

**STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE TRAINING AND
DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE FOR CO-OPERATIVE BANK OF
KENYA**

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**A Management Research Project submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Award of Masters of Business Administration
(MBA) Degree, School of Business, University of Nairobi.**

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DECLARATION

This MBA research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signed.....

Date.....

WARUGURU ITUU

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.

Signed.....

Date.....

FLORENCE MUINDI

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I am truly grateful to all the people who assisted me in various ways in order to complete this study. First, I am very thankful to God for enabling me to be in good health and being able to carry out the project successfully.

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I would like to say a big thank you to my parents, Mr. Ituu Ngacha and Wangari Ituu whose support, love, belief, encouragement and prayer were invaluable and of great benefit to my successful completion of this project.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my family for their continued support, love and encouragement.

You all are a true blessing and I love you very much. Thank you and may God bless you abundantly.

ABSTRACT

Human resource development has served the needs of organizations to provide employees with up-to-date expertise. Critical business issues, from new marketing strategies to innovations in production technology, are based on, among other factors, the performance capabilities of those expected to use these new work systems. As a factor integral to business success, employee expertise has been expanded through effective programs of employee development. Co-operative bank of Kenya is a leading and dominant Kenyan bank with a strong countrywide presence. It has a network of 79 branches and 2,239 employees as at June 2010. To better its way of doing business and align to current practices including the statutory requirements, the bank's structures, processes and systems have continued to change. This research was conducted to establish the strategic human resource training and development practice that co-operative bank engages in so as to stay ahead of competition and to ensure optimum performance.

The researcher used case study design since the research is descriptive in nature. Both the primary and secondary sources of data were used to obtain information for the study. Respondents were three employees in the human resource development involves department in Co-operative bank. The questionnaires were administered through a face to face interview. The researcher used Content Analysis to analyze the data. This is because content analysis involves observation and detailed description of objects, or things, and the errors which occur during the study are easily detected and corrected.

The research findings show that Co-operative bank has a strategic plan which consists of among others a Strategic human resource training and development plan. This plan is for a period of five years but is reviewed annually to cater for any unexpected changes in the environment. The management believes that strategic human resource training and development plan plays a very big role in the achievement of the bank's strategic plan through providing employees with up to date expertise to meet present and future performance demands. It also assumes a vital role in shaping strategy and enabling the bank to take full advantage of emergent business strategies. According to the management, business success in the bank hinges on the bank's ability to use employee expertise as a factor in the shaping of business strategy. Co-operative bank uses the following methods to train and develop their staff; induction, coaching, job rotation, career development, transfer approach, project management, staff empowerment, learning organizations, communication, attachment, job involvement, job enrichment, tuition reimbursement programs, mentoring and performance management.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Human resource development has served the needs of organizations to provide employees with up-to-date expertise. Advances in human resource development models and processes have kept pace with the increasingly sophisticated information and production technologies that continue to diffuse throughout our nation's most vital industries (Swanson and Torraco 1994). During this period of rapid technological development, the human resource development function could be relied upon to support a broad range of business initiatives that require a competent workforce. Critical business issues, from new marketing strategies to innovations in production technology, are based on, among other factors, the performance capabilities of those expected to use these new work systems. As a factor integral to business success, employee expertise itself has been expanded through effective programs of employee development.

Expertise is defined as the optimal level at which a person is able and/or expected to perform within a specialized realm of human activity (Swanson 1994). In short, the development of workplace expertise through strategic human resource development has been vital to optimal business performance. The price waterhouse, Cranfield survey clearly showed that in several European countries great interest was expressed in the increased use of training for strategic purposes. The results revealed that personnel managers were using training more as a recruitment strategy. Garavan (1991) suggests that Irish organizations use a mixture of short term and long term considerations and are also prepared to invest in long-term considerations and are also prepared to invest in long

term training and development strategies. Quite a number of Kenyan companies invest in their employees and consider them to be a competitive advantage. However, due to high turnover of staff, most companies insist that employees commit to stay in the company for a certain number of years if they are trained using the organization's resources.

1.1.1 Concept of Strategic Human Resource Management

Strategic human resource management is a concept that integrates traditional human resource management activities within a firm's overall strategic planning and implementation. Strategic human resource management integrates human resource considerations with other physical, financial, and technological resources in the setting of goals and solving complex organizational problems. Strategic human resource management also emphasizes the implementation of a set of policies and practices that will build employee pool of skills, knowledge, and abilities that are relevant to organizational goals. Thus a larger variety and more complete set of solutions for solving organizational problems are provided and the likelihood that business goals of the organization will be attained is increased. According to Graham and Bennett (1998), the strategic approach to human resource management involves the integration of personnel and other human resource management considerations into the firm's overall corporate planning and strategy formulation procedures. It is proactive, seeking constantly to discover new ways of utilizing the labor force in a more productive manner thus giving the business a competitive edge. Strategic human resource management involves the development of a consistent, aligned collection of practices, programs and policies to facilitate the achievement of the organization's strategic objectives. It considers the implications of corporate strategy for all human resource systems within an

organization by translating company objectives into specific people management systems. The specific approach and process utilized will vary from organization to organization, but the key concept is consistent; essentially all human resource programs and policies integrated within a larger framework facilitating, in general, the organization's mission and, specifically, its objectives (Mello 2001).

1.1.2 Strategic Human Resource Training and Development

Garavan (1991) defines it as the strategic management of training, development and management/ professional education interventions aimed at facilitating the achievement of organizational goals, while at the same time ensuring the full utilization of the knowledge and skills of employees. Harrison (1992) argues that strategic human resource development involves the alignment of training and development activities with the organization's mission and strategic goals so that through enhancing the skills, knowledge, learning ability and motivation of employees at all levels, there will be continuous organizational as well as the individual growth. This view is supported by Beer and Spector (1989) who consider the differences between traditional training and development and strategic human resource development as follows; "Strategic human resource development can be viewed as a proactive, system-wide intervention, with it linked to strategic planning and cultural change. This contrasts with the traditional view of training and development as consisting of reactive, piecemeal interventions in response to specific problems." Roles of strategic human resource development include individual development, occupational development and organizational development.

