

# P150 wage hike to lift pay above 'poverty' level

OPINION

## Qualities of an excellent training manager

**I interviewed a candidate for the job of a training manager. I asked him: "On your first day, what would you consider your number one task?" He said he will review our training calendar and immediately implement the first program on the list. I thought he should have had a better answer. Please advise. — Moon River.**

Job interviews are intended to discover the right person for the job. However, it should not be the only basis for selection. Don't be turned off by one answer. Instead, give him the chance to prove his worth in other things, like answering at least five more questions:

When do you stop employee training?

If a company president doesn't believe in employee training, then what can you do?

Which is more important — completing a training program perfectly at a high price or imperfectly at zero cost due to budgetary constraints?

What gives you joy when you're handling a training program?

Aside from training, how do you propose to improve employee performance?

Reviewing a company's training calendar on the first day of work is not exactly bad. It becomes bad only when it is scrapped without reason, in the absence of a training needs analysis. But then, what's the correct answer? Aside from onboarding, what should be done by a newly-hired training manager on the first day at work?

My best answer is to meet and greet the training staff after reviewing their 201 folders. Spend some time with the direct reports to understand their situation. After all, you can't solve a problem without knowing about all the possible resources within your control. Explore and understand all current tasks of the training department.

Find out the importance of training programs in order of priority. Ask their opinion about things pertaining to the department's objectives. Along the way, ask the five questions that I listed earlier. That way, you'll get a picture of their challenges and opportunities.

QUALITIES

It's not enough to limit yourself to asking the most difficult job interview questions. You have to dig deep by defining the desired qualities and characteristics of an excellent training manager and how that person can effectively manage an organization's employee training and development needs.

This includes all possible skills that are critical for job performance. For this reason, every organization needs an "excellent" training manager who must understand the following:

**One, the specific needs of the business.** This is often discerned by reconciling the company's vision, mission and values with the objectives of every training program created and developed by internal stakeholders. This means closely scrutinizing or even rejecting off-the-shelf programs offered by external training providers.

The exception to this is when an organization does not have an internal expert who can develop and deliver such specialized training programs. Another issue is when internal trainers act in a bookish manner, unlike real practitioners, who can help you manage difficult questions by drawing on their experience.

**Two, an idea of the difference between process and result.** Many times, process orientation must come ahead of results orientation. In lean thinking, if you're focused on using only the best training process, you'll come out with the best result, free from waste and defects.

This includes conducting a training needs analysis, recommending the best training solu-

tion for poor work performance and measuring the outcome of every training program. This should include finding out how participants implemented the key learnings in their jobs.

**Three, the need to go beyond classroom training.** Today, almost all training programs can be done online. Many of them are free. They're also convenient to users who can take them at their own pace, even outside of office hours. There are also many training interventions to help improve employee performance.

They include job cross-postings, immersion programs, special projects, case studies, coaching by internal experts or mentoring by outsiders or volunteers like retired professionals in the same field. In my case, I've been a beneficiary of many short-term Japan-sponsored management programs that are free of charge.

**Last, the importance of leading by example.** An excellent training manager walks the talk. A manager who conducts a leadership program and is revered for leading talent to greater heights would be highly desirable. One of the non-negotiables in a training manager is skill in both oral and written communication, which can be harnessed to persuade the reluctant.

This typically means having flair in delivering presentations, though there is no substitute for knowing the subject matter by heart, to the point where the bulk of the presentation will involve the training manager expounding at length on slides that could contain only two or three words.

As job responsibilities change, the job of a training manager must be redesigned or reengineered so the incumbent can go beyond the confines of employee development and treat it as the continuing process of avoiding obsolescence.

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By John Victor D. Ordoñez Reporter

THE proposed P150 legislated wage hike will raise worker pay beyond their current "poverty" levels and unleash consumer spending power, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) said.

"Purchasing power continues to erode (due to) rising prices of rice and oil. (It is these prices) that are fueling renewed concerns about inflation — and not (raising) workers' poverty wages," Carlos Miguel S. Oñate, legislative officer of the TUCP, told *BusinessWorld* in an e-mail.

"We push for the P150 wage hike not only to cushion the impact of inflation on working families but to revitalize our consumption-driven economy and drive wage-led growth as a more inclusive and equitable strategy of economic recovery and development," he added.

Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno and National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan have warned that proposals to legislate a P150 wage hike would stoke inflation.

Mr. Balisacan told a Senate hearing this month that the government should focus on improving job quality before implementing another wage hike.

"We understand what the problems are: high cost of energy, poor infrastructure, and high cost of doing business. We're trying to address those," he said.

"But, if we address the problem of low incomes now by raising wages, (the economy will slow down)."

The jobless rate in June fell to 4.5% from 6% a year earlier. The unemployment rate averaged 4.6% in the first half.

Legislators are proposing across-the-board minimum wage increases for workers in the private sector and agriculture industry to help them deal with the rising cost of living.

In March, Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri filed a bill seeking to increase the minimum wage for such workers by P150.

At the House of Representatives, the Makabayan coalition proposed a wage hike of P750 for all private-sector workers, including those working in special economic zones, freeports and in agriculture.

BMI Country Risk and Industry Research said in an Aug. 11 report that elevated inflation, high borrowing costs and an uptick in jobless rates are risks to the consumer spending outlook in the near term.

BMI sees consumer spending expanding 5.5% this year, and projected that inflation will likely remain above the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' 2-4% target range, averaging 5.7% this year.

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