

Developing Action-Plan Training Model to Enhance Employee's Competencies: A Hotel Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Hundreds of hours and millions of dollars are spent to train employees every year in the organization, however, little empirical evidence can be found to demonstrate the transfer of training in workplaces. This study represents a case study in hotel industry in which a model for the transfer of training knowledge, Action-Plan Training Model, is examined. Theoretical analysis and multiple data collection methods were used to answer questions regarding the training processes and the utilization of Action-Plan Training Model for twelve months following the program. Five principal research methods, interview, focus groups, questionnaires, observations and documentary analyzes, were used to cast a wide net to ensure that the highest quality data are collected. The results showed that the Action-Plan Training Model highly effective contributes to employee performance.

Keywords: ODI, Knowledge, Knowledge Transfer, Training, Action-Plan Training Model

บทคัดย่อ

หลายร้อยชั่วโมงและหลายล้านดอลลาร์ถูกใช้จ่ายไปกับการฝึกอบรมพนักงานในองค์กรทุกปี แต่มีเพียงส่วนน้อยที่สามารถแสดงให้เห็นถึงการถ่ายทอดการฝึกอบรมในสถานที่ทำงาน การศึกษาครั้งนี้แสดงให้เห็นถึงกรณีศึกษาในอุตสาหกรรมโรงแรมในรูปแบบการถ่ายทอดความรู้ในการฝึกอบรมและการดำเนินการแผนฝึกอบรม การวิเคราะห์เชิงทฤษฎีและวิธีการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลหลายรูปแบบได้ถูกนำมาใช้ในการตอบคำถามเกี่ยวกับกระบวนการฝึกอบรมและการใช้ประโยชน์ของการดำเนินแผนฝึกอบรมตลอดระยะเวลาสิบสองเดือน โดยใช้วิธีการวิจัยที่สำคัญห้าแบบคือ การสัมภาษณ์ การระดมสมอง แบบสอบถาม การสังเกต และการวิเคราะห์เอกสารถูกนำมาใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลโดยรวมเพื่อให้การรวบรวมข้อมูลที่มีคุณภาพสูงสุด ผลการศึกษาพบว่า การฝึกอบรมช่วยให้การปฏิบัติงานของพนักงานมีประสิทธิภาพสูงขึ้น

INTRODUCTION

Hotels around the world are facing new challenges ahead. The recession is a blip in a market faced with more long-term challenges and uncertainties. There are many important challenges happening to hotel industry. First is a shortage of skilled employees. One of the greatest challenges plaguing the hospitality industry is the unavailability of quality workforce in different skill levels. The hospitality industry has failed to retain good professionals. Second is an intense competition. The increasing competition in this industry is very intense since there are many new comers, higher products' quality and better service standards, and also competition from other countries around Thailand. Third, customer expectations: nowadays guests' expectations are increasing hotels have to focus on their loyalty customers, retain existing customers, and make sure the services that provide to guests are at least meet their expectations. There is a growing need for individuals within hotel industry globally to improve and develop their accelerated learning how to receive new knowledge and learn for knowing what to know, as an essential workplace competence. Increasing this competence can support an improvement in the effectiveness of the organization, team, and individuals.

Nowadays Asia is a new destination of tourists all around the world. Tourism industry helps to generate a significant amount of revenue to countries in Asia, create jobs, and finally cause the positive economic growth. Traveling in Asia becomes very famous, especially for Thailand when a nicely positioned brand of "Amazing Thailand" has been advertised to attract not only for American and European tourists but also Asian and Middle East tourists. Consequently, there has been an increasing demand of trained, skilled, and knowledgeable people to be ready for the growing needs of the expansion of the travel and tourism industry in Thailand. Employees need to change themselves to be more knowledgeable and professional in order to meet the changes happening in hotel

industry and they need to rethink new ways to accomplish those challenges.

One of the most important factors that have a big impact on driven organizational success is knowledge and the capability to transfer it among employees within organizations (Girdauskiene & Savaneviciene, 2007) and achieve sustainable long-term competitive advantage (Davenport & Prusak, 2000; Nonaka, 1994). Therefore, in this era of competition, there are needs of developing efficient means for creating new knowledge, transferring knowledge, and integrating knowledge, which are most suited to needs of customers in individual hotel in each location.

ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT

In order to assess the organization, SWOT analysis method is used as the assessment tool for this survey. It shows the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats of hotel.

