INVESTIGATING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ROYAL HASKONING DHV'S PERFORMANCE IN GAUTENG PROVINCE

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Abstract
Royal HaskoningDHV is a multi-disciplinary Engineering Consulting firm operating globally. From current statistics presented by the CEO on 3 March 2014, it is number 9 in revenue generation in Africa among other Consulting Engineering firms. Investigating its training status can help improve employee's performances in their current jobs or facilitate employee's learning of job related competencies and these include knowledge, skills or behaviour that are critical for successful job performance. As well development will help employees prepare for other positions in the company and increase their ability to move into jobs that may not yet exist. These can help the firm in gaining a competitive advantage for it to move from number 9 in Africa to number 1 and be able to generate 1 billion rands in revenue by 2015, which is the

Introduction

The company is a multi disciplinary Consulting Engineering Company. It has several business units or departments as follows;

- Buildings
- Transport and Planning
- Industry and Energy
- Water
- Project and Asset management
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Information Technology.
- Railway and maritime

The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate training and development strategy on Royal Haskoning Dwars Hedrick Verhey's (Royal HaskoningDHV) performance.

Research Objectives

- To assess and address skills deficiencies in the organisation.
- To investigate how the organisation can attempt to secure and maintain the organisation's competitive edge through the development and delivery of training programmes.
- To investigate how training and development can encourage a learning climate in the organisation.
- To investigate how training and development can act as a catalyst for technological and structural change in the organisation.

Literature Review

Introduction

Training, as one of the human resources practices, has been qualitatively and quantitatively established in literature to have a positive impact on organisational performance and competitiveness; nonetheless the extent to which training is genuinely perceived and valued to be strategically important by the firm's top management is still questionable (Noe, 2002: 31). This study will draw on diverse approaches on how training and development can improve the performance of RHDHV. The study adopted an in-depth analysis of both primary and secondary literal evidence of the impact of training to employees and its contribution to the organisations' bottom line. The training and development strategies plan provides an overview with checklists, motivation for participation, implementation process, the trainings involved, methods of coaching and mentoring, and assessments with certificate of completion.

Conceptual framework

Training is referred to a planned effort by a company to facilitate employee learning of job-related competencies, its goal is for employees to master the knowledge, skills and behaviours emphasised in the training programme and apply them in their day to day activities (Noe et al., 1994: 4). It is the systematic acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employees to adequately perform a task or job or to improve performance in the job environment (Goldstein, 1980: 27). The fundamental aim of any training effort within the organisation is to help the organisation achieve its purpose by adding value to one of its key resource which is the human resource function. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the organisation (Nel et al., 2004: 54).

Training is executed to ensure that a task is performed correctly, and therefore the behavioural change brought about by training must be measureable in terms of an organisation's requirements. Consequently training must be result oriented, it must focus on enhancing those specific skills and abilities to perform the job, it must be measureable, and it must make a real contribution to improving both goal achievement and the internal efficiency of an organisation (Nel et al., 2004: 62). Development on the other hand is aimed at employees serving in a managerial capacity or preparing for managerial post within an organisation. It can be seen as a process where managers obtain the necessary experience, skills and attitudes to become or remain successful leaders in the organisation. For an organisation to survive in a highly competitive and developing market it is essential to prevent obsolescence and develop managers to keep abreast of new challenges and new developments in technological, economic, social, political and legislative fields as well as contemporary personnel management practices (Nel et al., 2004: 74). One of the major objectives of

development is the prevention of obsolescence and stagnation within the company. Obsolescence occurs when the person in a particular post lacks the current skills and knowledge generally considered by other mangers as important and vital if the person is to remain effective in performing his or her work (Van Dyk et al., 200: 21).

Whilst training is focused on helping employees performance in their current jobs, development is future oriented, it helps employees prepare for other positions in the company and increases their ability to move into jobs that may not yet exist (Noe et al., 2003: 376).

The place and role of the training function in an organisation

An organisation consists of various subsystems that pursue the achievement of organisational objectives by means of different organisational processes. These enterprise subsystems are organised according to the unique needs of each enterprise, and usually include subsystems such as marketing, production, financial and human resource functions (Erasmus and Van Dyk, 1999: 39-41). Each of these subsystems can again be divided into smaller systems, such as planning, maintenance, training and development of human resource.

The training and development function is regarded as a subsystem of the HRM functions based on the following assumptions:

- The training function is a processing system that determines training needs, applies training technology and expertise, and transforms untrained employees into trained employees who can make productive contributions to the organisational objectives.
- The primary input into a training system (training needs and untrained employees) is transformed into an output (trained employees) by means of training processes such as analysis, design, development and evaluation of training.
- As a sub-system of an enterprise, the training function is exposed to the same influences as other systems in the organisation; these influences include politics, the economy and legislation.

The training process

The most effective training follows a 4 stage cycle of identifying training needs, formulation of training plans and designing the training, delivering or implementation of the training programme and finally evaluating its success and all stages of the cycle should be followed to ensure that the training is effective (Buckley and Caple, 1995: 123).

On the job training methods

On the job methods usually fit the needs of a particular employee and suits his / her background, knowledge and skills. Trainees learn by doing; they learn continuously and over a long period of time. In this method employees learn by observing peers or supervisors and imitate their behaviour. It is most effectively utilised when training new recruits and also when upgrading the skills of experienced employees. Although applauded for allowing workers to learn by actually performing the task on the job training however can prevent trainees from acquiring a broad perspective and can adversely influence their perception of their job and how it fits into the activities of the organisation (Nel et al., 2004: 127). Some forms of this method are discussed below

a)   Job Rotation

Job rotation involves the transfer of trainees from one job to another. The trainee is given full duties and responsibilities of the rotated position. It is more suitable for lower level executives. The major advantages of job rotation are that it creates a second line of competent employees to meet the problems of transfers, turnover etc., and it provides a rich experience to the candidates in a variety of matters as it enables trainees to acquire specific practical experience quickly instead of having to wait for opportunities to present themselves over a long period of time through transfers and promotions (Nel et al., 2004: 45).

b)   Planned Progression

Whilst similar to job rotation this method differs in that every movement fro m one job to another involves higher pay, position and duties. Planned progression is more likely to occur at higher managerial levels whilst job rotation occurs mainly at lower levels

c)   Coaching and Counselling

According to Stone (2003: 331), coaching is planned one-to-one instruction. In coaching the superior plays an active role in training the subordinate. The superior may assist and advice the subordinate to complete the assigned task. In this instance the superior acts as a coach in training the subordinate. When combined with job rotation, coaching can be a very effective technique of learning by doing. Caution should however be exercised regarding the elements of ethical coaching. These are outlined by Noe (2002: 33) as follows:

➢ Adhering to a recognised code of practice.
➢ Being trained and able to use the core skills of coaching.
➢ Being careful to take on clients suitable to their skills.
➢ Being willing to make referrals where appropriate.

In counselling the superior plays a passive role in training the candidate, the superior may only provide advice to the candidate if so required in the completion of the task.

d)   Apprenticeship

Used to train workers in technical trades (such as tool making, electronics and diesel mechanics), the major characteristic of this method is that the apprentice works under the guidance of a skilled artisan.

e)   Web-Based Training (WBT)

This type of training is delivered on public or private computer networks and is displayed by a web browser. Carrell et al. (2000: 67) notes that "… no educational or training approach has ever exploded into the scene faster and with as much promise as Web Based Training (WBT). Intra-net based training refers to training delivered by a company's own computer network whilst internet based training refers to training that is delivered on public or private computer networks and displayed by a web browser. Internet and Intra-net based training use the same technology though the major difference is that the latter is restricted to the company's employees (Stone, 2002: 337). Internet and Intranet-based training cover simple communications, online referencing and actual delivery of training and storage of the organisation's intellectual capacity and knowledge. The major disadvantages of web-based training include virus problems, the need to control and bill users and the difficulties and costs of writing and revising training programs.

• **Presentation Methods**

In this category learners are passive recipients of information. Methods in this category include Classroom instruction, distance learning.

a)   Classroom instruction

In this method a trainer lectures a group of candidates and the process may include question and answer sessions, discussions to provide fro participation. The man advantages of this method is that it is the least expensive of all, is less time consuming and also is suitable when dealing with a large number of candidates

b)   Distance Learning

This is a two way communication between learners and trainers used by geographically dispersed companies. Mediums of communication used to communicate include audio conferencing, video conferencing and document conferencing. The chief advantaged of this method is that companies save a lot on travel expenses and employees at remote locations have the opportunity to receive training.

1.   Group Building Methods

This method of training involves workers learning together to build a team identity. Group building methods may take the form of team training and Action learning Noe (2002: 106).

a)   Team training

This type of training promotes the ability of team members to work together effectively. The chief justification for engaging in this method is that it provides for the development of procedures to address team issues coordinate information, gathering and support individual team members.

b)   Action Learning

Action learning involves a process in which the trainees are required to produce an action plan. This method appears to maximise learning and it involves real life problems and is also useful for identifying dysfunctional team dynamic.

Strategic purpose of training

A crucial, priority strategic purpose of training is to assess and address skills deficiencies in the organisation (Mabey, Salaman and Storey, 1999: 132). The strategic purpose of training and development is an attempt to secure and maintain the organisation's competitive edge through the development and delivery of training programmes. Mabey and, Salaman and Storey (1999: 117) contend that this is the bottom line for most training initiatives. The need to remain competitive requires organisations to continue training their employees to use the best and latest technologies available (Mello, 2002: 23). The redesign of work into jobs having greater responsibility requires that employees assume more responsibility, take imitative, and further develop interpersonal skills to ensure their performance and success (Mello, 2002: 35).

Strategic training requires an approach in which the primary thrust is to create an environment in which learning for all the members of the organisation is encouraged, rather seeing the establishment and maintenance of a training department as a major strategy to only influence the development of people in organisations (Nel et al., 2004: 431). Swartz (1992: 86), made the observation that learning faster than your competitors is the only sustainable competitive advantage as every organisation learns- some just learn faster than others, learn more deliberately and use their knowledge more rapidly.

Nel et al. (2004: 165), asserts that when referring to strategic training the concept virtual training in organisations comes to mind. The virtual organisation is the ultimate results-centred enterprise. By using future work principles it is able to produce results that are at least equal to those of its traditional competitor but leveraged from a smaller asset base. The results of the virtual organisation are real and will show in the bottom line. According to McIntosh (1995: 14), virtual organisations are becoming a virtual reality. They are organisations that forge alliances with other firms in order to streamline processes, cut costs, and crack new markets. For virtual organisations to evolve, they need the support of virtual training organisations (VTOs). VTOs devise flexible structures and systems so that they can respond rapidly to their organisation's needs. Three principles dictate VTO operations:

- Individual employees, and not their organisations, have the primary responsibility for their own personal growth.
- The most powerful learning takes place on the job and not in a classroom.
- Improvement hinges not on the relationship between a trainer and a class participant, but on the relationship between the manager and the employee (McIntosh, 1996: 37).

Training and development can act as a strategy of encouraging a learning climate in the organisation. The focus is on the learning needs of individuals, which is influenced by the organisational goals. The assumption here is that within each member of the organisation there is a latent talent or skill waiting to unleash (Mabey, Salaman and Storey, 1999: 56).

