

# Impact of Off-The-Job Training Methods on Sales Representatives in Contemporary Scenario: A Study in Beverages Industry

Guntupalli V D Bharani

Assistant Professor

Department of Management Studies

Gayatri Vidya Parishad College of Engineering (A), Visakhapatnam, India

Email - guntupalli.vd.bharani@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Training is a systematic way by which critical skills are taught to an employee to derive benefits as an outcome of training. Managers should consider the importance of training in contemporary scenario to make sure that sales trainees meet the industry challenges while working. Most of the newly recruited employees feel that training is really essential for them to perform their respective job in an effective way. The main concern is that most of the sales representatives in beverages industry are being exposed to lecture training method (off-the-job method), but the outcome of this training method is not worthy. To meet the present and future challenges of this industry, an employee should undergo multiple training methods rather than going for traditional methods. Most of the respondents feel that the lecture type of training method is not helpful to face the issues as the technology and consumer behaviour is changing at a lightning speed day by day. Results show that employees of beverages industry are showing more interest towards simulation, case studies, and role play training method. They feel that when these methods are implemented together can give better solutions in challenging situations, as well as they can also make best use of their core competencies using these training methods.

**Key Words:** Case studies, Lecture, Off-the-job, Role Play, Simulation, Training

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Training and development activities play a significant role in the success of organizations and to the experiences of people in work. Training has implications for efficacy, health and safety at work and personal development. All business units employing people need to train and develop their employees. Many of the organizations are aware of this need and are investing more money, effort and other resources for training. This area of huge investments into training gave rise to specialist training centres. A newly recruited employee who is undergoing training should direct their attention from time to time towards his/her training as well as should take care about his main stream functions like production, maintenance, sales, marketing and management support, and etc. However, training process is generally regarded as an important management practice, to face contemporary scenarios with proper ability.

There are two types of training methods, on-the-job and off-the-job training methods. On-the-job training, given at the place of work while trainee doing the real job. Usually an experienced professional employee serves as the instructor to train their trainees. Off-the-job training is conducted in an allocated training place which is away from work place where most of the times it is within organization and sometimes in work fields. Lecture training method is not only the off-the-job training method but there are other various off-the-job training methods like, case study, role play, simulation, programmed instruction, computer based training, management games, and etc. A simulation is a method of training where it creates realistic experience in a supervised controlled environment. Simulation, in general is a virtual environment is created to manage a trainees' experiences with reality/contemporary situations. In this it mainly focuses on how a trainee can develop and practice the required competencies to meet the challenges prevailing in present scenario.

### 1.1 Training process:

Training is process by which critical skills are taught in a systematic order to derive expected benefits as an outcome of training. Training process should be designed in such a way that it fulfills Individual goals, Organization goals, Functional goals and Social goals. Generally a training process involves following stages:

- a) Purpose of training.
- b) Designing the training.
- c) Implementation of the training.
- d) Evaluation/Feedback of the training.

## **1.2 Development:**

In simple terms development is different to that of training, it can be defined as a process where group of activities are designed and carry out to prepare people for more job roles for the long term. This process of development is not an overnight process but tends to refer to individualized experiences, such as a professionally growing through professional certifications, handling more job rotations, coaching or mentoring.

In simple way, **Employee Development** = Employee Education + Employee Skills + Training Effectiveness + Employee Quality of work life (Kulkarni, 2013)

## **2. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY:**

The Study concentrates on various sales representatives who are exposed to off-the-job training methods in Beverages industry. The scope of the study is limited to metropolitan, cosmopolitan, and urban cities of South India. The study involves how they responds to training programs and their effectiveness after off-the-job training program. Based on the questionnaire, all the information is extracted through an e-mail and personal interaction. The findings of the study may be beneficial to both organizations and sales representatives who undergo training in future.

## **3. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The key terms used in search process were organization behaviour, human resources management to find the related journals, conferences, books, magazines. Total 193 related journals, conferences, books, magazines from various countries are shortlisted based on relevance to study (173 are international journals/ conferences/ magazine articles and 20 are Indian journals).

Once after getting these 193 journals, further search engine was customized to Training and development, training methods, organization studies, career development, leadership, commercial training, learning, personnel management. Once after this additional search is enabled 32 international journals, 2 book series, 1 magazine, and 10 Indian journals are shortlisted.

