



THE TIMES 100

BUSINESS CASE STUDIES

Training and development - Harrods

Harrods of London is a British institution. It is probably the most well-known and respected retail store in the world. For 162 years, Harrods has built its unique reputation supported by its key brand values: British; Luxury; Innovation; Sensation; Service. Harrods employs approximately 5,000 people from 86 different nationalities who deal with up to 100,000 customers a day at peak times. Harrods needs employees who can face the challenges that its reputation and standards bring. It needs people who are looking for an exciting and rewarding long-term career with responsibility and prospects. Its challenge is to find (and retain) employees with the right mix of skills and abilities, who can be developed to become the managers of the future.



Training and development is vital to any business. Its purpose at Harrods is to better the performance of employees to enable Harrods to meet its business goals. For example, at Harrods the Sales Academy develops employees' sales skills, leading to increased sales when they return to the shop floor. Allowing employees to acquire new skills, expertise and qualifications supports employee progression which leads to increased motivation. This supports Harrods' retention strategies. Training is about gaining the skills needed for a job. These may be learned at the place of work (on-the-job) or away from work (off-the-job). On-the-job training tends to be more cost-effective and relevant. However, off-the-job training is usually carried out by professional trainers. It also occurs away from the distractions of work. Training tends to have very specific and measurable goals, such as operating an IT system or till, understanding a process or performing certain procedures (for example, cashing up). Development is more about the individual, making him or her more efficient at a job or capable of facing different responsibilities and challenges. Development concentrates on the broader skills that are applicable to a wider variety of situations, such as thinking creatively, decision-making and managing people. In short, training is typically linked to a particular subject matter and is applicable to that subject only, while development is based on growing broader skills which can be used in many situations.

Harrods employees come from diverse backgrounds and different nationalities. They have differing levels of competency, education and experience. Harrods offers comprehensive Learning & Development opportunities. These opportunities are offered at a variety of levels to suit the needs of all Harrods employees. These range from workshops for Sales Associates and Warehouse Operatives to developmental programmes for senior managers. Amber is a Harrods Retail Manager who started as a Sales Associate at Harrods through an online application. Harrods Learning and Development ensured Amber acquired the skills she needed to carry out her role. Development at Harrods is linked to the company's Business Competencies. Learning is offered off-the-job in bite-size sessions. These sessions give employees the chance to learn more effectively over a much shorter period, reducing time away from work and bringing a tightly focused approach to skills development. All the Business Competencies are supported by self-help guides which are run either on- or off-the-job and include activities such as observation and review, reading and one minute guides offering top tips and tactics. The sales and service programmes include the Harrods Welcome. This induction provides essential training for new employees.



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Questions

1. What is training?

2. Describe how development differs from training.

3. Explain the terms on-the-job and off-the-job training, giving examples from Harrods.

4. Analyse why training and development are so important for organisations like Harrods.

Task

For each job role below, explain whether on-the-job or off-the-job training would be best (or a combination of both). Write a report of your recommendations, in each case justifying your decision and describing what the training would entail:

- A trainee hairdresser
- A council worker employed to keep the local parks tidy and safe
- A librarian
- A trainee doctor

What have you learned?

Flash cards . create a set of flash cards for use when revising the topic of training and development. You should have a question on one side of the card and the answer on the other side of the card. Once completed, pair up with another student and use the flash cards to test each other.