Another significant strategic purpose of training is to act as a catalyst for change. This approach is frequently associated with organisation leaders seeking to orchestrate change amongst their workforce. Employees need to acquire a broad skills base and be provided with development opportunities to assist with teamwork, collaboration and conflict management (Mello, 2002: 90).

The globalisation of business operations requires that managers to acquire knowledge and skills related to language and cultural differences (Anthony, Kacmar and Perrewe, 2002: 125). Strategically targeted training in critical skills adds to employee, positive work attitudes, buying into the organisational culture, marketability and employability security that are critical in the current environment of rapidly developing technology and changing work processes (Mello, 2000: 37).

Relationship between training and development as well as organisational performance

The knowledge and skills of an organisation's workforce have become increasingly important to its performance, competitiveness, and innovation (Lawler, Mohrman and Ledford, 1998: 78). According to Kraiger (2003: 12), successful organisations are thought to invest more in training and development than other organisations. Most organisations spend a substantial amount of revenue each year on formal training and development with the expectation that training investments will lead to improvements in organisational performance or results (Salas and Cannon-Boers, 2001: 27).

Organisations that prioritise training have been known to attain higher mission performance as training bridges the gap of work performance versus the work goals attainment (Law and Kenton, 199: 33). In sync with this notion Trevor (199: 48) articulates that the full benefits of training can be ascertained by assessing the organisations return on investments and as such a training process should have univariate, vicariate and multivariate effect on employees' performance targets. Organisations that have a rich pool of well trained staff will be able to make more progress towards their missions and visions because the staff will be able to execute challenging tasks of work while returns from investment also increase (Baines et al. 2005, 486-504). Valuing training as part of an organisations' culture enables organisations to motivate their employees with paid training offs and those organisations that embrace training as an equal opportunity policy stand to gain when social workforce bargains are on the table because the employees will be willing to receive the changes flexibly (ILO 2008: 6).

For instance Caldeira (200: 18) found that one of the key areas correlated to superior performance was workforce training. A case study of Reynolds and Reynolds the leading provider of integrated information management solutions to the automotive retailing market place, conducted by Hollis (2003: 30), showed that training drove business success through improving productivity and increasing competitiveness in the market place. A report by Relais International (2002: 25) indicated that British managers were looking to incorporate training as a tool to improve their firm's performance and competitiveness.

Maurer (2001: 34), states that enhanced employee performance through training has always been recognised as an important means of securing the competitive advantage. As quoted in the *Engineer*, a magazine serving the UK''s engineering technology community, Shorrocks (2003: 28), Icore's human resources manager asserted that, "training is a key part of competitiveness, we need our people skilled up so that they are at their best at solving customer's problems and making our product efficient and safely Maurer (2001: 35).

Whitney (2005: 53) suggested that the deployment of effective business training for firms could increase the chance for the organisational success and competitiveness in the long term. In addition Fawcett and Meyers (2001: 44) surveyed 158 managers from randomly selected US manufacturing firms and found a strong positive correlation, $r(158) = 0.81$, $p < 0.01$, between employee development and firm performance. Moreover, Morton (2002: 56) highlighted the impact of training on the success of the distribution industry by emphasizing that training workers about safety and

continually maintaining the awareness of the need for the safe procedures can pay big company benefits and hiring and training are the key survival and supply chain success (Morton, 2002: 33).

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research NCVER (2002: 58) of Australia conducted a study 40 large Asian business on training strategies, emerging skill shortages, government investment in training and the quality of the education in the training sector. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements related to training based on a 5 point scale. The results showed that investment in training was an important staff retention tool and trained employees were critical to profitability. In addition, training was the best way to improve efficiency and cut costs, training minimised exposure to employee related liabilities.

Moreover, training provided a more flexible workforce and allowed firms to get the best out of the new technology. Furthermore, training was a lever for the staff performance and brought new ideas and innovation to the business. The result also revealed that training provided product quality and training was an important tool for attracting and keeping high calibre staff and training was a major element of competitive advantage and of staying globally competitive. In addition, Russel (2003: 36) cited a study of the competitiveness of the US wood products industry which suggested that US producers would have to place more emphasis on work force training and education in competing against a flood of cheap imported products.

Another approach to understand the training impact on firm's competitiveness is to identify training determinants. For example, in the same study conducted by NCVER when respondents were asked about the factors influencing the training agenda, the result showed that factors that influenced training agenda included growing casualties of jobs, outsourcing non core activities, workplace compliance requirements, globalisation and export focus, growth of computer information technology, attracting and retention of staff, emergency of knowledge economy and increasing competitiveness in the market place. The result of this study highlighted major impacts of training on a firm's competitiveness (NCVER, 2002: 104).

In their study, Smith and Hyton (1999: 81), found similar training drivers, they were workplaces change, new technology, production improvement and quality initiatives such as customer service and total quality management. In addition Keep and Mayhew (1996: 31) viewed the link between training and economic performance as a driving force behind corporate training.

Could be changed, the result was a positive effect on performance that occurred more quickly and less expensively than training the employees to make a specific change Dean and Rebalsky (1992: 75). A shift to performance improvement, also called "human performance technology" Rosenberg (1996: 257) and "performance technology" American Society for Training and Development (1995: 91), "… helps link the business strategy and goals, and the capability of the workforce to achieve them, with a wide array of human resource interventions which include but are certainly not limited to education and training" (Rosenberg, 1996:370). Performance improvement applies systems thinking to human resource activities (ASTD, 1995: 114).

Impact of Training and Development on Information Technology

Information technology has become an influential factor in nearly every aspect of our society. Understanding information technology, its components and language has also become a requirement for personal and professional growth and success. According to Brophy (1009: 95), work supervisors have opportunities to encourage staff to develop IT related skills from the perspective of a subject, user, and technical or from a point of view of their administrative responsibilities. It is gradually happening in some work places that certain members of staff have the knowledge to design and maintain websites. Not all staff will welcome these new skills, and some will lag behind various reasons. Since it is no longer possible to allow any staff to opt out, some effort must be made to bring confidence and basic competence to all staff.

The following are some of the factors that have impacted on staff due to the introduction of IT:

- Change in education, where subjects dealing with IT have to be introduced to work environment and also to the practice of the profession itself.
- Staff have to cope and keep up with the rapid technological changes
- Lack of staff training due to time constraints resulting in pressure from clients who demand services that require or depend on IT literacy.
- Role changes for examples employees from different departments have to know how to search for information on the internet and how to use different database software interfaces.
- Demand by clients for IT training which is not the company's core business but its essential to use its resources.
- Increased workload requiring staff to work smarter, taking advantage of advances in IT.
- Being pro-active and informing clients of advances in IT.

Raitt (1997: 246) cites that one of the major factors that impacted on employees as a result of information technology is their role changes. Staff today is assuming a new role changes in their work places and so it is essential that they receive the training and support to acquire the necessary skills these new roles require. Information professionals in a new role perform different tasks as compared to before the introduction of technologies. According to Raitt (1996: 246 -247), there are several areas in which they can develop new skills and strategies in order to change, survive and continue to compete in the world of electronic information:

- Intellectual capital knowledge management
- Information 'anxiety' among corporate knowledge workers. The information professional can help workers overcome uncertainty about what they do not know.
- Information resources audit
- Information professionals who design web pages ('web authors') and maintain them and those who use databases and do searches.

These are some of the roles that are currently needed and are being practised. Special programmes may need to be established to deal with retraining.

Training and the Firm's Competitiveness in the Knowledge Based Economy

According to (Porter, 1998: 47), a firm's competitiveness refers to the competitive advantage over its rivals in a particular industry. Porter emphasised that a firm gains competitive advantage when:

- It is able to generate and sustain profits that are greater than the average for its industry
- It manages to deliver the same benefits as its rivals but at a lower cost
- It delivers benefits that exceed those of competing products by differentiating itself in the industry.

Porter asserted that a competitive advantage enables the firm to provide superior value for its customers and generate superior profits for itself in the industry. In other words, the firm is said to have competitive advantage when it is able to differentiate itself in the marketplace, generate greater revenue and operate at a lower cost than competitors.

Porter (2000: 36) categorised three types of economies in the analysis of countries' national competitiveness, they are resource based investments based and innovation or knowledge based economies. According to Porter, resource based economy is the least competitive compared to investment based and innovation or knowledge based economies, the innovation or knowledge based economy.

Porter (1990: 71) introduced the Diamond Model to assess the competitive advantage of the industrialised nations. Porters Diamond Model consists of firm strategy, structure and rivalry, demand conditions, related supporting industries and factor conditions. The concept of Porter's

Diamond Model views firms in a particular country as core drivers of the economy and national competitiveness.

Porter (2000: 81), states that operating in the innovation or knowledge based economy, firms become more and more dependent on the skills and knowledge of their workers. Therefore the skills and knowledge of employees moderate the level of the firm's performance and competitiveness and the firm's performance and competitiveness in turn will determine the country's national competitiveness. The importance of employees' skills and knowledge for firms to complete in the knowledge based economy justifies the need for firms to place strong emphasis on organisational learning.

Organisational learning is becoming increasingly important for firms in generating competitive advantage. For example Janz and Prasarnphanich (2003: 12), articulated that organisational learning has been believed to deliver creative and innovative solutions which could result in unique competitive advantages? The researcher went on to suggest that many organisations viewed their ability to learn as an important resource that could deliver current and future competitive advantages. In addition Lei (2003: 20), found that learning alliances provided the key organisational design drivers that sustain competitive advantage.

Li and Zhao (2006: 40) suggested that adopting organisational preparation for employee education and learning would have a positive effect on the firm's competitive advantage. Slater and Narver (1995: 63) asserted that organisational learning permitted firms to have profound understanding of the needs of their customers and to develop new products and services to match the needs of those customers. Furthermore, there was a relationship between learning organisation and performance outcomes of product success, profitability, growth and customer retention (Farrell, 2000: 49). Baker and Sinkula (1999: 71), found a positive correlation between learning and firm's overall performance and market share.

Hult, Snow and Kandermir (2003: 56), provided empirical evidence, they found that learning had an impact on a firm's overall performance compared to their competitors. The researchers suggested that "learning is the primary means by which firms can develop new products and processes that ultimately achieve desired success" (Hult, Snow and Kandermir, 2003: 419).

Moreover, Jashapara (2003: 48), surveyed senior executives from construction firms in the UK about their organisation's learning behaviours and effectiveness and suggested that organisational learning had a positive impact on firm's performance. March (1991: 22), believed that learning could influence both organisational efficiency and innovation. Mahoney (1995: 133) viewed organisational learning as the most critical core competence of organisations.

Furthermore Kirkwood and Pangarkar (2003: 11) contended that when learning become an integral component of the corporate strategy, is part of the daily activities, and contributes to the development of workers, the organisation possesses a sustainable competitive advantage that cannot be copied. They continued by stating that "significant and noticeable advantages of learning organisations include: A reduction in errors and mistakes, improved quality and innovations, a better understanding of the business and empowered employees" Kirkwood and Pangarkar (2003: 11-12). In addition Applebaum and Gallagher (2000: 73), found tremendous rewards for firms that was willing to invest the time and energy in organisational learning.

