

**Implementing an Action-Plan Training Model to Enhance Employee's'
Competencies: A Hotel Case Study**

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Abstract

Hundreds of hours and millions of dollars are spent to train employees every year in the organization, however, little empirical evidence can be found to demonstrate the transfer of training in workplaces. This study represents a case study in the hotel industry in which a model for the transfer of training knowledge, Action-Plan Training Model, is examined and implemented. Theoretical analysis and multiple data collection methods were used to answer questions regarding the training processes and the utilization of Action-Plan Training Model for twelve months following the program. Five principal research methods, interview, focus groups, questionnaires, observations and documentary analyzes, were used to cast a wide net to ensure that the highest quality data are collected. The results showed that the Action-Plan Training Model is highly effective and contributes to employee performance.

Key Words: ODI, Knowledge Transfer, Training, Action-Plan Training Model

Introduction

Hotels around the world are facing new challenges in today's world. The recession was a blip in a market faced with more long-term challenges and uncertainties, such as new ways to reappraise and improve the customer experience in an experiential economy; the requirement to introduce a more concierge-based approach to customer service as a standard service model; and better ways to re-evaluate overall offers to guests without undercutting core brand concept. There are similar challenges happening to the hotel industry globally. First, is a shortage of skilled employees. One of the greatest challenges plaguing the hospitality industry is the unavailability of quality workforce at different skill levels. The hospitality industry fails to retain good professionals. Second is the intense competition. The increasing competition in this industry is very intense since there are many new comers, higher pro-quality products, better service standards, and competition from other countries surrounding Thailand. Third, nowadays guests' expectations are increasing and hotels have to focus on their loyal customers to retain their existing customers, and make sure that the services provided meet the guests' expectations. There is a growing need for individuals within the hotel industry globally to improve and develop their learning. Therefore, individuals must improve knowledge and learn new competencies essential in the workplace. Increasing their competence could lead to an improvement in the effectiveness of the organization, teams, and individuals.

Knowledge becomes the only and inexhaustible source in an organization which enables development creation and competition of the company. Consistent knowledge management increases the possibilities of the organization in becoming successful. Organizational knowledge is seen as "the most strategically important among the firm's resources" (Grant, 1996); a principal source of sustainable competitive advantage (Argote & Ingram, 2000); and organization's values derived from knowledge (Neilson, 2002). This competitive advantage could be sustained by reinvesting in these competencies through knowledge creation and knowledge transfer activities (Reed & DeFillippi, 1990).

However, the accomplishment of successful transfer knowledge by using training as a tool is not a straightforward process. O'Dell & Grayson (1999) mentioned that within the same organization, it takes an average of 27 months to complete the transfer of "best

practices” between 2 divisions. Researches had increasingly focused on knowledge transfer’s antecedents and results to better understand the ways companies organize and benefit from it. A systematic overview of the underlying mechanisms and outcomes of knowledge transfer is still lacking even after twenty years of research. Both Argote (1999) and Szulanski (1996) determined that the effectiveness of knowledge transfer initiatives varies significantly among organizations. Argote *et al.* (2000) noted that knowledge transfer initiatives often fall far short of delivering all the sought-after results.

Therefore, every organization, including hotels, need to acquire and transfer knowledge as it seeks to implement their competitive advantage and survive the selection pressures (Kogut & Zander, 1992). Companies that could assimilate and apply existing and new external knowledge effectively are more likely to survive than organizations less adept at inter-organizational knowledge transfer (Argote & Ingram, 2000). Evidence is accumulating that within a firm, the transfer of knowledge provides many benefits across organizational units (Tsai, 2001). Accordingly, the ability to transfer and acquire knowledge across and within firm boundaries has emerged as an underlying theme in strategy and organizational research.

Organization Assessment

The SWOT analysis method was used as the assessment tool for this study. It showed the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats of Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai. The Hotel was founded in 1995 with the resort concept that is as old as the ancient kingdom of Lanna. It was awarded the most preferred travel destination and best service hotel in the world by Conde Nast Traveller in 2010.

Strengths

- Experience in hotel industry—it opened its business 15 years ago in Chiang Mai. Four Seasons could consider its experience in running hotels and be able to compete other hotels in the business.
- Brand positioning—strategy focuses on the development of a luxury brand at a premium price supported by innovative marketing, attractive rooms and landscape, and best services that makes an emotional connection and valuable experience with guests.
- Four Seasons Culture— philosophy and its core service standards offer the

experience of exceptional quality. They created properties of enduring value using superior design and finishes and supported them with a deeply instilled ethic of personal service.

Weaknesses

- Not open to change because of the success in the past— the numbers of rewards that the hotel received in the past hinders it from seriously continuously improving their current levels of service quality, employees' business acumen, learning strategy, and willing to change for better outcomes.
- Old-fashion lecture-based learning development plan had not changed much to focus on needs of hotel's business. What the hotel had so far was a traditional learning plan model, which had been in use since 1995.
- Lack of commitment to apply new knowledge—employees hardly understand when new knowledge was being transferred to them.

