

A study on the English communication skill training strategy for enterprise employees with the background of building Hainan Free Trade Zone - Taking Hainan BA International Hospital as an example

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Abstract: In the dynamic landscape of the Hainan Free Trade Zone construction in China, escalating global competition underscores the imperative for enterprises to continually enhance their employees' English proficiency for seamless integration into the international market. Yet, organizations often grapple with challenges such as high training costs, time constraints, and reliance on singular materials and teaching methods during English training sessions. Drawing insights from the experiences of Hainan BA International Hospital, this paper proposes a set of strategies. By adopting these comprehensive approaches, enterprises can effectively optimize language training outcomes, thereby bolstering their international competitiveness. The implications of this study extend significantly to the advancement of China's Hainan Free Trade Zone and the enduring growth of enterprises.

Key words: staff training; English training; Training strategy

I. Introduction

On June 1, 2020, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council issued the Overall Plan for the Construction of Hainan Free Trade Port, emphasizing that by the middle of this century, a high-level free trade port with strong international influence should be built in an all-round way. The rapid development of Hainan Free Trade Zone and the improvement of internationalization require enterprises in Hainan to quickly adjust and adapt to the needs of the global market, and the English ability of employees is increasingly becoming a key competitive advantage for local enterprises. Therefore, the training of employees' English ability has become crucial. In 2018, the General Office of the Hainan Provincial People's Government issued a notice on the Action Plan of Hainan Province to Comprehensively Improve citizens' Foreign language proficiency. It is clearly mentioned in the notice that: In order to meet the needs of the construction of Hainan Pilot Free Trade Zone and free trade port with Chinese characteristics, Hainan citizens' awareness of openness will be cultivated, their foreign language literacy and cross-cultural communication ability will be enhanced, and the national foreign language publicity and popularization program will be implemented, a multi-level foreign language learning platform will be built, and foreign language talent training and introduction will be carried out to help citizens in the province improve their foreign language proficiency in an all-round way. However, due to the cost of enterprise training, the time invested by employees, and the fact that the training materials cannot meet the individual needs of enterprises, the English ability training of enterprise employees has not achieved its due effect. This paper aims to study the English ability training strategies of employees under the background of the construction of China's Hainan Free Trade Zone (taking Hainan BA International Hospital as an example), and give suggestions on how to effectively carry out English ability training of employees in local enterprises, so as to attract the attention of enterprises in Hainan Free Trade Zone to the improvement of employees' English ability, so as to improve the market competitiveness of enterprises in Hainan and the cross-cultural communication ability of employees.

II. Current Research Landscape

1. Research Status of English Training for Domestic Enterprise Employees

Wang Wang Li (2023) investigated English training for employees from the perspective of language economics. The study underscores human capital as a core enterprise competitiveness factor, highlighting the pivotal role of employees' language abilities in economic benefits and development. Wang Li introduces the innovative "one body and two wings" training approach, emphasizing collaboration between vocational colleges and enterprises. Modular teaching training is conducted through the exploration of "comprehensive use of English in the workplace." However, the study lacks a clear delineation of the training steps.

Scholars Wang Haigang and Chang Axiang (2020) surveyed a special training course on foreign language competence for enterprise employees led by the industry and information technology department of Shandong Province. Findings reveal issues in SMEs' competence training in Shandong, including misalignment of training content with needs, insufficient actual enterprise research, and textbooks utilizing general materials without personalization. Although the article identifies problems, it lacks specific demand analysis suggestions.

Fu Da'an (2019) investigated the language proficiency of employees in international trading companies, highlighting the significant impact of English proficiency on personal ability development and salary levels, subsequently influencing enterprises' international competitiveness.

2. English Training Status at Hainan BA International Hospital

Owing to the unique tropical setting of Hainan, the amalgamation of medical tourism, traditional Chinese medicine, and nutrition has evolved into a distinctive hallmark of the Free Trade Zone's development. Hainan BA International Hospital stands as a global healthcare destination, catering to patients from around the world. Its comprehensive range of services spans outpatient diagnosis, inpatient treatment,

surgery, emergency medical care, and various medical specialties. Serving a diverse patient population, including international tourists, expatriate residents, overseas Chinese expatriates, and local residents, English has emerged as a primary working language within the hospital.

Given this linguistic landscape, it is imperative for hospital staff, particularly doctors, nurses, and front desk personnel, to possess fluent English communication skills to ensure the delivery of high-quality medical services and facilitate effective medical communication. English training programs at the hospital aim to enhance staff proficiency, mitigate misunderstandings, reduce medical errors, and elevate the hospital's international reputation while enhancing patient satisfaction.

Despite collaborative efforts between the international hospital and local English training institutions to provide annual English training opportunities for staff, the outcomes have fallen short of expectations. The medical staff still face challenges in achieving true proficiency in English within their work environment. Through a combination of questionnaire surveys and interviews, the author identified the following challenges:

III. Issues and Origins of English Training Challenges at BA International Hospital

1. Current issues

(1) **Cost Challenge:** The primary hurdle identified through a comprehensive analysis of questionnaire survey results is the cost associated with enterprise English training at BA International Hospital. Conducting a one-month training session annually fails to meet the ongoing learning needs of employees. Long-term English training incurs expenses such as educational materials, teachers' salaries, training equipment, technology, and venue rental, posing a financial burden on the business.

