Memorandum of Understanding (PSMU) document of 2004 set the foundation for positive change in the relationship between the workforce and Caribbean government. The PSMU organization is responsible for constructive change with the job sector in the Caribbean. The PSMU

process is critical to the modernization of the public sector in relation to the job sector. If the PSMU were to become more efficient, it could offer citizens a higher quality of service. Nevertheless, of equal importance is that the PSMU has initiated the upgrading of the workforce so employees can progress up the ladder in the public sector. For the PSMU to fill positions in the private sector, it has to create additional employment.

O'Donoghue (2008), from SplashJamaica.com in the Caribbean, launched a new website. SplashJamaica.com is geared towards simplifying the recruitment experience for both employers and job seekers and caters exclusively to the Caribbean market. The site is based on hugely successful United States and European companies and, therefore, is a competitor for the temporary agency. SplashJamaica.com filled the gap where there was no conventional career website catering to the Caribbean market. Because of SplashJamaica.com, job seekers have a website on which to find top jobs and employers have a portal where they can find the best talent with the use of computer techniques. This website offers employers a streamlined recruitment solution with lower costs, time efficiencies, and, ultimately, a competitive edge in the pursuit of qualified talent. O'Donoghue indicated there is also the expectation that the new website will be well received by all Caribbean persons abroad. This website was built on the premise that every day in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, there are talented Caribbean persons looking to return home if the right opportunity arises, and SplashJamaica.com will make this happen.

SplashJamaica.com includes detailed information that an individual would expect from a career website. Employers are offered a variety of packages that best suit their needs, from the small firm to the multinational. Furthermore, employers have access to a database of the best talent in Jamaica where they can screen candidates to find those who

best fit the requirements. The responsibility of the employers is to manage their accounts online, further increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the solution, while job seekers can search and apply for jobs on the site, as well as receive career advice and guidance (O'Donoghue, 2008).

SplashJamaica.com's future plans are still evolving, according to O'Donoghue (2008), who hinted that the product diversification and regional expansion may be in the offing and noting that it is the intent to expand to the Caribbean as a whole to embrace the e-commerce revolution. SplashJamaica.com intends to be a forerunner and, thus, a competitor for other temporary agencies.

Crandall (2002) concluded that the need for the utilization of any training course and its assessment is a direct result of a type of marketing strategy that a company can use with the purpose and the implementation of new revenue streams. Crandall suggested that, with regard to overall growth, a business should determine whether the competition has caused changes in the client mix over the last 6 months and keep in mind that if the business's growth rate continues in the same negative pattern and there is no formal marketing plan, it could lead to a possible decline in profits. The strategy of using a training program is to improve and build the current client base, thereby leading to a positive cash flow.

Human Resources Management and Development

Ramall (2003) expressed that in today's business environment, human resources department(s) play an important role constantly in businesses by providing guidance for management thereby, focusing on the needs of the employee. Many of the specific roles of the human resources department include: employee absenteeism, employee turnover and also career advancement.

Ramlall (2003) indicated that organizations will be able to utilize such information on employee turnover to determine how particular HR practices correlate with better business results. HR can determine areas for investment, expansion, and reduction; justify budget allocations; and be more accountable for each dollar spent within the organization and the placement of workers. An additional role of HR is to monitor recruitment and retention in the workplace.

Daft (2008) defined HR as the design of a formal system to ensure effective and efficient use of human capital to accomplish an organization's goals. The system is specifically designed to attract, develop, and maintain an effective workforce. Over the past decade, HR managers have restructured their image in order to gain recognition as a vital part of the recruiting and training process and to assist managers in finding the appropriate person for the job. The role of HR managers is to become one of the vital team members of the organization, but in addition, they must support the organization in furthering the overall performance of the employees with the goal of decreasing turnover.

Chaker (2007) expressed that it is the responsibility of managers to keep employees motivated in order to decrease turnover. Lovett, Hardebeck, Coyle, and Solis (2004) contended that to motivate employees, managers should consider treating employees differently according to and depending on their years with the company. It is essential to understand that the relationship between job satisfaction and tenure is important because the opposite of tenure and job satisfaction is turnover or absenteeism.

Ortega (2006) maintained that any creative and comprehensive employment program has to include a superior benefits package as a component of job satisfaction. Employers must focus daily on the satisfaction levels of their employees with the aim of reducing employee turnover. Ortega advised that job satisfaction level is often hard to

define. Therefore, the development and implementation of strategies that keep employees happy and routinely engaged in the organization are the basis for a successful employee retention program.

Nelson (2005) indicated that traditional forms of recognition could include an employee achievement award accompanied by plaques, trophies, or certificates. The selection process is often based on a formal procedure, which is done to ensure that there is as much objectivity as possible. Nelson acknowledged that the highly valued intangible form of recognition an employee receives will serve to enhance future career and training development opportunities. A reward for additional training serves two purposes: the reinforcement of a meaningful postgraduate education and the strengthening of a desired positive behavior so individuals gain skills to improve their marketability.

Daft (2008) declared that good leaders can assist subordinates to acquire the skills and confidence needed to enhance performance of tasks. Daft indicated that transformational leaders have the special ability to bring about innovation with their ability to promote rewards to meet the specific needs of subordinates. Therefore, the main goal of leaders is to encourage subordinates in order to result in satisfied customers and continue to reinforce and recognize employees by continuously improving and fostering exceptional customer service.

Ramlall (2003) argued, that when an organization positions itself for various intervals in the future, it can design a reward system to provide incentives specifically intended to foster positive behaviors and attitudes. It is intended that positive outcomes within the workforce are directly reward related. This reward system can then correlate with the strategic agenda of the organization. Given such a premise, the question arises, How can it be determined? The actual rewards are presented to the workforce by

encouraging the fostering of individuals to exhibit optimistic organizational behaviors. This will enable the organization to maximize its profitability and, conversely, assist in attracting and retaining qualified employees.

Ramlall (2003) believed that by rewarding employees, there is a direct positive correlation to customer service. Any justification of a reward given to employees should be measured. Ramlall suggested that several steps should be taken into consideration when determining how to reward employees:

1. Does the current rewards systems provide incentives to support a particular business strategy the company is trying to achieve?
2. Does the company allow new employees to accept rewards based on the organization's reward system?
3. Does the organization take into consideration personal values when giving the award?
4. Is the rewards system fair and flexible enough to be changed in the future?
5. Does the organization retain those people they are rewarding?
6. What is the overall cost of the reward program, and can it be compared to any existing benefits being offered by the company?