In summary, there are three forms of economies – resource based, investment based and innovation or knowledge based. Operating and competing in the knowledge based economy, firms become more and more dependent on the skills and knowledge of their workers, this dependency justifies the need for firms to place strong emphasis on organisational learning.

Integration of Training in the Firm's Business Strategies

Geisler and Justus (1998: 25), in their discussion of the integration of training as a strategic management tool asserts that without strategic training , organisations invariably end up with a patchwork quilt of corrective procedures and policies that are impossible to follow and impossible to control and monitor. Training all employees to analyse their current work processes allows the employees to understand several things , first they may appreciate the gaps that may exist between what is currently being done and what needs to be done. Next they have the opportunity to make corrections in their systems within a safe environment. Finally such training provides an opportunity for the employees to contribute to the development of the company and to receive recognition for changing.

McClelland (1994: 9) suggested that human resources managers who were in charge of the design and implementation of the management development and training need to focus on the corporate vision and long term growth strategies. He suggests that firms that integrate strategic management development into competitive strategy formulation process will find they have a larger degree of flexibility in the allocation and efficient usage of their managerial talents while becoming effectively proactive to constantly changing market environments. Furthermore Nathan and Stanleigh (1991: 48) strongly encouraged training managers to develop a strategic plan that is demonstrably aligned with the company.

Training and the Firm's Innovation

Turcotte (2002: 36) discovered that there is a positive correlation between support for training (both on the job training and classroom) and innovation in products, services and processes and the implementation of new technologies or new software. In a review of a number of Canadian studies Baldwin (1999: 62), established positive linkage between training and innovation. Baldwin and Johnson found that firms with a higher level of innovation provided training to a large number of their workers, both through informal and informal platforms. Furthermore Baldwin (2000: 78) emphasised the important relationship between innovation, training, skills and the success of start up firms. Blundell et al (1999: 81) found a direct link between employee education and the ability of those employees to be innovative. Frazis, Gittleman, and Joyce (1998: 62), by analysing data obtained from U.S. firms and their respective employees found that firms that have more innovative workplace practices have a tendency to offer more training.

Benefits of training and development to an organisation

Nel et al. (2003: 127), articulates the benefits of training and development to the organisation as a whole, to the individual employee and to the employee workgroup to be as outlined below respectively. Training and Development:

- Leads to improved profitability and / more positive attitudes toward profit orientation
- Improves the job knowledge and skills at all levels of the organisation
- Helps people identify with an organisation's goals.
- Helps create a better corporate image.
- Fosters authenticity, openness, and trust, aids in organisational development
- Provides information and skills for future needs in all areas of the organisation
- Aids in developing leadership skills, motivation, loyalty, better attitudes, and other aspects that successful managers and workers often display.

Benefits to the individual, in turn, should benefit the organisation, here training and development:

- Helps individuals in making better decisions and effective problem solving.
- Internalises and operationalizes the motivational variables of recognition, achievement, growth, responsibility and advancement.

- Aids in encouraging and achieving self development and self confidence.
- Provides information for improving leadership, knowledge, communication skills and attitudes.

Benefits in personnel and human relations, intra- and inter-group relations, and policy implementation impact positively on the organisation. Training and development:

- Builds cohesiveness in groups.
- Improves communication between groups and individuals
- Assist in the orientation of new employees and those taking new jobs through transfer or promotion
- Provides a good climate for organisational learning, growth and coordination.
- Improves employee morale
- Makes the organisation a better place to work and live.

Training and Development in the South African Context

Owing to the peculiarities of the South African situation which are a result of the legacy of the past, a multitude of factors impact on training and development. These need to be borne in mind when executing training (Erasmus and Van Dyk, 1999: 36).

- Diversity training

The changing demographics and socio-political scene in South Africa are having a significant impact on communities, organisations, society and the nation at large. Employee morale, productivity and success will depend on the way organisations manage the changing demographics of their current and future employees. Theories on training usually assume that the workforce is a homogeneous group. In South Africa this can be counterproductive if they do not take into account the diverse composition of the South African workforce. Diversity training has become one solution to assist organisations in their efforts to retain productive workers, maintain high employee morale, and foster understanding and harmony among culturally diverse workers. To be effective, diversity training must be designed to change the myths of diversity (such as affirmative action training), to educate participants about the realities of diversity, and to offer ways to respond to the challenges of valuing and managing diversity in the workplace (Nel et al., 2004: 452).

- Adult Learning

Workplace training and development in South Africa should take particular cognisance that learners are adults (quite often illiterate or semi-illiterate), who require different teaching methods to children. Andragogy is the study of how adults learn as opposed to pedagogy, which refers to how children learn. Adults and children learn in fundamentally different ways. Children are more often characterised as learning for curiosity's sake or just for the sake of learning while adults are more oriented towards learning for application in the near future. The reasons most frequently mentioned for adult learning episodes are problems on the job, preparing for an occupation, home and personal responsibilities, and improving some area of competence related to recreation or hobbies (Erasmus and Van Dyk, 1999: 58).

The following are characteristics of adults that facilitate adult learning:

➢ Adults prefer to plan their own learning projects and adopt a self-directed approach towards learning. This is derived from a desire to set their own pace, establish their own structure and keep open the option to revise the learning strategy.

➢ Adults possess a vast reservoir of experience, which can greatly facilitate the learning process. Adults approach learning with a fairly well defined cognitive map, and this map is based on their experiences of the world and the older they are the more detailed their map is likely to be. Adults should therefore be made aware of how the newly acquired information will supplement their existing knowledge and what benefits they stand to derive from it.

➢ Adults act form internal motivation, which originates from the need to grow and develop to self-realisation. The lecture material should accordingly be meaningful to learners and should relate to their objectives and work situation.

➢ Adults are problem-and task-oriented in their approach to the leaning process. They learn best if learning is built around their practical living and working environment. Instead of presenting subject matter to be memorised the trainer should present it as problems that need to be investigated and solved (Nel et al. 2003: 137).

• Recognition of Prior Learning

The identification of training needs should, however take cognisance of the realities that exist in South Africa, and should include the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Although it has no documented or certified proof the RPL approach has become popular in South Africa due to its informal evolution and restrictions regarding access to education and training for historically disadvantaged groups. Coetzee (2002: 153) notes that RPL is a process that enables people of all ages, backgrounds and attitudes to receive formal recognition for experience, skills and knowledge they already possess. Recognition of prior learning attempts to put value on all learning irrespective of how achieved, through an open and transparent approach to assessment.

The high profile RPL enjoys derives from the fact that it brings hope for many people especially those from historically disadvantaged communities, who have acquired capabilities outside the formal learning system and for which they receive no formal recognition. Nel et al. (2003: 147) argues that recognition of prior learning must be managed according to certain principles, namely:

➢ Sound assessment principles must be applied

➢ Competence should be evaluated against defined unit standards.

➢ A variety of assessment methods should be used.

➢ A procedure should be applied enabling a learner or employer to have access to RPL evaluation process.

Research Methodology

Introduction

Mc Nabb (2013: 13) cites research methodology as an approach taken to acquire information. Abrahams (2011: 1), defines research as an organised, structured and purposeful investigation aimed at discovering, interpreting and revising human knowledge at different aspect of the world by someone first hand. This chapter will outline the type of research, the rationale of the study, the research strategy, the target sample and sample size, research instruments such as questionnaires, data analysis and the validity and reliability of the study. In order to employ suitable remedies for the problem, researchers should employ suitable methodologies (Cooper and Schindler, 2003: 5)

Target Population

Population is a group of elements or cases whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria to which we intend to generalise the results of the research (Mc Millan and Schumacher, 200: 119). Bryman (2008: 698) defines a sample as being the segment of a population that is selected for research and it is a subset of the population. The target population will be all the employees from all the different departments and this will include junior staff, middle management and senior staff. The population of 210 employees will include all age groups and races from the Gauteng Province.

Sampling

Sampling is a process through which a representative subset or part of total population is selected and studied so that researchers will be able to draw a conclusion regarding the entire population (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008: 89). The advantages of sampling is that the smaller number of elements to be studied makes the research more manageable and time efficient, less costly and

potentially more accurate since it is easier to maintain control over a small number of elements. Saunders et al., (2003: 151) state that it is not easy to survey the entire population. Therefore it is necessary to survey a sample of the population as an alternative in order to generalise about the entire population. A sample of 52 employees was selected out of a total of 210 employees in Gauteng Province.

Table 3.1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Details	Number of Questionnaires	Percentage represented
Questionnaires sent	60	100
Returned	52	87
Not returned	8	13

Most of the questionnaires were collected the same day during the afternoon and a few were collected the following day. Some of the respondents were comfortable to complete the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher due to the fact that the researcher is a colleague.

Limitation and delimitation of the study

Marshall and Rossman (2011: 76), states that limitations of the study demonstrates that the researcher understand that no research project is perfectly designed consequently the researcher will make no overweening claims about generalizability or conclusiveness of what has been learnt. There is several RHDHV offices country wide in each province, however due to time constraints and resources the Gauteng Province was chosen for the research of training and development strategy as a tool to help improve RHDHV's performance since it is the largest with many employees from which the study can be conducted.

Ledez (2008: 120) explains delimitation of study as those characteristics that limit the scope of the inquiry and define boundaries for the study. This study will examine only few factors from theories and literature that can increase RHDHV's performance through training and development strategy.

Results, Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

Response Rate

A total of 52 out of 60 responded to the survey and that is 87%. A sample of 60 people (29%) was selected from the population of 210 (people working in Gauteng Province. The questionnaires were delivered by hand to those who were invited to participate in the survey.

Analysis of data

The findings are presented in five main sections as follows;

➢ Business unit and years of tenure
➢ Assessment and addressing of skills deficiencies in the organisation.
➢ Development and delivery of training programmes to gain a competitive edge.
➢ Training and development encouraging a learning climate in the organisation.
➢ Training and development acting as a catalyst for technological and structural change in the organisation

Business unit and years of tenure

This section aims to investigate the business unit of the participants as well as the number of years they worked in that business unit.