To be accurate and to maintain relevance search was customized further with additional search terms for off-job training, training methods, research in training. Once the search is done 15 international journals are shortlisted along with 4 Indian journals. Totally 19 journals are closely related to the study. In total 4186 articles/proceedings are extracted from these 19 journals/ conferences/ magazine/ cases, out of which 2778 articles are extracted from international journals and 1408 articles from India.

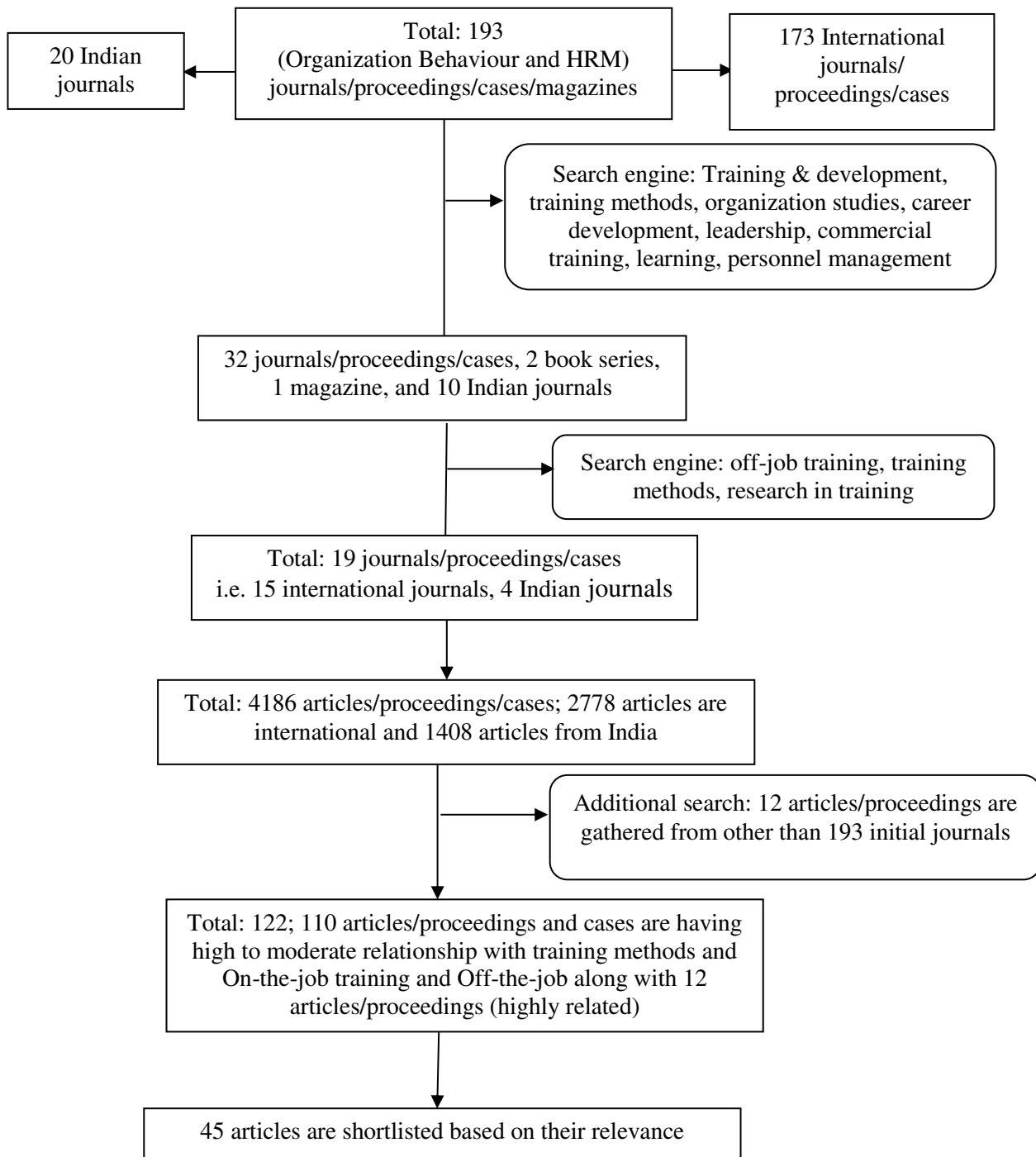
## **4. RELEVANCE ARTICLES DISTRIBUTION:**