Spinelli (2006) concluded that small firms may not have the money for extravagant programs or parties to show their appreciation for their employees, but they can demonstrate their gratitude in many other ways. Motivation of employees includes creating a mentoring program to encourage younger employees to pair with other partners within the firm to improve the workplace. Ortega (2006) agreed that this helps retain employees at the time the job market gets tight. Corporations have to look for ways to maintain their reward system and sweeten the package, thereby recruiting and retaining

the best and the brightest in the industry.

The award selection process is often based on a formal procedure. This is done to ensure that there is as much objectivity as possible, which is determined by the management of the company (Nelson, 2005). Bottos (2006) said that in addition to highly valued intangible forms of recognition, there is a positive and sustained benefit for the employee regarding career and training development opportunities. Bottos believed that the main challenge is crafting effective programs that empower employees to deliver a measurable impact and then compensate them for the results. Knowing what is important to employees can enable a new kind of dialogue between the HR department and employees. According to Bottos, this can significantly help to reduce employee turnover and replacement costs. Being rewarded quickly for good performance, having the option to work at home, and receiving continual training are a few things that employees want and that HR should be poised to give. HR professionals act as a liaison between the employer and employee with the hope of meeting recruiting and retention goals. Bottos commented that customer service and market factors can continue to possibly upset the balance between what employers have to offer and what employees actually value. The HR department and employees need to offer valuable insights into how to attract and retain employees.

Miller, Madsen, and John (2006) declared that an employee's readiness for change is dependent on his or her job skill and knowledge about the job. In a longitudinal study that was conducted on the readiness for organizational change in the workplace, the relationship employees had with their subordinates was found to be critical in the process of change. Workers need to feel valued and appreciated. Miller et al. suggested that good managers must communicate openly, clearly, and consistently. Bennett (2005) stated that

good communication helps to build faith and trust, which makes change easier to accept. An excellent manager is supposed to encourage feedback and then listen to that feedback.

Daft (2005) explained that in today's turbulent business climate, organizations and individuals must be continuous learners. Learning can entail knowledge from classes, reading, and interacting with others. Warren (2006) insisted that employers can effect organizational growth and change to create new opportunities within the company. It is important to be aware of employees' capabilities, attitudes, and behavior. Warren added that it will take some effort, but how people and systems function and how best to organize those systems more effectively are worth understanding on the part of the manager.

Daft (2005) further conveyed that organizations view continuous learning as a process that allows employees to share their growing knowledge and apply it to the workplace. In an organization where learning is taking place, the learning must involve managers who continuously visit and take the time to ask, what is the benefit of this learning experience? Managers can also foster learning by recognizing that experience can be the best teacher, and they should also focus on how employees can learn from their mistakes. As individuals, managers themselves can set the example by being continuous learners. It helps to listen to others, read widely, and reflect on what others say and what is observed.

Mujtaba et al. (2004) believed that age discrimination in the workplace affects people of all nationalities, sizes, colors, ethnicities, and religions. Recruitment managers may prefer workers who are supposed to be more open-minded and trainable and workers who are not set in their ways. Older workers are perceived as being more costly and therefore cost more to maintain but are less energetic than the younger worker. Mujtaba

et al. considered these views by employees as disturbing and they ought not to be an excuse for not hiring a qualified worker.

Summary

The review of the related literature consisted of information gathered from journal articles, books, and business theories. The purpose was to examine the literature related to the evaluation of online training programs. The review of related literature provided the basis for the evaluation study. A thorough investigation of literature revealed various sources in reference to the basic tenets of adult education, online training programs, evaluation, HR management, and training

The investigation of literature revealed the importance of online education, adult learning styles, and conditions of learning in relation to overall students' learning abilities. Similien (2006) was very specific regarding learning styles of adults in relation to technology and indicated that online learning must take into consideration a certain type of student, one who is disciplined and self-motivated.

According to Similien (2006), the conditions of learning are important, because they influence students' interpretation of materials, specifically the online course implemented by the researcher with the view of improving job placement through education and human resources training.

Research Questions

To determine the effectiveness of the interactive online training course, an evaluative research study was used to assess the course. Four research questions were addressed in this assessment:

1. What are the appropriate criteria used when evaluating the online training course for the placement agency's clients?

2. What are the appropriate format and content elements of an evaluation instrument used to measure the effectiveness of the online training course?
3. To what extent are the objectives of the online training course being met?
4. What recommendations can be made to improve the online training course?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluative study addressed assessment of an online training course for the subject Caribbean staffing agency. The focus was to determine the relationship between the job applicant's placement and the success of the online training course. The course was designed to get job applicants placed in suitable employment. Evaluation problem-solving methodology was used in the study. Trochim and Donnelly (2006) described the process:

Evaluation research focuses on the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide feedback about some object. The generic goal of evaluations is to provide useful feedback to a variety of audiences including sponsors, donors, client groups, administrators, staff and other relevant constituencies. (pp. 30-31)

Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004) stated that the process of conducting an effective evaluation study should identify, include, clarify, and apply defensible criteria to determine the product's worth or merit. The basic purpose of evaluation is to render judgments about the value of the product. Other purposes include providing improvements, encouraging meaningful dialogue, and providing insight and compliance for programs.

Morgan (2000) explained that methodology is the section of the study that encompasses how to evaluate a product or process. It is the portion of the study that includes an assessment of a product or instrument. Chen (2005) stated that when developing a study, an appropriate formative evaluation should meet two specific criteria: timeliness and relevancy.

Creswell (2008) explained that in order to do a study assessment, four aspects must be investigated before commencing the study: (a) Review and decide on the type of

data collection, (b) determine how the data will be analyzed, (c) assess the criteria for evaluating the study, and (d) develop a plan for the study. McNabb (2008) pointed out that conducting evaluative research also has to do with credibility. Credibility includes being able to replicate the study, and it has to be testable and scientific. In other words, anyone reviewing the study should be able to perform the same study and achieve the same results.

