

Global Workforce Training

5 challenges to overcome

By Dave Rietsema

Global expansion is a goal for many organizations and a reality for others. Having company locations in many countries can help increase the reach, influence, and of course revenues of an organization while bringing different perspectives and ways of working into the mix.



However, there are many challenges to training a global workforce that must be taken into consideration in order to keep productivity, systems, and the quality of company services consistent across borders.

1. Linguistic Diversity

Language barriers are the number one most commonly cited challenge to training a global workforce. In Europe, there are over 230 languages spoken and in Africa there are over 2,000 languages spoken, with variations in dialect causing different connotations even among areas that speak the same language.

To overcome language barriers, it may be helpful to hire several employees from the new area that speak both the local language and the language that the bulk of the organization's training materials are in. These employees can be invaluable when translating and restructuring the materials, training a new workforce for the area, and taking customer calls.

2. Cultural Differences

Cultural differences may make it difficult for companies to under-

stand the motivations and expectations of employees in an area. There are business ethics courses and cross-cultural communication courses that can be extremely helpful in training and managing workforces in different countries. Having a deep understanding of cultural norms and tailoring training to accommodate these customs can help to make training much more effective than attempting to translate and use existing training guides.

3. High Training Costs

Before expanding globally, it is very important to understand that training a global workforce will be much more expensive than training a team at home. Training programs must be reconstructed with sensitivity to cultural customs, effective metaphors and language, and the ability to be clearly communicated online or by a traveling training team.

Many organizations make the mistake of allocating a small budget for cross-border training, which can cause major issues when it comes to workforce competency, employee retention, and productivity in the newly established location.

4. Deficient Technological Infrastructure

Using online solutions may seem to be an effective method for training a global workforce, but it is critical to have an in-depth understanding of the technological infrastructure in the area. Not all countries are highly technologically advanced, so employee access to training materials may be limited to what is provided at the new location. It may be necessary to dispatch training teams or provide team members with devices that can be used for communication and training.

5. Time Zone Differences

Time zone differences can hinder the effectiveness of using webinars and collaboration for training. For best results, time zone differences should be taken into consideration ahead of time, so that training can be scheduled for times that make sense to the location. Making training modules available anytime or dispatching training teams to the area for a period of time may help to overcome time zone challenges. **TEL**

Sources

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