From the above mentioned 4186 articles, only (2.62%) 110 articles/proceedings or cases are having high to moderate relationship with training methods, On-the-job training and Off-the-job training. To get more relevant articles from training and development and training methods search engine was once again run and 12 additional articles/proceedings are gathered, other than 193 initial journals. Mentioned 12 additional articles/proceedings are from:

- 1) Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting
- 2) Rural Special Education Quarterly
- 3) Journal of Microbiology & biology education
- 4) Journal of Management
- 5) Health Education Journal
- 6) Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space
- 7) A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy
- 8) Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting
- 9) Adult Education Quarterly
- 10) Proceedings of the International Symposium on Human Factors and Ergonomics in Health Care
- 11) The International Journal of Human Resource Management

So, in total 122 articles/proceedings and cases based on high and moderate relationship with training methods, On-the-job training and Off-the-job training. Finally, 45 articles are shortlisted based on their relevance (shown in Figure 1 and Table 1).

Figure 1: Diagrammatical Representation of Systematic Literature Survey



The areas concentrated by the different authors referred in the Table 1 are denoted with serial numbers 1 to 10 are as follows:

- 1) Learning/ motivation/ job training/ learning imbalance/ training needs/ stress/ commitment/ team building
- 2) Structured OJT/ On-Job-Training/apprentice training/in-service training
- 3) Training & development/classroom training/ e-learning/training methods/self-efficacy
- 4) Training effects/Forecasting Method for Training Effectiveness
- 5) Motivation to learn/training evaluation and its barriers/training performance
- 6) International HRD/cross-cultural/employee demographics
- 7) Salesforce management/ organization change/group dynamics
- 8) Informal methods training/part-task training/teaching methods
- 9) Off-job-training/Simulation methods/Role plays/Critical incidents/computer based training/outdoor training
- 10) Sales training/Diversity Training

Table 1 represents the key findings of the authors related to the training methods (on-job and off-job-training)

**Table 1: Terms and factors: Training methods; on-job and off-job-training (Systematic literature survey)**

S.No.	Reference Source	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Wen-Rou Huang & Ying-Ju Jao (2015)	√	√	√		√					
2	Wei-Wen Chang (2009)						√				
3	Steven W. Schmidt (2009)	√					√				
4	Kate Hutchings , Cherrie J. Zhu , Brian K. Cooper , Yiming Zhang & Sijun Shao (2009)			√			√				
5	Andrew Smith & Erica Smith (2007)			√							
6	Debby Bonnin , Tony Lane , Shaun Ruggunan & Geoffrey Wood (2006)						√				
7	Younghee Jessie Kong & Ronald Lynn Jacobs (2012)					√					
8	Barbara Ostrowski Martin, Klodiana Kolomitro, Tony C. M. Lam (2014)			√							
9	Lewis Z. Schlosser Heather Z. Lyons Regine M. Talleyrand Bryan S. K. Kim & W. Brad Johnson (2010)			√							
10	Brian J. Hurn (2011)						√			√	
11	GW MORRIS, EJ BEAK, D DENNINGTON (1972)		√								
12	H. Wayne Smith, John W. Morrison (1986)		√								
13	MALCOLM LEARY (1974)			√							
14	James Lowe (1991)	√								√	
15	Kamarul Zaman Ahmad and 1 Raida Abu Bakar 2 (2003)	√		√							
16	Waed Abdel Razzaq Ensour and Radwan Alyan Kharabsheh (2015)			√							
17	Anna Grohmann and Simone Kauffeld (2013)					√					
18	Pascal Kamphuis, Arie C. Glebbeek and Harm Van Lieshout (2010)			√							
19	W. Kent Anger, Jeff Stupfel, Tammara Ammerman, Alys Tamulinas, Todd Bodner and Diane S. Rohlman (2006)									√	
20	Bert M. Versloot, Jan A. Jong and Jo G.L. Thijssen (2001)		√								
21	Roger Harris, Michele Simons, Peter Willis and Pam Carden (2003)		√								
22	Makoto Matsuo (2014)		√							√	
23	Alan M. Saks (1994)			√							
24	Marcel R. Van Der Klink, Jan N. Streumer (2006)		√		√						
25	AAhad M. Osman-Gani, Wee-Liang Tan (2005)						√				
26	Brian A. Jacob and Lars Lefgren (2004)		√								
27	Bradford S. Bell , Adam M. Kanar & Steve W.J. Kozlowski (2008)			√						√	
28	Frank V. Cespedes Yuchun Lee (2017)			√				√			
29	Michael Beer Magnus Finnstrom Derek Schrader (2016)			√				√			
30	Larry J.B. Robinson (1987)									√	√