The evaluative research method was chosen as the appropriate method for the study. According to Morgan (2000), the evaluative study encompasses how to assess a product or an instrument. Morante (2003) stated that the evaluation and assessment instrument should provide constant feedback and should assist in improving student learning. Morante also recognized that databases are important tools in facilitating effective assessment. The creation of an assessment process that is void of any follow-up with institutional efforts can be costly and counterproductive.

A quantitative research design was used in this study. The research encompassed the gathering of empirical data from job applicants' responses to two questionnaires. These applicants had completed the online training course at the job training and placement agency. Trochim and Donnelly (2006) implied that quantitative research relies on numerical data and statistical analysis. Creswell (2003) explained quantitative research:

A quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses postpositivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables, hypotheses, and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on pre-determined instruments that yield statistical data. (p. 18)

McNabb (2008) agreed that quantitative research involves the use of statistical analysis to measure, or count, averages to be interpreted as data in evaluative study

designs. Hackley (2003) confirmed that questionnaires and surveys are often used in a quantitative study.

Procedures

To assist the researcher in this study, formative and summative committees were formed. The formative committee consisted of a manager and a director of the subject company; the summative committee consisted of an associate professor and a financial manager. The credentials of the committee members and their various achievements in the areas of academia are presented in Appendix A. The committee members were advised of their respective roles related to the project. All committee members agreed to serve and indicated that they would honor the timeframe necessary to complete the project.

To determine the effectiveness of the interactive online training course, four research questions were established. Research Question 1 was, What are the appropriate criteria to be used when evaluating the online training course for the placement agency's clients? To answer this question, a comprehensive review of literature was conducted. The review of literature focused on methods of evaluation, assessment, and survey instrument design. The process involved searching traditional libraries and online databases for information in the areas of evaluation methodology criteria. Additionally, the review of literature focused on the importance of online training and evaluation in adult education.

Based on the literature review, criteria were identified for the study. These criteria were presented to the formative and summative committees for approval to be used in the development of the questionnaires. The iterative review and modification method was utilized in the validation of the criteria. The formative and summative committees

reviewed and made suggestions regarding the criteria.

Research Question 2 was, What were the appropriate format and content elements of an evaluation instrument used to measure the effectiveness of the online training course? The researcher used the approved criteria to develop a draft of the questionnaires. The purpose of the questionnaires was to determine the suitability of the types of questions that should be asked of participating first-time job applicants.

The first questionnaire pertained to evaluating the online training course, and the second was designed to obtain feedback from the participants after the job interview. The Online Training Questionnaire and the Job Interview Questionnaire were Likert-scale instruments instructing participants to check the most appropriate responses to the questions. Values from 1 to 5 were assigned to the appropriate choices: 1 (*excellent*), 2 (*very good*), 3 (*good*), 4 (*poor*), or 5 (*very poor*).

The draft of the questionnaires was presented to the formative committee for suggestions and feedback (see Appendix B). The formative committee agreed that minor changes should be made to the questionnaires, and the researcher agreed to make those changes. Comments from the formative committee members were addressed until consensus was attained. This was an iterative validation process by which the committee members examined the questionnaires and gave their feedback.

The revised draft of the questionnaires was presented to the summative committee (see Appendix C). The committee members provided additional feedback, and the researcher made the final decision on which questions to keep or delete. The expert knowledge of summative committee members was used to determine validity of the questions on the final questionnaires. Based on feedback from the summative committee, both questionnaires were revised. The summative committee provided feedback rating

the 15 questions on each questionnaire as to whether to keep or delete. The questionnaires were reduced to 10 questions each. The revised questionnaires were resubmitted to the summative committee for a final approval (see Appendices D and E). This was an iterative validation process by which the summative committee members examined the questionnaires and gave their feedback.

In order to determine the reliability of the two questionnaires, the researcher conducted a test-retest reliability. Trochim and Donnelly (2006) suggested that the test-retest is primarily used to determine reliability and should be administered on two separate occasions to prove that there is no substantial change in the responses from the test takers on the constructs of the same test. The questionnaires, validated by both the summative and formative committees, were administered to experts in the educational field (see Appendix F). Two copies of the questionnaires were administered at a 1-hour interval. A test-retest analysis was conducted on the responses. The responses confirmed the reliability of the questionnaires (see Appendix G). Validation of the questionnaires by the committees and the test-pretest reliability resulted in approved questionnaires to assess the online training course and job interview feedback. The questionnaires were administered to the job applicants.

Research Question 3 was, To what extent were the objectives of the online training course being met? All job applicants were eligible for the study. Once the clients completed the application, they were invited to participate in the online training course as part of the job placement process.

Participants

The participants were adult males and females between the ages of 18 and 65 years, a population that is representative of the adult population of job placement clients.

Over 80% of the participants were female and were from the immediate corporate area of the Caribbean country. The participants were of Caribbean descent with varied ethnic backgrounds. There was minimal risk to the participants, and no compensation was given for participating in the study.

Procedures for Data Collection

A plan was presented to the director of the subject company on how the study would be conducted. The researcher then met with the administrative assistants and gave them instructions on how the questionnaires should be administered and the strict procedures that needed to be followed in terms of confidentiality regarding the study. The researcher commenced data collection on November 10, 2009, and ended on December 13, 2009. Data were collected to assess the online course, first from the first-time job applicants, and second from participants in the online training course who were sent on job interviews. The study was conducted at the subject placement and business service. The participants (first-time job applicants) were informed that their responses would be confidential.

The first questionnaire focused on the applicants' assessment of the training course. The questionnaire was given to 202 of 221 first-time job applicants. These 202 respondents completed the course and agreed to participate in the study. The Online Training Questionnaire included a section for comments and suggestions about the course (see Appendix D). The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete, including the comment section.

After the training and completion of the first questionnaire, 187 of the 202 participants who completed the course were sent on job interviews. A second questionnaire was distributed to job applicants after their interviews. This survey took

place at the agency. The questions focused on the job applicants' preparedness for the interview (see Appendix E). This questionnaire was important in evaluating the impact of the online training course, because it focused on the first-time job applicants' assessment of their interviewing skills and preparedness after completing the course.