The new business context characterized by stiff competition, advancing technology and globalization is prompting senior management to take a greater interest in the development of their organizations' human resources. When organizations are able to fully integrate human resource strategy with corporate strategy, they will be able to operate at optimum levels of performance and efficiency. The key to achieving this is for human resource managers to realize that strategic human resource development can provide three critical outcomes: increased performance, enhanced shareholder value and employee satisfaction. These outcomes can be achieved through effective management of the staffing, retention, and turnover processes; selection of employees that fit with both the organizational strategy and culture; cost-effective utilization of employees through investment in identified human capital with the potential for high return; integrated human resource programs and policies that clearly follow from the corporate strategy; facilitation of change and adaptation through a flexible, more dynamic organization; and tighter focus on customer needs, key and emerging markets and quality (Garavan, Costine and Heraty 1995).

Human resource development practice also needs to be well organized and planned as well as integrated into every aspect of the organization. Furthermore, human resource development practice needs to be focused on long-term goals and anchored to business strategy. Consequently, every intervention or initiative should be designed to help the organization achieve its targeted business results. Well-planned strategies cannot stand up indefinitely to the uncertainties of the market place. However, human competence is a stable and renewable resource upon which today's organizational strategies must be based if they are to remain viable. Human resource development professionals add a

valuable dimension to the strategic planning process by ensuring that planning is based on an accurate assessment of current and achievable levels of employee expertise. According to Mabey and Salaman (1995) there are four strategic purposes of training and development; recognition that training and development is a strategic priority rather than a tactical or knee jerk response, it acts as a catalyst for change-frequently associated with organizational leaders seeking to orchestrate cultural change amongst their workforce, attempt to give the organization a competitive edge both through the content of such activities and the way in which they are delivered and lastly encouraging a learning climate in the organization.

1.1.3 Strategic Human Resource Training and Development Practice

Human resource training and development practice is part of the systems and processes that are expected to be consistent with strategy. Human resource development function is growing in importance and influence due to; growing budgets that make human resource the greatest single expenditure in most organizations, consequences of improper and ineffective human resource practices, vast potential for using human resource to enhance productivity, improve quality, spur innovations, contain costs and satisfy customers and finally integration of human resource into the mainstream functions in the organization (Phillips 1996). Training is a systematic process of changing behavior, knowledge, and /or motivation of present employees to improve the match between employee characteristics and employment requirements (Milkovich and Boudreau 2000). Training activities provide experiences and learning opportunities in hopes of changing the abilities of individuals to better match job requirements.

According to (Wilson 2005), strategic human resource training and development practices include 360 – degree appraisal, personal development plans, job rotation, culture, employee involvement with decision making, training and development. Greer (1995) outlines the following training and development practices; apprenticeship programs, tuition-reimbursement programs, on the job training, job enrichment, autonomous work groups and lastly, organizational culture. According to Armstrong (2009), high performance culture is whereby values, norms and human resource practices of an organization combine to create a climate in which the achievement of high levels of performance is a way of life. Such practices include job re-design, autonomous work teams, improvement groups, high involvement work practices, performance appraisals.

1.1.4 Co-operative Bank of Kenya

Co-operative bank of Kenya is a leading and dominant Kenyan bank with a strong countrywide presence, playing a central role in the co-operative movement and providing relevant and innovative financial services to customers. It has a network of 79 branches and 2,239 employees as at June 2010. To better its way of doing business and align to current practices including the statutory requirements, the bank's structures, processes and systems have continued to change. In the last financial year, the bank made a profit before tax of shs. 3.74 billion which was a 11.2% increase from last financial year (Annual report 2009).

One of the core values of Co-operative Bank of Kenya is; To grow it's people. Co-operative bank believes that human capital is the most valuable asset of a great company and their employee retainment strategies are aligned along this mantra. Co-operative bank

strives to bring out the collective best as this is the art of winning in an increasingly competitive environment. They are committed to the development and success of team-members through first-class training, leadership building and skills enrichment. The bank encourages its people to commit themselves to lifelong learning in both their professional and personal endeavors. Towards this objective, the bank offers interest free education loans to employees for use in their preferred learning or certification program. The bank's training arrangement begins with an induction course for new staff which consists of knowledge on bank products, processes and general corporate culture characteristics. Thereafter, they undertake to grow talent through on-job training and off-job training programs both locally and abroad designed to meet specific skill requirements. Further, they have set up an e-learning facility and robust intranet that facilitates self-learning by bringing information right to the office desk (Annual report 2009).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Strategic human resource development is important because the high levels of employee expertise are inevitably required if organizations are to fully and quickly capitalize on emergent opportunities for business growth as strategy unfolds within a broader context of business development. Enhancing employee expertise through human resource development increases the likelihood that business objectives will be achieved (Jacobs and Jones, 1995). Strategic human resource development aligns the formal structure and human resource systems so that they drive the strategic objectives of the organization hence leading to a successful implementation of the strategy. In addition, it manages transformation and change in the organization, increases the employees commitment and

capability and management of firm infrastructure for instance re-engineering. (Brown and Read 1984) highlight the conviction of Japanese management that business success based on high standards of performance was dependent on a highly trained and developed workforce. They found that training and development policies were always constructed in the same context as business plans and strongly related to them.

Co-operative bank in a quest to stay ahead of competition practices strategic human resource development. The fundamental aim is to enhance resource capability in accordance with the belief that the human capital of an organization is a major source of competitive advantage. Hence, Co-operative human resource development department seeks to develop intellectual capital and promote organizational, team and individual learning by creating a learning culture. Co-operative bank faces many challenges which include; technology advancement in the industry, stiff competition especially due to globalization, currency fluctuations, political upheaval, poaching of staff by competitors, high employee turnover, trade-union issues. The capability of people to cope and manage within such an environment is a vital element in the success of any business and ultimately a determinant in a company's financial performance. The new business context is prompting senior management to take a greater interest in the development of their organizations' human resources (Garavan, Costine and Heraty 1995).