31	Victor Lipman (2016)	√									
32	Steve W. Martin (2012)										√
33	Peter Bregman (2012)										√
34	Jason R. Barro Aaron Zimmerman Brian J. Hall (2004)							√			
35	Franklin L. Moses (1994)	√		√				√			
36	Brenda Sitthidah, Justin St-Maurice (2016)			√		√					
37	Howard A. Sulkin (1972)								√		
38	Patricia L. McDermott, Thomas Carolan, Christopher D. Wickens (2016)								√		
39	Doug Briggs, Buck Cameron, Howard Johnson, Dave Wilkinson (1997)			√							
40	Paul Jones, Malcolm J Beynon, David Pickernell, Gary Packham (2013)	√		√							
41	John Burton (1958)								√		
42	Judith Scully Callahan, D. Scott Kiker, Tom Cross (2003)					√	√				
43	Edward D. Dawdy, John K. Hawley (1982)					√					
44	Bacon, Ellen H. (1988)										√
45	Kevin M. Bonney (2015)	√									√

**5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- a) To study the off-the-job lecture training method given to sales representatives during training period.
- b) To analyse the satisfaction levels of sales representatives who are exposed to off-the-job training methods.
- c) To suggest measures for improvement of skills and knowledge through off-job training methods.

**6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

For the purpose of this study the data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data was collected from various journals, websites and magazines for purpose of literature survey. The primary data was collected through personal interviews, this survey is done with a specific intention and on a specific subject, and observation. The information was collected during the period of June 2017 to October 2017. This study is conducted to know the opinions of the sales representatives who have completed their post-graduation (MBA and PGDM) on the current training system. The employees responded for the survey are below the age of 30 years. The Questionnaires is distributed to 350 employees of beverages industry. A valid sample size of 320 is considered for the current study with a response rate of 91.4%. The sample type is convenient sampling and the questions are designed to know the satisfaction of the respondents with likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The data has been analysed and tabulated with necessary interpretation.

**7. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:**

The study analysis the impact of Off-the-job training methods on sales representatives in beverages industry. The data collected has been analysed and the finding of the study are discussed in the paper. It is found that 98.43% respondents' are interested in participating in training programs.

**Table 2: Most preferred off-the-job training methods of Respondents (N= 320)**

S.No.	Off-the-job training methods	Acceptance (%)
1	Case Study method	19.06
2	Incident method	0.62
3	Role Play	8.12
4	In Basket method	3.12
5	Business games	6.25
6	Grid training	7.81
7	Lectures	1.56
8	Simulation	53.12
9	Management education	0.31
10	Conferences	0

Table 2 shows the analysis regarding the most preferred off-the-job training methods. The mostly preferred off-the-job training method by the respondents is simulation method with 53.12 percent. The second and the third highly accepted training methods are case study method (19.06 percent) and role play method (8.12 percent) respectively. The methods grid training (7.81 percent) and business games (6.25 percent) are also preferred by some respondents. The least accepted training methods are In basket method (3.12 percent), lecture method (1.56 percent), incident method (0.62 percent) and management education (0.31 percent). No respondent preferred the conferences method (0 percent) of training.

**Table 3: Respondents Satisfaction towards Off-the-job Training (Lecture Method)**

S.No.	Factors	Mean
1	Training and development helps in improving the quality of work	4.41
2	Work effectiveness of employees after attending training program	2.88
3	Recreation facilities provided in the organization	3.28
4	Employee motivation through training program	2.94
5	Competencies mapping during training	2.16
6	Superior identify the need for the training to the employees	3.36
7	Coordination of superiors with subordinates in clarifying doubts	2.72
8	Code of ethics in organization	4.43
9	Training given to employees on safety measures	3.27
10	Impact of training on group behaviour	2.89
11	Training programs for employees at the time of need for the technology	2.34
12	Prior intimation is given to employees regarding the standards	4.61
13	Exposure of skill and knowledge after attending training programs	2.69