Research Question 4 was, What recommendations can be made to improve the online training course? After the questionnaires were completed, the results were tabulated and the findings were reviewed by the formative and summative committees. Based on their input, a completed evaluation report was prepared for submission to the director of the subject company. Any findings and recommendations from the results were to be used to modify the online training course or to determine if the course would be used in the future as part of job placement initiatives.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of the study was to determine if the online training course at the subject company was a success and if it should continue to be used by the placement agency in the future.

Research Question 1

What are the appropriate criteria to be used when evaluating the online training course for the placement agency's clients? Based on the literature review, which focused on online courses for adults and training for interviewing, three criteria items were identified for this assessment: (a) the clarity of the online course content, (b) the relevance of the online course, and (c) the impact of the online course on the interviewing process. These criteria were presented to the formative and summative committees for review. The committees used an iterative process for validation and approved the criteria for use in the development of the questionnaires.

Research Question 2

What were the appropriate format and content elements of an evaluation instrument used to measure the effectiveness of the online training course? The established formative and summative committees made suggestions about the questionnaires. A draft of 15 questions and a section for comments was presented to the formative committee for review and for suggestions for changes. This iterative validation procedure resulted in 15 approved questions to be presented to the summative committee.

The summative committee reviewed the revised questionnaires and provided feedback and suggestions on the appropriate changes and improvements to the questionnaires. The summative committee made a suggestion to reduce the number of questions from 15 to 10 based on the importance of the questions to be presented to the

online applicants (see Appendix C). Appendix D shows results of the summative committee's decisions to keep or delete questions from the final questionnaire. For the Online Training Questionnaire, questions under the 80th percentile were removed and 10 questions between 80% and 100% were included.

For the Job Interview Questionnaire, the researcher, with the assistance of the summative committee, decided that Questions 6 and 8 should be an exception to the 80th percentile rule and were included in the questionnaire. This was decided because these questions matched and were applicable to the remainder of the questions. Question 14 was eliminated even though it met the 80th percentile rule, because it was determined not to be needed and would keep the questionnaires to 10 questions each.

The revised questionnaires were resubmitted to the summative committee for final approval. A test-retest reliability was administered by the researcher to experts in the educational field. The results of the test-retest reliability are shown in Appendix G. The test-retest reliability procedure indicated that there were no substantial changes to the answers given by the respondents from the first administration compared to the second. All the answers to the questionnaires were either *excellent* or *very good*. Reliability for the questionnaires was deemed acceptable.

Research Question 3

To what extent were the objectives of the online training course being met? The two questionnaires were used to address this research question. The responses presented to each question are those of first-time job applicants (202 respondents) to the Online Training Questionnaire to evaluate the online training course.

1. How would you rate the accuracy of the material(s) presented in the online training course? Of the respondents, 79.64% rated the accuracy of the materials as

excellent; 8.08% rated the accuracy of the materials as very good; 7.5% rated the accuracy of the materials presented as good; 2.40% rated the accuracy of the materials presented as poor; and 1.90% rated the course as very poor.

2. How would you rate the instructor in the online training course? Of the respondents, 68.81% rated the instructor as excellent; 18.81% rated the instructor as very good; 9.09% rated the instructor as good; 3.20% and rated the instructor as poor; and, 0.09% rated the instructor as very poor.

3. How would you rate the PowerPoint presentations in the online training course? To this question, 86.6% of the respondents indicated that the PowerPoint presentations were excellent; 4.5% indicated they were very good; 8.9% indicated that the PowerPoint presentations were good, and no responses indicated poor or very poor.

4. How would you rate the user friendliness of the technology of the online training course? Of the respondents, 75.25% rated the user friendliness of the technology as excellent; 16.80% responded it was very good; 7.90% rated it as good 2.00% rated it as poor; and .02% as very poor.

5. How would you rate the content of the online training course? To this question, 83.59% of the respondents rated the content as excellent; 11.33% rated the content as very good; 4.9% rated the content as good; and 0.09% rated the course as poor and very poor.

6. How would you rate examples given in the online training course? Of the respondents, 66.83% rated the examples as excellent; 27.68% rated the examples as very good, 5.45% rated the examples as good; and 0.04% rated them as very poor.

7. How would you rate the clarity of the material presented in the online training course? Of the respondents, 91.83% rated the materials presented as excellent, 4.69%

rated the materials presented in the course as very good 3.4%, of the respondents rated the material presented as good 0.04% poor and 0.04% as poor.

8. How would you rate the audio during the online training course? To this question, 79.64% of respondents rated the audio as excellent; 17.32% rated the audio as very good; 1.20%, 1.20% rated the audio as poor; and 0.01% rated the audio as very poor.

9. How would you rate the practicality of the online training course? Of the respondents, 69.30% rated the practicality of the course as excellent; 19.8% rated it as very good; 11.09% rated it as good; and 0.04% rated it as poor and very poor.

10. What is your overall rating of the online training course? To this question, 88.10% of the respondents rated the overall course as excellent; 5.47% rated the course as very good; 6.43% rated it as good; and no one rated the course as poor or very poor.

Representative comments related to the online training course are presented as summarized by the researcher. Positive comments from respondents included the following:

1. Information was unique and contained tips on what not to do on the first day of the job.
2. Online course was excellent no changes needed.
3. Good information for first-time applicants and well put together.
4. Description of the online course was comprehensive.

Some negative comments were also received:

1. Information presented as inadequate. There was an unclear understanding of the preinterview information.
2. Not enough time for the course.

3. Too much information felt rushed, this should be not be, in this case due to the importance of a job.

4. Did not want to interact with an instructor, preferred online access.

Many of the respondents also indicated that the online program should be made more accessible from the World Wide Web so that they could refer to the information at a later date at their convenience. Some respondents indicated that they wanted a chance to make suggestions on how to improve the online course.

The second component of the study was the analysis of the Job Interview Questionnaire with a brief synopsis of the comments by the applicants returning from the job interview. For this questionnaire, there were 187 respondents from the 202 individuals who completed the training and were first-time applicants who were sent on the job interview. The number of responses to each question on the Job Interview Questionnaire is presented in Appendix H. The following is a summary of responses:

1. How would you rate your overall performance after the job interview? Of the respondents, 63.60% rated their performance as excellent; 24.09%, rated their performance as very good; 9.09%, rated their performance as good; 1.61% rated their performance as poor; and 1.61% rated their performance as poor.