Pfeffer (1994) found a significant correlation between high commitment work practices such as employment security, high wages, employee ownership, information sharing, participation and empowerment, cross training and re-design of jobs and organization's performance. Owenga (2008) recommend that the competitive pressure facing organizations today require employees whose knowledge and ideas are current and whose

skills and abilities can deliver results. According to him, competitive training is very essential in organizations because it increases output since trained employees are likely to put more emphasis on their jobs thus improving on job satisfaction which produces better performance hence high productivity levels. Employee development programs clearly play a significant role in employee satisfaction. When that training is carried to the next level and becomes overall development, employees tend to feel valued by their employers. They are not only given the tools to do their jobs well, but they are also given opportunities to develop new skills and attain career goals. Companies that offer employee development programs enjoy the luxury of higher employee satisfaction.

An extensive review of literature shows a knowledge gap whereby strategic human resource training and development practices in Co-operative bank are not identified. The biggest challenge Co-operative bank faces is stiff competition from over forty commercial banks in Kenya. In addition, the telecommunication industry is also eating into the bank's market through the introduction of mobile banking. Nevertheless, Co-operative bank has been able to stay ahead of the competition by being amongst the top five commercial banks in Kenya. Hence, this research was conducted to establish the strategic human resource training and development practice that co-operative bank engages in so as to stay ahead of competition and to ensure optimum performance.

1.3 Objective of the Study

To establish strategic human resource development practice at Co-operative bank.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The research findings will be important to the human resource department in Co-operative bank, they will be able to establish if there are ways in which they can enhance the impact of strategic human resource department and also ensure optimization of their staff.

The research findings can be used by companies in the financial industry, for instance, commercial banks. It will enable such companies to be able to optimize their labour resources and achieve competitive advantage. Currently there is stiff competition in the industry and thus a company can be able to differentiate itself and obtain strategic advantage by investing in their human capital.

Scholars and organizations will also find the study important as it will increase to the body of knowledge in this area and can also be used as literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Strategic Human Resource Management

Human resource strategy of an organization refers to its fundamental approach toward its employees; the patterns of human resource decisions made by managers reflect strategies and are directly related to organizational and environmental conditions. The approaches to the separate human resource activities are integrated to provide a unified pattern to the employment relationship which is consistent with organization conditions and strategies. Human resource strategy positions the organization in relation to the pressures in its environment and guides managers' personnel decisions (Milkovich and Boudreau 2000). Strategic human resource management involves the development of a consistent, aligned collection of practices, programs and policies to facilitate the achievement of organization's strategic objectives. It considers the implications of corporate strategy for all human resource systems within an organization by translating company objectives into specific people management systems. The specific approach and process utilized will vary from organization to organization, the key concept is consistent; essentially all human resource programs and policies are integrated within a larger framework facilitating, in general, the organization's mission and specifically, its objectives. Establishing a strong human resource strategy that is clearly linked to the organization's strategy is not enough. Human resource strategy needs to be communicated, practiced and perhaps most importantly spelled out and written down (Mello 2001). Taking a strategic approach to human resource management involves abandoning the mindset and practices of "Personnel Management" and focusing more on strategic issues than

operational issues. Strategic human resource management involves making the function of managing people the most important priority in the organization and integrating all human resource programs and policies within the framework of a company's strategy. Strategic human resource management involves realizing that people make or break an organization because all decisions made regarding finance, marketing, operations or technology are made by an organization's people.

2.2 Human Resource Training and Development

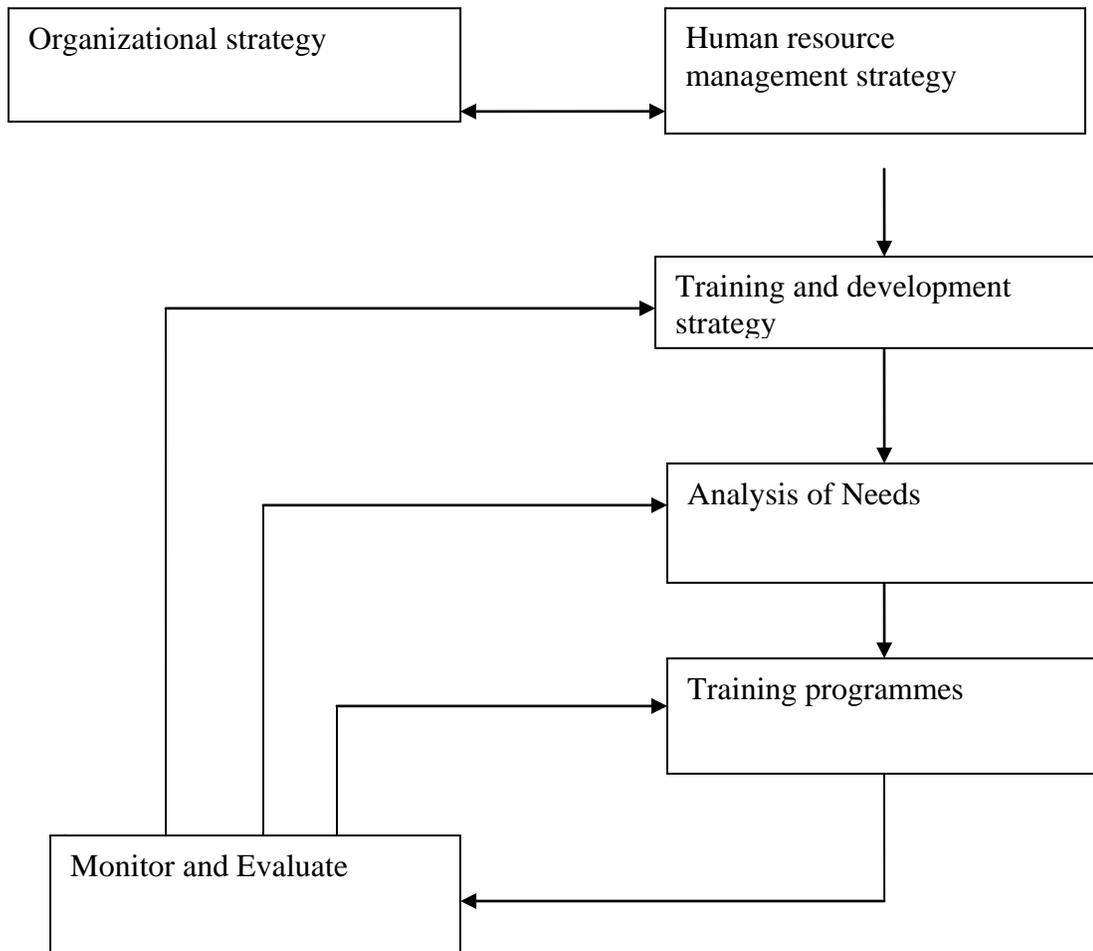
As an essential machinery of managing organizations, the human resource training and development function, is being looked at to provide effective solutions to many business problems. The following are some of the important strategic pressures relevant to human resource development involves activities; new technology, drive for quality, new competitive arrangements and globalization. Keep (1989) argues that the case for a strategic approach to training and development is easily made if human resource management is to have significant meaning. Bratton and Gold (1994) argue that a move to strategic human resource management involves is a powerful signal of a subsequent emphasis on human resource development involves. Garavan (1991) defines it as the strategic management of training, development and management / professional education interventions aimed at facilitating the achievement of organizational goals, while at the same time ensuring full utilization of the knowledge and skills of employees. Strategic human resource development can be viewed as a proactive, system wide intervention, with it linked to strategic planning and cultural change. This contrasts with the traditional view of training and development as consisting of reactive, piecemeal

