What is Training Needs Analysis

Getting effective feedback

INTRODUCTION

Training needs analysis is effectively a skills gap analysis. The main aim is to find out the current state and formulate a desired state. The difference between the two states will lead you to identify the gap and plan a training programme that addresses it

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What is a Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

Knowledge of TNA is particularly applicable if you are commissioned to provide training for a particular individual or organisation by first identifying and assessing what the people in the organisation actually need to be trained on.

If you are a trainer working with a training body, then it is likely that the body will carry out a TNA and then ask you to provide a particular training course on a specific area that has been identified as necessary and useful for their staff. In this case, you don't need to be involved in TNA but you would still need to know the objective of your training course and what areas need to be addressed. Hence, the knowledge of TNA process is still quite useful as you would know where you fit in the whole process and what is expected.

Training needs analysis is effectively a *skills gap analysis*. The main aim is to find out the current state and formulate a desired state. The difference between the two states will lead you to identify the gap and plan a training programme that resolves it.

A TNA can be initiated based on a variety of triggers:

- New technological change
- Customer surveys and feedback
- New customer behaviour or social trends leading to need for new skills
- New competitors
- New markets
- Drop in organisational productivity
- New legal challenges
- Information management
- Upskilling staff

A TNA can be applied on many levels:

- Organisation
- Teams
- Individuals
- Tasks
- Problem related

How Does Training Needs Analysis Work?

TNA is a *data-centric* approach to discovering skill gaps. The current state and the desired states are parameterised and then quantified for comparison. The result of TNA is a series of actions, in particular, what training activities are required to get the organisation from its current state to the desired state. Note that the result of TNA can also be no actions required.

A TNA can be complex if many parameters are considered or if understanding of the current or desired state is cumbersome.

INPUTS — Data that specifies the current set of skills and state of productivity; Data that specifies the current state of the market and the environment the organisation operates in; The desired state of productivity and skill set.

TNA

OUTPUTS — Recommendations on how to achieve the desired state; Reasons on why the recommendations will succeed.
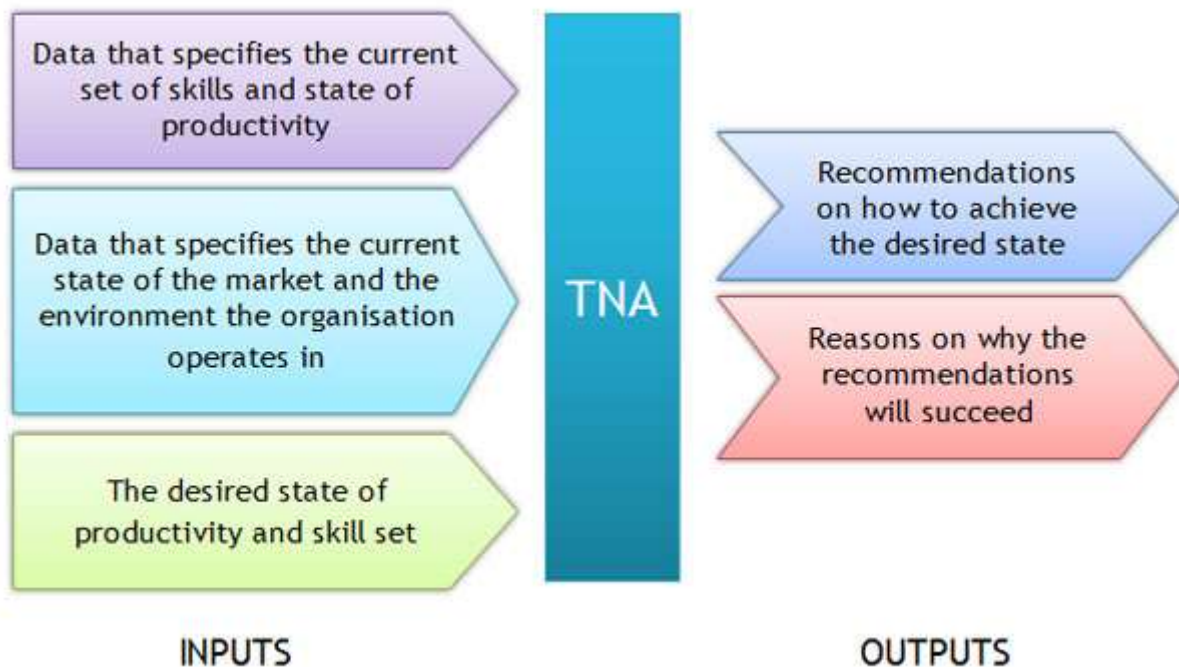
Inputs and Outputs of TNA