2. What influence did the online training course have on your dress code for the job interview? To this question, 58.36% indicated that the online course had an excellent influence on their dress code; 28.8% indicated that the course had a very good influence; 9.62% indicated that the course had a good influence; 1.61% indicated that the course had a poor influence; and 1.61% indicated that the course had a poor influence on their dress code.

3. What effect did the online course have regarding promoting your attributes or

selling yourself during the interview? In response to this question, 57.20% of participants indicated the course had an excellent effect; 27.31% indicated the course had a very good effect; 10.69% indicated the course had a good effect; 3.20% indicated the course had a poor effect; and 1.60% indicated the course had a poor effect.

4. In what way did the online course affect your self-confidence during the job interview? Of the respondents, 64.80% responded that the course had an excellent effect on their self-confidence during the interview; 26.00% responded that the course had a very good effect; 7.48% responded that the course had a good effect; 1.61% responded that the course had a poor effect; and 0.05% responded that the course had a poor effect.

5. What effect did the online training course have on your verbal skills? To this question, 64.72% of respondents indicated that the course had an excellent effect on their verbal skills; 30.48% responded that the course had an very good effect; 1.60% responded that the course had a good effect; 1.60% responded that the course had a poor effect; and 1.60% responded that the course had a poor effect.

6. How would you rate your salary negotiating skills presented in the online course in relation to the interview? Of the respondents, 62.50% rated their skills as excellent; 26.73% rated their skills as very good; 4.78% rated their skills as good; 4.94% rated their skills as poor; and 1.05% rated their skills as poor.

7. How would you rate the information presented in the online training course on the use of body language in relation to the interview? To this question, 80.20% rated the; during the interview as a result of the online course 5.45% rated their use of body language as very good; 9.62% rated their use of body language as good; 2.6% rated their use of body language as poor; and 2.13% rated their use of body language as poor.

8. How would you rate the information presented in the online course on making

eye contact in relation to the interview? In response to this question, 65.20% rated making eye contact as excellent; 21.00% rated their eye contact as very good; 10.62% rated their eye contact as good; 1.57% rated their eye contact as poor; and 1.61% rated their eye contact as poor.

9. How would you rate the information in the online training course on paying attention to your appearance in relation to the interview? Of the respondents to this question, 72.10% rated the information on paying attention to appearance during the interview as excellent; 12.29% rated the information as very good; 12.41% rated the information as good; 1.6% rated the information as poor; and 1.6% rated the information as poor.

10. With the information gathered from the online training course, how would you rate your ability to convince the prospective employer to hire you for the position hired for? Of the respondents, 64.70% rated their performance as excellent; 25.66% rated their performance as very good; 7.90% good; 1.69% rated their performance as poor; and 0.05% rated their performance as very poor.

The open-ended questions on this questionnaire elicited comments from the participants regarding their assessment of their performance during the job interview. The responses were summarized by the researcher. The following positive comments were received:

1. Confidence gained during the interview and request for future instruction.
2. Extensive knowledge gained about the interviewing process.
3. Interviewees felt that, the correct jobs were matched to their skills.

Negative comments were also received:

1. Information could have been presented sooner.
2. More emphasis on how to prevent nerves during the interview.

3. The information was not useful for the applicant who did not have the required skills.

4. The information was rushed and had a negative effect on the job applicant.

Research Question 4

What recommendations can be made to improve the online training course?

Responses to the online training course were positive; 79.4% indicated that the job interview was excellent, 14.5% indicated it was very good, 6% indicated it was good, .01% indicated poor, and only .08% indicated it was very poor. Responses to the job interview experience were also very positive. Appendix H shows that 65.6% indicated that the job interview was excellent, 23.0% indicated it was very good, 8.3% indicated it was good, 1.8% indicated it was poor, and 1.3% indicated it was very poor.

The continuation and improvement of the online training course should be based on the results of the study that were presented to the director of the subject company. The evaluation of the online course will allow the director of the subject company to make a more effective decision about the usefulness of the online training course and to determine if it should be continued.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Overview

The problem addressed in this study was directly related to the staffing agency managing director's concern for the decline in the number of first-time job applicants being successful in obtaining positions applied for. The problem was based on the fact that the general education level of the first-time job applicants had been progressively declining over the years. The issue was having an adverse affect on the placement service, as fewer clients were being offered jobs.

The purpose of the applied dissertation study was to determine if an online training course assisted first-time job applicants in interviewing for placement in a suitable job. The online training course that was assessed was specifically designed for prospective job applicants at a temporary staffing agency in the Caribbean.

The study emphasized the assessment of the online course in relation to the success of the job interview. Daft (2008) is a strong advocate of the usefulness of online training in relation to the interviewing process. The interview serves as a two-way communication process and allows the organization and the applicant to collect information that would otherwise be difficult to gather without such face-to-face communication.

Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) stressed that for any assessment to be deemed effective, there must be a strong focus on the processes as well as the outcomes of the course content. The writer must determine what matters most in the process of the assessment and whether it focuses on the questions that people really care about. Also, attention must be given to the outcome and the experiences of the learner.

In order to assess the online training course, the quantitative method was used.

Creswell (2003) stated that quantitative research uses surveys to collect data. In this study, Likert-type questionnaires were developed as the tools to obtain information used to determine whether the online training course should continue to be used. A limitation to the study was that it was specific to job applicants of a particular placement agency in a Caribbean country. The results of this study cannot be generalized to any other population without future study.

Discussion of Findings

The formative and summative committees made recommendations for the questionnaires. Using an iterative validation process, several drafts were submitted to address feedback by the committees. Consensus by the researcher and committees was reached, and the questionnaires were approved. A test-retest reliability was conducted for the committees' validated questionnaires by experts in the educational field. Results indicated that the questionnaires were reliable, and the researcher proceeded to use them in the assessment of the online training course and its impact on the interviewing process.

According to Robbins and Judge (2007), the success of a training course is used for upgrading or improving skills. In this study, the focus was on improving interviewing skills of potential employees. In relation to improving interviewing skills, the researcher determined that the online course objectives were being met. Responses to the questionnaires regarding the online training course and its impact on the job interview were very positive. For the online training course, the overall response of *excellent* was given for 79.4% of the 10 questionnaire items, and 14.5% responded *very good*. The number of respondents was 202 of 221 first-time job applicants at the agency.