interventions in response to specific problems. Human resource development can only be strategic if it is incorporated into the overall corporate business strategy. It is in this way that the human resource development function attains the status it needs to survive and to have a long term impact on overall business performance and respond to significant competitive and technological pressures.

Rothwell and Kazanas (1991) further elaborate on the differences between traditional training and strategic human resource development: strategic human resource development is more positive than traditional training. It advocates the involvement of many stakeholders rather than simply the training and development function acting as a provider. Strategic human resource development puts less emphasis on the role of experience. Traditional training activities provide individuals who are lacking in knowledge and skills with structured opportunities to receive the fruits of deskilled organizational experience. When viewed this way, training and development is a maintenance subsystem, intended to improve organizational efficiency by increasing routine and predictability of human behavior. It is appropriate to rely on experience if future events and situations will be similar to the past. However, experience is not always appropriate in preparing for the future. Strategic human resource development advocates that individuals should anticipate knowledge and skills needed in future rather than react after problems become apparent.

2.1.1 Creation of a human resource development plan

Training cycle based on a human resource development plan: Figure 1



Source: Beardwell and Holden (1994). Page 340, figure 9.1. A training cycle based on human resource development plan.

Whilst there are no set procedures which organizations should follow in creating a human resource development plan, the following eight points should act as a guideline; discern the training and development requirements from the organizational strategy and business objectives, analyze the training requirements for effective work performance in organizational functions and jobs, analyze the existing qualities and training needs of current employees, devise a human resource development plan which fills the gap between organizational requirements and the present skills and knowledge of employees, decide on the appropriate training and development methods to be used for individuals and groups, decide who is to have responsibility for the plan and its various parts, implement the plan and monitor and evaluate its progress and finally amend the human resource development plan in the light of monitoring / evaluation and changes in the business strategy (Beardwell and Holden 1994).

2.1.2 Human Resource Training Practice

The term training indicates the process involved in improving the aptitudes, skills and abilities of the employees to perform specific jobs. Training helps in updating old talents and developing new ones. Training is concern with improving the knowledge and skill in the present job (Ghosh 2000). The researcher noted that some of the practices doubled as training and also development practices. This depends on the size of the organization and its current needs. Major training practices are outlined below.

Coaching consists of the day-to-day feedback, instructions and advice provided by the employee's supervisor. This is a formal or casual regular sessions in which an experienced employee usually a manager, explains the job, asks the trainee questions to

test his or her knowledge and often exercise general supervision over the trainee to check that she is making correct use of the knowledge. The instruction is immediate, direct, inexpensive, convenient and allows two-way communication. Account may be taken of the trainee's special needs, and the pace of the instruction maybe varied (Graham and Bennett 1998). Orientation training is important because it provides the first real work contact with the company and the first opportunity for new employees to develop an understanding of the company's culture. Employees are introduced to company's values and norms when designing orientation programs, it's advisable to place greater emphasis on imparting the company's values to new employees with less emphasis being placed on details. Ghosh (2000) states that induction seeks to develop in the employee a sense of belonging and loyalty to the company, build a two-way channel of communication between the management and the workers and promote the informal relations with his co-workers.

Communication is an important training practice. Information sharing is an essential component of high performance work systems for two reasons (Pfeffer 1998). First, the sharing of information on things such as financial performance, strategy and operational measures conveys to the employees that they are trusted. Even motivated and trained people cannot contribute to enhancing organizational performance, and training on how to use and interpret that information. Secondly, information is power and sharing that information spreads that power. Now more than ever, business must rely on good communication across organizational boundaries. To promote innovation, business need to tap and share soft knowledge, insights, intuitions and hunches. Argenti (1998) stated that more than anything else, communication is key to getting workers become more

productive. Communication must be a two-way process rather than the traditional downward spiral communication. More interactions also give management more credibility with employees, which can be a tremendous asset in both good times and bad times.

Apprenticeship training programs combine on the job and off the job training. The apprentice commits to a period of training and learning that involves both formal classroom learning and practical on the job experience (Milkovich and Boudreau 2000). Apprentices or protégés build their careers from apprenticeships. Most of their training is done on the job while working for an employer who helps the apprentices learn their trade, in exchange for their continuing labour for an agreed period after they become skilled. Theoretical education may also be involved informally via the workplace and / or by attending vocational schools while still being paid by the employer.

Attachment is whereby an employee is attached to a different department for a specified period of time, to learn through on job training. Attachments help the human resource managers to evaluate the learning capability of the employee and if they fit in that department. It also exposes the employee to different tasks and duties hence increasing his skills and capabilities.