Strengths

- Experience in hotel industry—as hotel has been in the business for more than 15 years in Chiang Mai. Four Seasons' administrators can consider their experience to run hotel and be able to compete other hotels in the business.
- Brand positioning—it's strategy
Focuses on the development of luxury brand at a premium price supported by innovative marketing, attractive rooms and landscape, and best services that makes an emotional connection and valuable experience with guests.
- Four Seasons Culture—it's philosophy and its core service standards are in offering only experiences of exceptional quality. They create properties of enduring value using superior design and finishes, and support them with a deeply instilled ethic of personal service.

Weaknesses

- Old-fashion lecture based—learning development plan has not been much changed to focus on needs of

hotel's business, especially its local business and competitions. What hotel has so far is traditional learning plan model, which has been used since 1994.

- Lack of commitment to apply new knowledge—management team claimed that their employees hardly understand when learning manager or management team delivered new knowledge, which is not related to what employees traditionally do it for their own work.

- Not open to change because of the success in the past—numbers of rewards hotel received in the past obstruct hotel to seriously continuously increase their current level of service quality, employee's business acumen, learning strategy, and willing to change for better outcomes.

Opportunities

- Dynamic growth in emerging markets—improving economic conditions, developing infrastructures, the development of city of Chiang Mai and growing tourism are driving strong growth in emerging markets such as India and China.

- Thai guests—if a hotel repositions itself to focus more on local guests, it can create more reputations in Thailand and create more revenues eventually.

- To acquire more loyal guests—since the company already has developed a solid core of repeat customers, these clients are almost expected to recommend the Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai to their family, friends, colleagues, and business associates.

Threats

- Consumer confidence—general economic, political situations in Thailand and business conditions which adversely impact the income levels of potential travelers coupled with a rising lack of confidence in strong markets can have a negative impact on hotel.

- Potential downturns in travel—rising fuel prices, environmental concerns, political instability, terrorist threats in South and economic downturns all have the potential to dampen the performance of tourism flows and, consequently, the performance of travel accommodation as a whole.

- Increasing numbers of direct and indirect competitors: Several international majors hotel are established in the Chiang Mai markets. Other hotels such as boutique hotels and home-stay hotels are also increasing tremendously.

SWOT's analysis shows that this hotel lacks of commitment to learn, adapt, and use new knowledge in order to face challenges that already existed and new challenges that will occur in the future. This organization needs new learning tool to support this serious challenge.

The focus of this study is on the impact of knowledge transfer method on staff's performance (knowledge, skills/abilities, and behavior). Therefore, training transfer concept and knowledge transfer are the foundation of this research.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to focus on the following objectives:

- to analyze current organization's situation regarding the effective of knowledge transfer

- to build an organization development intervention in explaining how to develop and implement effective knowledge transfer technique

- to analyze and develop a richer understanding of developing effective knowledge transfer, Action-Plan Training Model, in an organization.

- to determine the impact of knowledge transfer on employee's competency to receive, create, and apply what they learn in training to their job.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1: What are the methods to create success in knowledge transfer in Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai?

Q2: What is the impact of implementing action-plan training model in the organization?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1: Action-Plan Training Model has no impact on employee's performance (Knowledge, skills, personality and attitude)

H2: Action-Plan Training Model has an impact on employee's performance (Knowledge, skills, personality and attitude)

LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The transfer of knowledge within organizations has been called knowledge transfer (Szulanski, 1995), knowledge acquisition (Lyles & Salk, 1996), learning (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998), knowledge inflows/outflows (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000) and knowledge integration (Grant, 1996; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). Ko *et al.* (2005) mentions that knowledge transfer has been described in several views. For example, some researchers take an exchange view by defining knowledge transfer as "dyadic exchanges of organizational knowledge between a source and a recipient unit in which identity of the recipient matters" (Szulanski, 1996). However, others argue that knowledge transfer happens only when the adopter uses the shared knowledge (Darr & Kurzberg, 2000). In all these cases, knowledge transfer is fundamentally built on the "source and recipient" model (Ko *et al.*, 2005). With regard to knowledge, the issue of transferability is important, not only between firms, but also even more critically, within firm (Grant, 1996).

In order to transfer knowledge in the organization, training is a systematic process that provides employees with the skills and knowledge to improve their performance. Successful training has been proven to benefit organizations from several perspectives. Employees will be able to perform their jobs well through proper training. Employees will be more motivated when they know how to do their jobs. Training can help reduce employee anxiety by clarifying job expectations and communicating the organization's vision and mission. Training enables organizations to be more competitive by improving job satisfaction, employee morale, and consistent service quality (Cullen, 2001).