Being a data-centric approach, the analysis highly depends on the quality of the collected data and so it is important to collect accurate and meaningful data. There are various tools at your disposal.

Training Needs Analysis Data Collection Tools

To collect data for the inputs to TNA you need to consider the three main inputs and ask questions from the stakeholders and the organisation's management team:

Problem Definition:

- What is the problem you are aiming to solve?
- What is the main objective?
- What do you expect to get from a TNA process?
- What is the budget and how does this influence the TNA?
- What are the challenges to carrying out a TNA and the subsequent training needs that will be identified?
- What are the key issues that must be addressed?

Current state of productivity and the market:

To find out about the current state of an organisation, especially in respect to workers' skills and needs, a variety of tools such as the following can be used:

- Direct feedback by employees on their needs and desires
- Decisions based on broad strategy
- Results of a change management programme
- Psychometric tests
- Focus groups
- Questionnaires
- Performance appraisals
- Exit interviews
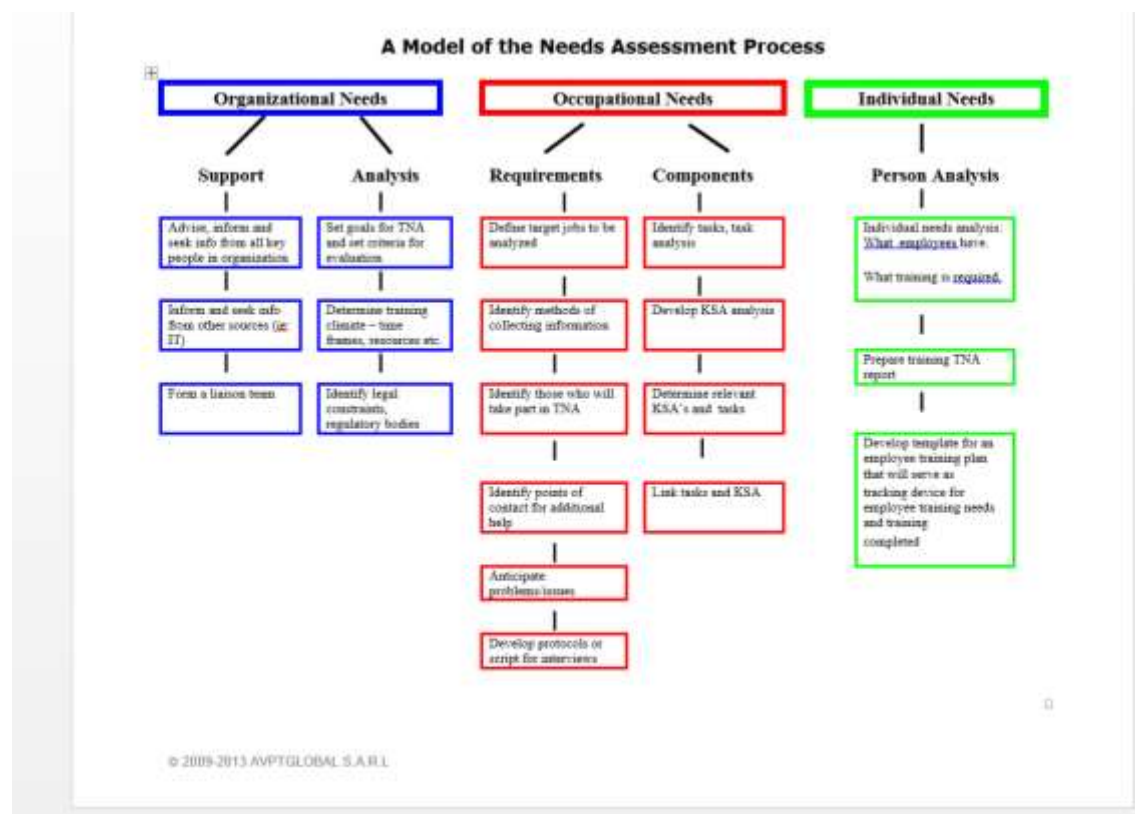- Results of a SWOT Analysis

