

Effective in-service education requires more than subject expertise

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Several formal roles within the field of human performance and training are specifically responsible for ensuring that programs are designed and developed for maximum impact. Data show that education and training are essential functions of healthcare risk management professionals. For this, healthcare risk management professionals can maximize their training efforts by partnering with an instructional designer or developer to create a training program that promotes safe and trusted healthcare.

INTRODUCTION

The value of effectuating measurable change across an organization through training programs can have an enduring impact on improving organizational safety and patient care delivery processes.

A well-designed and well-developed experiential training approach can result in 75% to 90% content retention by participants, the maximum yield from any training program.(1) A viable training program is important in the face of risk management concerns such as workforce productivity and efficiency and an increased demand for patient safety, accountability, and transparency within healthcare. Furthermore, inefficiency causes delays, rework, harm, and poor-quality care.

The role of healthcare risk management professionals is vast and varied, and often influenced by the demands of their healthcare organization or the external healthcare environment.(2) Many healthcare risk management professionals find themselves accountable for work product and outcomes for which they have not had any formal training or experience. Education is one of those areas, and thus represents one of the top four functional areas of responsibility for healthcare risk management professionals.(3)

A good training program can maximize safety, timeliness, the effectiveness of employees, and their efficiency in the healthcare environment. The Institute of Medicine's *Crossing the Quality Chasm* report says that healthcare should be safe, effective, patient centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.(4) Moreover, the report discusses preparing the workforce by "redesigning the way health professionals are trained to emphasize the six aims for improvement, which will mean placing more stress on teaching evidence-based practice and providing more opportunities for interdisciplinary training."(5)

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Effective education and training programs can empower employees and frontline caregivers to use critical thinking and decision making, which are essential to the provision of safe healthcare.

This article reviews the framework for conducting healthcare risk management training programs.

Value of healthcare risk management professionals

Healthcare risk management has evolved from being reactive and independent to a comprehensive, integrated, and proactive discipline. More important, enterprise risk management (ERM) has created a strategic framework for risk.(6) The ERM model provides a mechanism by which healthcare risk management professionals can demonstrate their pivotal role and support healthcare organizations in accomplishing their strategic goals and objectives.(7)

Today's professionals are challenged by the economic downturn and its impact on healthcare delivery, increasing legal and regulatory mandates relative to reporting and nonpayment policies, and the uncertainties surrounding healthcare reform. Yet healthcare risk management professionals continue to demonstrate their value to healthcare organizations by developing solutions and strategies aimed at improving patient care outcomes. They seek to create revenue-saving opportunities through early risk identification and mitigation strategies intended to minimize losses. These strategies include early identification systems (event reporting, hot lines, investigations), early intervention programs (disclosure and transparency, mediation), the ability to aggregate and benchmark risks and hazards associated with patient care to share lessons learned through patient safety organizations,(8) and hospital-wide risk management education and training.

Training: A top job function

According to the 2006 ASHRM Professional Healthcare Risk Management job analysis, the job function for 69% of healthcare risk management professionals includes an educational and training component.(9) This may include the design, development, implementation, and maintenance of educational programs on risk management and patient safety-related topics for the governing body, medical staff, clinical staff, nonclinical staff, administrative staff, house staff, and medical students.(10) In short, healthcare risk management professionals serve their organizations as a resource, internal consultant, and educator for risk management and patient safety issues.

Healthcare risk management professionals' educational responsibilities vary based on their professional level, articulated by ASHRM as Risk Manager Levels 1 to 3 and Chief Risk Officer.(11) For example, the Risk Manager

Level 1 may conduct periodic in-services and routine facility orientation on risk management and related subjects.(12) The Risk Manager Level 2 professional organizes and manages organization-wide education and training programs aimed at minimizing the frequency and severity of actual and potential claims, risks, and hazards.(13) The Risk Manager Level 3 professional and the Chief Risk Officer develop organization-wide educational loss control programs and a comprehensive orientation program for all stakeholders.(14)

Hence, healthcare risk management professionals' role as trainer-educators is essential to the success of an organization's loss control and risk-reduction program, which requires collaborative management processes across disciplines. In addition, they have an opportunity to influence behaviors and decision making aimed at improving performance outcomes and thereby preventing harm to patients.

Note: For more information on the categories of professional levels and their respective job descriptions, see Sedwick J. The healthcare risk management professional. In: Carroll, R et al., eds. *Risk management handbook for healthcare organizations* (5th ed., Vol. 1). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 2006:115–153)

Teaching versus training

If risk management professionals are to be effective educators, they must understand the distinction between teaching and training.

