



# Avoid the Costs of Poor On-the-Job Training

Many U.S. industries are struggling as there are simply not enough experienced workers to go around. With the loss of expertise and knowledge that has accompanied the retirement of so many of the baby-boomer generation; today's organizations are struggling to fill the gaps in their workforce.

This article demonstrates why on-the-job training (OJT) is essential—and how to avoid the costs and penalties of not training your workforce effectively.

## Why On-the-Job Training Matters

In today's industries, OJT is critical as the presence of a mentor or a trainer provides a new employee with the vision to better understand how to execute their job responsibilities.

There is still a place in the learning paradigm for seminars, on-site, or online training, but passing knowledge down directly from experienced, time-served personnel provides a level of understanding that can't be achieved through off-site methods. The best and most effective way to show a new employee how to do their job is for them to be directly supported by someone who already knows the requirements of the role and has inside knowledge of any "tricks of the trade."

## Planning to Succeed

Although OJT is essential for ensuring today's workforce is equipped with everything they need to succeed in industry, it's not just a case of pairing a new worker with someone more experienced. Proper,

effective OJT needs to be carefully planned before it can be successfully implemented.

## Succession Plan

A succession plan or a transfer of knowledge is an important first step for an organization looking to train new starters (or individuals new to a specific role).

Even though a worker may have been in place for many years, this doesn't always mean that they are skilled in passing on their knowledge. As such, a succession plan should include program development and training for managers and other senior staff that facilitates the transfer of knowledge from experienced workers to trainees.

At the planning stage, it is also important to consider whether any outside contractors or support services could help with bringing lost skills back to the workplace.

## Costs of Not Planning

The costs associated with insufficient OJT can be significant—and potentially catastrophic. One common cost is simply employee dissatisfaction. If employees are unable to execute their job responsibilities or they're unknowingly performing their responsibilities incorrectly, it can lead to frustration and, ultimately, increased employee turnover.

On a larger scale, significant costs can be incurred if employees are running a machine or process incorrectly, leading to broken components, damaged hardware, safety issues and worst case scenario, a major accident.

In short, a lack of effective and thorough training can lead directly to increases in unplanned downtime and high worker attrition rates.

## Creating an On-The-Job Training Development Strategy

When a firm needs to put together a training development strategy, the first step must always be to identify a thought leader or a mentor who is willing to champion the program and create an effective curriculum.

In developing an effective training strategy, consider the criticality of specific functions or roles within the organization. It's vital to spend the time to identify the necessary skills that need to be passed on, whether it's programming, machine operability, or maintenance capabilities—what are the areas that need the most focus?

The way organizations go about training is often unstructured, slow, and places too heavy a burden on one or two members of staff. Truly effective OJT involves curriculum development and documentation before any other steps can be taken.

In many organizations, the skills and expertise that need to be passed on to new workers simply no longer exist. Perhaps the experienced workers have retired or moved on, leaving behind a skills gap and little documentation to support new recruits. Although serious, this all-too-common situation can be remedied.

### How Valin Can Help

The solution to these issues may well be to partner with a company with the skills and experience to understand what effective on-the-job training looks like and how it should be implemented.

If an organization no longer has the expertise (or the time) to train new workers themselves, then choosing an outside vendor such as Valin is a realistic alternative. Valin's world-class trainers have the necessary experience and understanding of your industry and processes—and the ability to pass on that information in ways that can be understood and applied in practical scenarios.

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