

**EMPLOYEE TRAINING PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN TELECOM INDUSTRY**

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**Abstract**

*The recent cancellation of 122 licenses has brought turmoil in the Indian Telecom sector. The fight is now for survival in this tough time. The sustainability opportunity goes to the giant fishes in the sector like Bharti Airtel, Idea cellular, Vodafone etc to capture maximum market share by not only customer services and attractive plans but also by retaining and developing the real assets of any organization, the human resource. A trained and qualitative human resource in the organization ensures better sales proposition and customer services. Thus the paper talks about the training practices followed by these companies Airtel, Vodafone and Idea for effective sustainable growth in India. The key findings of the study suggest that the Airtel recognizes the importance of training to its employees and is able to manage its training programmes more effectively and efficiently than the other companies. The results of it are clearly visible as the Airtel has become the largest private cellular company in India.*

*Key Words: Employee productivity, sustainable growth, training effectiveness, comparative analysis*

**INTRODUCTION**

Today, in India telecom business is undergoing a challenge due to the recent cancellation of around 122 licenses of major players in the market. Hence, the companies like Uninor, Etisalat, etc. whose licenses have been cancelled are facing a tough time for survival in the market as they will have to opt for a fresh bidding for the spectrum licenses. However, at the same time, it is an opportunity for other major telecom operators like Vodafone, Bharti Airtel, Idea Cellular, etc. to capture the maximum market share and increase their subscriber base thus leading to an increase in their overall revenue and profits. In fact, for the opportunists, this is the time for the

telecom market consolidation. Hence, telecom companies who believe in the principle that human resources are their real assets, should also ensure that they have been providing adequate training to their personnel working in the functions of technology, sales & CRM, key account management, etc. To derive optimum output out of their employees with the help of the training and development concept with well formulated strategies for an effective implementation of the same. Thus, considering all these facts, we have formed the objective of studying the training effectiveness in the telecom companies having an operation base in the Mumbai metropolitan region. The needs of the training basically emphasize the gap between the existing and desired knowledge, skills and attitudes at individual, group and at the organizational level to make the employees competent enough to contribute towards the organizational goals and efficiency.

The knowledge and skills of an organization's employees have become increasingly important to its performance, competitiveness and advancement. Among the internal resources which can be considered sources of competitive advantage is the human element, mainly due to its intangible characteristics: knowledge, skills and attitudes (Wright et al., 1994; Kamoche, 1996; Mueller, 1996; Barney and Wright, 1998) and organizational knowledge (Bassi et al., 1998; Lee and Yang, 2000; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Bollinger and Smith, 2001) are being given more and more significance of these resources, training is one of the main activity in order to have qualified, flexible, and proactive employees

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The modern day techniques have made it very efficient and productive to go for new age training methodologies which are time saving and more result oriented. Internet technologies are having a significant impact on the learning industry. For profit organizations and traditional set ups have developed and, are using web-based modules, but little is known about their effectiveness which became a basis of this study. The present study focuses on the effectiveness of a training programme on the participants and their productivity. "Piccoli Gabriele, Rami Ahmad and Blake Ives (2001), looks at recent definitions of such terms as Adjustment, Adaptation, Acculturation, Assimilation, and Effectiveness. The skills, attitudes, and traits as they relate to Intercultural Effectiveness, including the ability to communicate, ability to establish and maintain relationships, interaction management, orientation to knowledge, world view, cultural empathy, linguistic ability, flexibility, a realistic view of the target culture and organization skills. Factors that have a negative correlation are also covered, including dependent anxiety, task-related behavior, authoritarianism, perfectionism, rigidity, ethnocentrism, narrow-mindedness, and self-centered role behaviors. Hannigan (1990) presents a meta-analysis of empirical studies that explore the impact of predictive factors (e.g.,

