Reinforcing Training Infrastructure Through E-Learning

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Looking into the complexities in the day to day running vest organisations handling intricate control mechanisms which interface on trade tariff policies of the public sector, there is a growing need to upgrade the quality of trained staff to meet the challenges faced in the background of globalisation and attendant deregulatory environment within which new policy initiatives have been announced in the last few years.

In order to evolve an adequate training infrastructure and a manpower geared to meet the challenges ushered in the background of new policy orientations within a framework operating in a WTO environment, training environment, training environment has to be reoriented to disseminate the learning process within a time bound regime to the large manpower attending to various issues that impinge on deregulated environment.

There is therefore an urgent need to bring about a paradigm shift in evolving new teaching techniques and attendant tools which would usher in a change in the learning process, looking into the dynamics and speed with which the new policy orientations have been evolved to meet the challenges of the global environmesnt. One of the techniques which would adequately meet the requirement in this regard is to open a new flank which would shift the training environment from classroom training to e-learning.The training establishments may undertake setting establishments may undertake setting up of learning websites and the learning products. It is imperative that a working group with appropriate public

sector interfacing be set up with adequate representations drawn from representatives from the IT sector, management institutes, national training establishments so as to identify training modules and converting them into e-learning products. These e-learning products could then be posted to the learning websites which could be accessed by the end users. Simultaneously, it would be necessary to evolve new course curriculum and study materials which would impart training through distance learning. Today the managers have not only to discharge functions at designated work places but function in a dynamic environment which transport them to attend to work at global work places like container terminals, courier hubs, private ports, chambers of commerce etc. These entail huge logistics to bring them to the classrooms located in metropolis where the training institutes are located. While doing so, there is a cost and time overrun to transport them from the field to the desk. Thus new training environment which would lead to imparting in situ training by largely overcoming the inadequacies in the imparting of training through the conventional made mentioned above. Through this process, learning could be widespread with speed and precision to the personnel handling complex regulations at every nook and corner of the country.

Liberalization and automation are two major change realities, which modern day managers need to accept and keep pace with. To facilitate this change, the existing training establishments are undertaking change management workshops for managers with a few years hands on experience. While these in service

training do enable them to fine tune their learning experience, a road map for training managers in management establishments on attitudinal change requires to be drawn up for catering to the changing ground realities in a deregulated environment where rules and regulations keep on changing. However, it has to be remembered that through these workshops, it is possible to train officers in a limited scale.

In order to accelerate the process of training through improved techniques, sanction of funds for evolving adequate electronic infrastructures which will integrate the learning process with changes brought about in the public sector policies is urgently called, for. This will require web based approach on the one hand, and on line training classrooms to impart education at remote and selected locations on the other. It is felt that through the e-learning process it will be possible to train managers in much larger numbers and at their convenience through e-learning solutions. This would enable the managers to keep abreast with their work parameters while attending to their work at their respective work stations.

As already mentioned earlier, automation is one of the major tools which have brought bout changes in the functioning of training establishments. As obvious major thrust area has been to bring about a change in the working environment through computer literacy. E-learning solutions could only become effective once people are sensitized to use of computers.

To sum up the idea on this score, it is reiterated that training mode could be reoriented through

- A learning website on which the training material is available

- Specific course content CDs

- Distance learning infrastructure

The advantages of E-learning are that :

- it has a wider reach

- employees can access it at their convenience

- it avoids the need of classroom and physical presence of faculty

- it saves on organisation of courses at specific sites

- it increases speed to performanc and relevance

- it lowers cost

- it delivers timely, dependable message to meet organizational and employee needs

- it is universally available anywhere, anytime and it is scalable

- it integrates the implementation of Governmental policies throughout the vast country

- it leverages corporate investment in the web

- it enhances business responsiveness.

This would call for

1. development of training material by faculty who is competent developing e-learning products.

2. development of learning websites

3. computer connectivity for the entire work force.

4. computer-literacy amongst participants.

Despite training establishments conducting additional courses on computers, it is suggested that higher computer literacy can be achieved through the above process so that all work stations where computerization is done should be manned by such computer literate persons only.

Through experience sharing and collaborations with international training agencies, the centres of management practices have interacted with certain innovations and best practices that would benefit the domestic tax administration. Some organisations have defined competencies, which a person should posses in order to qualify for a certain position. These competencies are both technical and behavioral. With these clearly defined competencies, it is ensured that

a person who takes up a certain job is suited to it. Training establishments are upgrading the competency levels for all jobs at the organisational, technical, behavioral levels in order to improve efficiency and to use the human resources more effectively.

For evolving towards e-learning environment and beyond, a core group with representatives from IT, training and field staff may be set up for undertaking the creation of an infrastructure to instil learning process through website mechanism, and puruse this objective through the development of appropriate learning products.

There is an emerging need to have an interface between the public sector and the trade in building suitable bridges to exchange views at various levels to improve the quality of perception of trade facilitation in particular. This calls for adequate, mature training tools where the trade has a window to express their points of view at the implementation levels. It is here that a well integrated training policy can be evolved within a time bound regime.