2.1.3 Human Resource Development Practice

Human Resource Development is a framework developed for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities. The focus of all aspects of Human Resource Development is on developing the most superior workforce so that

the organization and individual employees can accomplish their work goals in service to customers. According to Harrison (1992) development is a process through which individual and organizational growth can through time achieve its fullest potential. Development practices are outlined below.

Job involvement serves to increase employee commitment to their work and to their organization in order to facilitate workforce suitably. By creating an environment in which employees could have greater control over their work, managers also assumed that workers would become more committed to their jobs, thereby enhancing quality, safety and service (Kanter 1997). There are three general categories of employee participation programs: parallel suggestion involvement, job involvement and high involvement systems. These range in scope from simple suggestion boxes and improvement teams to joint goal setting and gain sharing. Employee involvement is designed for various functions such as; increase employee's trust and commitment to the organization, provide a forum through which employees can express their beliefs and attitudes about daily operations and lastly to enable employees to identify and solve problems so that they can improve their own performance.

Job enrichment practices, such as those building in increased responsibility or autonomy, knowledge of results, meaningful work, knowledge of how assigned tasks contribute to greater activity of the larger organization. Practices that enhance job latitude and job satisfaction have a positive impact on employee retention. According to (Ghosh 2000), job enrichment constitutes an increase in the variety of tasks performed by an employee for the purpose of reducing monotony and fully utilizing the potential skills and

capabilities of the individual and allowing the worker more freedom and responsibility in the performance of his job. Such changes permit more social contacts and greater control over the work process. The purpose of job enrichment is to eliminate undesirable characteristics of highly repetitive specialized job and enlarging the concept of the job.

According to Ghosh (2000), empowerment is the concept of giving people more responsibility for how they do their own job. It is concerned with more involvement in decision making. Empowerment is a process to increase efficiency and make greater use of each individual's contribution. It implies synergy – the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts. It requires creation of a culture which both encourages people at all levels to feel they can make a difference and helps them to acquire the confidence and skills to do so. Empowerment can be of three types: suggestion involvement – employees are encouraged to contribute ideas through formal suggestion programs, job involvement – jobs are re-designed so that employees use a variety of skills, high involvement – information about all every aspect of business is shared horizontally across organizations as well as up and down the structure. Autonomous work groups are another form of employee empowerment. A self managing team enlarges individual jobs to include a wider range of operative skills (multi-skilling), decides on methods of work and the planning, scheduling and control of work, distributes tasks itself among its members and monitors its performance taking corrective action when required. This approach takes into account the social or group factors and the technology as well as the individual motivators (Armstrong 2009).

Learning organizations emphasizes the contribution that each individual employee can make to the overall impact of the organization, whether in profit making or social terms (Wilson 2005). Pedler, Boydell and Burgoyne (1989) defines learning organizations as one which facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself. This definition contains an individual and an organizational change element. Individual learning is necessary but not sufficient for organizations to learn. Organizations now need to be able to impact upon their environment as well as adapt to the changes taking place (Mintzberg 1979). He showed how organizations succeed in affecting the circumstances in which they have to operate for example, their clients and local and government policies. Senge (1990) states that learning organizations is whereby people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. The learning organization is a process rather than a state, something on which all members of an organization have to work all the time, yet which can never be fully utilized.

Job rotation seeks to provide a broad view of the organization and as a result may involve inter-departmental of cross functional assignments. Use of job rotational programs is positively correlated with company size. Advantages of job rotation include development of generalist, avoiding overdependence on supervisors. Strategic advantage is that such programs develop a pool of managers who have been exposed to an area of the business who can then provide management talent in the event that there is an unexpected or sudden increase in the level of business in that area (Greer 1995).

Role modeling is one of the best methods of developing new managers since the effective managers teach them. The role model sets a good example of how to be a manager, answers questions and explains why things are done the way they are. It is the manager's obligation to help the manager-trainee make the proper contacts so that the job can be learned easily and performed well (Milkovich and Boudreau 2000). Research on the role modeling approach stresses that if the trainees are to develop, the superior must delegate enough authority to let them make decisions and even mistakes. A climate for learning not only provides opportunities to learn, but also encourages a feeling of mutual confidence. Appropriately chosen task-force and special assignments are often used as a form of coaching and counseling by a role model.

Tuition reimbursement programs is designed to support employee development by defraying partial costs for employees who are participating in certificate or degree programs that are related to their current job assignments or to identifiable positions in a career development plan (Greer 1995). The program provides up to 90% of current tuition costs for accredited, comparable programs. The Program is intended to assist employees who have invested in their own career development. Program funds are limited and do not fully reimburse employees for their expenses, especially those participating in higher cost programs, for instance doctorate programs.

Mentoring is usually used for training managers and professionals according to Greer (1995). Many of the subtle skills needed to advance to the highest level positions are learnt through mentoring relationships. Aside from providing viable role models, candid feedback, instruction, insights into the company politics, advice and other support.

Mentors also serve in other valuable capacities. Mentors are frequently in the position of sponsors who help their protégés gain visibility and responsibility. Potential benefits of mentoring include enhanced employee motivation, job performance, and organizational culture. People learn what is expected of them and what is reasonable to expect from the organization. Mentors themselves receive valuable feedback on what is happening at lower levels.

Project management can be defined as managing and directing time, material, personnel and costs to complete a particular project in an orderly and economical manner, and to meet established objectives in time, money, value and technical results. This is a management development program whereby employees who have the potential to become managers are identified and given a particular assignment to manage within the organization. This may be a task force or a small project that the organization is engaging in. Such assignments are given to assess the manager's capability and management skills. It is also used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the individual so as to know which areas to train him on.

Performance management means the integration of employee development with results-based assessment. It encompasses performance appraisal, objective setting for individuals and departments, appropriate training programs, and performance related pay. Appraisal of managers by their subordinates, peers and people in other departments (perhaps even customers) might also be included in the scheme (Graham and Bennett 1998). Performance management systems need not be formal in order to be effective. The most important concern in designing a performance management system is its fit

with the organization's strategic objectives and the most important concern in providing performance related feedback is its fit with the organization's culture. An effective performance management process can be conceptualized as one that connects three time periods. It utilizes data about the past performance to set goals, plans and objectives for the present that should result in high levels of performance in the future (Mello 2001).