Desired state:

- What is the desired state of productivity? The more accurately this is defined, the more likely that you will achieve it.

What are the Stages of a Training Needs Analysis

A TNA has the following fundamental stages. Often, a few of these stages are conducted simultaneously rather than in series as each stage can feed into other stages and improve the overall quality of the solution by going back and forth between them.

A Model of the Needs Assessment Process

Organizational Needs		Occupational Needs		Individual Needs
Support	Analysis	Requirements	Components	Person Analysis
Advise, inform and seek info from all key people in organisation	Set goals for TNA and set criteria for evaluation	Define target jobs to be analysed	Identify tasks, task analysis	Individual needs analysis: What employees have. What training is required.
Inform and seek info from other sources (ie IT)	Determine training climate – time frames, resources etc.	Identify methods of collecting information	Develop KSA analysis	
Form a liaison team	Identify legal constraints, regulatory bodies	Identify those who will take part in TNA	Determine relevant KSA's and tasks	Prepare training TNA report
		Identify points of contact for additional help	Link tasks and KSA	Develop template for an employee training plan that will serve as tracking device for employee training needs and training completed
		Anticipate problems/issues		
		Develop protocols or script for interviews		

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1. ***Define objectives.*** Define business objectives that are specifically related to workplace productivity and workforce skills.
2. ***Define desired state.*** Define what the training aims to achieve.
3. ***Collect data.*** Audit the current state of the organisation in respect with productivity and the position in the market (see data collection tools above).

4. ***Perform gap analysis.*** Carry out an analysis to identify skill gaps. Identify training needs that can address these skill gaps.
5. ***Seek agreement on actions.*** Involve stakeholders in the process to agree to actions identified as part of the gap analysis.
6. ***Create a Training Plan.*** Produce a detailed training plan that captures who receives what kind of training, along with who provides the training, the training methodology used and where and when these training interventions will take place. See more details on Training Plans below.
7. ***Create an Assessment Plan.*** Identify how the training will be assessed to make sure that the gaps identified in the skill gap analysis will be covered.
8. ***Design Training Courses or Activities.*** Once you know the requirements of the Training Plan and the Assessment Plan, you can move ahead to actually prepare the training course. You have three choices. You can either buy off-the-shelf ready-made training materials, design your own from scratch or use previous materials you already have or attend a course by us specially designed for HR departments. Ready-made content accelerates the process and also allows you to use the focused expertise of specialists in a specific domain. With your own design you will have total control in matching the training needs of your client, though this often involves more effort, time and money.

It is important to note that you must involve the stakeholders on all stages throughout the TNA process. Research shows that their involvement and agreements to plans identified can significantly increase the likelihood of success. In contrast, a training plan that is *imposed* on an organisation by an outsider may not be taken seriously and in fact might even be resisted by management or staff if is not seen to be in line with company principles or expectations.

The Training Plan

The results of a TNA can be captured in a *Training Plan*. This is a document that describes the required training with details on specific skills and knowledge required for staff.

It also includes why such training is necessary to clearly define the objective for the training team.

The Training Plan typically includes the following sections:

Objectives

- *The overall objective and purpose of the training.* What is the training team trying to achieve?

