

Benefits to Training

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Public works is constantly changing with new methods to design, construct, and maintain roads and bridges. Public works departments

must continuously update practices and procedures to ensure beneficial, cost-effective, and appropriate repairs are used. Old practices may lose money, time, resources, and manpower, and create unsafe roads.

Residents demand that tax money is spent wisely. Education and training are crucial to satisfy departmental and public needs for secure, safe, and reliable roadways. Attend training regularly to meet these goals:

- Stay informed of current trends, ideas, and resources.
- Improve customer relations.
- Increase competency and dedication of the department and community.
- Improve employee effectiveness.
- Regard training as a continuous process to improve performance and not something to be achieved and then dismissed.

This article presents benefits of attending training and maximizing the learning process.

A Solid Investment

To an accountant, training is an expense. However, training is an investment as the return outweighs the cost. Trained employees are more effective, spend less time researching problems, feel competent, and regard constructive criticism as an opportunity for change. These characteristics increase productivity and save money.

Benefits

One benefit of training is networking. Professional contacts make work easier and more meaningful. A professional network encourages the sharing information and ideas, plus an opportunity for collaboration.

Training increases an employee's confidence as they can explain tasks and projects to others. They become a resource to others. Problem solving is crucial to job success therefore when an employee is capable of handling problems there is less stress.

Safety should be the first priority in the workplace. Safety training saves money by reducing accidents, which results in lower workers compensation fees. A safe work environment increases productivity by relieving employee safety concern.

Learning creates new connections between the neurons in the brain. New connections help the brain to process recent and recall old information. New brain connections result in less brain deterioration. Deterioration leads to age-related illnesses such as Alzheimer's.

Make Training Count

Set personal and professional goals before attending training. Make goals realistic and honestly try to reach them. Be an active learner. Ask questions if something is unclear. Start a discussion to learn different points of view. This helps everyone.

Participate in the evaluation process. Most instructors wish to improve the presentations effectiveness and quality. Provide constructive criticism: state areas of concern and ideas for improvement. Stress the effective parts of the presentation as well.

When completing the the evaluation form, include comments pertinent to the training session such as:

- Appropriateness, value, and helpfulness of the materials.
- Areas that are unclear.
- Speaker's speed and voice projection.
- Environmental aspects that helped or hindered the presentation: seating arrangements, room lighting, and temperature.

Choosing the Right Workshop

Most workshops provide something for everyone. If the topic doesn't seem relevant, pass the information onto someone else.

Education and awareness are powerful tools. Both Chesterfield and Claremont's Selectboards realize the value in training. Both towns list employee training as one of the requirements for upward job mobility. Trained employees are crucial to a knowledgeable, capable, and competitive department. Only then will the organization effectively maintain roads and satisfy the public. ❖

Sources:

Training can be a valuable investment that produces high returns for counties. Oklahoma LTAP News, October 2005.

Blanchard, P. Nick & Thacker, James, *Effective Training: Systems, Strategies, and Practices.* Pearson Education Inc., 2003.

Polston, Michelle, *Training: What's In It For Me?* KS LTAP, 2004.

Events:

New Hampshire Public Works Association Annual Meeting

May 4, 2006 at the Local Government Center

Agenda Items:

- Mutual Aid
- Historical Resources
- NH Retirement System
- Invasive Species

Luncheon speakers:

- Ed Smith, NHDOT, will discuss NHDOT outreach projects.
- Dave Danielson, SEA, will discuss Public Works Accrediation

NHRAA

Mountain of Demonstrations

May 25, 2006 at Gunstock

Other Events

Workzone Awareness Week April 3-9, 2006

National Transportation Week, May 14-20, 2006

National Public Works Week, May 21-27, 2006

Road Business is a quarterly publication of the University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center

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