(2) **Time Constraints:** Employees face challenges in allocating time for training while juggling their regular work responsibilities. As revealed in interviews, conducting training during working hours increases the learning burden and workload, adversely affecting the overall learning effectiveness. Striking a balance in enterprise language training is essential to ensure employees can actively participate in training without compromising their job performance.

(3) **Monotonous Training Methods:** A notable issue in employee English training lies in the over-reliance on a singular teaching method, predominantly traditional face-to-face instruction. This approach may fall short in addressing diverse learning needs as employees possess varying learning styles and English proficiency levels. The lack of interaction and practical application in traditional methods hinders active engagement and skill application. To address this challenge, companies should consider adopting diverse teaching methods, including online learning, interactive applications, simulated situations, and case studies. Such an approach aims to enhance training effectiveness and provide employees with a more engaging and practical learning experience, ensuring a better grasp of English skills.

2. Analysis of Reasons

(1) Reduction in Training Expenses by Functional Departments:

The primary challenge hindering the adequacy of the English training cycle is the financial cost, often prompting functional departments to curtail training expenditures. The imperative of financial and resource management frequently leads to a reduction in training costs. However, such cost-cutting measures risk diminishing the competitiveness of enterprises. In a rapidly evolving business landscape, continuous enhancement of employees' language skills and knowledge is paramount for companies to maintain their competitive edge. Failure to consistently invest in training may leave companies lagging behind industry trends and competitors.

Conflict between Training and Work Time:

Employee time constraints for training stem from the clash between work tasks and training sessions, making it challenging for employees to identify suitable learning times. This clash not only diminishes work efficiency but also negatively impacts the balance between professional and personal life. Intensive training within a compressed timeframe may create a sense of time pressure among employees, exacerbating stress levels.

Utilization of Generic Training Materials:

The accessibility and cost-effectiveness of generic training materials often lead businesses to opt for them. However, these materials tend to lack specificity, as they do not adequately consider the diverse needs and backgrounds of employees. While generic materials offer convenience, their use may compromise the learning experience and overall training quality for employees.

IV. Optimized Recommendation for Enhancing English Training at BA International Hospital

Tailor the Curriculum:

Utilize on-site observations and questionnaires to craft customized English training courses.

Design learning content aligning with the specific work needs of BA Hospital and the current English proficiency of medical staff, ensuring close relevance to actual job requirements, encompassing medical professional English, patient communication skills, and more. Customization ensures precise training, equipping healthcare workers with the language skills essential for delivering superior medical services.

Conduct Simulated Scenario Training:

Implement mock medical scenario training to enable healthcare workers to practice English in a secure environment, particularly during emergency situations.

Employ task-based teaching design to facilitate repeated language practice, enhancing confidence in dealing with emergencies, refining

practical working abilities, and ultimately elevating patient satisfaction and medical quality.

3. Adopt Diverse Teaching Methods

Companies may consider combining traditional teaching methods with modern educational technology to create more diverse training programs. This could include online learning, virtual classrooms, simulated scenarios, interactive applications, and more, to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of employees. This approach provides employees with greater flexibility and convenience, alleviating time constraints and ensuring active participation in learning within their busy work environments. Adopting online learning platforms enables employees to access training materials anytime, anywhere, providing greater flexibility and thereby enhancing learning effectiveness. Additionally, the implementation of online teaching can also alleviate financial pressures on the company.

V. Conclusion

Amidst the development of China's Hainan Free Trade Zone, English training emerges as a strategically invaluable asset for enterprises. Enhancing employees' English proficiency serves as a catalyst, facilitating superior integration into the international market, fostering global partnerships, expanding overseas markets, and elevating international competitiveness. However, this paper's research and analysis on employee English training reveal challenges, including cost constraints, time limitations, and reliance on singular materials and teaching methods during the training process. Implementing strategic approaches tailored to employees' learning needs can effectively elevate their English proficiency, thereby advancing international competitiveness. Furthermore, cross-cultural training emerges as a pivotal tool to fortify transnational cooperation and cross-cultural communication.

Innovatively employing a task-based needs analysis methodology, this paper enhances employees' learning interest and efficacy. While space constraints limit an exhaustive exposition of the research process, future studies could delve into designing industry-specific training materials, aligning English training strategies with diverse enterprise environments.

In essence, employee English proficiency stands as a cornerstone for bolstering international competitiveness. Through effective training strategies and diverse teaching methodologies, enterprises can equip their workforce with the requisite language skills to navigate the challenges of the international market, contributing to the overall success of the enterprise. This holds significant implications for the development of China's Hainan Free Trade Zone and the enduring prosperity of enterprises.

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