Opportunities

- Dynamic growth in emerging markets—improving economic conditions, developing infrastructures, the development of city of Chiang Mai and growing tourism are driving strong economic growth .
- To acquire more loyal guests—since the company already had developed a solid core of repeat customers, these clients are expected to recommend the Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai to their family, friends, colleagues, and business associates.

Threats

- Potential downturns in travel—rising fuel prices, environmental concerns, political instability, terrorist threats in the South and economic downturns dampened the performance of tourism flows and the performance of travel accommodation as a whole.
- Increasing number of direct and indirect competitors: Several international majors hotel were established in the Chiang Mai markets. Other hotels such as boutique hotels and home-stay hotels are also increasing tremendously.

The SWOT analysis showed that even if the hotel was very strong and successful, it lacks the commitment to learn, adapt, and use new knowledge in order to face challenges to face the competition and the new challenges..

The focus of this study is on the impact of knowledge transfer method on the employees' competencies (knowledge, skills/abilities, and behavior). Therefore, the knowledge and training transfer model is the focus of this research.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study has the following objectives:

- To analyze current organization's situation regarding effective knowledge transfer
- To analyze and develop a richer understanding of developing effective knowledge transfer, Action-Plan Training Model, in an organization.
- To determine the impact of knowledge transfer on employee's competency to receive, create, and apply what they learn in training to their job.

Research Questions

Q1: What are the methods that create success in knowledge transfer in Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai?

Q2: What is the impact of implementing the action-plan training model in the organization?

Research Hypothesis

H1: The Action-Plan Training Model has no impact on employee's performance (Knowledge, skills, personality and attitude)

H2: The Action-Plan Training Model has an impact on employee's performance (Knowledge, skills, personality and attitude)

Literature Review and Research Framework

Knowledge

Knowledge is the "combination of information and human context that enhances the capacity for action" (Long, 1997). Knowledge is valuable only when combined with the human addition of experience and interpretation (Jennex, 2007). Organization knowledge is embedded within documents, routines, processes, practices and norms (Davenport & Prusak, 2000; Michaels *et al.* 2006). Bryans and Smith (2000) stated that the most important point about knowledge is better understanding, identifying, and releasing it into the organization. A greater emphasis and attention have been drawn to the importance of making the management of knowledge an explicit function in

organizations. Interest in transforming individual knowledge into organizational knowledge that could be distributed, applied, and implemented in improving organizational effectiveness is increasing (Bryans & Smith, 2000).

Knowledge Transfer and Training

The transfer of knowledge within organizations has been called knowledge transfer (Szulanski, 1995), knowledge acquisition (Lyles & Salk, 1996), learning (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998), knowledge inflows/outflows (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000) and knowledge integration (Grant, 1996; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). Ko *et al.* (2005) mentions that knowledge transfer has been described in several views. For example, some researchers take an exchange view by defining knowledge transfer as “dyadic exchanges of organizational knowledge between a source and a recipient unit in which the identity of the recipient matters” (Szulanski, 1996). However, others argue that knowledge transfer happens only when the adopter uses the shared knowledge (Darr & Kurzberg, 2000). In all these cases, knowledge transfer is fundamentally built on the “source and recipient” model (Ko *et al.*, 2005). With regards to knowledge, the issue of transferability is important, not only between firms, but also even more critically, within the firm (Grant, 1996).

Training is a systematic process that provides employees with the skills and knowledge to improve their performance. Successful training has been proven to benefit organizations from several perspectives. Employees would be able to perform their jobs well through proper training. Employees would be more motivated when they know how to do their jobs. Training could help reduce employees’ anxiety by clarifying job expectations and communicating the organization’s vision and mission. Training helps organizations to be more competitive by improving job satisfaction, employee morale, and consistent service quality (Cullen, 2001).

Knowledge Transfer Models

This literature provides five main concepts of knowledge transfer as described below.

Baldwin and Ford’s Model of the Transfer Process: The Baldwin and Ford’s Model of the Transfer Process (1998) has three steps: training input, training output and conditions of transfer. This model defines the elements of transfer as a system in which training knowledge is presented, learned, and utilized within a particular organizational

context. It does not directly address the variety of responsibilities within that system, nor do the authors explain how the model relates to an actual transfer situation. Therefore, while it is very helpful to view training as a linked system of inputs and outputs, it is difficult to understand the usefulness of this particular model without understanding it in a practical and realistic context.

Dixon's Model of Five Transfer Methods: Dixon's (2000) The Model of Five Transfer Methods is based on the similarity of task and context, the type of knowledge being transferred (tacit or explicit), the nature of the task (routine or non-routine), and the impact of that knowledge on the organization. Knowledge transfer among team is the main focus of this model. The five transfer methods are serial transfer, near transfer, far transfer, strategic transfer, and expert transfer.