Training Method

- *Training prerequisites.* Details on what is required before training can take place.
- *Training requirements.* Details on what skills need to be trained on. Includes the approach and resources that will be used in the process. This will lead to training curriculum and the syllabus for each training course.
- *Training providers.* Details of the trainers, their expertise, approach, roles and responsibilities. In addition, it includes whether external consultants or specialists will be used in the process as well as any necessary training resources and equipment.
- *Training plan matrix.* Details on the type of training that each employee receives based on the skill gap analysis carried out in the TNA. See below an example of a Training plan matrix.

	Customer Service Skills	Leadership Skills	MS Power Point	Delegation Skills	Handling Difficult People	Handling Complaints	Decision Making
Trainer	Ben	Adam	Wendy	Neil	Steve	Chris	Pam
Admin Personnel							
Person 1	R, Training Course						O, Training Course
Person 2		R, Bite Sized	O: On-the-job-training	R: Online Training		R, Training Course	R, Training Course
Person 3						R, Training Course	
Line Managers							
Person 4		R, Mentoring				R, Bite-Sized	
Person 5		R, Mentoring	R, Self-Study	R, Online training			
Person 6	R, Training Course	O, Self-Study	R, Self-Study		R, Training Course		R, Training Course
Marketing Team							
Person 7					R, Training Course	R, Training Course	

- *Training schedule.* When should each training activity be provided? Training activities can include training courses, e-learning, training software, books, websites, training resources, on-the-job training, etc. The schedule includes how long each training activity will take and when applicable where it would take place.

Evaluation

- *Performance Criteria.* Definition of key parameters that will be used to judge the effectiveness of the training applied.
- *Evaluation methodology.* Details of how each employee will be evaluated based on the identified performance criteria.

Action Plan

A Training Plan is usually accompanied by an *Action Plan* that identifies the tasks and activities and how they are assigned to specific people.

A form such as the following can capture this data:

	Target Individuals	Training Activity	Delivery by Who	Delivery When	Delivery Where	Date Completed
Customer Service Skills	Paul, Joseph	Training Course	Sahar	September 10th	In-House	September 10th
Leadership Skills	William	Mentoring	Alex	Over the next 3 months	Office	
MS Power Point	Anna, Erika, Mia	On-Line Training	David	November 15th	Training Agency	
Delegation Skills	Farida, Andrea	Training Course	Chloe	September 8th	Training Agency	September 8th
Handling Difficult People	Louis, Andrea, Jan, Ahmad, William	Training Course	Ben, Chloe	October 10th and October 23rd	In-House	
3D Printing Machine	Anna, Joseph	On-the-job training	Paul	During November	Workshop	

An Example of An Action Plan (source skillsconverged)

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The Training Plan must be accompanied with an assessment plan. This should clearly define the criteria used to assess the trainees and methods used to carry out these assessments. The assessment plan can be included within the Training Plan document or it can be issued as a separate document depending on the complexity of the training. For example, if employees need to be certified on a particular qualification which has health and safety risks, then critical parameters must be identified and assessment must be audited to make sure that people who go through the process have met the objectives of the training.

Enhance Your Training with effective Feedback

As a training provider you should continuously monitor your training quality to ensure your training meets the training objectives.

One way to find out if training has been useful or not is to see what delegates complain about. The following are the most common complaints:

- **Too difficult.** Delegates complain that some objectives or methods in the course were difficult.
- **Irrelevant.** Delegates complain that some objectives are no longer important, are not related to their needs or are outdated.
- **Confusing.** Delegates complain that some parts of the course don't make any sense, don't fit with the rest or are inconsistent.
- **Too thin.** Delegates complain that they wish some parts were covered more extensively. This can be more content, more exercises or more discussions.
- **Too much.** Delegates complain that some areas were covered much more than necessary and the time could have been spent on something more important.
- **Wrong pace.** Delegates complain that the pace was too quick and they struggled to keep up with the content. They may complain that the pace was too slow and therefore boring.
- **Poor training methodology.** Delegates complain that they were not happy with certain aspects of the instructional method used. For example, they complain that they don't like to be asked to do something without been shown first how to do it. They may complain that everything was described to them rather being shown visually.
- **Poor assessment.** Delegates complain that they did not like the way they were assessed. They could be unhappy because the assessment doesn't represent their knowledge, or they don't like the method used to assess them. For example, many people don't like roleplay-based oral assessments carried out in front of an audience as it puts too much pressure on them. If delegates think that the assessment is not worthy of the pressure they need to go through they will complain about it.
- **Poor training environment.** Delegates complain about various aspects of the environment. Examples include poor seats, poor lighting, poor seating layout, too cold or too hot, lack of refreshments, unreasonable parking costs, bad food and lack of freely available pens and papers.