Table 3 shows the mean values with reference to satisfaction of the respondents towards off-the-job training methods. Prior intimation is given to employees regarding the standards scored highest mean value of 4.61, followed by the variables code of ethics in organization ( $\mu=4.43$ ), training and development helps in improving the quality of work ( $\mu=4.41$ ). The respondents are also satisfied with the variables Superior identify the need for the training to the employees ( $\mu=3.36$ ), recreation facilities provided in the organization ( $\mu=3.28$ ) and training given to employees on safety measures ( $\mu=3.27$ ). The analysis shows that the respondents are having low satisfaction regarding, the exposure of skill and knowledge after attending training programs ( $\mu=2.69$ ), training programs for employees at the time of need for the technology ( $\mu=2.34$ ) and competencies mapping during training ( $\mu=2.16$ ). Finally it has been observed that respondents are satisfied with the awareness of off-the-job training programs whereas less satisfied with outcomes of the training (off-the-job methods).

## 8. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Most of the respondents feel that the lecture type of training method is not helpful to face the issues as the technology and consumer behaviour is changing at a lightning speed day by day. 98.4 percent of the sales representatives feel that training is mandatory to start a job in any organization and feels that training and development helps in improving the quality of work.

Majority of the respondents feel that intimation regarding standards of the organization being explained clearly, but such training which meets its standards is not given. Impact of lecture training method on group behaviour is very minimal. Most of them are unable to work in groups as they are not trained as how they can go along with group by providing with case studies or by creating virtual environment. As many as respondents argued that during their training, they are mostly driven towards achieving targets rather than making them aware of the safety measures/health hazards that may arise during the job.

As high as 80.30 percent people think that they should be provided with Case study, simulation, and role play trainings so that get exposed to real scenario, situations to face the challenges. Out of which nearly 53.12 percent sales representatives feel that simulation training method will help them to meet the standards of the organization and same time they feel that this training will help them to face new or existing challenges. Sales representatives also feel that they are hesitate to talk to their superiors about doubts, because as in “Lecture training” method speech is always from single person these sales representatives feel shy/dilemma to get doubts clarified. Whereas in “Simulation training” method it focuses on business awareness, time management and organization, team coordination, and problem solving.

## 9. CONCLUSION:

Few studies says that participants who are involved in traditional curriculum based training forget more than 80% of information that is taught during training within 90 days. Also, when someone hears the information, they remember nearly 10% of it three days later, whereas if they are taught using pictures the retention rate is 65 percent (Frank V. Cespedes Yuchun Lee, 2017).

Based on few studies and proceeding, this study may fill the gap that may be associated with off-the-job training methods. Instead of going for anyone of the training methods in off-the-job methods it will be advantageous if one can adapt of involving more than one training method from off-the-job methods, this prepares an individual to face challenges in contemporary scenario. The proposed feasible training module:



**Case Study (20%):** Case studies makes trainees to get exposed to past events and their respective decisions took in the events. Pictorial representation would also help trainees to remember for than just listening during training. Solution to be provided to the case studies, to face them if once again such situation arises. Material should be provided in order to refer and comeback if there are any doubts later on. Feedback can also be collected from the trainees.

**Role Play (15%):** Once the case studies are done, trainee gets and idea about how the industry is and the challenges faced by industry over years. Once trainee gets aware of the various business challenges, he/she should get exposed to internal and external organization behaviours, roles, cross-culture, and various other factors that prevail in multinational companies. One of the article from Harvard business review gives a good example about role play situations (Larry J.B. Robinson, 1987).

**Simulation (65%):** Once the person gets exposed to internal and external environments through case studies and role plays, as everything going digital in country like India, one needs be aware of changes in technology day to day. Especially in field like beverages, technology increases efficiency and production, saving time and money in the industry and decreases man made mistakes. So, in such scenario simulation training methods will allow trainees to purposely undertake high-risk activities and procedural tasks within a given safe environment under supervision. This method makes trainee to participate and learn from mistakes at the earliest.

Based on the study, one can infer that if a new training method is designed based on, 20% of their training concentrating on case studies, 15% on role plays and 65% in simulation based on the contemporary issues and challenges, may be a helpful training module for trainees and as well as organizational efficiency.

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