Nonaka's SECI Model: Nonaka's (1994) SECI Model, which includes Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization, describes the knowledge transfer process in terms of tacit and/or explicit knowledge that is being transferred. Nonaka explains that in this model, socialization would be used when tacit knowledge is transferred among individuals. However, when knowledge is converted from tacit to explicit, involved individuals transferring knowledge to the group, externalization would be used. On the other hand, the combination would be used when explicit knowledge is transferred between two groups. Lastly, when explicit knowledge is converted to tacit knowledge through groups transferring that knowledge to individuals, internalization will be used.

Szulanski's Knowledge Transfer Model: Szulanski (1996) defined his knowledge transfer model as a process consisting of a series of stages. It focuses on the sequence of knowledge transfer between sender and receiver. There are four stages of this model, starting from the sender (initiator) to receiver (recipient): (a) initiation- all activities leading to the transfer decision, (b) implementation – knowledge begins to flow from the sender. Identification of knowledge sources and recipients, and appropriate adaptation of practices for transferring such knowledge should have taken place, (c) ramp-up – recipient starts using transferred knowledge, and (d) integration – recipient incorporates knowledge into normal routines.

Yelon's MASS model: Yelon (1992) presents the MASS model for producing transfer, which suggests Motivating trainees, increasing their Awareness of when to use

and master their new Skills, and giving them the necessary Support to do so. Yelon's model is essential to the transfer effort, but clearly focuses upon the motivation and support of the trainee, while not clearly explaining the roles and responsibilities of trainers and management in providing support. In reality, motivation is a personal function, which occurs within motivating, encouraging environments. Finally, Yelon does not provide clear examples of the model nor evidence that it actually influences transfer.

Action-Plan Training Model

The Action plan is a helpful method to enhance the transfer of knowledge in training (Bramley, 1996). This plan, to be effective, should include a time frame for each and every area in this process, opposing forces that may occur, and methods to deal with those forces. Bramley also mentions that the action plan should include discussions of the possible effects that this action may have on others and/or the organization. Broad and Newstrom (1992) suggest that using action plan also enhances the transfer of training. In their model, the discussions with supervisors and/or managers takes place in order to see the problems that occur, indicate time frames for the plan, and ensure the learning goals/objectives were aligned with business needs. Lastly, the real commitment of all involved parties must be agreed upon. There are important stakeholders who need to support this transfer of training: management team, trainer, and trainees. Broad and Newstrom (1992) also suggest to have all parties sign a contract for this plan as a real commitment to bring life to the plan. This support must occur before, during, and after training.

Conceptual Framework

The study conducted an action research using the case of the Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai to explore the participants' views related to the relationship between action-plan training model, knowledge transfer, and employee competencies in an organization. The researcher illustrated the fact that the concept (action-plan training model as an intervention process, learning plan, organization factors, and training factors) influenced and improved the context (a level of knowledge transfer: competencies and actions after training). As an intervention, the Action Plan Training Model comprised of four critical factors: Intervention Process, Learning Plan, Training Factors, and Organization Factors.

Intervention process

The Intervention process consists of four steps, which include: 1) identifying problems, 2) indicating timeframe, 3) learning goals, and 4) real commitment from the organization. This intervention process was a first step in developing a learning plan. It was important at this stage to not rely exclusively on management needs or immediate performance needs of an organization, but to focus on current and potential problems .

Learning plan

It was one year learning plan which was divided into 4 quarters with 4 theme concepts (Q1: Product Knowledge and Service standards, Q2: Social activities and Life, Q3: Resources management/Financial management and Q4: It's all about Leadership). During each quarter, training classes were led by management team and other facilitators who were experts in their own areas such as Front Office Managers, Executive Housekeepers, Directors of Spa, etc. Guest speakers also facilitated the training sessions.

Q1: Products and standards: at the beginning of the year, the staff was trained to understand more of the existing and new products, standards and services available for guests in the hotel. This training module led by the Resort Manager designated trainers and training managers who were involved extensively in hotel products and standards. During the high season (January to March), knowledge transfer about products and standards was very important for all employees because all of them serve a lot of customers during this period of time. This knowledge helped employees to understand more about the hotel's products and improve their service standards. After attending all training classes, employees were able to utilize their knowledge.

Q2: Social activities and life: The 2nd quarter was a low season for Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai. Therefore, it was the best time to refresh and increase the staff's morale and wellness. The management teams wished that the staff see the world, personal life, and their own work in a positive way to be ready when the high season arrived at the end of the year.

