

## Utilizing State-Funded Training to Achieve Business Goals

In order to keep California's businesses competitive with out of state and international companies, the state provides several sources of funding to help support a trained workforce. One such source is the Employment Training Panel or ETP as it is commonly referred to. California employers pay into an Employment Training Tax fund, which supports training assistance for those companies who face out of state competition. ETP began in 1983, and since that time has reimbursed employers for more than \$1 billion dollars of training services. This has resulted in more than 750,000 workers spread across tens of thousands of businesses receiving training through this program. California employers also participate in this public-private partnership by providing funds to match the training funds awarded by ETP.

Another funding source is the Economic & Workforce Development (EWD) grants through the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges. The EWD grants are awarded on a competitive basis annually to local colleges that assist businesses in meeting their training needs, while helping to defer training costs. These include the Industry Driven Regional Collaborative, Job Development Incentive Fund, and Responsive Training Fund grants, each of which is targeted to support specific training needs of companies. This program was up for re-authorization in 2012 and several local businesses provided letters of support. Senate Bill 1402: *California Community Colleges Economic and Workforce Development Program*, was recently renewed for another five years. By signing this bill the Governor showed his support for both the EWD Program and California businesses.

At College of the Canyons we have these and other funding sources available and we provide customized workforce development programs on a daily basis. While many local manufacturers and other businesses take advantage of these state-funded training opportunities, they do not always tie training programs directly to business strategic objectives. Developing the skills and abilities of your workforce is usually a good idea, it can have a much greater impact if it is part of a strategic plan that connects the skill development efforts toward business objectives. Many times employers know that their workforce needs training in certain areas, but they may not have a training plan, or if they do, it may not be tied directly to achieving stated business goals and objectives.

A comprehensive, systematic and detailed training plan should provide consistency and allow management to measure and adapt training needs in a coordinated manner. This plan should also track and analyze metrics and feedback obtained from stakeholders before, during and after training events in order to allow for continuous improvements.

Many training design plans utilize the ADDIE model — a systematic, step-by-step framework to ensure goals of training programs are met. The ADDIE model has five phases:

- 1) Analysis: determining the performance goals, capabilities of learners, and learning environment
- 2) Design: crafting the training program, identifying how learners will accomplish the performance goals
- 3) Development: selecting appropriate methods and media; creating and assembling the course materials
- 4) Implementation: ensuring course meets important business goals and covers the content learners need to know
- 5) Evaluation: ensuring continuous alignment of program to business goals using metrics and well established criteria for outcome evaluation

Utilizing state funds to offset training costs is good business. Developing a training plan that is driven by business goals and utilizes state funds is smart business! After all, just increasing skills and abilities of your workforce may not help your business grow in the direction you desire. Investing time and energy to build a focused training plan is a critical tool in keeping companies competitive and will pay dividends well beyond the initial investment.

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