Training transfer is known as the process in which knowledge and skills are learned during training and continually applied as part of an individual's job performance (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Broad & Newstrom, 1992). Transfer of training is the "effective and continuing application, by trainees to their jobs, of the knowledge and skills gained in training, both on and off the job" (Broad & Newstrom, 1992, p.6). Identifying training transfer is not only a way to justify time and cost spent on training when funding in higher education is under such scrutiny, but also verify the usefulness and applicability of training curricula (Garavaglia, 1993). Therefore, understanding training transfer models as well as the complex relationships existing between influencing elements is important.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this paper is to apply and evaluate the impact of knowledge transfer through Action-Plan training model. The aim of this research is to develop an intervention model, which is resulted to

improve employee's performance (knowledge, skills/abilities, and behavior).

Knowledge Transfer Models

This literature provides five main concepts of knowledge transfer as described below.

Baldwin and Ford's Model of the Transfer Process: Baldwin and Ford's Model of the Transfer Process (1998) is the knowledge transfer process, which has three steps: training input, training output and conditions of transfer. This model defines elements of transfer as a system in which training knowledge is presented, learned, and utilized within a particular organizational context. It does not directly address the variety of responsibilities within that system, nor do the authors explain how the model relates to an actual transfer situation. Therefore, while it is very helpful to view training as a linked system of inputs and outputs, it is difficult to understand the usefulness of this particular model without understanding it in a practical and realistic context.

Dixon's Model of Five Transfer Methods: Dixon's (2000) Model of Five Transfer Methods is based on the similarity of task and context, type of knowledge being transferred (tacit or explicit), nature of task (routine or non-routine), and the impact of that knowledge on the organization. Knowledge transfer among team is the main focus of this model. The five transfer methods are serial transfer, near transfer, far transfer, strategic transfer and expert transfer.

Nonaka's SECI Model: Nonaka's (1994) SECI Model, which includes Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization, describes knowledge transfer process in terms of tacit and/or explicit that is being transferred. Nonaka explains this model that socialization will be used when tacit knowledge transfers among individuals. However, when knowledge is converted from tacit to explicit, involved individuals transferring knowledge to the group, externalization will be used. On the other hand, combination will be used when explicit knowledge is transferred between two groups. Lastly, when explicit knowledge is converted to tacit knowledge through groups transferring that knowledge to individuals, internalization will be.

Szulanski's Knowledge Transfer Model: Szulanski (1996) defined his knowledge transfer model as a process consisting of a series of stages. It focuses on the sequence of knowledge transfer between sender and receiver. There are four stages of this model, starting from sender (initiator) to receiver (recipient): (a) initiation- all activities leading to the transfer decision, (b) implementation – knowledge begins to flow from sender. Identification of knowledge sources and recipients, and appropriate adaptation of practices for transferring such knowledge should have taken place, (c) ramp-up – recipient starts using transferred knowledge, and (d) integration – recipient folds knowledge into normal routines.

Yelon's MASS model: Yelon (1992) presented the MASS model for producing transfer, which suggests Motivating trainees, increasing their Awareness of when to use and master their new Skills, and giving them the necessary Support to do so. Yelon's model is essential to the transfer effort, but clearly focuses upon the motivation and support of the trainee, while not clearly explaining the roles and responsibilities of trainers and management in providing support. In reality, motivation is a personal function, which occurs within motivating, encouraging environments. Finally, Yelon does not provide clear examples of the model, or evidence that it actually influences transfer.

Action-Plan Training

Action plan can be a helpful method to enhance the transfer of knowledge in training (Bramley, 1996). This plan, to be effective, should include a time frame for each and every area in this process, opposing forces that may occur, and methods to deal with those forces. Bramley also mentions that action plan should include

discussions of the possible effects that this action may have on others and/or organization. Broad and Newstrom (1992) suggest that using action plan also enhance the transfer of training. In their model, the discussions with supervisors and/or managers have been taken in order to see the problems that have been occurred, indicate time frames for the plan, and ensure the learning goals/objectives are met with business's needs. Last, the real commitment of all involved parties must be agreed. There are important stakeholders who need to support in this transfer of training: management team, trainer, and trainees. Broad and Newstrom also suggest to have all parties sign a contract for this plan as a real commitment to bring life to the plan. This support must occur in these actions – before, during, and after training.

CONCEPTUAL AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The study is conducted an action research using a case study from Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai to explore participants view related to the relationship between action-plan training model and knowledge transfer in an organization. This study described action research that it can highlight and exploit not only qualitative data (interviews, observations and focus groups), but also quantitative data (questionnaires), or some combination of the two.

The researcher illustrates the fact that the concept (action-plan training model) influences and improves the context (A level of knowledge transfer: competencies and actions after training). The emphasis on action-plan training model in the organization will increase the employee's performance. Thus, there is a positive correlation between those factors.