Q3: Resources management/ Financial management: It was during this budgeting period that all managers prepared and presented their department budget for 2011. Moreover, cost saving was another technique the hotel needed to use during this low season period. There were many factors causing unnecessary expenses and all managers learned how to decrease those costs in order to minimize expenses and maximize profits as much as they could. Understanding finance matters was sometimes very difficult for

managers who were uncomfortable with numbers. Therefore, the Director of Finances and his team who were experts in this area of training.

Q4: It's all about Leadership: Leadership is very crucial for every single person in the organization. In order to improve their leadership skills, the General Manager and the Director of Human Resources served as leaders for this theme. There were many leadership skills that managers needed to learn in order to lead their teams to succeed in their own departmental goals.

Training Factors

The Training factors consisted of trainee characteristics and content of training and methods:

1. Trainee Characteristics—Research had shown that the characteristics of the trainee's personality directly affected the training process and training transfer (Ford *et al.*, 1992). The ability of the person to learn, analyze, and utilize what has been learned is the first important factor. To practice and transfer the skills and knowledge to work is the second important factor for the training transfer. In order to gently change trainee characteristics to be ready for knowledge transfer, setting specific performance evaluation for all trainees was created. All trainees must attend and pass all training courses with a mark of at least at 80 percent in order to be considered for any promotion or salary increase.
2. Content of Training and Methods—In order to achieve successful training transfer in the workplace, the training program must be relevant to the job requirements (Axtell *et al.*, 1997; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). However, it was not enough for the content of training to be relevant because the trainee must also understand the relationship between training and work practice to be able to make the knowledge transfer. All the content of training were relevant to the real time, real situation, and employees' job requirements. This was to ensure that all knowledge that had been transferred to employees were learned, applied and utilized in the real situation as soon as possible.
3. The planning of the training program was very important for its total success and therefore for training at work. The goals and the extent of training, the training methods and objectives, as well as the training environment and equipment, were important factors related to training program planning. The trainer also must

possess two essential characteristics. First of all he must be reliable, and secondly he must be effective in the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Gauld & Miller, 2004). A good combination of these was important and leads to increased knowledge transfer in training.

Organizational Factors

The prevailing organizational climate concerning new knowledge and skills greatly influences whether the transfer is made or not (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey *et al.*, 1995). Burke & Baldwin (1999) stated that a supportive environment increased the adoption of transfer strategies by the trainees as well as the transfer in general. Moreover, other important factors mentioned in the literature as affecting training transfer were superiors and colleagues (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The organizational culture, which emphasized values of training, learning and taking initiatives, allowed the employee to experiment on his new skills in his job position. Moreover, in a highly human-oriented organizational culture, practices that reflect individualized consideration and informal relationships provided development opportunities to employees (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2004, p.596).

Therefore, organizational culture, transfer atmosphere, and rewards are factors that create more opportunities for employees to experiment and transfer newly acquired knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the existence of the available equipment used at work affect the training transfer and internal and/or external rewards are related to training transfer at work (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey *et al.*, 1995). Finally, a basic prerequisite for a company to undertake successful training programs is also its good reputation, not only regarding training, but its reputation in general.

This model is a success when the selected employees complete training and apply what he learned directly or indirectly to their work. Direct training transfer to the workplace meant that the trained employee is able to apply and utilize the knowledge and skills acquired to his job. Indirect transfer means that the trained employee may transfer to the workplace skills or attitudes that were developed in training, not as part of the training objectives but as a result of the interactions and methods used.