trainee characteristics, work environment, training interventions) on the transfer of training to different tasks and contexts. Several moderators had significant effects on transfer relationships, including the nature of the training objectives. Specifically, most predictor variables examined (e.g., motivation, work environment) had stronger relationships to transfer when the focus of training was on open (e.g., leadership development) as opposed to closed (e.g., computer software) skills. Other moderators related to the measurement of transfer also influenced transfer relationships, including situations in which transfer outcomes were obtained by the same source in the same measurement context— which consistently inflated transfer relationships. Stewart J. Black and Mark Mendenhall (1990, Kirkpatrick's (1998) training evaluation model was used to examine the effects of training team managers in issues such as teamwork, transformational leadership and change management on the outcomes of team implementation. We used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to isolate the impact of manager training on the success of the teamwork intervention. The results identified some significant, but modest, incremental positive effects that could be attributed to the manager training. The results also showed that significant organizational changes during the intervention had an impact on both the team intervention and the transfer of manager training.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- 1) To study the importance of training in the leading telecom companies i.e. Bharti Airtel Vodafone and Idea Cellular.
- 2) To study the impact of planning on effectiveness of training by Bharti Airtel and Idea Cellular.
- 3) To study the impact of training on the employees' productivity in Telecom sector with reference to the selected companies
- 4) To suggest strategies for effective employee training to sustain in the competition

#### **HYPOTHESES**

H1<sub>0</sub>: Idea cellular emphasizes more on importance of training.

H1<sub>1</sub>: Idea cellular does not emphasizes more on importance of training

H2<sub>0</sub>: Idea cellular has scored over on knowledge and skills of training.

H2<sub>1</sub>: Idea cellular has not scored over on knowledge and skills of training.

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H3<sub>0</sub>: Idea cellular gives better quality training.

H3<sub>1</sub>: Idea cellular does not gives better quality training.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no association between performance of telecom companies and parameters of effectiveness of training

H<sub>1</sub>: There is association between performance of telecom companies and parameters of effectiveness of training

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

Following four parameters have been taken to identify the effectiveness of training.

Importance of Training

Planning for training

Knowledge and skills required for training

Quality of training

For this, the percentage utility of personal profile analysis was to be gauged; hence quantitative technique used to find the percentage. Survey method was used to obtain the required data through the use of structured questionnaires from the employees of selected companies.

### **Sampling Considerations and Sampling Plan**

Sampling unit: Mumbai region, Maharashtra

Source list: Telecom companies

Sample size: 110

Type of Sampling: Stratified Random sampling

### **Data Collection**

Based on the market share and the growth rate of the telecom companies in India, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular companies are selected for the present study. Thus the relevant information is collected from the employees of Bharti Airtel, Vodafone & Idea Cellular. Information is collected from employees placed in the organization up to middle management level i.e. till the designation of manager. Sample includes total 110 respondents of which 30 from Idea and 30 from Vodafone, remaining 50 from Airtel.

The collected primary data is been processed through SPSS software and statistical tools such as Mean, Standard Deviation are calculated. For testing of hypothesis, Chi – Square test is applied. Results of classified data are presented using tables and charts wherever required.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA:**

Telecom companies: Information from employees of the leading telecom companies is collected. There are 110 respondents from whom information is collected to study effectiveness of training. Classified information of respondents is presented in the following table.

Table-1: Distribution of Respondents by Companies

Name of Company	No. of Respondents	Percent
Bharti Airtel	50	45.45
Vodafone	30	27.23
Idea Cellular	30	27.33
<b>Total</b>	110	100.0

Above table indicate that out of total 110 respondents, 50 (45.5 %) respondents are Airtel employees, 30 (27.3 %) are from Idea and remaining 30 (27.3 %) are Vodafone employees.

Parameters of Effectiveness of Training: To study effectiveness of training in telecom companies four parameters are considered.

- 1) Importance of Training
- 2) Knowledge and Skill of Training
- 3) Impact of training

The table-2 indicates that mean score for all four parameters are very close to each other. This indicates that overall effectiveness of training is almost same. For detail study mean score of each parameter are calculated for three telecom industries separately.

Table-2: Effectiveness of Training

Particulars	N	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mean	Std. Deviation
Score of Importance of Training	110	46.67	93.33	83.5152	9.10732
Score of Knowledge and skill training required	110	50.00	100.00	84.9091	9.78577
Score of Impact of training	110	45.00	95.00	81.7727	11.72284
Valid N (list wise)	110				

**Importance of Training**

To understand importance of training given by each telecom company descriptive statistic is calculated. Results of statistics are as under.

Table-3: Importance of Training

Particulars	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Airtel Importance score	50	80.00	93.33	86.0004	3.68900
Idea Importance score	30	46.67	93.33	77.4443	13.77620
Vodafone Importance score	30	70.00	93.33	85.4443	6.80748

Above table indicate that H1 is true, Idea Company has very less (77.4443) importance of training where as Airtel has maximum (86.0004) importance followed by Vodafone (85.443).