As an intervention, Action Plan Training Model comprised of two critical factors: organization factors and training factors, which will be the keys leading to the results. There is a variety of theoretical and empirical approaches that examine the issue of training transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Geilen, 1996). These studies distinguish two categories of factors affecting training transfer at work: (1) Training factors (trainee characteristics, training design and methods); and (2) organizational factors affecting the transfer as well as the training and the trainee (culture, transfer atmosphere, rewards). In addition, factors that could influence the success of training include trainees' pre-existing characteristics (personality, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes), delivery methods of training, and the criteria used to determine whether training is effective (O'Donovan & Dawe, 2002).

Conceptual Framework

Action-plan training model is a new model that was implemented in 2010, which consists of four parts: intervention process, learning plan, training factors and organization factors (See figure 1). Intervention process consists of 4 steps, which include identifying problems; indicating timeframe, learning goals, and commitment from organization. This intervention process is a first step in developing a learning plan. It is important at this stage to not rely exclusively on management needs or immediate performance needs of an organization, but to focus on current problems and potentially problems in the future. First step is to identify problems in the organization. This step involves many parties in the organization such as employees, managers, management team and General Manager. This is because it is very crucial step. All parties need to find challenges that occurred in the organization regarding the knowledge transfer. First step is to interview and conduct meeting with General Manager to see a big picture of the hotel's challenges. After getting feedback and direction from General Manager, interviews and meeting with department head team members are conducted. This would help to see more in details and narrow down all challenges happening in the hotel. Next step is to have interviews and focus groups with line staff. This allows the researcher to see challenges that line staff are facing now. After gathering all related

information, conference calls with other Four Seasons Management Team in Thailand are conducted. Therefore, all know an update on hotels' problems, discuss on training plan, and set up to indicate a training plan timeframe. Second is to indicate timeframe. This step is also important because action-plan training model takes time. Therefore, clear timeframe must be made to inform all related parties in advance. Otherwise, this plan is not be successful. Therefore, analyzing hotel's occupancy forecast report to see the occupancy percentage in each day, week, month, and quarter in order to set up training classes. Also monthly turnover report and manning need analysis report are analyzed. This helps to set up numbers of staff who participate in each training class. Third is to set learning goals, which are matched with business needs. The outcomes of learning in both of short-term and long-term have to support organization to be more effective. This step mostly involve with management team and trainers. Last is Real commitment from organization. All parties must agree with the plan, sign a contract, and support this long-term plan. This is a final process before implementing learning plan to a real practice.

The second part is learning plan.

Learning plan was divided into 4 quarters with 4 theme concepts (Q1: Product Knowledge and Service standards, Q2: Social activities and Life, Q3: Resources management/Financial management and Q4: It's all about Leadership). Each quarter, training classes were led by planning committee members and other facilitators who are expert in their own area and also guest speakers to facilitate the training sessions.

The third part is training factors, which consist of trainee characteristics, content of training and methods. Research has shown that the characteristics of the trainee's personality directly affect the training

process and training transfer (Ford *et al.*, 1992). The ability of the person to learn, analyze, and utilize what he has learnt to practice and transfer the skills and knowledge to work is the second factor for the training transfer (Robertson & Downs, 1979). All trainees must have attended and passed all training courses at least 80 percent in order to be considered for any promotion or salary increase. Moreover, -

Content of Training and Methods—In order to achieve successful training transfer to the workplace, the training program must be relevant to the job requirements (Axtell *et al.*, 1997). However, it is not enough for the content of training to be relevant. This is because trainee must also understand the relationship between training and work practice to be able to make the knowledge transfer. All contents of training are relevant to the real time, real situation, and employees' job requirements. This is to

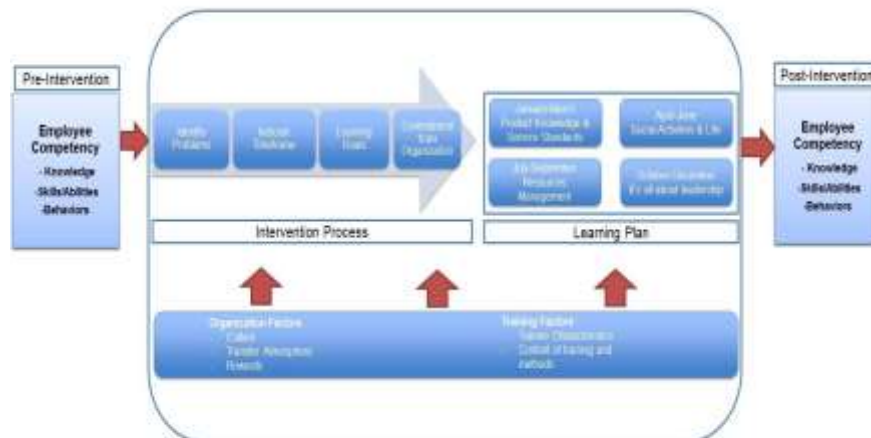
ensure that all knowledge that has been transferred to employees are learned, applied and utilized in real practices as soon as they can.