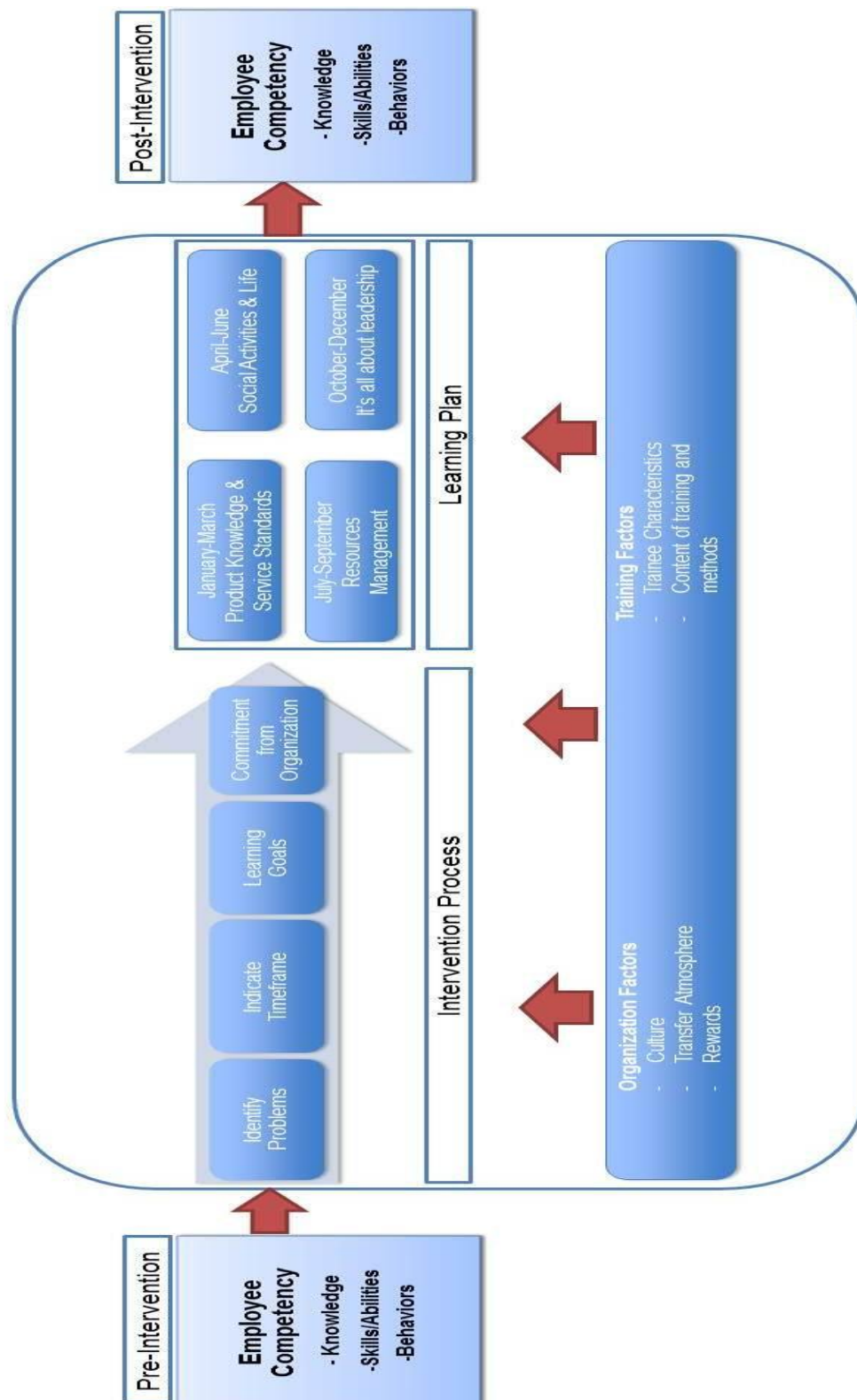


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework

Action Research Framework

There were 3 steps of this action research process: Pre-ODI, ODI, and Post-ODI. The Pre-ODI was a stage where current situation and challenges at Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai were diagnosed. The ODI stage was the stage where intervention took place and Post-ODI was the last stage. This stage was the evaluation of ODI intervention's result (See Figure 2).