While education is an investment in the individual's personal development, training is an investment in the organization's overall performance outcomes. A more comprehensive definition is provided in **Exhibit 1**.

Although training has its roots in education, it has evolved appreciably. Information dissemination that results in memorization, theoretical knowledge, and content mastery is partial. A comprehensive approach focuses a practical application of the information that will ultimately improve performance. Moreover, measurement of success is not based on how much employees know once they leave the training but rather what they are able to do as a result of the training:(15)

Traditional Focus (Basis in Education)

- Training content (and activities)
- Cost
- Skills (and knowledge)
- Programs
- Volume (number of participants)
- Participant (what they want)

Exhibit 1: Definitions of Teaching and Training

Term	Definition
Teaching	A process that aims to increase or improve knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors in a person to accomplish a variety of goals. Teaching is often driven more toward the long-term personal growth of the learner and less toward business drivers, such as job tasks, that are often the focus of training. Some people characterize teaching as focused on theory and training as focused on practical application.(16)
Training	A process that aims to improve knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors in a person to accomplish a specific job task or goal. Training is often focused on business needs and driven by time-critical business skills and knowledge, and its goal is often to improve performance.(16)

Business Focus (Basis in Training)

- Business results
- Return on investment
- Performance
- Initiatives
- Value
- Markets

The development of a training program is not an event but rather a process. This process is driven by the business needs of the organization for a specific target audience, which may include the governing board, hospital administrators, medical staff, nursing staff, and other members of the healthcare team.

Roles for a training program

There are several critical roles for developing a training program (see **Exhibit 2**).

Subject matter expert

The subject matter expert (SME) is sometimes referred to as the content specialist. The SME is knowledgeable and well informed about a particular content or subject area.(16)

Healthcare risk management professionals can function successfully in the SME role because they have technical and theoretical knowledge, as well as practical application experience. Stolpe stated that SMEs are responsible for providing or confirming the appropriateness and accuracy of content material, including these:(17)

- Performance objectives
- Levels of complexity

- Processes and procedures
- Order of performance steps
- Statistical content
- Historical context
- Facts and information
- Taxonomies
- Drawings, graphs, tables
- Glossary of terms and acronyms
- Resources and references (respectively, the bibliography and citations)

Unfortunately, SMEs are sometimes so good at what they do that they leave out information or performance steps that are intuitive for them (but not their students). Therefore, SMEs should be mindful of their target audience, recognizing that often the content or performance steps may be unfamiliar to them.(18)

Key tips for addressing this challenge include:

- Arranging similar tasks together or from easiest to hardest
- Separating nice-to-know from need-to-know information to perform the job (nice-to-know information may be appropriate for additional reading material or recommended resources)

While SMEs have a high degree of knowledge, information, and understanding in a particular area, there is much more to the overall process. That is why there is value in employing additional skills to ensure that a training program will have maximum impact on its student participants.

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Instructional designer

An individual who applies systematic methodology based on instructional theory and adult learning principles to develop training programs is known as an instructional designer (ID).(19) Instructional design is an evidence-based practice for maximizing the effectiveness, efficiency, and appeal of instruction and other learning experiences.(20) The process consists of:(21)

- Analysis of training needs and goals
- Development of a delivery system to meet those needs
- Development of instructional materials and activities
- Implementation of instruction
- Evaluation of instruction and performance outcomes

Among the potential design models are analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (popularly known as ADDIE); rapid prototyping; and instructional development learning systems. While all these design models support healthcare risk management professionals in the development of their training programs, instructional designers have experience applying those models. The instructional designer can also partner with the healthcare risk management professional to help identify the model that will best meet organizational training development needs.

Dick, Carey, and Carey reported that almost every instructor who has studied the process of instructional design has had the following two reactions: 1) they will certainly begin immediately to use the components in the model, and 2) their approach to instruction will never be the same because of the insights they have gained.(22)

It is important to reinforce the point that the ID is reliant on the SME to provide the appropriate information for the training. The SME ensures that the training content is both accurate and current.

Exhibit 3 shows common delivery options for training. In addition, it is important for healthcare risk management professionals to understand some of the universal terminology and definitions that are prevalent in the human performance and training industry.(23)

The end product of the partnership between the SME and the ID is a clear training goal, performance objectives, story board, and design document of the training program.

Developer

A developer is most often used for distance education(24) or distance learning when the expectation is that there will not be face-to-face instruction. Also, distance education may consist of a blended opportunity with combined aspects of online and face-to-face instruction (**Exhibit 3**). The role of a developer is vital if the intent is to use electronic learning (e-learning).

