

benefitsconnection

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Training – ‘Benefit’ or ‘Entitlement’?

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Even more than usual, in an economic downturn employers and employees ask themselves “What constitutes an employee benefit?” It doesn’t matter if it is a voluntary, flexible, or core benefit, it’s under scrutiny. Staff training, whether for hard or soft skills, is also under the microscope. Companies seeking to cut costs which may have positioned training as an “entitlement” are now of the view that training is a “benefit” instead. With this trend in mind, more progressive employers have looked at the positive contribution of training and how it enhances the business moving forward.

Staff seeking to secure their jobs will be searching for ways to increase their knowledge base making them more valuable to their current (or, it has to be noted, a future) organisation. Training is often essential for “entry level” jobs and employers can’t avoid the investment of internal resources, but with restraints on headcount, more and more existing employees will need training to handle changing workloads and responsibilities created by changing circumstances.

Why it’s worth fighting for your training budget

Training is a fantastic tool for employers in the current uncertain environment. Here’s some of the reasons why:

- Employees value training even more than usual and see the benefits of increased knowledge
- Employees will take on more responsibility or do the same job better for the same costs to the organisation
- Employers will be credited with adding value to the careers of employees
- High-quality, well-trained employees are needed in difficult times

- Employee loyalty, morale and confidence will increase
- It helps companies to stay competitive and adapt to the business environment
- Targeted training will mitigate the negative effects of cost cutting

Investing in training and benefits signifies a company’s desire to invest in and value its employees’ development, which it will have to do to get increased performance during a downturn.

Survival of the trained

Training and non-core benefits look like an easy target but cuts in these areas are demonstrably a false economy. The return of investment on training will be judged by the company evaluating how the training has increased performances of the employee and the business. Budgets will be fine tuned and aligned to efficiencies, and IT training in particular enables staff to get more out of their working day. Specialist courses, such as methodology courses which are designed to focus on business processes or project management software skills, can have particular relevance. Organisations that don’t give up on training will be the new leaders and innovators – or at least the survivors.