The second component of the study was to determine whether the objectives of the training were being met. Participants were asked to assess the impact of the online

training course on their interview. The responses by the interviewees were positive. Of the 187 participants who went on an interview, overall 65% of them responded *excellent* and 23.0% responded *very good* to the 10 items on the Job Interview Questionnaire.

Comments, both negative and positive on both of the questionnaires, were reviewed for incorporation in future changes to the training course. The presentation of the statistical results and comments were given to the director of the agency, highlighting advantages of the online training course by providing a first-time job applicant with greater knowledge at the job interview. Negative responses such as the administration of the questionnaires proved to be time consuming and the job applicants felt rushed to come back to do the questionnaire after the job interview, were also addressed for future course evaluations.

Conclusions

The data collected from this study indicated that there is a successful online training course in place for first-time job applicants with the aim of increasing the educational knowledge about the interviewing process with a view to improving the success rate of job placements. The tallied findings and positive comments revealed that the majority of the job applicants agreed that the online training course was excellent or very good and was in line with their expectations of preparation for a successful job interview.

Mujtaba and Preziosi (2005) indicated that online education has been a reality for many adult learners and suggested that for continued success with any online course, there has to be continuous enhancements and improvement. The purpose of this is to achieve progress towards a better outcome for the educational process in order to meet the responsibilities of the educator and the student.

Robbins and Judge (2007) stated that in recent years, the fastest growing means of delivering training is computer based or e-learning systems; this process is both fast and efficient. The researcher agrees that e-learning is the fastest growing method of delivery for training and believes that this format should be continued in the future.

Implications

The online training course will help to alleviate the number of unprepared first-time job applicants sent to potential employers and will increase job placements. It is expected that any future job applicants will become more informed about the job interviewing process. Another implication is that the course can continue to be used as a successful future training tool for the placement agency.

The staff will also be able to use the online training course as a guide to inform future job applicants on how to find information regarding the job application process, as many of the frequent questions that job applicants ask are answered within the online training course.

Another implication of the study is that any improvement to the online training course will serve to increase revenue streams for the company. By increasing the number of first-time job applicants' success in suitable job placements, revenue will increase as well as the valued reputation of the placement agency.

Recommendations

With the positive results as listed, the researcher and the managing director of the company along with the formative and summative committees decided that several steps should be taken to improve the online training course:

1. All eligible first-time job applicants should receive the online training course before the interviewing session as a preparation tool. This recommendation is based on

the successful responses to the Online Training and Job Interview questionnaires.

2. The online training course should be extended as a 1-week workshop to better prepare first-time job applicants for interviews.

3. The instructor should stay current with the materials presented in the online training course. This is to ensure continuity with the training materials presented and the trends in the job market. The instructor should explore the possibility of using various employment tests to better prepare the job applicants.

Four recommendations are presented for changes and future research related to the online course:

1. The study should be conducted in the middle of the year, which is traditionally when the greatest number of applications are received. Additional research should focus on (a) the theory that unemployment does have a cycle, (b) the relationship between the times of the year that applicants apply and when they are hired for certain positions, and (c) the relationship between the type of industry and the number of persons who are hired.

2. A comparison study should be conducted in approximately 1 year to determine if any competitors implemented a similar but more effective course. This is designed specifically to ensure that there is continuous improvement to the online training course offered at the subject agency.

3. The instructor should follow up with employers periodically to determine if the job candidates are successful in the interviewing process. The purpose of this recommendation is continuous improvement in training to prepare applicants for interviewing.

4. Another study should be conducted when the recession in the Caribbean

country is over so that the results are not skewed due to the economic crisis. The researcher believes that this will be a more accurate determination of the success of first-time interviews.

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Appendix A

Formative and Summative Committees

Formative and Summative Committees

Formative Committee

Senior Manager for the placement Agency

Responsible for the implementation of payroll systems for the placement service and the office staff. Over 20 years experience at the placement agency. Responsible for all accounting systems at the placement agency. Interviewing all prospective candidates and placement of temporary candidates. Duties also include the development of alternative revenue streams for the agency to expand operations.

Manager for the placement agency

Interviewing candidates for permanent positions. Responsible for the operations management of the placement agency. Over 15 years experience, in the field. Assistant to the CEO of the agency. Managing the delivery of payroll systems and the general office flow of traffic during the peak season. Diligent, hardworking and a responsible worker, with the placement of staffing operations.

Managing Director

Founder of the placement agency of 35 years in a Caribbean country. Former Human resources manager. Entrepreneur for several business ventures including owner of several businesses other than the placement agency. CEO and CFO of the agency still running the daily operations of the agency. Responsible for increasing revenue streams for the agency on a yearly basis. Management of funds for the agency with a view of expanding the agency into other areas, besides placement but rather, payroll and accounting services. Development of a secretarial school with the view of parlaying the overflow of students into the placement agency, from temporary to permanent positions

Summative Committee

Assistant Professor

For a recognized university in South Florida. Masters in Business Administration. Published a compilation of books including a course developed for research methods now currently being used by students of a prominent university in South Florida. Former Associate to the Director, responsible for hiring faculty for off campus locations for 25th largest university in South Florida. Career coordination for a private 2 year college in South Florida. Masters in Business Administration, Doctoral Candidate.

Award winner for the 2006-2007 award year as the Career Services coordinator presented by the college board. Highest total percentage of the number of students placed for the location of the school. Eleven college locations participated in the award ceremony. Responsible for placement of graduates within Allied Health, Business and Information Technology fields. Management of the Career Services staff in a manner that

ensures that they achieve the highest quality of customer service to the students whilst maintaining the placement goals. Raised the placement level within 90 days of employment, increased graduate placement in field of study from 33% to 98% and maintained that percentage consistently throughout the year.

Duties also include assisting the Education Department with scheduling of classes, orientations and coordination of students during the beginning of sessions. Conduct Career Development and Exit workshops. Coordinate with external employers and internal departments to create highly successful Career Fairs.

Financial Services Coordinator - For a 2 year college in Florida.

Responsible for accounts receivables and payables. Experience in the day to day operations of the accounting areas of financial aid. Bachelor's degree in Accounting. Over 5 years experience in the area of increasing revenue streams.