The planning of the training program is very important for its total success and therefore for training at work. The trainer also must possess two essential characteristics. First of all he must be reliable, and secondly he must be effective, as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Gauld & Miller, 2004). A good combination of these is important and leads to increased knowledge transfer in training. The fourth part is organizational factors: Culture, Transfer atmosphere, and rewards. The prevailing organizational climate concerning new knowledge and skills greatly influences whether the transfer is made or not (Rouiller & Goldstein). Burke & Baldwin (1999) states that a supportive environment increases the adoption of transfer strategies by the trainees as well as the transfer in general. An organizational culture, which is emphasizing values of training, learning and taking initiatives, allows the employee to experiment on his new skills in his working position. Moreover, in a highly human-oriented organizational culture, practices reflect individualized consideration and informal relationships provide development opportunities to employees (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2004, p.596).

By promoting, communicating, and fully supporting by management team at the hotel in order to change culture to be learning culture, employees at this hotel feel and understand this change happening in the organization. Moreover, changing venues, from normal training rooms to guest's venues, places outside hotels, and even field trips, is encouraging employee's excitement and attention to learn new knowledge. Last is celebrations after completion of training, recognition from regional General Manager, and rewards in every training class motivate employees to participate and enjoy this training model.

Therefore, organizational culture, transfer atmosphere, and rewards are factors that create more opportunities for employees to experiment and transfer newly acquired knowledge and skills. Finally, a basic prerequisite for a company to undertake successful training programs is also its good reputation, not only regarding training, but its reputation in general. This model is success when the selected employees complete training and apply what he has learned directly or indirectly to their work. Direct training transfer to the workplace means that the trained employee is able to apply and utilize the knowledge and skills acquired to his job. Indirect transfer means that the trained employee may transfer to the workplace skills or attitudes that were developed in training, not as part of the training objectives but as a result of the interactions and methods used.

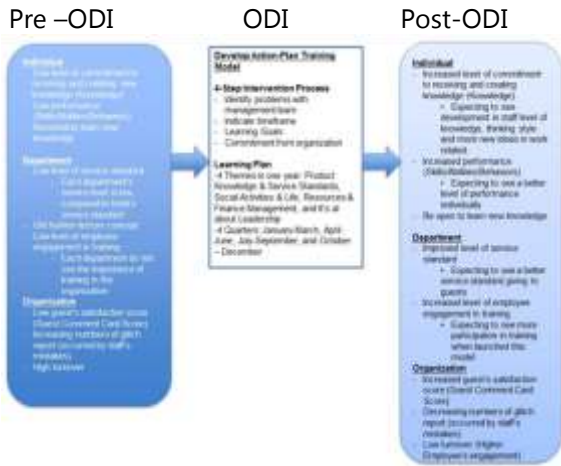
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Action Research Framework

There were 3 steps of this action research process: Pre-ODI, ODI, and Post-ODI. Pre-ODI was a stage where current situation and challenges at Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai was diagnosed. ODI stage was the stage where intervention took place and Post-ODI was the last stage. This stage was the evaluation of ODI intervention's result (See figure 2).

Figure 2: ODI Framework



RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

Subject for this survey are full-time staff who are currently working in Operations (Front Office (32), Housekeeping (34), Food and Beverage (28), and Spa (16)). All of them are in line-staff and supervisor level only, totally 110 people. In order to gather necessary data for this study and produce the most credible, coherent, and useful study, the author uses five principal research methods: interview, focus groups, questionnaires, observations and documentary analyzes to cast a wide net to ensure that the highest quality data are collected. In order to gain participant's experience of management team who participate in this research, in-depth interviews are appropriate technique to use. There are two sections of interviews: closed-ended questions and opened-ended questions. For this study, semi-structured interviews are used. The author conducted Pre-ODI interviews with planning committee level (Directors and General Manager) and Post-ODI interview with General Manager. This allows the author to gain multiple views and perceptions of the same issue studied. Moreover, Extensive meetings and discussions with planning committees before conducting focus groups are arranged to fine-tune the data collection process, by identifying target groups and presenting potential close-ended and open-ended questions to be asked. Each focus group lasts approximately one to two hours, depending on the degree of participation and the amount of information elaborated upon. Furthermore, the questionnaire is designed to gather respondents' opinions on an impact of Action-Plan Training Model. Five-Point rating scale was used to indicate the level of participant's agreement with the values 1 = Completely Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Completely Agree. Observation and Third-Party Participation is used. There are two stages for the observations and the author spent each stage 2 months of observation: pre-organization development intervention (Pre-ODI) and Post-organization development intervention (Post-ODI). These proprietary observations are conducted in all selected departments (Front Office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverages, and Spa), apples-to-apples, of selected participants' performance in Pre-ODI and Post-ODI, evaluated by core standard checklist

