

PIONEERING FOREIGN TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

Overseas Training for Trainers: The First Ever for Personnel Down to the Level of Inspectors.

Background :

Training of Trainers (TOT) posted at NADT, the DTRTI and their MSTUs has conventionally been a modest domestic-oriented effort. This resulted in sporadically undertaken training initiatives in the DoPT-supported government training institutes. These initiatives have been impelled more by personal interest taken by individual faculty-members rather than any organizational policy for trainer-capacity development. Foreign training, in this environment, was naturally perceived to be an elite opportunity reserved for a few, mostly direct-recruit officers, based on extraneous considerations rather than in accordance with any organized policy.

Breaking Stereotypes :

2. In order to dispel these perceptions, attract best talent towards training, and to incentivize training performance, a scheme of foreign training for faculty members, cutting across cadres, was conceived and piloted by the DTRTI, Bengaluru. The pilot project of five days was successfully concluded in December 2010 with the strong support of NADT and the HRD Directorate. Sixteen trainers from NADT, the RTIs and the MSTUs attended the program on 'Instructional Design and Delivery Techniques' conducted at the Civil Service College in Singapore. The group consisted of six DDs/ADs, seven ITOs, and three ITIs.

3. The program was conceptualized with the following objectives:
- (a) Identifying success factors for effective learning.
 - (b) Recognizing the importance of Design in creating effective learning experiences.
 - (c) Conducting Training Need Analysis.
 - (d) Identifying appropriate learning strategies for different types of learning experiences – for example knowledge vs. skill vs. attitude based programs and instructional vs. participatory learning.

- (e) Designing learner-centered program based on Adult learning principles and brain research.
 - (f) Creating and engaging a learning environment without appropriate learning aids and resources.
4. The TOT program design also had modules for the participants to learn about the Singapore experience in fostering a citizen-centric culture with a special emphasis on tax administration and public services delivery. Towards the latter purpose, the officers were given a two day exposure to the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) with emphasis on their customer service practices which are amongst globally acknowledged best practices.

Highlights:

- It is the first ever foreign training in the Income Tax Department in which the participants ranged from Inspectors to Deputy Commissioners. No supervisory cadre officer accompanied the group. The inclusion of faculty from MSTUs was a historic first for these institutions which normally languish under dual control and inadequate prioritization in the organization.
- The sense of empowerment, self confidence and esteem which has been engendered in each of the participants through the program is palpable from their feedback, their heightened organizational commitment and enhanced desire to contribute to the department. In fact, their singularly high level of engagement and motivation during the training has been singled out for special mention by the Singaporean trainers. The entire experience, which included traveling on white passports of the Govt. of India, negotiating a foreign society and systems and interacting with the officials of the Indian embassy in Singapore, helped to crystallize their ambassadorial role with an enhanced respect for the duties inherent in their official identity.
- The innovative and advanced techniques of training learnt during the Singaporean exposure have already been adapted and put into practice. These techniques are more participatory and experiential and thus better suited to the challenges of adult learning. They are being used even for handling complex technical subjects related to Income tax. The overall receptivity and retention of learning for the trainees who

receive inputs through these new techniques is found to be of a much higher order compared to conventional learning strategies focused on adults.

- The exposure to the public systems of the Singapore Government and their taxpayer services has created a new awareness in the participants of the processes, technology and, most importantly, the attitudinal sets which drive successful public service delivery. The integration of information collected by other Govt. agencies which is used to identify and track tax payers, the use of pre filled information to simplify tax filing, the composition of the IRAS Board with persons from both private and public sector are all new ideas on revenue administration which the officers have seen in operation with relevant learnings for their own system. Their role as change agents in creating the right balance of service and enforcement in the department now seems to be better appreciated.
- Promoting a more inclusive organization through equal opportunity and esteem for the different cadres of the Income tax department has been a thrust objective of the training sector. The first TOT at Singapore and the continuation of the project in the forthcoming calendar of training has successfully reinforced it.

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