BUSINESS UNIT							
Water	**Project and Asset Management**	**Corporate**	**Buildings**	**Industry and Energy**	**Aviation**	**Transport and Planning**	**Information Technology**
Frequency	11	9	10	11	2	1	4	1
Percentage	22.45	18.37	20.41	22.45	4.10	2.04	8.16	2.02

Table 4.1: Participation per Business Unit
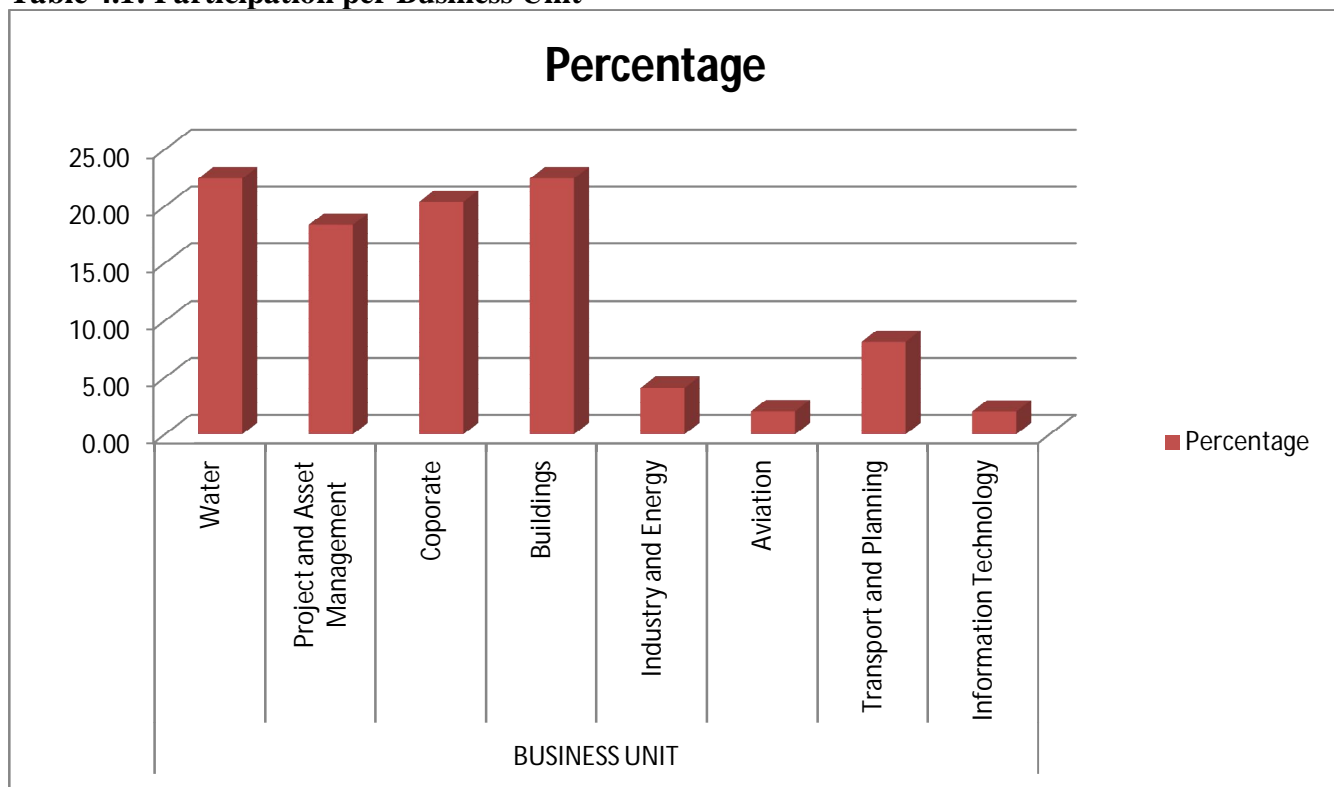
Respondents were invited at random from different Business Units. Some Business Units are too small such as Aviation and Information Technology; hence the number of employees who participated in the survey is small as well. However the researcher ensured that a significant number is invited to participate in the survey from each Business Unit in relation to its size. The graph indicates that more people who participated in the survey were from water and buildings, indicating that these business units are relatively bigger.

Table 4.2 Years of tenure in the organisation

|	Years of Tenure			
	1 to 3	4 to 7	8 to 15	> 15
Frequency	17	19	8	4
Percentage Frequency	35.42	39.58	16.67	8.33

Figure 4.2 Years of tenure in the organisation
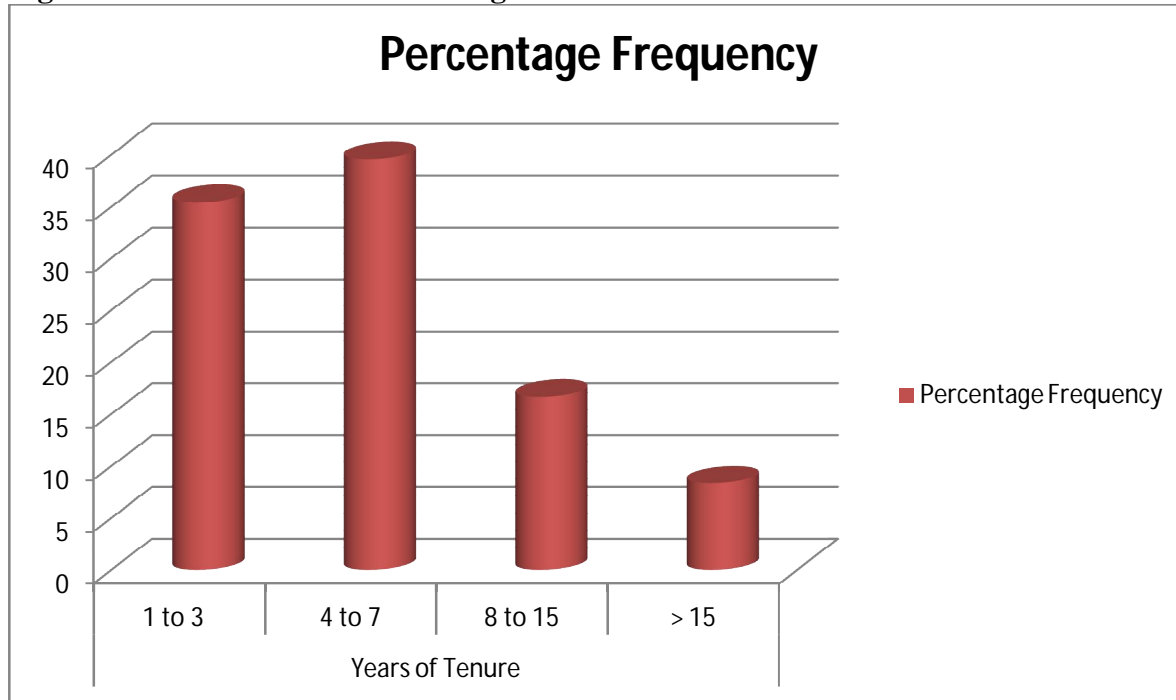
As depicted in the graph above, 64.58% of participants have been with RHDHV for at least 4 years. This authenticates the results as the majority of the participants have been with the organisation for a considerable period of time allowing them exposure to the organisation's training and development policies, thus being in a better position to give an accurate view of the scenario. Recently the organisation has been struck by high employee turnover rate, hence the indication of new employees in the range of 1 to 3 years. However those in the range of greater than 15 years are few in the organisation due to others retiring and others who are too experienced deciding to start their own Consulting firms.

Training need analysis to RHDHV employees

Table 4.3 RHDHV offering training programmes to employees

| Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	8	15.4
Agree	30	57.69
Unsure	7	13.46
Disagree	5	9.62
Strongly Disagree	2	3.83

Figure 4.3 RHDHV offering training programmes to employees
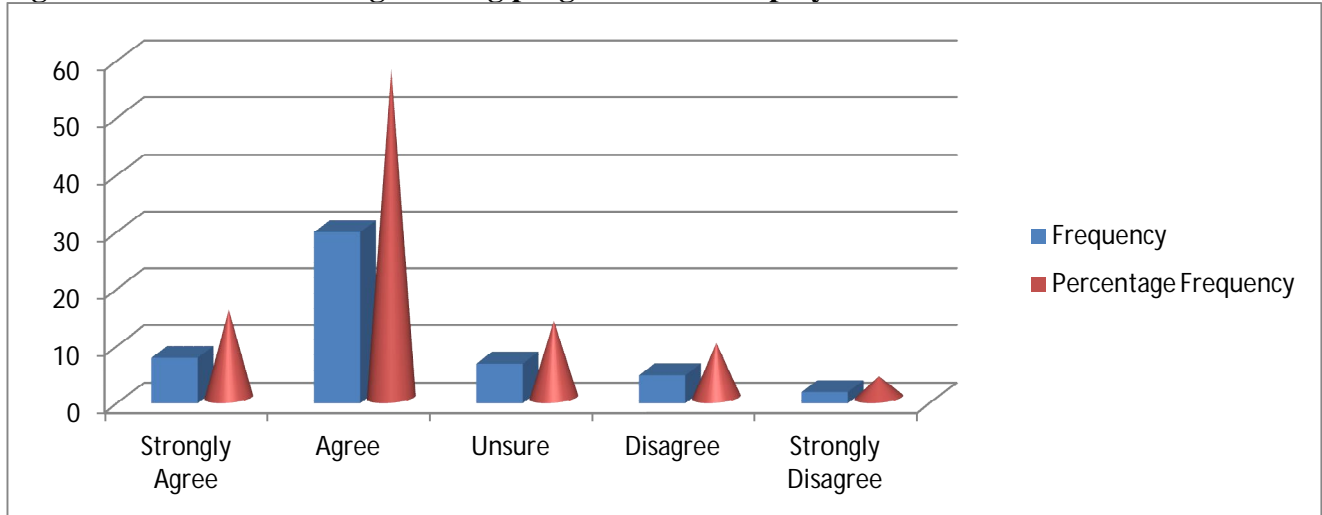
This question was intended to try and solicit the participants' perception of the adequacy of training and development programmes that are currently being implemented in the organisation. The strategic purpose of training and development is an attempt to secure and maintain the organisation's competitive edge through the development and delivery of training programmes. Mabey and, Salaman and Storey (1999: 41) contend that this is the bottom line for most training initiatives. The need to remain competitive requires organisations to continue training their employees to use the best and latest technologies available (Mello, 2002: 62). With a 73.9% of respondents on the positive side of the question (Agree and Strongly Agree), it translates that effort is being made to invest in training and development programmes however with a 13, 46% in the neutral (Unsure) and 13.45% in the negative (Disagree and Strongly Disagree) it could imply that more effort should be exerted to find out in which areas of the organisation is it crucial to invest more in training and what the relevant training programmes are.