Each time you deliver a course, you may receive some of these complaints. You will need to act on them to improve your next training course. Of all of these complaints, the complaint about the training environment is not directly related to training. However, don't underestimate this complaint as it can influence the overall results. The negative feeling caused as a result of such issues, which can happen even before the course starts, can easily put people on edge and anchor them to focus more on shortcomings and problems. This in turn can make delegates more critical of the actual training content. Negative emotions felt by one person is then spread to other delegates and soon you may have a training group who feels defensive. You would then need to work much harder to train this group of delegates.

Evaluating your last 3 training courses.

Consider the last three training courses you have delivered which you should have received feedback for. Use the following form for each training courses to evaluate your performance.

1. Given the overall reviews you have received score yourself from 1 to 5 for the following criteria.

Training Course: _____

Delivered on: _____

Your Course Was...	*Your Delegates' Score* *1 (Strongly Disagree)* *to 5 (Strongly Agree)*	*Your Action to Improve Your Course on This Criterion*
Too difficult		
Irrelevant		

Confusing		
Too superficial		
Had too much information		
Delivered with wrong pace		
Delivered with poor training methodology		
Delivered with poor assessment of delegates		
Delivered in a poor training environment		

2. Next, look for a pattern across all three courses to see which areas you are consistently good at and which areas you are consistently poor at or are average at. Draw up a number of critical actions that can help you to improve your weak areas.

Your Actions:

Your action plan for improvement:

About Academy of Vocational and Professional Training Ltd

AVPT is the only UK Globally Accredited online and workshop based provider of over 390 Soft Skills courses using a cutting edge, proprietary online Learning Management system.

It takes an awful lot of time and effort to create a training course; Designing, researching, writing, and appropriately presenting it. Especially difficult though, even more so is the time taken to create an on-line learning system to work fluently and securely with various technologies. We know this because we have done just this.

What most people, employers, entrepreneurs and even some educational institutions do not have in today's current environment is time the necessary resources and the infrastructure they need to support and achieve their learning objectives. Both our online and workshop based courses are a cost effective way to deliver and up-skill a wide cross section of our society. Designed to be student (user) centric and time sensitive. We believe that online courses can save time, are easily scalable, reduced acquisition costs per person, measurable, provide a flexible virtual support system, Less paper/ink

In today's ever changing environment, the real promise experts say, is providing learning experiences that are more tailored to individual students that enables more "learning by doing," which many students find more engaging and useful. Our 'Chunked' teaching approach revolutionises the learning experience

Learning Management Solution (LMS) & Portal Hub

The Academy of Vocational and Professional Training has a sophisticated LMS solution that is not built on a static system. Yet the user interface is clean, clear, accessible, and easy to understand and work through. It uses little bandwidth, making it quick to load and use, and accessible on a scalable model. Globalisation has changed the way we communicate, do business and relate to each other and technology can help to up-skill a far wider audience.

Teaching using 21st Century pedagogy, AVPT educators must be student centric and for that reason all of our virtual teacher and workshop facilitators have been highly trained to create the most comprehensive training experience for individuals within our broader society. Effectively covering everyone's individual learning style! Our courses will not only train them in soft skill but also help them to become technology fluent.

Call us for more information about our services on 0203 551 2621 or email diane@avptglobal.com