E-learning is a wide set of applications and processes, such as Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via Internet, intranet or extranet (LAN/WAN), audio- and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, and CD-ROM.(25)

Many comprehensive training initiatives use an automated software application called a learning management system (LMS; **Exhibit 4**) to administer their e-learning programs. LMS software can document, track, and provide reports and participant transcripts for classroom events, online

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Exhibit 2:

Delineation of SME and ID Roles

Role of the Subject Matter Expert

Provides the content or technical information
Responsible for identifying content or performance steps
Recommends order of content
Provides technical jargon
Determines what is acceptable performance
Responsible for determining performance objectives

Role of the Instructional Designer

Arrange content into material that can be easily learned
Responsible for how the material will be presented
Determines order of frames
Determines if jargon needs an explanation
Determines how performance will be evaluated
Responsible for turning performance objective into learning outcomes appropriate for the learning environment or delivery medium

Exhibit 3:
Common Delivery Options for Training

Training Methodology	Definition
Instructor led	Instructor-led training (ILT), computer-based training (CBT), Web-based training (WBT), blended learning curriculums, training video scripting, teleconference training, videoconference training, audioconference training, train-the-trainer, onboarding process training, and learning management systems.
Computer based	An umbrella term for the use of computers in both instruction and management of the teaching and learning process. Computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and computer-managed instruction (CMI) are included under the heading of computer-based training. Some people use the terms <i>CBT</i> and <i>CAI</i> interchangeably.
Web based	Delivery of educational content via a Web browser over the Internet, a private intranet, or an extranet. Web-based training (WBT) often provides links to other learning resources such as references, e-mail, bulletin boards, and discussion groups. It also may include a facilitator who can provide course guidelines, manage discussion boards, deliver lectures, and so forth. When used with a facilitator, WBT offers some advantages of instructor-led training while also retaining the advantages of computer-based training.
Blended learning	Learning events that combine aspects of online and face-to-face instruction.
Video/CD-ROM	A format for recording digital video onto a compact disk, allowing for compression and full-motion video.
Teleconference	Two-way electronic communication between two or more groups in separate locations via audio, video, or computer systems, or a combination of these.
Videoconference	Using video and audio signals to link participants at different and remote locations.
Audioconference	Voice-only connection of more than two sites using standard telephone lines.
Webinar (Web + seminar)	A synchronous online learning event in which a presenter and audience members communicate by text chat or audio about concepts, often illustrated using online slides or an electronic whiteboard. Webinars are often archived for asynchronous, on-demand access.
Webcast (Web + broadcast)	A broadcast of video signals that is digitized and streamed on the Internet and may also be made available for download. As a verb, <i>Webcast</i> means to digitize and stream a broadcast on the Internet.

Exhibit 4:
Definition of a Learning Management System

Term	Definition
Learning management system	Software that automates the administration of training. The LMS registers users, tracks courses in a catalogue, records data from learners, and provides reports to management. It is typically designed to handle courses by multiple publishers and providers. It usually does not include its own authoring capabilities. Rather, it focuses on managing courses created by a variety of other sources.

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events, e-learning programs, and training content. These are commonly used applications.

Risk managers as education partners

Many companies offer design and development services. Healthcare risk management professionals can partner with them to help support the design and development of their learning programs. In addition, there are also opportunities to contract with individual consultants.

Costs vary depending on the type and length of the training, as well as the methodology employed. Individual consultants will often have lower bids and as a result may save an organization money because they generally do not have the administrative cost associated with larger companies. In any event, it is important to check references and sample work products to ensure that they are capable of delivering the product required.

CONCLUSION

Healthcare risk management professionals should employ the expertise of an instructional designer and possibly a developer for their training programs to maximize the impact and outcome of their organizational training investment. A well-designed and well-developed experiential training approach can result in a 75% to 90% content retention by participants, the maximum expectation from any training program.(26)

Furthermore, when considering this expense, it is important to factor in the productivity and efficiency of the workforce and the demand for patient safety and transparency within healthcare industry. The outcomes of not having a viable training program are twofold. First, consider the training investment: staff time, risk management and patient safety imperatives for competencies, and unsuccessful deliverables. Inefficiency causes delays, rework, harm, and poor-quality care. Second, a program that is poorly designed and developed can reduce the probability that the organization will meet or exceed its performance outcomes or realize a return on its training investment.

The investment in a viable training program for healthcare risk management training responsibilities can have an enduring impact on improving organizational safety and patient care delivery processes.

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