Career development refers to a formal approach used by the firm to ensure that people with proper qualification and experiences are available when needed. Career development benefits both employees as well as organizations, as properly developed employees are better equipped to add value to themselves and to the company. Organizations can devise and implement several initiatives in order to develop their employees' careers. More significant of them are career planning workshops, career counseling, mentoring, personal development plans and career workbooks (Aswathappa 2008). Career development is an important way to utilize a vast supply of untapped human resource potential. A growing number of organizations are creating full-fledged career development program. The most important point to remember about career development activities is that they are an ideal way to integrate the needs of employees with goals of the organizations. The person has need for challenge, job satisfaction and growth. The organization needs to tap the creative potential of all its employees to a far greater extent than ever before.

Transfer approach is whereby trainees are rotated through a series of jobs to broaden their managerial experience. The jobs typically involve exposure to a variety of functions, product lines and geographic areas. Advocates of transfers content that; this approach

broadens the manager's back ground, accelerates the promotion of highly competent individuals, introduces new ideas into the organization, and increases organization effectiveness (Milkovich and Boudreau 2000).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The researcher used case study design since the research is descriptive in nature. This is because case study investigation was able to make a detailed examination of the subjects.

3.2 Data collection

Both the primary and secondary sources of data were used to obtain information for the study. Secondary data used included the training and development plan, strategic plan and circulars of Co-operative bank. Primary data was obtained through a semi structured interview guide, comprising of open ended and closed questions. Respondents were three employees in the human resource development involves department in Co-operative bank. The respondents were the head of man power planning and development in Co-operative bank, his assistant and a human resource development officer. The researcher picked three respondents because the data to be collected will be similar, and thus the two respondents are to enable the researcher to check data for accuracy and get additional information. The questionnaires were administered through a face to face interview.

3.3 Data analysis and presentation

Before analysis, the data collected was checked for completeness and consistency. The researcher used Content Analysis to analyze the data. This is because content analysis involves observation and detailed description of objects, or things, and the errors which occur during the study are easily detected and corrected.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Data was collected from Co-operative bank, Man power planning and development department. The researcher used an interview guide to conduct face to face interviews with three correspondents who included; the chief manager, Man power planning and development; senior manager, Man power planning and development and a human resource development officer. The researcher also used secondary sources of data which included Co-op's annual report, training plan, circulars and human resource development policies.

4.2 Human Resource Strategic Plan

Co-operative Bank of Kenya Ltd has a human resource strategic plan which is reviewed annually. The man power planning and development is responsible for writing up a human resource strategic plan. The human resource committee chaired by the human resource director reviews the plan and amends it to suit the current needs of the company and to factor in environmental changes in the market. The department bases the human resource strategic plan on the overall strategy of the bank whereby they forecast human resource needs depending on the strategic needs of the organization. The management of the bank communicates organization's plans and performance to the employees through circulars, email, meetings and also through the departmental heads.

4.3 Human Resource Training and Development

Co-operative bank determines the training and development needs of the workforce by conducting a needs analysis whereby they consider the following: business needs of the bank; user analysis whereby the potential participants learning style and existing knowledge are identified; work analysis which seeks to identify the main duties and skills level required to ensure that the training developed will include relevant links to the content of the job; content analysis whereby they analyze the manuals, documents, policies and procedures used on the job; training sustainability analysis to find out if training is the desired solution and if it will be effective in its usage; cost-benefit analysis whereby human resource development determines if training was effective by comparing the training returns to the initial investment of produce or administer the training. The Co-op strategic human resource training and development assist in the achievement of the company's strategic plan through providing employees with up to date expertise to meet present performance demands, strategic human resource development in Co-operative bank has kept pace with the increasingly sophisticated information and production technologies that continue to diffuse throughout the banking industry. It also assumes a vital role in shaping strategy and enabling the bank to take full advantage of emergent business strategies. Business success increasingly hinges on the bank's ability to use employee expertise as a factor in the shaping of business strategy.

4.4 Human Resource Training and Development Practice

The bank has an induction program for its entire new staff. This is whereby the new staff are familiarized with the bank's products, values, culture, its history, vision and mission.

It is also an opportunity for the new staff to meet with key people in the bank, for instance the directors and senior managers. During induction, the main emphasis is change. It often includes the relinquishing of certain attitudes, values and behaviors. The new staff is taught the basic goals of the organization, the preferred means by which those goals should be attained, the basic responsibilities of the job, the required behavior patterns for effective performance, and a set of rules. Co-operative bank has a standard induction program for all the entry level staff, that is, Graduate Trainees who will be posted to work in the branches. It also has a different induction program for people joining the bank at management level. This is because the new managers are specialists whose opinion is highly regarded and they need to understand and easily comprehend the bank's functions and products.

Coaching is only used for the entry level employees in the bank. This is done immediately after induction when the new staff are posted to their respective work places. Here, the staff meets with their line manager and discusses the expectations of the job. The manager then holds periodic formal coaching sessions with the staff, he then assesses the results of the staff performance and compares them to the performance plan. Finally he makes feedback on performance and sits with the staff to develop ideas on how their performance can be maintained or improved. Coaching usually takes a period of six months and thereafter the manager decides if the employee is the best fit for the job depending on his performance.

Job rotation is used both to train and develop employees in the bank. It is mostly used in the bank's branches whereby the manager rotates all his / her employees to ensure

continuity of work if one of the staff is absent. This ensures that every employee in the branch can competently handle work in any of the sections in the branch. The bank also uses job rotation to prepare staff to take greater tasks. For instance, auditors are first rotated in all the departments in the bank before they can be confirmed, Branch managers are also rotated through all the departments of the bank before they are assigned a branch to manage. This ensures that they create networks and also they understand the process flow of the support departments. This is advantageous as it makes the branch managers realistic in their demands to the support departments. It also enables them to be more confident in their work and when talking to customers since they understand the bank dealings at a greater level.

Career development is a continuous process in Co-operative bank. The management encourages people to consciously make an effort towards personal development. This is done through offering all staff interest free educational loans, flexible working hours to the staff who are schooling, tuition fee reimbursement for those people who study something relevant to their current job. The management also ensures career development by recruiting for management jobs from within so that the existing employees can grow. The bank's management also tries to ensure that all staff are placed in relevant departments considering their qualifications.

