

# FIVE EXCUSES FOR NOT TRAINING YOUR PEOPLE

By Sherry Knight, President and CEO, Dimension 11 Ltd.

## 1. It's Too Costly

It costs money and time to train. Whether you develop the buddy system so one can learn from another or you send people off to apprenticeship programs, it is a cost.

**Response:** Yes, it is costly. There is no doubt about it. Yet, you might want to consider the cost of not training. Imagine putting a locomotive in the hands of an untrained employee. "Well," you say, "I would never consider doing that." Smart employer!

However, just imagine you have no one else around because the shift is over and everyone except one person has left. It'll only take a minute – you just need the locomotive moved forward a hundred feet so it is not blocking a thoroughfare on the premises. So you ask the only person left to simply do as you tell him and

move the locomotive a short distance. But something goes horribly wrong and the locomotive slams into another engine.

You have just cost yourself a huge amount of money, and this is the best-case scenario – something that would probably never have happened if you had provided training. The cost of training is much less than the cost of not training.

## 2. They'll Leave Me Once They're Trained

It is very possible! Sometimes people see the position they are in as merely a stop gap in their career to get to the position they really want.

**Response:** It happens. There is no easy answer to this one. Consider this though – if you believe in your community, then when you train your

people, you help the community. Have the faith others are also training for you.

Another element that might help – if the training is extremely costly you might consider asking the employee to sign a contract agreeing to stay with you for a given length of time so you can recoup some of your costs of training. This is not always binding, so be aware of the loyalty and trust factor when you consider this alternative.

## 3. I'll have to Pay Them More Money

Salaries evolve as business evolves. Your value is increasing when you train because you have a better organization. The question is, "How can I make staff more productive?"

**Response:** This depends on the type of training offered. If you are providing a safety course, it is doubtful it will require more money. However, if you have someone completing a level toward their ticket, then you will need to pay him or her more simply to keep them as the field itself will warrant a higher salary. And others may be paying a higher wage.

## 4. If I Train One I'll have to Train Them All

Probably, if it's being offered as a perk! Sometimes it's because the individual needs to do his/her job better. In this

instance, the critical element is to clearly explain why people are being provided the training.

It is amazing how a statement about the reason for "communications" training is viewed when the boss explains how this benefits the outcomes in the organization rather than expressing the fact, "George needs this!"

**Response:** This generally depends on the purpose of the training. Sometimes you need someone to take a course in a very specific area and other times you want people to learn something of value to everyone.

## 5. Training's Just a Perk

Some people do look at training as a perk – a day off, a chance to be with others, a new city, a chance to eat out at the company's expense.

While we haven't heard any one of these statements from an employer, it saddens us. At Dimension 11 we look at training as an improvement in one's professional role. In fact, we work with each individual to decide what is needed for their professional development.

**Response:** Both parties must see direct and material results. Thus, tie the organizational goals to the training so staff can see why they are receiving training and how it will benefit them and the organization.

Corporate leaders need to be mindful of how they are promoting the concept of development and its value to the organization.

Workforce development is the job of every employer and every employee. The better an employee is at his or her job the better the organization

and the more productive the company as a whole. This is a win/win for everyone. Don't develop at your peril – you will lose the very people you may want to retain. ■

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*Sherry Knight is President and CEO of Dimension 11 Ltd., a leader in people and performance development, helping companies realize stronger profits so they can create more jobs and better communities.*

Sherry Knight  
306-586-2315  
sherry@dimension11.com  
www.dimension11.com

Suite 200 - 4561 Parliament Avenue  
Regina, SK, Canada S4W 0G3

PHONE: (306) 757-9681  
FAX: (306) 757-9684



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