Design and Development ODI

Action-plan training model is an annual plan for 2010 training roadmap. This roadmap is divided into four categories. All four categories fall into four concepts, which follow on business needs in each quarter. Learning courses have been designed to associate with employees' needs in each period of time, so that knowledge from all learning methods will be able to turn the concept into a real practice in a real time. By this objective, Four Seasons can have the momentum rolling over the year through different learning activities as every management will be accountable for 2010 success in their respective area and be confident to transfer own experience and knowledge to employees accordingly. Project summary and timeline are described in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Project Summary and Timeline

	2009		2010												2011		
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	
Pre-ODI: Current Situation Diagnosis																	
Interview/Focus Group	←	←															
Survey		←															
Observations		←															
ODI: Implement Action-Plan Training Model																	
Quarter 1: Products & Standards			←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←
Quarter 2: Social Activities							←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←	←
Quarter 3: Resources Management											←	←	←	←	←	←	←
Quarter 4: Brand Image/Leadership																	←
Post-ODI: Situation Evaluation																	
Survey																	←
Observations																	←
Report																	←

THE FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Quantitative Data: for quantitative analysis, the researcher used questionnaires to analyze the results and impact of implementing Action-Plan Training model on knowledge, skill and abilities, and behavior.

Table 1: Comparison of knowledge of staff before, after intervention (immediately), and 8 weeks after intervention

Knowledge	Pre		Post (Immediately)		Post (8 Week after Intervention)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Job Knowledge	3.76	0.618	3.76	0.713	4.09	0.576
Performance	3.85	0.515	4.11	0.502	4.02	0.644
Learning Perception	3.73	0.638	4.35	0.485	4.13	0.639
Knowledge Transfer Perception	3.73	0.58	4.10	0.671	4.06	0.579
Using/Applying Knowledge	3.68	0.778	3.82	0.859	3.73	0.492
Innovation	3.79	0.571	4.27	0.554	3.69	0.537
Self-Development	3.55	0.647	3.83	0.293	3.73	0.704
Overall	3.73	0.47	4.03	0.406	3.92	0.392

According to Table 1, it was found that means score of knowledge competencies after intervention immediately was higher than that before intervention in overall with statistical significance of .05 level. Total Knowledge variable mean score improved from 3.702 at pre-ODI to 3.964 at post-ODI. For job knowledge, perception on learning, and perception on knowledge transfer, the means score obtained immediately after the experiment was higher than that before the intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On using/applying knowledge and performance, the means score obtained immediately after intervention was higher before intervention without statistical significance of .05 level.

Total knowledge was dropped from 4.03 at immediately ODI to 3.92 at 8-week after ODI, but still higher than pre-ODI stage (3.73). When considering individual aspect, it was found that for job

knowledge, the means score 8 weeks after the intervention was higher than that immediately after the intervention with statistical significance of .05 level.

On learning perception and innovation, the means score 8 weeks after the intervention was lower than that immediately after intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On Performance, Knowledge Transfer Perception, Using/Applying Knowledge, and Self-Development the means score immediately after intervention was lower than that before intervention without statistical significance of .05 level.

Table 2: Comparison of skills and abilities of staff before, after intervention (immediately), and 8 weeks after intervention

Skills/Abilities	Pre		Post (Immediately)		Post (8 Week after Intervention)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Access to Customer	3.93	0.628	3.78	0.346	3.31	0.289
Communication	3.51	0.465	3.75	0.423	3.53	0.276
Results Orientation	3.31	0.354	3.89	0.429	3.52	0.295
Solve Guest's Problem	3.74	0.408	4.05	0.372	3.68	0.499
Service Excellence	3.73	0.487	3.90	0.547	4.17	0.433
Teamwork	3.90	0.443	4.00	0.547	4.18	0.541
Listening, Understanding, and Responding	3.70	0.348	3.93	0.570	3.79	0.564
Overall	3.69	0.249	3.90	0.270	3.74	0.241

According to Table 2, it was found that means score of skills/abilities after intervention was higher than that before intervention by overall with statistical significance of .05. Total skills/abilities variable mean score improved from 3.69 at pre-ODI to 3.895 after post-ODI. For communication, results orientation, solve guest's problem, and service excellence, the means score obtained immediately after the intervention was higher than that before the experiment with statistical significance of .05 level. On teamwork, the means score obtained immediately after intervention was higher than that before intervention without statistical significance of .05 level.