Pre –ODI

ODI

Post-ODI

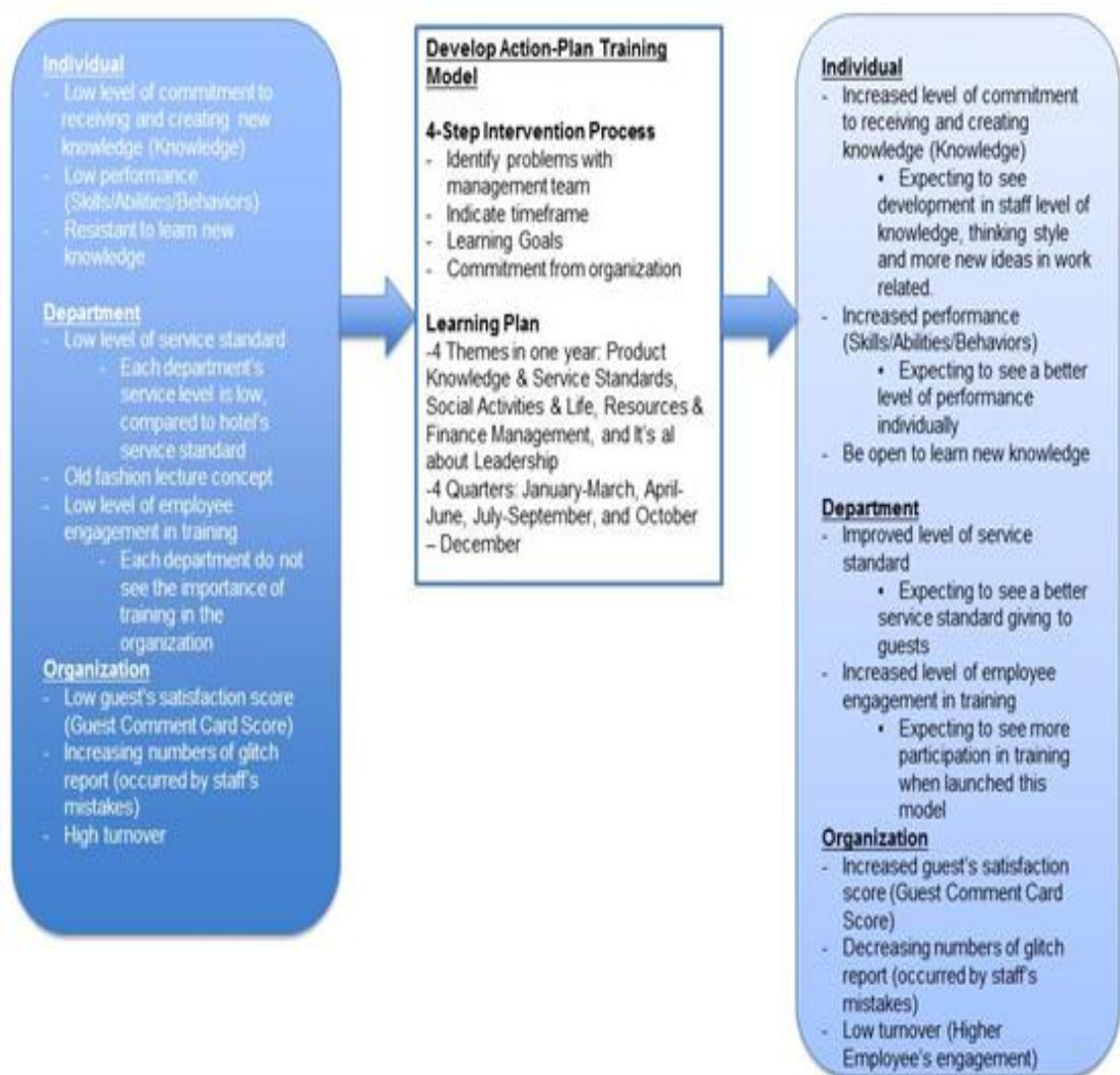


Figure 2. The ODI Framework

Research Design and Process

The subjects for this survey were full-time staff who were currently working in Operations , namely: Front Office (32), Housekeeping (34), Food and Beverage (28), and Spa (16). All these 110 participants were in the line-staff and supervisor levels. In order to gather necessary data for this study and produce the most credible, coherent, and useful study, the author used five principal research methods: interview, focus groups, questionnaires, observations and documentary analysis to cast a wide net to ensure that the highest quality data were collected.

Interviews

In-depth interviews were used to gather the personal experiences and views of the management team who participated in this research. There were two sections of interviews: closed-ended questions and opened-ended questions. The researcher conducted Pre-ODI interviews with the planning committee level (Directors and General Manager) and Post-ODI interview with General Manager. This allowed the author to gain multiple views and perceptions of the same issue studied. Moreover, extensive meetings and discussions with the planning committees before conducting focus groups were arranged to fine-tune the data collection process, by identifying target groups and presenting potential close-ended and open-ended questions to be asked.

Focus Group Work

Each focus group session took approximately one to two hours, depending on the degree of participation and the amount of information discussed . The format of this method was to have the researcher play the role of facilitator to moderate intense discussions and promote interaction among participants.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was designed to gather respondents' opinions on an impact of Action-Plan Training Model. A Five-Point rating scale was used to indicate the level of participant's agreement.

Observations

Observations and Third-Party Participation were used. There were two stages for the observations and the researcher spent 2 months of observation for each stage: pre-

organization development intervention (Pre-ODI) and Post-organization development intervention (Post-ODI). These observations were conducted in all selected departments (Front Office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverages, and Spa), and selected participants: their performance in Pre-ODI and Post-ODI was evaluated by a core standard checklist

Design and Development ODI

The Action-plan training model was the annual plan for 2010 training roadmap. This roadmap was divided into four categories. All four categories fall into four concepts based on the business needs in each quarter. Learning courses had been designed to align with the employees' needs in each time period so that knowledge from all learning methods could be applied into real practice. Thus, Four Seasons Hotel could have the momentum rolling of rolling-out the different learning activities as each manager was accountable for the 2010 success in their respective areas. In this way, they could be confident that they had transferred their own experience and knowledge to the employees accordingly.

Results and Discussions

Quantitative Data: for quantitative analysis, the researcher used statistical mean and standard deviation to analyze the results and impact of implementing Action-Plan Training model on knowledge, skill and abilities, and behavior.

