

# Employer Guide to Selecting Training Providers<sup>1</sup>

The Applicant Assistance Program at Commonwealth Corporation provides this guideline to help employers select training vendors and the education and training programs that best fit their business needs. There are a set of six (6) questions, or themes, to pursue with prospective education and training providers. The next few pages provide the questions, suggested “probes” or secondary questions, and a chart you can use for tracking your interviews with providers. You will want to ask for references from other businesses that the provider has served and speak with those references before making your final selection. Specifically ask the training provider for references for the same type of training that you are considering because training vendors may have strengths in some areas and weaknesses in others.

It is also good practice to review course materials the training vendor will provide to trainees or course materials from a similar training activity that the vendor has conducted.

## **PART 1: Suggested Questions**

When you first sit down with a training provider, you will probably start the interview by stating your needs, or the problems you want addressed, and asking the provider to recommend solutions. During the discussion that follows, you will want to determine the provider’s ability to develop and deliver a high-quality training program targeted at meeting your company’s specific needs. To do this, you could ensure that the provider supplies appropriate answers to the following six questions:

1. **Business Objectives:** How will you develop an employee-training program that is tied to my company’s business objectives?
2. **Workplace Requirements:** How will you develop an employee-training program that reflects my workplace and its requirements?
3. **Employee Needs:** How will you craft an employee-training program tailored to our employees’ needs?
4. **Employee Assessments:** How will you ensure that the employee assessments you use will be high quality?
5. **Qualified Staff:** How will you ensure that staff members involved in the development and delivery of training programs are highly qualified?
6. **Evaluation:** How will you use evaluations to ensure training quality?

### **Detailed Questions**

(ask all these questions or the ones that are most pertinent to your situation):

1. **Business Objectives:** How will you develop an employee-training program that is tied to my company’s business objectives?

#### **Probes:**

- a) How will you align the program with the company performance objectives and job requirements?

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from “Employee Training Interview Guide, Judging the Quality and Effectiveness of Training Providers”, National Alliance of Business, 1995

- b) How will you link training success to clear learning objectives and industry skill requirements?
  - c) How will you involve management, supervisors, employees and unions in development?
2. **Workplace Requirements:** How will you develop an employee-training program that reflects my workplace and its requirements?

**Probes:**

- a) How will you align training to my company's structure, process and culture?
  - b) How will you teach foundational, as well as occupational skills?
  - c) How will you integrate training with company work restructuring efforts?
  - d) How will you develop interactive, experiential, problem-solving exercises?
  - e) How will you create short, discrete, clearly defined training sessions?
  - f) How will you time delivery of training with employees' needs for knowledge and skills?
  - g) How will you develop activities that use technology and materials like those used on the job?
  - h) How will you provide instruction at multiple sites? ... multiple shifts?
  - i) How will you reinforce training on the job?
3. **Employee Needs:** How will you craft an employee-training program tailored to our employees' needs?

**Probes:**

- a) How will you assess employee knowledge and skills?
  - b) How will you tailor training to individual knowledge and skill development needs?
  - c) How will you use instructional methods appropriate to individual students?
  - d) How will you allow for self-paced learning?
  - e) How will you train employees to transfer knowledge and skills to different work settings?
  - f) How will you promote continuous learning?
  - g) How will you provide portable credentials for learners?
4. **Employee Assessments:** How will you ensure that the employee assessments you use will be high quality?

Employee Assessments are sometimes used before and after training. Employee course evaluations, which are discussed in question 6, are frequently used to determine the response of trainees to the training activity.

**Probes:**

- a) How will you develop assessments that are reliable indicators of performance?
- b) How will you explain outcomes and assessment methods to employees?
- c) How will you assess participants' needs and develop individualized training plans?

- d) How will you provide employees with ongoing feedback?
  - e) How will you assess employees at program completion to measure program success?
5. **Qualified Staff:** How will you ensure that staff members involved in the development and delivery of programs are highly qualified?

**Probes if the provider is supplying the training:**

- a) How do you know about job performance requirements and what is your industry-based experience?
- b) How will you apply adult learning principles to instructional design and delivery

**Probes if the provider is preparing you company's training or operational staff to serve as trainer:**

- a) How will you prepare our staff members to serve as employee training instructors?
  - b) How will you train our staff members to deliver the employee training program?
6. **Evaluation:** How will you use evaluations to ensure training quality?

**Probes:**

- a) How will you develop measures to assess the quality and effectiveness of the training?
- b) How will you involve management, supervisors, employees and unions in evaluation development?
- c) How will you incorporate feedback from evaluations into training on an ongoing basis?

## PART II: Provider Comparison Chart

**Instructions:** Put the names of each of the providers you interviewed in the blank boxes across the top of the chart. Use the notes from your interviews with these providers to place a check mark in the boxes corresponding to the points the different providers made. Add up the number of points covered by each provider. Also note whether the providers' corporate resumes, staff resumes, and references demonstrate quality and experience, and note the providers' costs. Be sure to compare which points the providers do and do not cover, whether you can address the points not covered by a provider, whether the providers' materials demonstrate quality and relevant experience, and what program costs are.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS				
<b>1. Business Objectives</b>				
Aligns training with performance objectives				
Links training success to learning objectives				
Involves managers, supervisors and employees				
<b>2. Workplace Requirements</b>				
Aligns training with company processes				
Teaches foundational and occupational skills				
Integrates training with work restructuring				
Develops interactive, experiential exercises				
Creates short, discrete training sessions				
Times training delivery with employees' needs				
Uses technology and materials used on the job				
Provides instruction at multiple sites / multiple shifts				
Reinforces training on the job				
<b>3. Employee Needs</b>				
Assesses employee knowledge and skills				
Tailors training to individuals' needs				
Uses appropriate instructional methods				
Allows for self-paced learning				
Trains employees to transfer skills to work				
Promotes continuous learning				
Provides portable credentials				
<b>4. Employee Assessments</b>				
Develops reliable indicators of performance				
Explains assessments to employees				

Develops individualized training plans				
Provides on-going feedback				
Assesses employees at program completion				
<b>5. Qualified Staff – Provider’s</b>				
Knows job requirements and your industry				
Applies adult learning principles				
<b>Qualified Staff – Company’s</b>				
Prepares staff to serve as instructors				
Trains staff to deliver training program				
<b>6. Evaluations</b>				
Assesses quality and effectiveness				
Involves managers, supervisors and employees				
Incorporates feedback on an on-going basis				
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>				

<b>MATERIALS DEMONSTRATE EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY</b>				
Corporate resumes				
Staff resumes				
Course materials				
Reference checks				
<b>COST</b>				