Total skills and abilities was dropped from 3.90 at immediately ODI to 3.74 at 8-week after ODI, but still higher than pre-ODI stage (3.69). For service excellence and teamwork, the means score 8 weeks after the intervention was higher than that immediately after intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On access to customers, communication, result orientation, and solve guest's problem, the means score 8 weeks after the experiment was lower than that immediately after intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On listening, understanding, and responding, the means score immediately after intervention was lower than that before intervention without statistical significance of .05 level.

Table 3: Comparison of behavior of staff before, after intervention (immediately), and 8 weeks after intervention

Skills/Abilities	Pre		Post (Immediately)		Post (8 Week after Intervention)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Ethics and Value	3.80	0.688	4.09	0.472	3.94	0.557
Organization Commitment	3.81	0.627	3.86	0.590	3.62	0.864
Self-Confidence	4.50	0.369	4.06	0.624	4.11	0.506
Self-Control	3.92	0.536	4.06	0.521	3.99	0.496
Flexibility	4.21	0.282	3.90	0.646	3.86	0.537
Information Seeking	4.09	0.459	4.03	0.619	3.77	0.695
Overall	4.06	0.268	4.00	0.423	3.88	0.448

According to Table 3, it was found that means score of behavior after intervention immediately was lower than before intervention by overall without statistical significance of .05. Total behavior was dropped from 4.06 at pre-ODI to 4.00 at post-ODI. For ethics and value, the means score after the experiment immediately was higher than that before intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On Self Confidence and Flexibility, the means score after the experiment immediately was lower than that before intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On organization commitment, self-

control, and information seeking, the means score after intervention immediately was lower than that before intervention without statistical significance of .05 level.

Total behavior was dropped from 4.00 at immediately ODI to 3.88 at 8-week after ODI, and slightly lower than pre-ODI stage (4.06). For accessing to ethics and value, organization commitment, and information seeking, the means score 8 weeks after the experiment was lower than that immediately after intervention with statistical significance of .05 level. On Self-Confidence, Self-Control, and Flexibility, the means score 8 weeks after intervention was lower than that intervention immediately without statistical significance of .05 level.

Qualitative Data: The collection of qualitative data at Pre-ODI and Post ODI, which includes interviews with General Manager, focus group and observation, is used as a supported data for this research and understand participant's progress and present the kind of change that occurred after this ODI. For observation, a third party participant assessed it. In overall, General Manager mentioned that he saw clearly the changes happened at hotel. The result was positive in term of staff performance, guest satisfaction, and hotel's reputation. Employees know more what to do, be able to present new ideas to, and can fix normal problems without asking their supervisor. Number of glitch report was dropped after the intervention was completed and guest satisfaction score was increased also. One of the most important benefits of this program is the transferring of necessary knowledge and skills, which operations employees need to know, in order to support them to work effectively. Furthermore, there were 2 focus group interviews, 15 staff each. Therefore, this POST ODI focus group represents 27.27% of total staff of Four Seasons Resort Chiang Mai who participated in this survey. There were 5 questions regarding this survey. Participants divided their developments in 2 categories: knowledge and soft skills. In term of knowledge, participants mentioned that they were more confidence on their knowledge in order to deal with guests. Last is the positive impact of implementing Action-Plan Training Model. The results of implementing Action-Plan Training Model are shown in Table 4, which can describe a positive impact of this model.

Table 4: Results of implementing Action-Plan Training Model

Results	2010	2011
Standard Score	88.04%	91.29%
Turnover	14.16%	12.03%
Glitch Reports	940	867
Customer Satisfaction	73.70%	87.30%

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides clear evidence that Action-Plan Training Model can improve employees in the organization, even though it is very challenging to implement this new model to the hotel in the beginning because of the timeline, limited resources, and the complicated of model itself. Action-Plan Training Model positively impact knowledge, ability and attitude of trainees, which are presented as better results of guest engagements and guest satisfaction scores. This study also can be concluded the fact that participants have been developed their knowledge, ability and attitude by indicating their work performance and behavior. This training model is very fit to their needs in each specific time and it is adapted and localized the process to fit people and organization's nature and limitation. Therefore, it is very easy for them to understand and think about the situations that might happen.