Table 4.4 RHDHV offering training programmes just in time (when needed, correct time to correct person)

| Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	2	3.92
Agree	20	39.22
Unsure	21	41.18
Disagree	7	13.73
Strongly Disagree	1	1.95

Figure 4.4 RHDHV offering training programmes just in time (when needed, correct time to correct person)
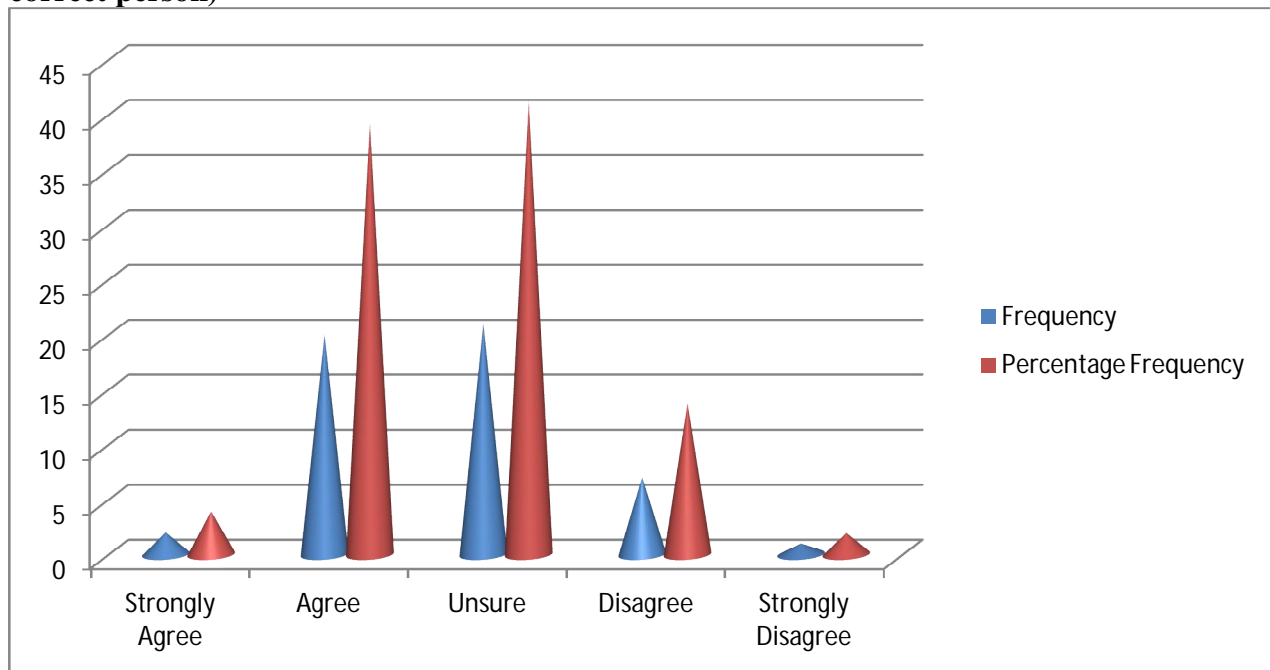
This question was intended to establish if the training interventions in the organisation are relevant and timeous. Offering training programmes at the right time to the right person is very important as it ensures that employees are well equipped with the relevant skills which enable them to execute their duties well as well adapting to the fast technological changes within the working environment. With the majority of respondents being in the Uncertain and negative spectrum (56.86%), it implies that there is need for responsible personnel to continuously scan the environment so as to identify changes that may need to be redressed by training in a timeous manner. This view emphasised by (Nel et al., 2004: 431). Swartz (1992: 92), who made the observation that learning faster than your competitors, is the only sustainable competitive advantage as every organisation learns- some just learn faster than others, learn more deliberately and use their knowledge more rapidly.

For RHDHV to continue surviving in a highly competitive and developing market and possibly become the top company in revenue generation in Africa from its 9th position as reported by the CEO from current statistics, it is essential to prevent obsolescence and develop employees to keep abreast of new challenges and new developments in technological, economic, social, political and legislative fields as well as contemporary personnel management practices. One of the major objectives of training and development is the prevention of obsolescence and stagnation within the company. Obsolescence occurs when the person in a particular post lacks the current skills and knowledge generally considered by competitors as important and vital if the person is to remain effective in performing his or her work (Van Dyk et al., 2001: 67). Thus more effort should be exerted to ensure that training interventions are offered just in time.

Table 4.5 RHDHV still need to offer more training and development opportunities

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	19	36.54
Agree	26	50
Unsure	3	5.77
Disagree	3	5.77
Strongly Disagree	1	1.92

Figure 4.5 RHDHV still need to offer more training and development opportunities
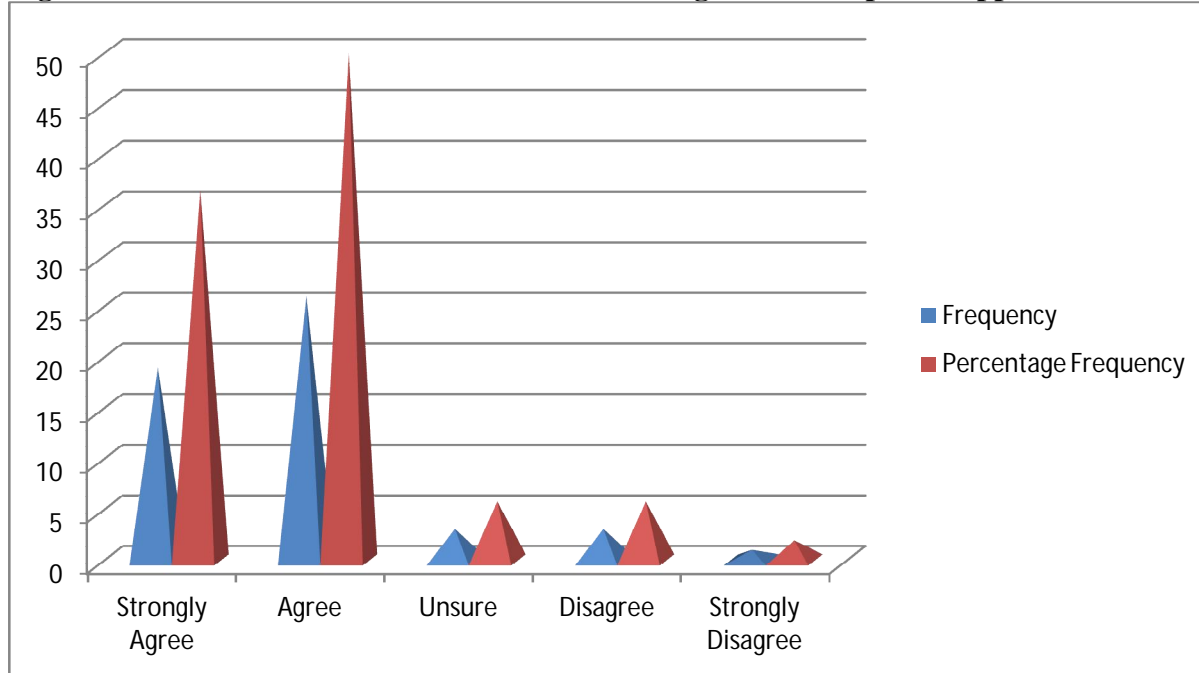
This question investigates on whether RHDHV needs to offer more training and development opportunities to employees and see the need for more training compared to what is being offered by the company at this stage. As depicted in Figure 4.5 above a substantial number of respondents (86, 4%) agree that there is still need for RHDHV to offer more training and development opportunities to its employees. It is imperative therefore those responsible personnel at RHDHV should continue to scan the environment and identify trends that can be addressed by training to ensure that the organisation is always abreast of developments in both its internal and external environment. This is because training has been quantitatively shown to result in increased organisational performance.

Blundell, Dearden and Meghir (1999: 35), provided a review of the evidence on the returns to education and training for the individual, the firm and the economy at large. American Society for Training and Development's 2003 State of the Industry Report quantitatively showed a positive relationship between training expenditures and both revenues and profitability (ASTD, 2003: 73). Moreover, another study, funded by the U.S Department of Education with the Bureau of Census, determined that training impacted productivity. The result showed that increasing individual's education level by 10% increased productivity by 8.6%, increasing an individual's work hours by 10% increased productivity by 6% and increasing capital stock by 10% increased productivity by 3.2% (US Department of Education, 2003: 22).

Training and development improving job satisfaction

Table 4.6 Training and development to improve job satisfaction

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	35	67.31
Agree	17	32.69
Unsure	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Figure 4.6 Training and development to improve job satisfaction
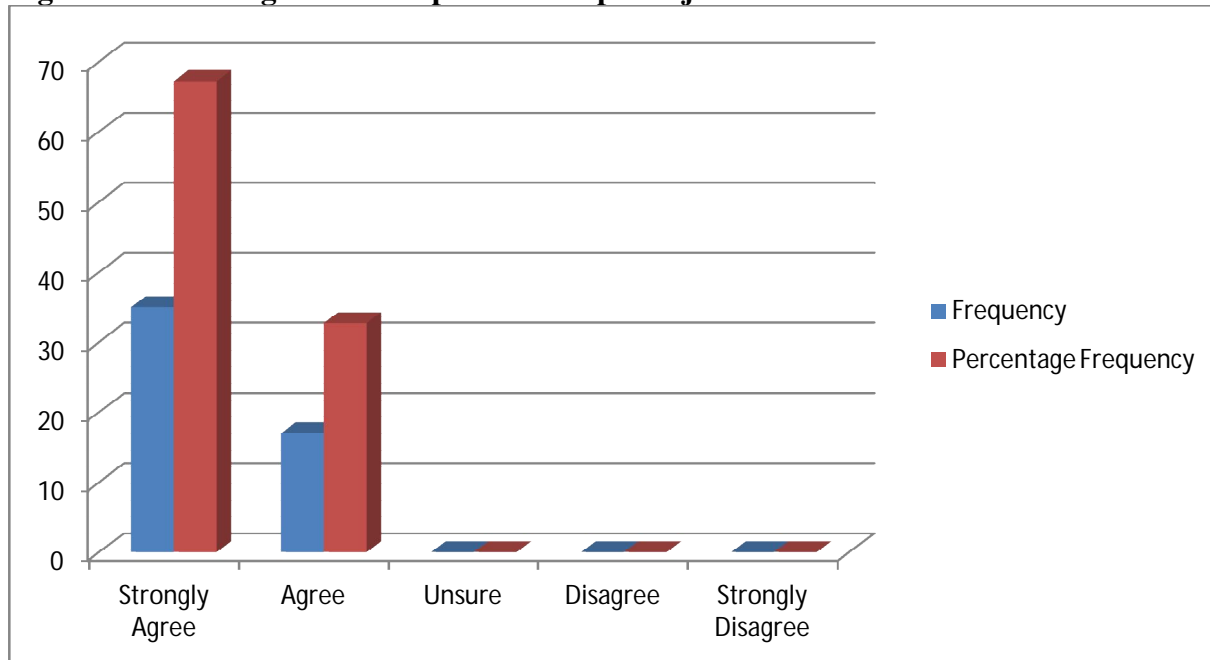
There is unanimous agreement among the respondents that investing in training and development opportunities culminates in increased job satisfaction among employees and employees who feel that the organisation is concerned with developing their skills and abilities are more likely to develop organisational citizenship, they tend to identify with the organisation and perceive themselves as part of the organisation which translates into greater satisfaction. From the graphs it can be seen that all the employees agree and strongly agree that training will improve job satisfaction implying that if the firm invest in training and development a friendly environment where everyone is satisfied can be created.

