



The Importance

of Training and Why it Matters

By Chris Swires, FSCTE

Companies who invest in the training of their staff never regret the investment and neither do the trainees. Everybody stands to benefit from training throughout their career.

Training can bring tangible benefits to both the trainee and the company they work for. It's an investment in your workforce, which improves morale, and generates its own revenue exponentially. Well-trained staff enhance a company's reputation, and the benefits are reflected in the buoyant share price experienced by the shareholders.

Theoretical Informs the Practical

Training is the core value of the SCTE. Established in 1945 to maintain standards across the industry, the SCTE understands that the practical must be complemented by the theoretical if an engineer is to progress.

Apart from the knowledge of how to do routine tasks, the most important benefit of training is an awareness and understanding of broader aspects of the networks. It is crucial that technicians and engineers employed to install and maintain networks have a broad enough knowledge and training to effectively troubleshoot and problem solve.

Theoretical knowledge is invaluable when awkward problems arise; without the knowledge of the theory behind the working of the networks, engineers and technicians struggle to find answers to problems.

Training as an Investment

The best engineers are always keen to learn and this should be encouraged by the management. Training we feel is integral to the success of an individual's own career aspirations as much as the profit margins of the operator.

The SCTE's training courses which were historically in person, are now online and as a result the overall cost of training technicians and engineers has been significantly reduced. The SCTE always strives to keep the costs competitive, since we know that cost margins are being stretched and rising prices are affecting businesses across the board.

Maintaining the standards the SCTE upholds, while making training accessible to all is critical to the future of our sector.

Engineer Managers

Engineer managers are becoming more and more scarce, as the emphasis on marketing and sales grows throughout the whole industry. We have established the need to persuade the management of companies to invest in training for their engineers.

Once this investment comes into fruition and companies are reaping the benefits of a workforce of highly trained and



experienced engineers, these same engineers should be being considered for promotion into management roles.

Managers with an engineering background are often well placed with the knowledge and experience they possess, to direct network operations and oversee buying, whilst ensuring that reliable components and good techniques are employed.

A collaboration across the industry is needed to protect what we have all worked so hard to achieve and ensure that sound engineering practice is protected in future.

What if I decide not to bother to invest in training?

The simple fact is that without the necessary investment in suitable training, the monetary cost of having insufficiently trained staff is enormous. Each time an engineer is called out to fix a problem in the network or at a customer's home the cost equates to about £100.

If an inadequately trained engineer goes out on the call, they may fail to find the fault in order to cure the problem. A more senior engineer is then required to visit, generating another fee of £100. This inefficiency results in increased cost for the supplier. The customer has at this point had to bear the inconvenience, the delay not to mention the added cost.

The customer may at this stage have lost faith in the company's ability to do their job in a timely and effective manner and decide to move to another supplier. Invariably word gets around, via online reviews and word-of-mouth and the reputation of the company is harmed. A reputation once damaged is very difficult to re-establish.

A false economy

Invariably it is ill-informed, cost-cutting measures, taking the narrow view, which ends up costing companies the most financially and affects their reputations. When the decision is made to set aside the necessary budget for training, it is about companies protecting their own interests as much as investing in the skill set of their team.

Never has there been a time when training has been so accessible to those who wish to learn, nor the outlay been so reasonable, with the transfer of all Broadband Training courses online.

In the final analysis, the true winners are the suppliers who have made the valuable investment of training their engineers and promoting some of them to managerial positions where they are able to make decisions informed by their experience, to advance the reputation and promote the effective running of the company.

Broadband Training needs the help of SCTE members to convey the message to senior management that training engineers and technicians is an investment that will pay back companies in dividends.