Table 1: Comparison of knowledge of staff before, after intervention (immediately), and 8 weeks after intervention

Knowledge	Pre		Post (Immediately)		Post (8 Week after Intervention)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Job Knowledge	3.76	0.618	3.76	0.713	4.09	0.576
Performance	3.85	0.515	4.11	0.502	4.02	0.644
Learning Perception	3.73	0.638	4.35	0.485	4.13	0.639
Knowledge Transfer Perception	3.73	0.58	4.10	0.671	4.06	0.579
Using/Applying Knowledge	3.68	0.778	3.82	0.859	3.73	0.492
Innovation	3.79	0.571	4.27	0.554	3.69	0.537
Self-Development	3.55	0.647	3.83	0.293	3.73	0.704
Overall	3.73	0.47	4.03	0.406	3.92	0.392

According to Table 1, it was found that the mean score of knowledge competencies after intervention immediately was higher than that before intervention in overall with

statistical significance of .05 level. The Total Knowledge variable mean score improved from 3.702 at pre-ODI to 3.964 at post-ODI. For job knowledge, perception on learning, and perception on knowledge transfer, the mean scores obtained immediately after the experiment were higher than before the intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On using/applying knowledge and performance, the means score obtained immediately after intervention were higher before intervention with a statistical significance of .05 level.

Total knowledge dropped from 4.03 immediately after the ODI to 3.92 at 8-week after ODI, but still higher than pre-ODI stage (3.73). When considering the individual aspect, it was found that for job knowledge, the means score 8 weeks after the intervention was higher than that immediately after the intervention with statistical significance of .05 level.

On learning perception and innovation, the mean score 8 weeks after the intervention was lower than that immediately after intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On Performance, Knowledge Transfer Perception, Using/Applying Knowledge, and Self-Development the mean scores immediately after intervention were lower than before the intervention with a statistical significance of .05 level.

Table 2: Comparison of skills and abilities of staff before, after intervention (immediately), and 8 weeks after intervention

Skills/Abilities	Pre		Post (Immediately)		Post (8 Week after Intervention)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Access to Customer	3.93	0.628	3.78	0.346	3.31	0.289
Communication	3.51	0.465	3.75	0.423	3.53	0.276
Results Orientation	3.31	0.354	3.89	0.429	3.52	0.295
Solve Guest's Problem	3.74	0.408	4.05	0.372	3.68	0.499
Service Excellence	3.73	0.487	3.90	0.547	4.17	0.433
Teamwork	3.90	0.443	4.00	0.547	4.18	0.541
Listening, Understanding, and Responding	3.70	0.348	3.93	0.570	3.79	0.564
Overall	3.69	0.249	3.90	0.270	3.74	0.241

According to Table 2, it was found that mean score of skills/abilities after intervention was higher than that before intervention by overall with statistical significance of .05. Total skills/abilities variable mean score improved from 3.69 at pre-ODI to 3.895 after post-ODI. For communication, results orientation, solve guest's problem, and service excellence, the mean scores obtained immediately after the intervention were higher than that before the experiment with statistical significance of .05 level. On teamwork, the mean scores obtained immediately after intervention was higher than those before intervention with a statistical significance of .05 level.

Total skills and abilities dropped from 3.90 at immediately ODI to 3.74 at 8-week after ODI, but still higher than pre-ODI stage (3.69). For service excellence and teamwork, the mean score 8 weeks after the intervention was higher than that immediately after intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On access to customers, communication, result orientation, and solve guest's problem, the mean scores 8 weeks after the experiment were lower than those immediately after intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On listening, understanding, and responding, the mean scores immediately after intervention were lower than those before intervention with a statistical significance of .05 level.

Table 3: Comparison of behavior of staff before, after intervention (immediately), and 8 weeks after intervention

Skills/Abilities	Pre		Post (Immediately)		Post (8 Week after Intervention)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Ethics and Value	3.80	0.688	4.09	0.472	3.94	0.557
Organization Commitment	3.81	0.627	3.86	0.590	3.62	0.864
Self-Confidence	4.50	0.369	4.06	0.624	4.11	0.506
Self-Control	3.92	0.536	4.06	0.521	3.99	0.496
Flexibility	4.21	0.282	3.90	0.646	3.86	0.537
Information Seeking	4.09	0.459	4.03	0.619	3.77	0.695
Overall	4.06	0.268	4.00	0.423	3.88	0.448

According to Table 3, it was found that mean score of behavior after intervention immediately was lower than before the intervention by overall with a statistical significance of .05. Total behavior dropped from 4.06 at pre-ODI to 4.00 at post-ODI. For ethics and value, the mean scores after the experiment immediately was higher than

before the intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On Self Confidence and Flexibility, the mean scores after the experiment immediately were lower than that before intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On organization commitment, self-control, and information seeking, the means score after intervention immediately were lower than that before intervention with a statistical significance of .05 level.

Total behavior scores dropped from 4.00 at immediately ODI to 3.88 at 8-week after ODI, and slightly lower than pre-ODI stage (4.06). For accessing to ethics and value, organization commitment, and information seeking, the mean scores 8 weeks after the experiment were lower than those immediately after the intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On Self-Confidence, Self-Control, and Flexibility, the mean scores 8 weeks after intervention were lower than those at the intervention immediately with a statistical significance of .05 level.