Training and development improving employee performance

Table 4.7 Training and development improving employee performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	37	71.15
Agree	15	28.85
Unsure	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

**Figure 4.7 Training and development improving employee performance**
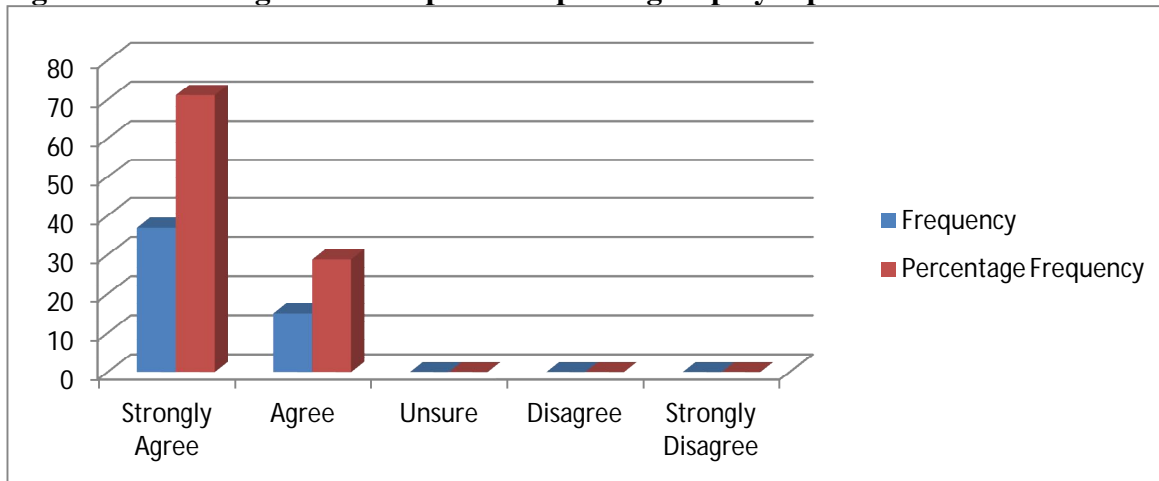
All the respondents unanimously agreed that investments in training and development improves employee performance with 71, 15% strongly agreeing that there is really a positive correlation between degree of investment in training and employee overall performance and 28.5 % agreeing to this notion. This is in sync with the findings of Hollis (2002: 49), who after studying Reynolds and Reynolds, the leading provider of integrated information management solutions to the automotive retailing market place, established that training drove business success through improving productivity and increasing competitiveness in the market place. Training bridges the gap of work performance versus the work goals. In another study Caldeira (2001: 63), found that one of the key areas correlated to superior performance was workforce training.

This is also in tandem with the findings of Fawcett and Meyers (2001: 81), who surveyed 158 managers from randomly selected US manufacturing firms and found a strong positive correlation, $r(158) = 0.81$, $p < 0.01$, between employee development and firm performance.

Training and development encouraging a learning climate

Table 4.8 Training and development encouraging a learning climate

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	28	53.85
Agree	20	38.46
Unsure	4	7.69
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Figure 4.8 Training and development encouraging a learning climate
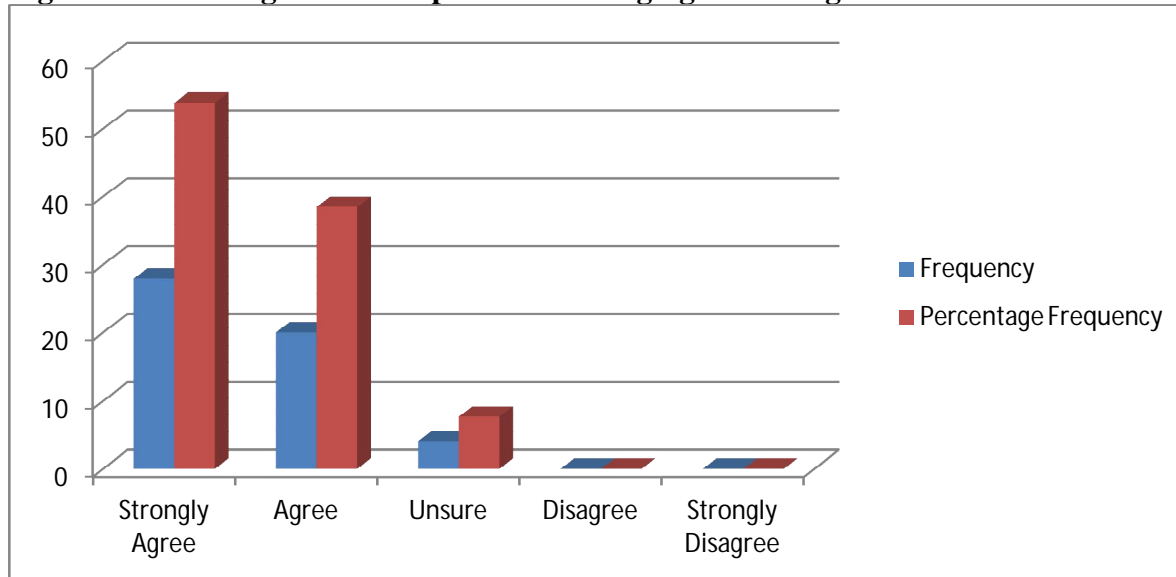
The majority of respondents (92.31%) agreed that investment in training and development encourages a learning climate to prevail in the organisation. In support of this notion, Mabey, Salaman and Storey (1999: 11) note that training and development can act as a strategy of encouraging a learning climate in the organisation. The focus is on the learning needs of individuals, which is influenced by the organisational goals. The assumption here is that within each member of the organisation there is a latent talent or skill waiting to unleash.

This is in tandem with the resource based view which theorises that firms can use their resources and capabilities, that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and not substitutable, to create value to obtain and secure sustainable competitive advantage. The RBV argued that conventional sources such as natural resources, technology, economies of scale, operational and manufacturing designs can be utilised to generate sustained competitive advantage, yet these sources can be easily copied by competitors. In this case, any sources of sustained competitive advantage that cannot be easily imitated are especially important. The RBV established that people (human resources), the only repository ok knowledge and skills can be leveraged to create value in a way that is difficult for competitors to imitate (Barney, 199: 62). Thus creating a learning climate is essential for maximum utilisation of this rare, imperfectly inimitable resource, which is the human resource for RHDHV to achieve and sustain a competitive edge among its competitors.

In a study Janz and Prasarnphanich (2003: 77) found out that, organisational learning is becoming increasingly important for firms in generating competitive advantage and that it helps deliver creative and innovative solutions which could result in unique competitive advantages. In congruence with the research findings, Jashapara (2003: 24), surveyed senior executives from construction firms in the UK about their organisation's learning behaviours and effectiveness and suggested that organisational learning had a positive impact on firm's performance as it could influence both organisational efficiency and innovation.

Training and development improving rate of doing work and quality

Table 4.9 Training and development improving quality delivered

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	33	63.46
Agree	17	32.69
Unsure	2	3.85
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

**Figure 4.9 Training and development improving quality delivered**
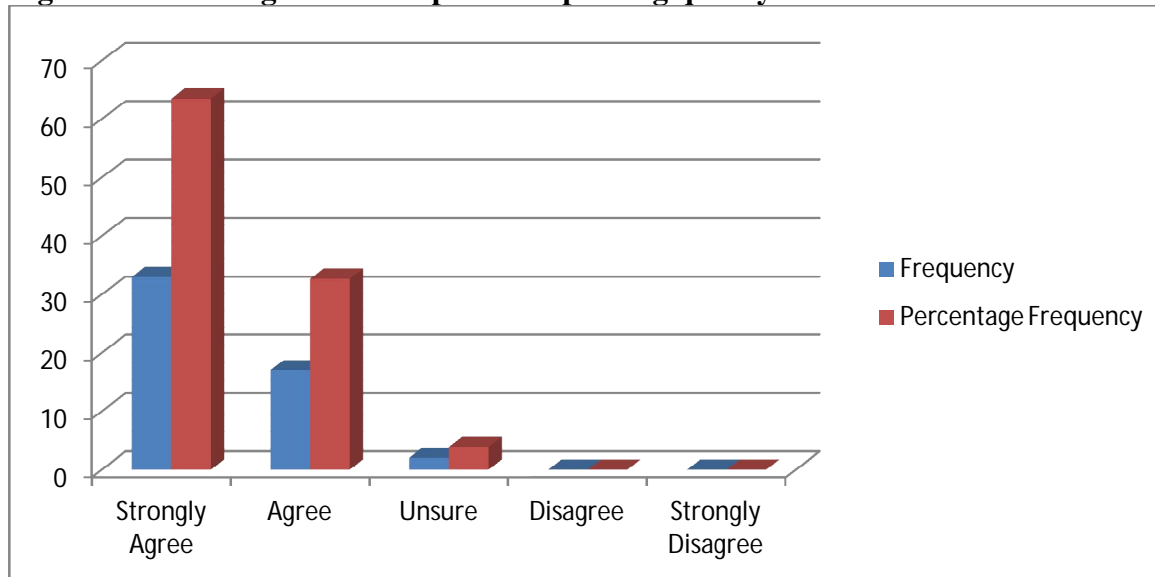
From the above analysis it can be seen that 96.15% of respondents are in agreement that training and development improves the quality of the product or service being delivered. This is in congruence with the findings of Baker and Sinkula (1992: 55) who articulates that training and development permitted firms to have profound understanding of the needs of their customers and to develop new products and services to match the needs of those customers.

In the implementation of performance and quality improvement, training may be introduced to improve a worker's performance and quality, however it is seen as only one way to improve that worker's performance and quality. For example Dean and Rebalsky (1992: 31), identified factors in the workplace environment that could be changed, the result was a positive effect on performance and quality that occurred more quickly and less expensively than training the employees to make a specific change Dean and Rebalsky (1992: 75).

Table 4.10 Training and development will improve rate of doing work

| Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	17	32.69
Agree	29	55.77
Unsure	6	11.54
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Figure 4.10 Training and development will improve rate of doing work
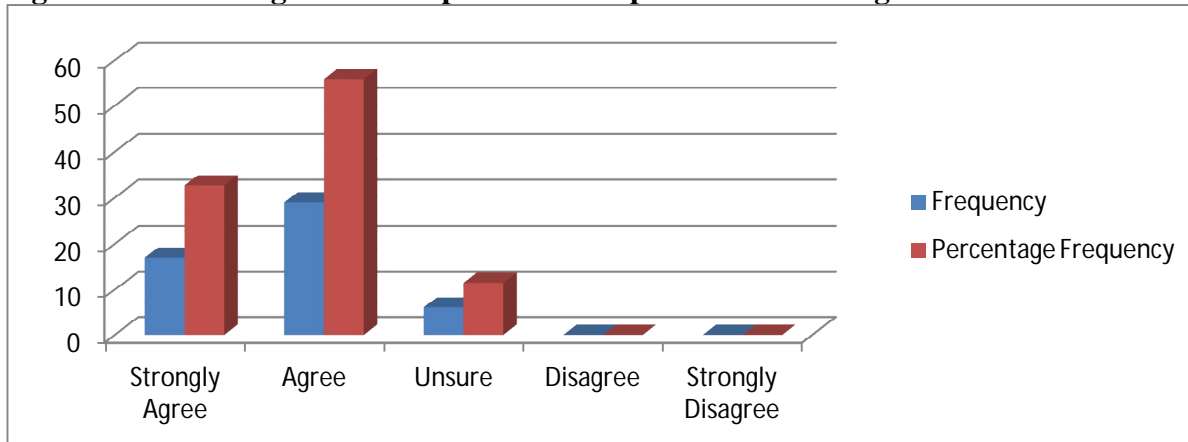
With 88.6% in the positive spectrum (Strongly Agree and Agree) it translates that training and development does lead to improved rate of work. In support of this view Kirkwood and Pangarkar (2003: 11), note that significant and noticeable advantages of training and development in organisations include a reduction in errors and mistakes thus increasing rate of doing work, improved quality and innovations, a better understanding of the business and empowered employees.

