

14 Types of Employee Training: Which Is Right for Your Workforce?

A company is only as good as its employees—and to perform at their peak, employees need the right training. Effective employee training programs have [numerous benefits](#), from reducing turnover to increasing productivity. However, many organizations struggle to identify the types of employee training that will have the greatest impact.

Employee Training Types for Today's Workforce

For most companies, an approach that includes multiple types of training for employees will be most effective. Below is a list of 14 common types of workplace training.

1. New Employee Orientation

New employee orientation usually takes place within the first days or weeks of an employee's tenure. Orientation programs, which many companies deliver to cohorts of new employees across functions, typically provide a high-level overview of the company's mission, vision, and values. They also provide information every employee needs on topics like company policies, reporting structures, benefit plans, and more.

2. Onboarding

Orientation generally falls under the larger umbrella of a longer-term form of employee training known as onboarding. The onboarding process gives new hires the tools they need to get up and running in their role. Generally, departmental leaders or direct managers develop onboarding programs specific to their units or for individual hires.

By the end of onboarding, an employee should have a clear sense of their responsibilities and goals. They should also know how to obtain the resources they need to do their jobs and understand how their role contributes to their team's and company's priorities.

3. Team Training

Team training programs drive engagement and productivity. They develop beneficial relationships among coworkers and improve processes.

You can deliver these in an intensive format, such as during a retreat or over an extended period of weeks or months. Common areas of focus for [team training](#) programs are interpersonal communication, process improvement and management, and goal-setting. While team training is beneficial at any time, it's especially important during and after mergers, reorganizations, or leadership changes.

4. Leadership Training

Transitioning from an individual contributor role to managing others is an important inflection point in an employee's career. Yet too often, companies provide little support during this transition. [Leadership and management training](#) programs help develop key skills like employee development, delegation, and providing feedback. They come in a number of different formats, ranging from [online leadership courses](#) to internal mentorship opportunities.

5. Senior Executive Training

While all leaders rely on certain foundational skills, senior executives require a significantly expanded toolbox. Programs [built for senior executives](#) (like those Emeritus offers) tend to focus on areas like strategy, innovation, and culture development. They can also explore narrower subjects for specific C-suite roles. For example, programs for senior technology or marketing executives may focus on emerging challenges and opportunities specific to those positions. Many participants find that external training programs provide a unique opportunity to network and learn from senior executive peers from other companies and industries.

6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training

Developing effective diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs is now important for companies of all sizes. However, this can be a challenge for organizations that lack internal expertise.

Given the complex and sensitive nature of DEI work, it's essential that companies turn to experts to ensure their efforts effectively address biases and challenges and create an environment in which all employees can thrive. While some companies choose to bring in external consultants to lead DEI training, an equally effective approach is to send company leaders through external programs that equip them to [create DEI strategies](#) for their organizations.

7. Technical Skills Training

According to Gartner, [58% of employees](#) need to acquire new skills to do their jobs effectively. Given the rapid pace of technological change and the fact that job descriptions evolve quickly due to market demand, that's no surprise. However, if companies don't take steps to address the resulting [skills gaps](#), they won't be able to maximize their employees' performance.

Technical skills training is one of the more straightforward employee training types. It typically consists of targeted courses that impart specific skills, like data analytics or social media management.

8. Soft Skills Development

[Soft skills](#), the traits and behaviors that help employees perform at their best, are not as easy to measure as technical skills. But that doesn't mean employees can't develop soft skills with conscientious effort.

There are numerous effective soft skills development programs out there, and they impart skills ranging from empathy to time management. While coaching from leaders is important to build soft skills, most employees will also benefit from formal training programs designed to help employees understand and practice those skills.

9. Product Training

Companies can't effectively sell products (which could be anything from a physical object to an app) unless their employees understand and evangelize for them. Product training programs, which are typically created in-house or with the help of consultants, acquaint employees with the various functionalities and selling points of their company's product. This better positions employees to excel at their jobs—whether in marketing, product development, or finance—and also opens up opportunities for innovation and iteration.

10. Sales Training

Sales training combines the nitty-gritty knowledge of product training with hands-on sales tactics to help close the deal. This kind of training can include everything from identifying the best prospects for a certain product or service to structuring conversations with warm leads to offering demos. This type of training is critical in business-to-business (B2B) companies that need to provide a compelling, detailed case for a prospect to make a major investment.

11. Quality Assurance Training

Quality assurance training is primarily relevant in companies with a heavy production or distribution element. While the specifics will vary depending on the nature of production, quality assurance training provides employees with the skills needed to maintain high-production quality, assess products for defects or other concerns, and improve production systems.

12. Compliance Training

Most industries, from financial services to construction, face some kind of regulatory burden. Compliance training, often delivered as part of the employee onboarding process, familiarizes the workforce with the regulations applicable to their industry and advises them on their legal obligations. Some industries require compliance training (and sometimes employee certification) as part of the regulatory process.

13. Safety Training

Safety training, which is especially important in industries that involve physical labor, reduces both the risk that individual employees take on as well as a company's potential liabilities. Some safety training programs, such as fire prevention or lockdown drills, are somewhat universal, while others are highly industry-specific. For example, companies that use potentially dangerous chemicals will need rigorous safety training protocols, while food-service companies must provide food safety training. These programs may be required to maintain licenses or insurance.

14. Online Training

Online training is defined by its delivery format rather than the content conveyed. Many of the types of training discussed above can be delivered online or in a hybrid online/in-person format. Today's online programs are increasingly collaborative and experiential thanks to technology like videoconferencing, which allows learners to work with peers worldwide. Since [the benefits of online learning](#) including greater flexibility than in-person coursework, it's much easier for professionals to fit into a demanding schedule.

For most large companies, an effective employee training strategy will utilize several types of employee training. The exact mix of programs that produces the greatest return on investment, however, will vary based on the organization's unique needs and goals.

That's why it's essential for organizational leadership to take a strategic approach to identify the right types of workplace training. Leaders should use tools like a [skills gap analysis](#) and organizational surveys to identify areas of focus while always keeping the company's goals front of mind.

As with any initiative, measuring results and iterating as needed will produce the most impactful outcomes.