### Knowledge and Skills required for Training

To understand Knowledge and skill of training given by each telecom company descriptive statistic is calculated. Results of statistics are as under.

Table-4: Descriptive Statistics

Particulars	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Airtel Knowledge and Skill score	50	83.33	96.67	88.0000	3.92665
Idea Knowledge and Skill score	30	50.00	100.00	78.5553	14.76976
Vodafone Knowledge and Skill score	30	73.33	93.33	86.1093	7.48401

Above table indicate that H1 is true, Idea Company has minimum (78.5553) knowledge and skill of training where as Airtel has maximum (88.0000) knowledge and skill of training followed by Vodafone (86.1093).

### Quality of Training

To understand Quality and Impact of training is given by each telecom company descriptive statistic is calculated. Results of statistics are as under.

Table-5: Quality of Training

Particulars	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Airtel Quality and Impact score	50	75.00	95.00	85.2	6.14120
Idea Quality and Impact score	30	45.00	95.00	74	15.16575
Vodafone Quality and Impact score	30	55.00	95.00	83.8333	11.64736

Above table indicate that H1 is true, Idea has low (74.0000) quality and impact of training where as Airtel has high (85.2000) followed by Vodafone (83.8333) quality and impact of training. To study association between Name of company and each of four factors Chi-square test is applied. Result of the test is as follows.

Table-6: Test of Hypothesis

	Hypothesis	Degree of Freedom	Calculated Chi-square	Table Chi-square Value (5 % I.O.C.)	Result of Test
1	Association between telecom company and Importance of training	4	22.807 <sup>a</sup>	9.49	Rejected
2	Association between telecom company and effective planning	4	40.460 <sup>a</sup>	9.49	Rejected
3	Association between telecom company and knowledge & skill	4	19.947 <sup>a</sup>	9.49	Rejected
4	Association between telecom company and quality & impact	4	27.003 <sup>a</sup>	9.49	Rejected

Above table indicate that H1 is true, there is strong association between telecom companies and parameter of effectiveness of training

## RESULTS

Mean score for all four parameters are very close to each other. This indicates that overall effectiveness of training is almost same. For detail study mean score of each parameter are calculated for the two telecom companies separately.

1. Importance of Training: Idea Company has very less importance of training where as Airtel has more, immediately followed by Vodafone.
2. Knowledge and Skill of Training: Idea Company has minimum knowledge and skill of training where as Airtel has maximum knowledge and skill of training then Vodafone.
3. Quality and Impact of training: Idea has low quality and impact of training where as Airtel and Vodafone has high quality and impact of training.

4. Association of training parameters: There is a strong association between training parameters and its effect on training.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendation to the other players in the telecom industry is to try their level best to follow similar standards which will help them in proving that human resources are their real value assets. Investing in their overall personality development through training / learning will help the companies to achieve their Return on Investment.

They should keep their employees fully up to date in terms of knowledge considering the competition and technology dynamics involved in the industry. For their employees, specifically technical field staff, we recommend that a skill assessment should be done covering important practical topics involved in their day to day work on the basis of which a coaching plan should be developed for each staff. And, for a successful implementation of the training plan for the employee, first of all, their direct reporting managers should be trained on topics like "Training and Coaching Skills" which will in turn be beneficial for the reporting manager to become effective trainers.

Some key performers / leaders of the business units of telecom companies should be trained on topics like "Quest for Excellence" so that after the completion of successful training the participants can form small groups and take up some important "Special Group Initiative Projects" in which they can consider important topics like Unbilled Tenancies, Site Up Time, etc. The best SGIPs can be awarded because such SGIPs might save / earn companies' major revenue.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study on effectiveness of training on employee productivity specifies that the parameters selected for employee training are well justified and the companies taking the maximum market share in this region are doing satisfactorily well in training and development of the employees, where Airtel has scored maximum and has been a bench mark amongst all these companies, and hence has the market share of 20.58%, i.e. highest amongst the telecom service providers in Maharashtra region immediately followed by Vodafone with a market share of 16.88 % in 2012. From the results of the study of this research paper, it is clear that Vodafone and Bharti Airtel Limited have set comparatively highest standards on all the important training effectiveness parameters involved in this study and hence have managed to gain the maximum market share in Mumbai. The proper training to employees definitely increases their productivity by improving accuracy and better time management, as the test scores also reveals the



importance of the parameter of training has the maximum score in all the companies, especially at the times of emergency.

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