Training and development as a catalyst for change
Table 4.11 Training and development as catalyst for change by equipping employees with necessary knowledge and skills

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	25	48.08
Agree	26	50
Unsure	1	1.92
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Figure 4.11 Training and development as catalyst for change by equipping employees with necessary knowledge and skill
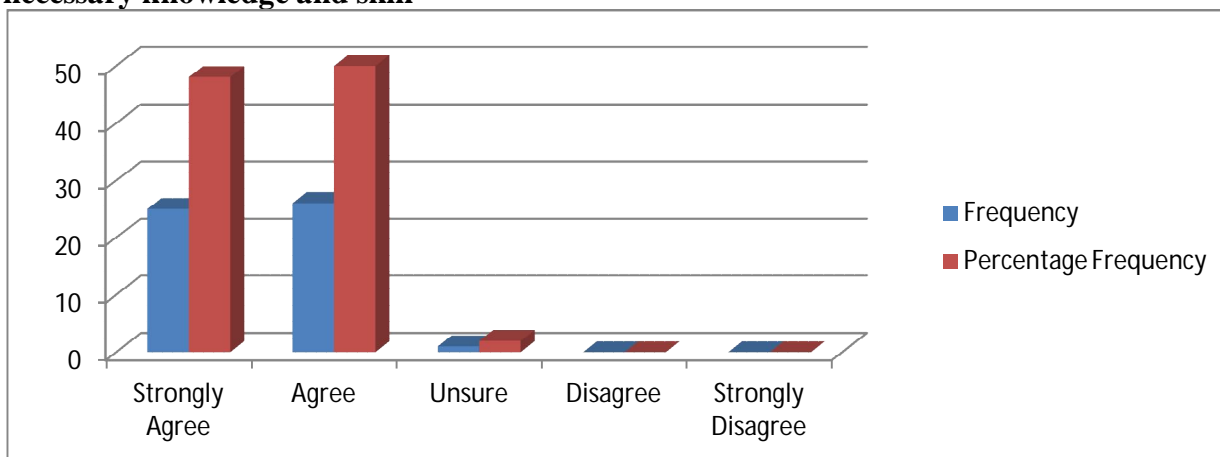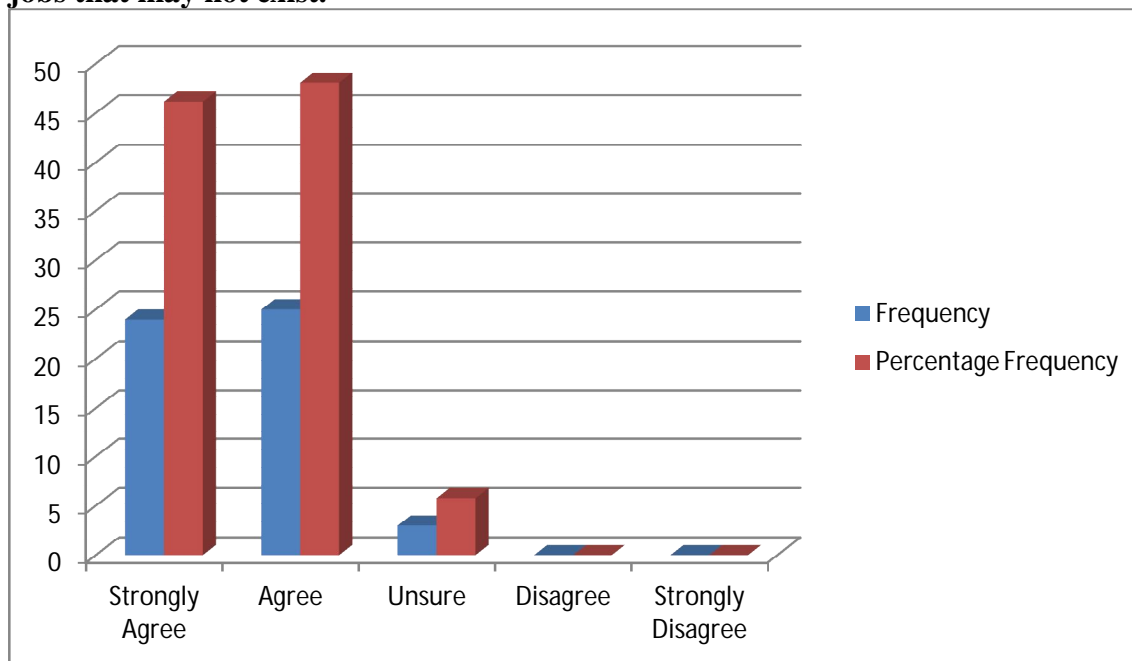

From the analysis, 98.8% of respondents agreed that training and development act as a catalyst for change by equipping employees with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to implement the changes. Armstrong (2000: 19) notes that people are naturally afraid of change, they are more

comfortable with routines and as such change if not prepared for and handled correctly, may elicit anxiety from the employees and it is this anxiety that is the major reason for resistance to change. It is imperative to have the buy in of all employees both management and non-management personnel for a change endeavour to successfully take place and one way of doing that is providing training where necessary. For instance, when there are technological changes in the organisation people should be trained how to use the new equipment such as computers if manual systems are to be computerised and if it is structural change people should be trained to attain skills that are in tandem with their newly acquired responsibilities.

Table 4.12 Training and development as a catalyst for change by moving employees into jobs that may not exist.

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	24	46.15
Agree	25	48.08
Unsure	3	5.77
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Figure 4.12 Training and development as a catalyst for change by preparing employees for jobs that may not exist.
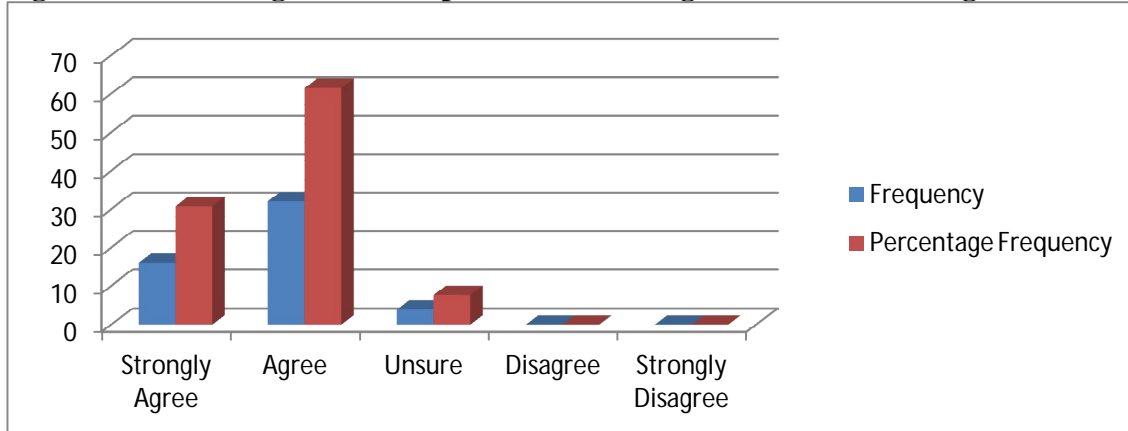

From the above analysis, 94% of the respondents (Agree and Strongly Agree) are in agreement with the notion that training and development does act as catalyst for change by preparing employees for jobs that may not yet exist. This holds true for training methods such as job rotation and planned progression. In support of this notion Nel etal (2000: 122) articulates that such types of training create a second line of competent employees to meet the problems of transfers, turnover etc., and it provides a rich experience to the candidates in a variety of matters as it enables trainees to acquire specific practical experience quickly instead of having to wait for opportunities to present themselves over a long period of time through transfers and promotions.

Table 4.13 Training and development overcoming resistance for change

| Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Strongly Agree	16	30.77
Agree	32	61.54
Unsure	4	7.69
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Figure 4.13 Training and development overcoming resistance for change

From the above analysis, 93.31% of the respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) are in agreement with the idea that training and development helps overcome resistance to change. Training and Development dispel anxieties that often underlie most resistances to change. Once people feel that they are going to be equipped with the necessary knowledge needed in a changed environment they are more likely to embrace that change.

Overall training overview

Table 4.14 Overall rating of organisation's investment in training

Response	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Poor	11	22
Good	35	70
Excellent	4	8

Figure 4.14 Overall rating of organisation's investment in training
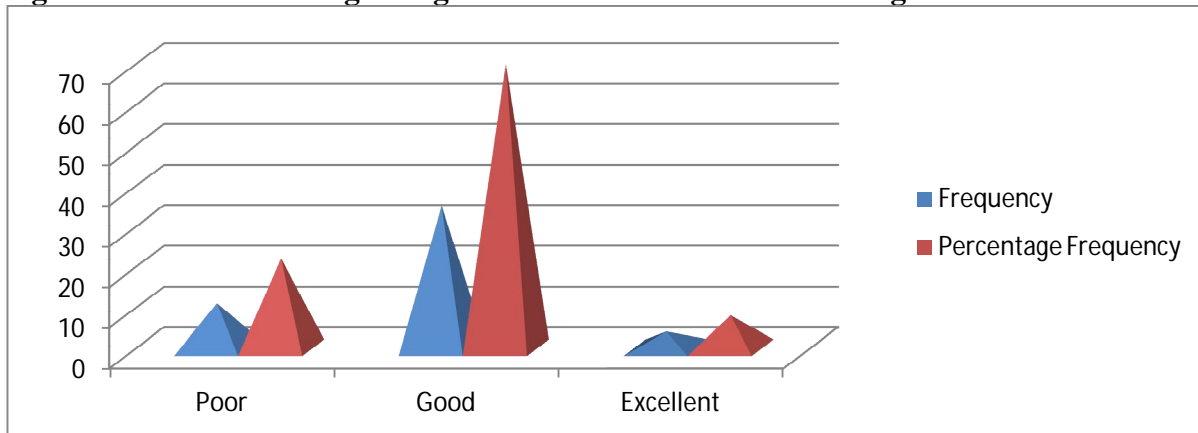
This question was intended to solicit the employees' perceptions with regards to the overall organisation's policy towards training and development. With 78% of the respondents rating the organisation's overall contribution towards training and development as good and excellent it translates therefore that currently that employees may be comfortable with the current training and development programmes being implemented but there is still need to improve. With 22% of the sample stating that the investment in training is poor, this shows that the company still need to address the issues of training and development.

The 22% may reflect that;
- The company is not offering training and development to all its employees at the correct time.
- The company is not offering training programmes to the correct person.
- The company is not offering relevant training programmes
- The company is not offering enough training programmes
- Employees are not happy with the way they are being offered the training programmes.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Findings from the study
Findings from the study will be discussed under two headings namely, findings from the literature review and findings from the primary research

Findings from literature review
Extensive review of relevant literature was done on investigating training and development strategy to improve RHDHV performance. The finding in summary are presented as follows;
The place and role of the training function in an organisation
An organisation consists of various subsystems that pursue the achievement of organisational objectives by means of different organisational processes. These enterprise subsystems are organised according to the unique needs of each enterprise, and usually include subsystems such as marketing, production, financial and human resource functions (Erasmus and Van Dyk, 1999: 39-41). Each of these subsystems can again be divided into smaller systems, such as planning, maintenance, training and development of human resource.