Moreover, it is found that the intervention is practical and it could extend to other resort hotels.

Moreover, it is found that the result of the training from each employee received differently. This is because there are other factors involved, which include internal factors of participants and organizational factors. Internal factors are the differences of each participant's level of knowledge, ability, and attitude and ability to receive and understand new knowledge. These affect the learning efficiency and can show the work operation behavior and result of the work differently. Some can show the big improvements, the others can show little improvements. Organizational factors such as support from executive members, understanding of executive members about the important of this model, and specific job responsibility, the reward system, company policy, effective communication, and employee's career path.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the development of knowledge transfer by implementing Action-Plan Training Model in the organization, especially in resort type of hotel, can be used to develop people so that they have better knowledge, better ability, and better attitude. These can be applied in the work operation efficiently to the point that it improves result of organization.

From implementing Action-Plan Training Model in an organization, it is found that there are many factors that cause success in using model. Based on the assessment of the findings and conclusions of this research, there are recommendations as useful guidelines from this study and for further research related to this study:

- Participation and support from executive members. Transfer of knowledge within the organization needs support from executive in order to emphasize the important of learning development, which needed to ally with Key Performance Indicators. Executive members also have to be role models for employees on this matter to drive learning culture in the organization and spend their time allocation to their employees during all the process.

- Effective communication between organization and employees regarding the importance of this knowledge transfer, the process of this intervention, and expected outcome after attending this model is very crucial to achieve this development. Human Resources team needs to make sure that communication flow must easy to understand and feedbacks during the intervention from employees will be recorded and revised. This is because Action-Plan Training Model needs to be flexible and suit to environment, organization's needs, and trainees' needs.

- To create measurable system during time using Action-Plan Training Model. It is found that concept model will be driven by line staff through organizational knowledge management, which KPIs are important as a tool that connects organizational policy to work operation and will make employees to feel that the policy of the company is tangible and can be used in practice and understand the objective and result anticipated to happen from implementing the model. Therefore, the system emphasizes staff to follow the results happening all the time by going through measuring tools, which cause employees to learn and develop from the result continuously.

- To reduce timeline less than one year. This will be effective much more than one-year training plan. This is because employees will be more focus to training plan and would make the employees feeling more comfortable about the program. During high season, it is very difficult to get all attentions from employees, since their priority is to serve guests. Therefore, the recommendation is to implement only during low season of the year.

- To implement train the trainer

program (TTT). This will help organization to have qualified trainers to train all trainees and also help to reduce expenses.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- This research has provided evidence that Action-Plan Training Model is useful and that many factors beyond the scope of the training itself impede or enhance transfer. In order to create a better understanding of training and to initiate constructive dialogue about how to improve it, it is important to continue to study its effect upon organizations.

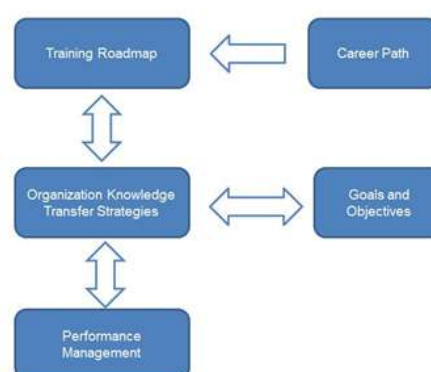
- While this study has added to the literature on training, much is yet to be done. Future studies could provide valuable information by comparing groups that do not use action-plan training model to those that do, by exploring transfer over an extended period of time. Furthermore, even this study explores a hospitality industry; much could be gained from an examination of other industries and non-profit organization. Such companies can also gain a lot valuable results by implementing action-plan training model that adapted to its own environment.

- Learning occurs when knowledge is made useful and relevant to daily life, as illustrated through the use of the Action-Plan Training Model. Employees alike should be given a project which allows them the opportunity to make use of the information in their own department or in their personal lives.

- In generic model presented in

Figure 4, it shows the recommendation of the model that potentially applies this implementation in the organization for the future research. Considering starting with discussing and setting career path for each and individual employee in order to analyze and come up with the annual training roadmap for the organization. Moreover, the business goals and objectives of organization will be important factors in specifying appropriate and effective learning tools in order to transfer knowledge within organization and evaluate the system by performance management, which includes follow-up, refreshment, evaluation and qualification. This generic model will help organization, especially in hotel industry, to analyze and set right training courses, tools/techniques, timeline, knowledge transfer strategies, and maximize the outcomes of knowledge transfer.

Figure 4: Generic Model



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