Appendix B

Formative Committee Online Questionnaire

To: The Formative Committee Members
 From: Administrative Offices of Placement and Business Services

Date: November 25, 2008

The purpose of this memorandum is to ensure the validity of the questionnaire presented to the job applicants regarding the online course and the questionnaire taken after the interview. Your responses will assist in determining if the questionnaire will be used in the future. Please circle your answers and use the following responses to rate the questions asked in sequential numerical order.

Questionnaire A – Online Course

Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor

1. How would you rate the accuracy of the material(s) presented in the online training course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
2. How would you rate the instructor in the online training course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
3. How would you rate the power points presented in the online training course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
4. How would you rate the technology used to present the online training course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
5. How would you rate the user friendliness of the technology for the online course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
6. How would you rate the organization of the material(s) presented in the online training course.
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
7. How would you rate the content of the online training course?

 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
8. How would you rate the format and readability of the online training course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
9. How would you rate examples given in the online course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
10. What is your overall rating of the online training course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
11. How did you rate clarity of the material presented in the online training course?
 (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)

12. How would you rate the instructor's ability to hold your interest during the online training course?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
13. How would you rate the audio during the online training course?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
14. How would you rate the practicality of the online training course?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
15. What is your overall rating of the online training course?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)

Questionnaire B – After the Interview

Please use the rating scale as indicated previously.

Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor

1. How would you rate your overall performance after the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
2. How would you rate your interviewing skills after the online training course?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
3. What influence did the online training course have on your dress code for the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
4. What effect did the online course have regarding promoting your attributes “or sell yourself” during the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
5. What effect did the online training course have on your presentation during the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
6. In what way did the online training course affect your self-confidence?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
7. What effect did the online training course have on your verbal skills during the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
8. How would you rate “your salary negotiating skills” presented in the online course in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
9. What was overall effect did the online course have in preparing you for the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
10. How would you rate the information presented in the online training course on the use of “body language” in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
11. How would you rate the information presented in the online training course on the use of “making eye contact” in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
12. How would you rate the information in the online training “paying attention to your appearance” in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)

13. What effect did the online training course have on your ability to answer questions appropriately during the interview?
- (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
14. What effect did the online training course have on your ability to ask questions during an interview?
- (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
15. With the information gathered from the online training course, how would you rate your ability to convince the prospective employer to hire you for the position applied for?
- (E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)

Appendix C

Summative Committee Online Questionnaire and Results

To: The Summative Committee Members

From: Administrative Offices of Placement and Business Services

Date: November 28, 2008

The purpose of this memorandum is to ensure the validity of the questionnaire presented to the job applicants regarding the online course and the questionnaire taken --- after the interview. Your responses will assist in determining if the questionnaire will be used in the future. Please indicate what questions you would keep or delete with the view of improving the questionnaire.

Questionnaire A – Online Course

Question 1	Keep	Delete
Question 2	Keep	Delete
Question 3	Keep	Delete
Question 4	Keep	Delete
Question 5	Keep	Delete
Question 6	Keep	Delete
Question 7	Keep	Delete
Question 8	Keep	Delete
Question 9	Keep	Delete
Question 10	Keep	Delete
Question 11	Keep	Delete
Question 12	Keep	Delete
Question 13	Keep	Delete
Question 14	Keep	Delete
Question 15	Keep	Delete

To: The Summative Committee Members

From: Administrative Offices of Placement and Business Services

Date: November 28, 2008

The purpose of this memorandum is to ensure the validity of the questionnaire presented to the job applicants regarding the online course and the questionnaire taken after the interview. Your responses will assist in determining if the questionnaire will be used in the future. Please indicate if what questions you would keep or delete with the

view of improving the questionnaire for the job placement candidates.

Questionnaire B – After the Interview

Question 1	Keep	Delete
Question 2	Keep	Delete
Question 3	Keep	Delete
Question 4	Keep	Delete
Question 5	Keep	Delete
Question 6	Keep	Delete
Question 7	Keep	Delete
Question 8	Keep	Delete
Question 9	Keep	Delete
Question 10	Keep	Delete
Question 11	Keep	Delete
Question 12	Keep	Delete
Question 13	Keep	Delete
Question 14	Keep	Delete
Question 15	Keep	Delete

Tallied result of the numbered questions to keep or delete:

Online Training Questionnaire	Job Interview Questionnaire
1. 95%	1. 98%
2. 96%	2. 65%
3. 93%	3. 92%
4. 55%	4. 96%
5. 96%	5. 62%
6. 74%	6. 77%
7. 85%	7. 98%
8. 73%	8. 65%
9. 96%	9. 75%
10. 77%	10. 94%
11. 94%	11. 93%
12. 65%	12. 95%
13. 85%	13. 72%
14. 94%	14. 93%
15. 92%	15. 98%

Appendix D

Online Training Questionnaire and Results

Your Opinion of the Online Training Course of a Placement and Business

To all job candidate(s) who have successfully completed the online training course this questionnaire is specifically designed to help us to improve our online training course in the overall placement process for a job that you may be applying for today. It is hoped that your honest responses will allow us to use this process for future candidates. Please circle your responses below. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time.

1. How would you rate the accuracy of the material(s) presented in the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
2. How would you rate the instructor in the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
3. How would you rate the power points presented in the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
4. How would you rate the user friendliness of the technology of the online course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
5. How would you rate the content of the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
6. How would you rate examples given in the online course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
7. How did you rate clarity of the material presented in the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
8. How would you rate the audio during the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
9. How would you rate the practicality of the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
10. What is your overall rating of the online training course?
Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor

Results of Online Questionnaire

Question	N=202					very poor	
	excellent	very good	good	poor			
1	152	25	16	5	4	202	
2	139	38	20	3	2	202	
3	175	9	18	0	0	202	
4	150	34	16	1	1	202	
5	168	20	10	2	2	202	
6	135	55	11	0	1	202	
7	185	10	5	1	1	202	
8	152	35	6	6	3	202	
9	140	40	20	1	1	202	
10	178	11	13	0	0	202	
	1574	-277	135	19	15	2020	
	79.42%	14.50%	6%	0.01%	0.08%		

Appendix E

Job Interview Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Job Applicants of a Placement and Business

Congratulations all job candidate(s) on your recent job interview, this questionnaire is designed to help us to improve our overall placement process for a job that you may be applying for today. It is hoped that your honest responses will allow us to use this process for future candidates. All responses will be confidential. Thank you for your time.