The training process
The most effective training follows a 4 stage cycle of identifying training needs, formulation of training plans and designing the training, delivering or implementation of the training programme and finally evaluating its success and all stages of the cycle should be followed to ensure that the training is effective (Buckley and Caple: 1995: 48).

Methods of training and development
Training and development methodologies can be divided into three categories which are Presentation methods where the learners are passive recipients of information, Hand- on-methods where the learner is actively involved in the learning and Group building methods where learners work together to build a team identity (Noe et al, 2006: 281-297).

Strategic purpose of training
A crucial, priority strategic purpose of training is to assess and address skills deficiencies in the organisation (Mabey, Salaman and Storey, 1999: 31). The strategic purpose of training and development is an attempt to secure and maintain the organisation's competitive edge through the development and delivery of training programmes. Mabey and, Salaman and Storey (1999: 43) contend that this is the bottom line for most training initiatives. The need to remain competitive

requires organisations to continue training their employees to use the best and latest technologies available (Mello, 2002: 17).

Relationship between training and development as well as organisational performance
The knowledge and skills of an organisation's workforce have become increasingly important to its performance, competitiveness, and innovation (Lawler, Mohrman and Ledford, 1998). According to Kraiger (2003), successful organisations are thought to invest more in training and development than other organisations. Most organisations spend a substantial amount of revenue each year on formal training and development with the expectation that training investments will lead to improvements in organisational performance or results (Dolazek, 2005; Salas and Cannon-Boers, 2001).

Training as a Component of Performance Improvement
A combination of pressures on a company in the form of globalisation, increasing demands for higher quality products and services, ever increasing financial returns and increasing employee demands require the redefining of human resource professionals' responsibilities. A shift is occurring from design and implementation of training as a major focus to training for improved output. In other words, training and development is shifting towards performance improvement, which has been defined as the continually improving performance of individuals and organisations (American Society of Training and Development, 1996).

Impact of Training and Development on Information Technology
Information technology has become an influential factor in nearly every aspect of our society. Understanding information technology, its components and language has also become a requirement for personal and professional growth and success. According to Brophy (1009: 95), work supervisors have opportunities to encourage staff to develop IT related skills from the perspective of a subject, user, and technical or from a point of view of their administrative responsibilities.

Training and the Firm's Competitiveness in the Knowledge Based Economy
According to (Porter, 1998), a firm's competitiveness refers to the competitive advantage over its rivals in a particular industry. Porter emphasised that a firm gains competitive advantage when:
- It is able to generate and sustain profits that are greater than the average for its industry
- It manages to deliver the same benefits as its rivals but at a lower cost
- It delivers benefits that exceed those of competing products by differentiating itself in the industry.

Integration of Training in the Firm's Business Strategies
Geisler and Justus (1998: 25), in their discussion of the integration of training as a strategic management tool asserts that without strategic training , organisations invariably end up with a patchwork quilt of corrective procedures and policies that are impossible to follow and impossible to control and monitor. Training all employees to analyse their current work processes allows the employees to understand several things , first they may appreciate the gaps that may exist between what is currently being done and what needs to be done.

The role of training in High Performance Work Organisations
High Performance Work Organisations are defined by Jarboe and Yudken (1997: 54), as combining innovative work and management practices with reorganised work flows, advanced information systems and new technologies based on the skills and abilities of frontline workers to achieve gain in speed, flexibility, productivity and customer satisfaction. The skills required in high performance work organisations certainly do require training, the only difference is that the focus is on the output of training and not on the training itself. Training is an important component of high performance work organisations, but it is not an end goal but rather is viewed as a means to achieving an end, the

end being productive, efficient work organisations, populated by informed workers who see themselves as significant stakeholders in their firms' success (Meyer, 1996: 62).

Training and the Firm's Preparation for New Opportunities and Threats

A survey with over 300 senior executives in human resources, finance and operations at the U.S and European companies with revenues of greater than $1 billion conducted by Convergys Corporation (CVG) showed that 65% of corporate executives expressed that in order to gain a competitive advantage in today's changing markets, a flexible workforce was essential.

Training Impact on the Firm's Productivity and Efficiency

Blundell, Dearden and Meghir (1999: 37), provided a review of the evidence on the returns to education and training for the individual, the firm and the economy at large. American Society for Training and Development's 2003 State of the Industry Report quantitatively showed a positive relationship between training expenditures and both revenues and profitability (ASTD, 2003: 44).

Training helps Firms differentiate themselves in the Market place

Kleinfelder (2005: 17) articulates that training helps sales people differentiate themselves in the marketplace. In a research study conducted by Wilson Learning Corporation (a provider of Human Performance Improvement solutions) it was established that traditional sources of competitive differentiation - a superior product or service, increased size through mergers and acquisitions or reductions in price no longer suffice in todays business operation environment (Edian, 2005: 34).

Training and the Firm's Innovation

Turcotte (2002: 57) discovered that there is a positive correlation between support for training (both on the job training and classroom) and innovation in products, services and processes and the implementation of new technologies or new software. In a review of a number of Canadian studies Baldwin (1999: 73), established positive linkage between training and innovation.

Benefits of training and development to an organisation

Nel et al. (2003: 82), articulates the benefits of training and development to the organisation as a whole, to the individual employee and to the employee workgroup. However Training and Development benefits in personnel and human relations, intra- and inter-group relations, and policy implementation impact positively on the organisation. Training and development benefits to the individual, in turn, should benefit the organisation.

Findings from primary research

- Investigating if RHDHV is offering training programmes to employees shows that 73.9% of respondents are on the positive side of the question (Agree and Strongly Agree), it translates that effort is being made to invest in training and development programmes however with a 13,46% in the neutral (Unsure) and 13.45% in the negative (Disagree and Strongly Disagree) it could imply that more effort should be exerted to find out in which areas of the organisation is it crucial to invest more in training and what the relevant training programmes are.

- Investigating if RHDHV offering training programmes just in time (when needed, correct time to correct person) with the majority of respondents being in the Uncertain and negative spectrum (56.86%), it implies that there is need for responsible personnel to continuously scan the environment so as to identify changes that may need to be redressed by training in a timeous manner.

- Investigating if RHDHV still need to offer more training and development opportunities a substantial number of respondents (86,4%) agree that there is still need for RHDHV to offer more training and development opportunities to its employees.

- Investigating if Training and development improve job satisfaction, it showed that all the employees agree and strongly agree that training will improve job satisfaction implying that if

the firm invest in training and development a friendly environment where everyone is satisfied can be created.

- Investigating if Training and development improve employee performance it showed that 71, 15% strongly agree that there is really a positive correlation between degree of investment in training and employee overall performance and 28.5 % agreeing to this notion.
- Investigating if training and development encourage a learning climate, the majority of respondents (92.31%) agreed that investment in training and development encourages a learning climate to prevail in the organisation and (7.69%) is unsure of the fact.
- Investigating if training and development can improve the rate of doing work, (32.69%) strongly agree to the fact whilst (55.77%) are in agreement and (11.54%) is unsure of the fact.
- Investigating if training and development can improve quality 96.15% of respondents are in agreement that training and development improves the quality of the product or service being delivered and 3.85% is unsure.
- Investigating if training and development can as catalyst for change by equipping employees with necessary knowledge and skills, 48.08% were strongly in agreement of the fact whilst 50% were in agreement and 1.92% was unsure.
- Investigating if training and development as a catalyst for change by moving employees into jobs that may not exist, 46.15% are in strong agreement of the fact whilst 48.08% are in agreement and 5.77% unsure.
- Investigating if training and development can overcome resistance for change, 30.77% were in strong agreement of the fact whilst 61.55% agree to the fact and 7.69% were unsure.
- Overall rating of organisation's investment in training shows that 22% believe to the fact that the investment is poor and 61.54% believe that the investment is good and 8% believe that it is excellent.

Future research area

There are other areas of research which can be investigated by RHDHV so as to improve its performance as follows;

- Investigating the RHDHV culture as a strategy to improve its performance
- Investigating diversity as a strategy to improve the RHDHV performance
- Investigating the RHDHV leadership as a strategy to improve its performance
- Investigating pay and remuneration as a motivating factor among employees so as to improve the RHDHV performance
- Investigating how RHDHV can reduce employee turnover rate and retain its experienced employees who can strongly contribute in improving its performance.

Recommendations

- RHDHV is offering training programmes to employees but however since there is 13, 46% in the neutral (Unsure) and 13.45% in the negative (Disagree and Strongly Disagree) it is recommended that the company should invest in more training programmes.
- RHDHV is offering training programmes just in time (when needed, correct time to correct person) however, with the majority of respondents being in the Uncertain and negative spectrum (56.86%), it implies that there is need for responsible personnel to continuously scan the environment so as to identify changes that may need to be redressed by training in a timeous manner.
- RHDHV still need to offer more training and development opportunities since a substantial number of respondents (86, 4%) agree that there is still need for RHDHV to offer more training and development opportunities to its employees.

- It is recommended that RHDHV should offer more training and development opportunities to improve job satisfaction among employees since the primary findings show that all the employees agree and strongly agree that training will improve job satisfaction implying that if the firm invest in training and development a friendly environment where everyone is satisfied can be created.
- It is recommended that RHDHV should offer more training and development opportunities to improve employee performance since it is shown that 71,15% strongly agree that there is really a positive correlation between degree of investment in training and employee overall performance and 28.5 % agreeing to this notion.
- It is recommended that RHDHV should offer more training and development opportunities so as to encourage a learning climate; the majority of respondents (92.31%) agreed that investment in training and development encourages a learning climate.
- It is recommended that RHDHV should offer different training and development opportunities so as to improve the rate of doing work, (32.69%) strongly agree to the fact whilst (55.77%) are in agreement.
- It is recommended that RHDHV should offer training and development opportunities so as to improve quality 96.15% of respondents are in agreement that training and development improves the quality of the product or service being delivered
- It is recommended that RHDHV should invest in training and development as it can act as a catalyst for technological and structural change in the organisation.

Conclusion

This research investigated RHDHV strategy to improve its performance. This will enable the company to survive in this world of competition within the Consulting Engineering industry. It is currently number 9 in Africa's top ten Consulting Engineering Companies rankings on performance. However from the research done, it shows that there is a gap in trainings which can be a contributing factor on its performances. The results form the research indicates that there is still more work which needs to be done so as to eliminate the 22% which is shows that the training and development at RHDHV is poor. This merely proves that the 22% of the sample from the employees are not well versed with adequate training opportunities which can improve their work performances, quality and job satisfaction and the same employees are likely to resist changes. These maybe be the contributions to RHDHV being number 9 in Africa instead of being number 1 on performance.

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Kindly note that the full bibliography of the study is cited and the applicable references to this article are contained in the full bibliography cited.

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