Transfer approach is also a training practice in Co-operative bank. The human resource department is at discretion to transfer any member of staff without notice so as to meet the business demands. Transfers enable people to adapt to different cultures and regions. This creates a team of employees who are diverse such that they can deal with staff from

other cultures and regions and get to appreciate the diversity viewing it as a strength. As part of a human resource policy by the bank, no employee is posted to work at his home village. This is because of family ties that may interfere with their course of work and also they may be lenient when it comes to lending policies since they are dealing with people that they know.

Project management is a development practice used by the bank to develop senior managers or to establish if some staff are able to handle greater responsibilities to a successful end. A staff is given a project to manage and oversee implementation and depending on how well they perform on the job, they can be given a job which has greater responsibilities and authority. The bank uses project management training activities to help participants understand and practice the project management techniques. They gain experience working in the various projects they do. A project is a temporary endeavor which has a defined beginning and an end. The specific manager is tasked with planning, organizing, securing and managing resources to bring it to successful completion. The only challenge is that the projects can be very sensitive and using them for training and developing can be expensive and can expose the bank to certain risks. Hence, Co-operative bank only uses project management to further develop the senior most managers who are conversant with the banks dealings and functions.

Staff empowerment is also used by the bank to enable employees to make independent autonomous decisions. In empowering the employees, the bank attempts to create a nurturing environment in which staff can learn, grow, improve and function effectively. Staff empowerment gives employees a sense of trust, importance and capability thus

creating a positive work environment. This empowerment necessitates guidelines for the conduct of whatever role staff members occupy. Co-operative bank practices empowerment by engaging staff in ways that promote personal and professional growth. This is usually done by availing interest free educational loans to staff to develop themselves by undertaking professional courses. In addition, the bank's management involves the staff while making any changes that will affect them, e.g. change in working hours, change of banking system.

Co-operative bank adopted the learning organization's approach whereby they continually seek to improve existing products and services and innovation. This is usually through business process engineering whereby the bank evaluates and improves its way of doing things. This approach provides the bank with flexibility to cope with dynamically changing situations. The learning organization criteria has been adopted to involve the development of higher levels of knowledge and skill. The bank practices it through: learning facts, knowledge, processes and procedures, learning new job skills that are transferable to other situations by bringing in outside expertise, learning to adapt due the current dynamic environment and finally, learning to learn by emphasizing on innovation and creativity amongst its staff.

The bank uses communication channels are clearly defined. Communication is used as a training and development practice so that employees can always be clear about the happenings of the company when dealing with customers or other stake holders of the bank. The main goal of the communication practice is to improve customer relations, increase employee satisfaction and most importantly enhance company's

competitiveness. The departmental heads are expected to hold meetings with their teams on a monthly basis to brief them about the Board of Management meetings, concerns raised and other bank matters. In addition to departmental meetings, there is a monthly report about the banking industry zeroing in on Co-operative bank and its plans and developments. Other communication channels used include circulars, memos, staff magazines and emails.

The bank also uses attachment to train its employees. Attachment is at two levels in the bank. Firstly, the bank provides attachments to continuing students in universities so that they can familiarize themselves with the banking industry. This helps them determine their career options and choices depending with their experience in the bank. The bank also utilizes attachment with the existing staff who want to be transferred to a new department. These employees are attached to the new departments on a part time basis, for instance, afternoons whereby they go learn the work there for a period of three months and then they can determine if they really want to be transferred. The human resource also uses that opportunity to evaluate the staff's performance and if they can add any value to that department if they are transferred.

Job involvement is used as a development practice whereby the bank increases the staff's morale and commitment by involving them when changing the job processes that involve them. Co-operative bank also has an open door policy whereby the staff are free to make any suggestions to the manager about job improvements, there is also an online site whereby staff can give anonymous suggestions. In addition, the management encourages to raise any issues about their jobs during the departmental meetings and in the course of

their jobs. In addition, the employees are given greater control over how to do their jobs as long as the results are excellent and ethical.

Job enrichment is used as a development practice by the bank whereby staff are allocated additional responsibilities and duties in their jobs depending with their capability. The additional duties may be administrative or related to the current work being done. This is a motivating factor to the staff since they perceive the employer has trusted them with extra responsibilities. In addition, it helps the employees grow and increase their expertise and also enable them to handle greater tasks in the future. Job enrichment is practiced at all levels in Co-operative bank, that is, for managers and all other staff. The discretion on job enrichment lies with the line manager.

Tuition reimbursement programs have been in place since the bank began its operations. It's both a training practice and also a development practice. It is a training practice in the sense that once an employee takes up a course relevant to his work, the bank compensates them the costs incurred. Thus, this is an incentive for people to sharpen their skills in their current jobs. It is a development practice in the sense that staff use this opportunity to do courses and increase their knowledge and skills thus giving them an edge. In case of future jobs in the organizations, such employees will stand a bigger chance.

Mentoring is largely used to train new staff at Co-operative bank. The young staff's joining at entry level are each allocated a mentor to guide them throughout the probationary period which is usually six months. The mentor is then tasked with orienting the staff on the job, office politics and culture. In addition, they are supposed to

write a progress report to human resource about the new staff. This usually has a performance chart which has the key skills and abilities required to do the job and the major tasks involved. The mentor then remarks if the mentee is learning and catching up and gives recommendations on what can be done to improve his skills and capabilities. This practice is highly successful in Co-operative bank especially because it gives the new staff a link to the organization whereby they socialize with the mentor both formally and informally thus helping the mentee to settle in and feel as part of the organization.