Please circle your answers in the following format according to the chart below:

Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor

1. How would you rate your overall performance after the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
2. What influence did the online training course have on your dress code for the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
3. What effect did the online course have regarding promoting your attributes “or sell yourself” during the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
4. In what way did the online training course affect your self-confidence?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
5. What effect did the online training course have on your verbal skills during the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
6. How would you rate “your salary negotiating skills” presented in the online course in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
7. How would you rate the information presented in the online training course on the use of “body language” in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
8. How would you rate the information presented in the online training course on the use of “making eye contact” in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
9. How would you rate the information in the online training course “paying attention to your appearance” in relation to the interview?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)
10. With the information gathered from the online training course, how would you rate your ability to convince the prospective employer to hire you for the position applied for?
(E) (VG) (G) (P) (VP)

Appendix F

Credentials of Experts Taking the Test-Retest Reliability

Associate Professor

Prominent career with a recognized university in South Florida. Masters in Business Administration. Professors' Assistant, editor for a compilation of books and a number of publications for a duration of three years. Assisting students of a prominent university in South Florida with completing their academic career.

Administrative Assistant

Administrative Assistant working with a recognized university in South Florida. Associates in Science, assistant to the Director of Financial aid, ensuring that all documents regarding personnel records are kept confidential, assisting the director with scheduling meetings Six years experience, with aiding students with the financial aid requirements necessary for the payment of fees with the view that students will be successful with their college career.

Student Advisor Service Manager

Manager for student advisors services at a recognized university in South Florida. Masters in Business Administration. Responsible, for coordination of student advisors with training, and maintaining the required recruitment numbers needed for the university for the entire year. Successful with recruitment numbers for period of 15 years.

Appendix G

Results of the Test-Retest Reliability

The three respondents who took the test re-test reliability were experts in the educational field (Appendix G). Two copies of the questionnaires were given within the same one hour interval and 100% of the responses were (excellent or very good) on the retest across all 3 respondents for both questionnaires.

The following listed below are the responses from the three respondents:

Responses to questionnaire - Online Training Course #1

Respondent Number 1

1 st Copy		2 nd Copy	
Question 1	Excellent	Question 1	Excellent
Question 2	Excellent	Question 2	Excellent
Question 3	Excellent	Question 3	Excellent
Question 4	Excellent	Question 4	Very Good
Question 5	Excellent	Question 5	Excellent
Question 6	Excellent	Question 6	Excellent
Question 7	Excellent	Question 7	Excellent
Question 8	Excellent	Question 8	Excellent
Question 9	Excellent	Question 9	Very Good
Question 10	Very Good	Question 10	Excellent

Questionnaire 2 - After the Interview # 2

1 st Copy		2 nd Copy	
Question 1	Excellent	Question 1	Very Good
Question 2	Excellent	Question 2	Very Good
Question 3	Excellent	Question 3	Excellent
Question 4	Excellent	Question 4	Excellent
Question 5	Very Good	Question 5	Excellent
Question 6	Excellent	Question 6	Very Good
Question 7	Excellent	Question 7	Very Good
Question 8	Excellent	Question 8	Excellent
Question 9	Very Good	Question 9	Very Good
Question 10	Very Good	Question 10	Excellent

Responses to Questionnaire Online Training Course #1

Respondent Number 2

1 st Copy		2 nd Copy	
Question 1	Excellent	Question 1	Excellent
Question 2	Very Good	Question 2	Excellent
Question 3	Very Good	Question 3	Very Good
Question 4	Very Good	Question 4	Excellent
Question 5	Excellent	Question 5	Very Good
Question 6	Excellent	Question 6	Excellent
Question 7	Very Good	Question 7	Excellent
Question 8	Very Good	Question 8	Excellent
Question 9	Very Good	Question 9	Excellent
Question 10	Very Good	Question 10	Excellent

Questionnaire 2 -After the Interview # 2

1 st Copy		2 nd Copy	
Question 1	Very Good	Question 1	Excellent
Question 2	Very Good	Question 2	Excellent
Question 3	Excellent	Question 3	Excellent
Question 4	Very Good	Question 4	Very Good
Question 5	Excellent	Question 5	Excellent
Question 6	Very Good	Question 6	Very Good
Question 7	Very Good	Question 7	Very Good
Question 8	Very Good	Question 8	Excellent
Question 9	Very Good	Question 9	Very Good
Question 10	Very Good	Question 10	Excellent

Responses to Questionnaire - Online Training Course #1

Respondent Number 3

1 st Copy		2 nd Copy	
Question 1	Excellent	Question 1	Excellent
Question 2	Very Good	Question 2	Excellent
Question 3	Excellent	Question 3	Excellent
Question 4	Excellent	Question 4	Excellent
Question 5	Very Good	Question 5	Excellent
Question 6	Excellent	Question 6	Excellent
Question 7	Excellent	Question 7	Excellent
Question 8	Excellent	Question 8	Excellent
Question 9	Excellent	Question 9	Very Good
Question 10	Very Good	Question 10	Excellent

Questionnaire 2 - After the Interview #2

1 st Copy		2 nd Copy	
Question 1	Excellent	Question 1	Very Good
Question 2	Very Good	Question 2	Very Good
Question 3	Excellent	Question 3	Excellent
Question 4	Very Good	Question 4	Very Good
Question 5	Very Good	Question 5	Excellent
Question 6	Excellent	Question 6	Excellent
Question 7	Very Good	Question 7	Very Good
Question 8	Excellent	Question 8	Excellent
Question 9	Very Good	Question 9	Very Good
Question 10	Very Good	Question 10	Excellent

Appendix H

Results for Job Interview Questionnaire

Results for Job Interview Questionnaire

N=187

Question	excellent	very good	good	poor	very poor	
1	119	45	17	3	3	187
2	109	54	18	3	3	187
3	107	52	20	6	2	187
4	115	49	14	3	1	182
5	120	57	2	5	3	187
6	117	50	8	2	3	180
7	150	10	18	5	4	187
8	122	41	19	3	2	187
9	135	23	24	2	3	187
10	121	48	15	2	1	187
	1215	429	155	34	25	1858
	65.6%	23.0%	8.3%	1.8%	1.3%	