

## Career Shot: Training and Organizational Development

Courtesy of Career Leader

Training and organizational development are specialized areas of human resources management. Therefore, you may also want to review the Human Resources Management business career profile.

**Trainers** are teachers. They train business professionals and company employees in areas such as:

- computer applications, sales and management techniques, time management

They may also train in specialized topics, including:

- business strategy, marketing, finance

**Organizational development (OD) professionals** may teach in similar areas as trainers, but their work often includes helping organizations create effective working environments. Thus they emphasize topics such as:

- team building, organizational design, hiring, promoting, and succession planning, executive coaching, change management (preparing and motivating employees for new work systems or processes), career development

People who are interested in careers in training and organizational development can take two paths:

- **Working in a company's internal training and development department:** Through this path, training and development specialists can gain a sense of continuity and responsibility for the ultimate outcome of their efforts. They play a central role in designing organizational initiatives and in training employees to support those initiatives. Many of them travel infrequently and have relatively predictable work hours.
- **Working in a consulting firm:** Through this path, training and development specialists work with a wide variety of problems and clients. Assignments are more project-based and of shorter duration than those found within a company's training and development department. Consultants also tend to make more money than internal trainers and developers. However, they also travel a great deal. Moreover, at senior levels, they have to constantly "sell" their business to new clients in order to become partners in their firm.

They tend to develop specific areas of expertise, which may shift as they progress in their careers. Their areas of expertise may include:

- team development
- executive coaching
- succession planning
- organizational design

Regardless of their area of expertise, all trainers and development specialists must eventually develop strong communication and presentation skills if they want to advance in the field.

If you're interested in working in this field after graduating, a good starting point is the human resources department of a company -- and if possible, within the training and development "specialty" group.

This would be a great opportunity to get involved in the delivery of training programs with some veterans in the field, while establishing a broad knowledge base. Though training programs certainly vary from company to company, many topics cut across all industries (e.g., team building, hiring, change management, and career development).

After a few years, you can then consider transitioning over to a consulting firm that specializes in corporate training and development. Your years of experience would benefit you greatly as you work to bring in new clients as well as serve existing ones.

In any job search, previous work experience is extremely beneficial. If you're only a year or two into your college education, consider the merits of a summer internship in the human resources department of a company. If you're facing graduation this coming spring, think about what other experiences you've had during your college years that might translate to the work you'd do in a training role.

For instance, did you develop a training and transition program for that extracurricular activity you've been involved with over the past four years? If you were a resident assistant, did you speak to your dorm residents about safety concerns on the college campus? Think about times when you've shared knowledge with others in a somewhat formal setting. If you liked those experiences, then you might enjoy working as a trainer.