Performance management is used to develop employees at Co-operative bank. This involves setting of objectives at the beginning of the year which is done by every employee of the bank together with their respective line managers. These objectives are then summarized into measurable targets which the employee endeavors to achieve. These targets are then evaluated every quarter of the year. This is usually done through comparing the set targets and the actual results. The performance appraisal in Co-operative bank measures the key pillars of the bank which include; customer focus, financial pillar, people pillar, risk and control. The employee then rates himself or herself. After that, the staff sits to discuss the ratings with the line manager and these ratings maybe modified depending on the agreement made. After that, the completed document is forwarded to human resource division. The results of the performance appraisal can be outstanding, on-track or off-track. These results are used by human resource division when allocating yearly bonuses to employees.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The research findings show that Co-operative bank has a strategic plan which consists of among others a Strategic human resource training and development plan. This plan is for a period of five years but is reviewed annually to cater for any unexpected changes in the environment. Hence, the review is done to factor in environmental changes. The review is done by a human resource committee which is chaired by the Human resource director. The management believes that strategic human resource training and development plan plays a very big role in the achievement of the bank's strategic plan through providing employees with up to date expertise to meet present and future performance demands. It also assumes a vital role in shaping strategy and enabling the bank to take full advantage of emergent business strategies. According to the management, business success in the bank hinges on the bank's ability to use employee expertise as a factor in the shaping of business strategy. The man power planning and development department of the bank determines the training and development needs by conducting a needs analysis through factoring in the business needs of the bank, staff analysis, work analysis, content analysis, training sustainability analysis and cost-benefit analysis.

The bank uses various methods to train and develop its staff. The researcher also found out that some practices double up as training practices and also as development practices. This depends with the level of staff being trained and the objectives of the training. The

methods used by co-operative bank include: induction, coaching, job rotation, career development, transfer approach, project management, staff empowerment, learning organizations, communication, attachment, job involvement, job enrichment, tuition reimbursement programs, mentoring and performance management. The bank does not use apprenticeship as a training practice nor does it use role modeling. The methods which double up as training and development practice include; job rotation, transfer approach, staff empowerment, job involvement and tuition reimbursement programs.

5.2 Conclusion

Strategic human resource training and development practice is key to every organization today. It is especially important to companies which face stiff competition in the industry. The banking industry in Kenya is very vibrant with over forty commercial banks. These banks offer the same products and services and also use the same information systems to conduct their businesses. Hence, their greatest challenge is to differentiate themselves from competitors and develop a competitive advantage that will enable them stay ahead of competition. Some of the strategies used by these banks in the past include: cost reduction strategies, diversification, acquisition and mergers and expansion of branch network. All the above strategies work for the specific banks for a particular period but with time, they are adopted by the competitors and thus they stop being a competitive advantage.

The human resource of a company is unique to that company and can easily be transformed to a competitive advantage. This can be achieved when companies consider their staff as an investment which will bring back good returns to the business. By

having strategic human resource training and development practice in place, the bank is able to develop their staff and keep them up to date so that they are able to handle the market changes that include; globalization, increased competition, technology advancement, e-commerce etc. In addition, strategic human resource training and development practice enable the organization to have continuous development which can lead to a high performance work place. This is because the plan outlines ways in which to train and develop staff, the methods to use having factored in market demands and factors such as technology advancement and other changes using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. In addition, strategic training and development enables staff to be alert and increases innovations and new ideas in the company.

5.3 Recommendations

Co-operative bank should respond to the globalization of the market by practices such as outsourcing expertise trainers to train and develop their staff. This will be beneficial to the bank in that they will get new ideas from experts who have studied the industry, different perspective and approach, reduce monotony and also enable the bank to focus on their key business because the training and development issues are being well handled. Secondly, the bank should review the courses offered to staff every so often so as to cater for emerging demands and concerns. Commercial banks and other financial institutions can also use this report to streamline their training and development practice and ensure that they gain competitive advantage in the industry by investing in their staff and thus gaining a competitive advantage. Companies should ensure that they develop their staff

and manage their systems to match with today's market. This can be achieved through automating processes, business re-engineering and continuously developing their staff. Researchers can conduct further research to establish the specific benefits of having a strategic training and development practice in an organization.

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APPENDIX 1
INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Name _____
Designation _____
2. Does your organization have a HR strategic plan?
Yes ()
No ()
3. If your answer to the first question is yes, how often does your organization review its HR strategic plan?
Quarterly ()
Semi-Annually ()
Annually ()
Every two years ()
Others (specify) _____
4. Does your organization have a strategic human resource training and development plan in place?
Yes ()
No ()
5. If yes, how long has strategic human resource training and development been in place for your organization?
Less than 1 year ()
1-2 years ()
3-4 years ()
5 years and above ()
6. In your own opinion, does strategic human resource training and development assist in the achievement of the company's strategic plan?
Yes ()
No ()
7. How does your organization determine the training and development needs of the workforce?

8. How do you communicate organization's plans and performance to the employees?
Email ()
Circular placed on notice boards ()
Verbally during departmental meetings ()
All the above ()
Others, specify _____

SECTION B
Training and Development Practices

9. Do you practice coaching
Yes ()

- No ()
10. If yes, when do you coach staff and how is it done
-
-
11. Does your organization conduct job rotation?
- Yes ()
No ()
12. If you answered yes to the above question, how is job rotation done in your organization?
-
-
13. Does your organization engage in the career development of your employees?
- Yes ()
No ()
14. How do you ensure career development of your employees?
-
-
15. Does your organization practice apprenticeship?
- Yes ()
No ()
16. If yes, how do you conduct apprenticeship?
-
-
17. Does your organization practice the transfer approach for development of your staff?
- Yes ()
No ()
18. If yes, how is transfer approach done?
-
-
19. Does your organization use project management to develop your staff?
- Yes ()
No ()
20. If yes, how is it conducted and to who?
-
-
21. Does your organization use role modelling as a development practice?
- Yes ()
No ()
22. If yes, how is it practiced?
-
-
23. Does your organization empower its staff as a development practice?
- Yes ()
No ()

24. If yes, how does your organization empower its staff?

25. Would you refer to your organization as a “learning organization”?

Yes ()

No ()

26. Please give reasons for your answer above

27. Does your organization engage in job enrichment practices such as building increased responsibility so as to develop your staff?

Yes ()

No ()

28. How is job enrichment done in your organization?

29. Does your organization engage in job enrichment practices?

Yes ()

No ()

30. How is job enrichment done in your organization?

31. Which other training practices does your organization engage in?
