

Employee training an investment, bosses told

➤ Companies have to see the value of human capital enhancement: Expert

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PETALING JAYA: Companies should treat training for employees as an investment rather than mere expenses, if Malaysia is to truly see an enhancement in human capital that could subsequently spur growth.

Experts claimed that while there have been improvements over the years in terms of willingness of employers to train their staff, many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in particular are still reluctant to do so.

“They perceive this as an added cost, instead of an investment for the company,” a senior human resource consultant, Ahmad Raji Yaakub, told *theSun* yesterday.

The chief operating officer of Irshad HR Consulting Sdn Bhd said based on his years of experience, many small businesses were unwilling to spend due to limited funds.

He said employers were also reluctant to take the risk that their staff might eventually leave the company after receiving such training, a risk Ahmad Raji however said was certainly worth taking.

“If a staff stays on with the company for years to come, which do you think is better? Taking the initial risk to send them for training, or not sending them worrying they will leave? Of course it is the former,” he said.

“The onus is on the employers. If bosses show the employees that they value the need for development, staff will certainly feel appreciated,” he added.

“Companies have to see the value and benefit of people development. Once they see this and convince themselves that it will help improve both their staff and the company, then they will see results, as far as efficiency and productivity go,” he said.

Ahmad Raji said if planned properly, training would benefit an organisation, as the staff would be able to utilise the skills and knowledge harnessed for the betterment of the company.

He also expressed bemusement as to why many SMEs do not send workers for training, particularly as many private organisations and government agencies offer free courses, or charge minimal fees.

Ahmad Raji noted registered companies are also able to utilise funds from the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF), to which they pay a compulsory monthly levy.

Under the current law, companies with 10 staff or more are required to contribute 1% of their monthly payroll to HRDF, which can then be used or claimed for training purposes for their workers.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan explained that many SMEs were unwilling to release their employees for training as they would not have enough manpower to operate, which would translate into higher costs.

“I think if the courses are held during weekends, they will be okay with it. But the issue is workers are usually reluctant to attend classes on their off days,” he said.

Shamsuddin said as such, many of these companies were willing to forego their monthly levy to HRDF, and considered it as part of their tax contribution.

As for micro businesses with less than 10 staff, Shamsuddin said they would be even more reluctant to contribute to HRDF or conduct their own training, as this would eat into their reserves.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Raji said while larger corporations tend to have no issues with sending workers for training, many still find difficulty identifying proper courses that would suit their staff and the company.

“Another issue with these bigger firms is that not many of them do proper post-assessment on the impact of the training, whether there have been any improvement to the human capital.

“Some companies just conduct or send employees for training for the sake of fulfilling requirement and utilising their HRDF contribution,” he said.