Qualitative Data: The collection of qualitative data at Pre-ODI and Post ODI, which included interviews with General Manager, focus group and observation were used as support data for this research and to understand the participants' progress and to present the kind of change that occurred after this ODI. For observations, a third party participant assessed it. The General Manager mentioned that he clearly saw the changes happening at hotel. The result was positive in terms of staff performance, increased level of staff competencies, guest satisfaction, and hotel's reputation. Employees knew more what to do, were able to present new ideas, and could fix normal problems without asking their supervisor. The number of glitch report dropped after the intervention was completed and guest satisfaction scores also improved. One of the most important benefits of this program was the transfer of necessary knowledge and skills which operations employees needed to know in order to support them to work effectively. Furthermore, there were 2 focus group interviews with 15 staff each. This POST ODI focus group represented 27.27% of total staff of Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai who participated in this survey. There were 5 questions regarding this survey. Participants divided their developments in 2 categories: knowledge and soft skills. In terms of knowledge, participants mentioned that they were more confident in their knowledge to deal with guests. Lastly, the positive impact of implementing Action-Plan Training Model shows positive results of implementing Action-Plan Training Model (Table 4).

Table 4: Results of implementing Action-Plan Training Model

Results	2010	2011
Standard Score	88.04%	91.29%
Turnover	14.16%	12.03%
Glitch Reports	940	867
Customer Satisfaction	73.70%	87.30%

Conclusions

This study provides a clear evidence that the Action-Plan Training Model could improve employees' performance in the organization. The Action-Plan Training Model positively impacted knowledge, the ability and attitude of trainees as shown by the better results of guest engagements, guest satisfaction scores, better work performance, and behavior. This training model and process was adapted and localized to fit the organization's needs, nature and limitations. Therefore, it was very easy for participants to understand and think about the situations which they would need to handle. Moreover, it was found that the intervention was practical and could extend to other resort hotels.

Moreover, it was found that the results of the training was received differently by each employee because there were other factors involved, which included internal factors at the participants and organizational levels. Internal factors were the differences of each participant's level of knowledge, ability, and attitude and ability to receive and understand new knowledge. These affect the learning efficiency and could show the work operation behavior and result of the work differently. Some employees show great improvement while others show little improvement. Organizational factors such as support from executive members, the understanding of executive members about the

importance of this model, specific job responsibility, the reward system, company policy, effective communication, and employee's career path were also important.

Recommendations

- The transfer of knowledge within the organization need the support and participation from executives in order to emphasize the importance of learning development, which needs to align with the Key Performance Indicators. Executive members also have to be role models for employees on this matter to drive the learning culture in the organization .
- Effective communication between organization and employees regarding the importance of this knowledge transfer, the process of this intervention, and expected outcome after attending this action training model implementation are very crucial to achieve this development. The Human Resources team need to make sure that communication flow must be easy to understand and feedbacks during the intervention from employees would be recorded and revised. The Action-Plan Training Model needs to be flexible and suited to environment, organization's needs, and trainees' needs.
- To create a system of measuring training results during time when the Action-Plan Training Model is used. This concept model is to be driven by line staff through organizational knowledge management, where KPIs are important as tools that connect organizational policy to operations and would make employees feel that the policy of the company is tangible and could be used in practice and to better understand the objectives and results anticipated from implementing the model.
- To reduce timeline to less than one year. This will be a much effective than a one-year training plan because employees will be more focused at the training and feel more comfortable about the program. During the peak season, it is very difficult to get the attention from employees since their priority is to serve the guests. Therefore, the recommendation is to implement only during low season of the year.

- To implement train the trainer program (TTT) which will help the organization to have qualified trainers to train all trainees and also reduce expenses.

Recommendations for further research

- While this study has added to the literature on training, much is yet to be done. Future studies could provide valuable information by comparing groups that do not use action-plan training model to those that do. Furthermore, while this study explores a hospitality industry; much could be gained from an examination of other industries and non-profit organizations.
- Learning occurs when knowledge is made useful and relevant to daily life, as illustrated through the use of the Action-Plan Training Model. Employees alike should be given a project which allows them the opportunity to make use of the information in their own department or in their personal lives.
- The generic model presented in Figure 3 shows the recommendation of a model that could potentially apply the implementation of the action training model in the organization. Consider starting with discussing and setting career path for each and individual employee in order to analyze and come up with the annual training roadmap for the organization. Moreover, the business goals and objectives of organization will be important factors in specifying appropriate and effective learning tools in order to transfer knowledge within organization and evaluate the system by performance management, which includes follow-up, refreshment, evaluation and qualification. This generic model will help organizations especially in hotel industry, to analyze and set right training courses, tools/techniques, timeline, knowledge transfer strategies, and maximize the outcomes of knowledge transfer.



Figure 3: Generic Model

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