

EMPLOYEE TRAINING IS WORTH THE INVESTMENT

Employee training does cost money; still it should not be seen as an expense but rather as an investment. Since it is an investment, it makes sense to talk about “Training Return On Investment (ROI)” and many people look at Don Kirkpatrick’s work from as early as 1959 as the beginning of ROI in learning and development.

- K**irkpatrick distinguishes four levels, being:
1. Reaction: to what degree participants react favourably to the training.
 2. Learning: to what degree participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills based on their participation in a training event.
 3. Behaviour: to what degree participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job.
 4. Results: to what degree targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training event and subsequent reinforcement.

Shortage of qualified staff

In concept, Kirkpatrick’s levels seem valuable. After all, what business wouldn’t want to have training programmes that impact the performance of an organisation? However, the difficulty starts as one tries to quantify these results and get meaningful results. So, instead of trying to do too much number crunching, let’s follow the well-known economist J.M. Keynes, who once said “It’s better to be roughly right than precisely wrong”, and look at the topic from a qualitative point of view, realising that in the high-tech systems arena there is a shortage of qualified staff. While government and industry are doing their best to stimulate technical education in order to increase the inflow of new talent and companies are also working on the inflow by recruiting staff from all over the world, there is ample reason to also invest heavily in the current staff.

Payback

Despite the initial monetary costs, staff training pays back the investment. Here are just some of the reasons to take on development initiatives:

- Training helps to speed up the learning curve of newcomers by sharing the knowledge and lessons learned from more experienced seniors.
- Training does not only make an individual employee better, it also helps to make teams much more effective. Especially in the case of complex technology projects, requiring many team members from different disciplines, an individual improvement of say 2% for each team member easily results in a double-digit improvement of overall team efficiency and output.
- Training is a recruiting tool. Today’s young workers want more than a monthly paycheck. They are looking for employment that allows them to learn and develop their professional skills. Employers are more likely to attract and keep good employees if they can offer development opportunities.
- Training promotes job satisfaction. Nurturing employees to develop more rounded skill sets will help them contribute to the company. The more engaged and involved they are in working for success, the better the employer’s rewards.
- Training is a retention tool, instilling loyalty and commitment from good workers. Staff looking for the next challenge will be more likely to stay if they are offered ways to learn and grow on the job while at the company. Don’t give them a reason to move on by letting them stagnate.

At the end of the day, it’s the employee that lays the golden eggs, by producing solutions to technical challenges, fixing customer issues, coming with innovative ideas and generating IP that helps to stay in front of competition. So, learning and upgrading their skills makes business sense. ■

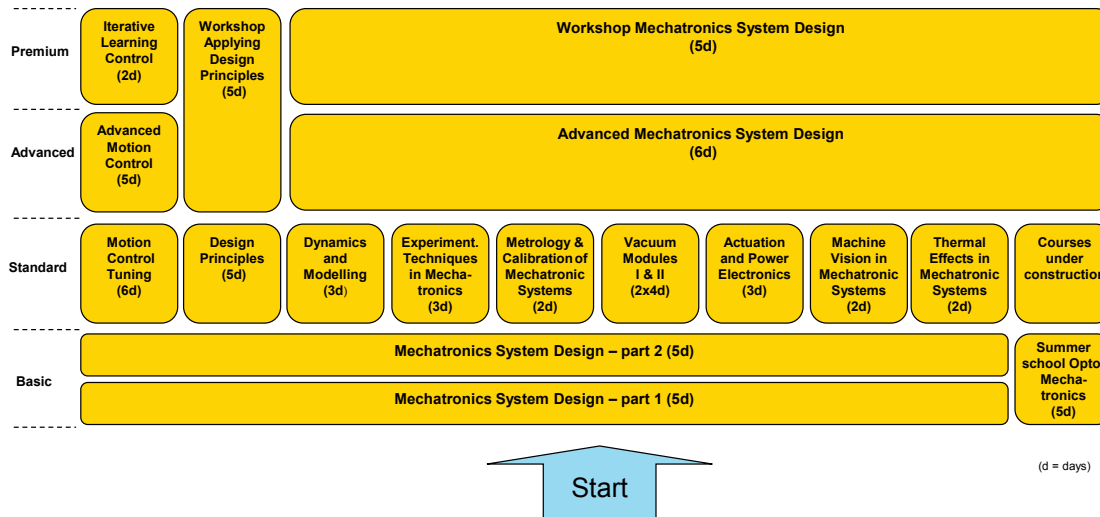


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INFORMATION

WWW.KIRKPATRICKPARTNERS.COM

Training Curriculum



Mechatronics Academy

Early this year, after a period of informal cooperation, Maarten Steinbuch (professor of Control Systems Technology in Eindhoven), Jan van Eijk (professor emeritus of Advanced Mechatronics in Delft) and Adrian Rankers (former manager Mechatronics Technologies at Philips) have taken the step to a formal cooperation in the field of Mechatronics courses by founding the Mechatronics Academy. The purpose of the Mechatronics Academy is to ensure the continuity of the mechatronics-related courses that arose within Philips, and to update and expand the entire training portfolio in cooperation with top experts from industry and academia in order to permanently provide quality training services to the high-tech landscape.

For the open trainings an exclusive collaboration with The High Tech Institute has been established. This step also fits in the growth scenario of The High Tech Institute, which focusses on marketing, communications and back-office, while cooperating with a growing number of leading content partners for the different domains.

The Mechatronics portfolio currently consists of sixteen trainings, arranged in a consistent training framework. In line with needs from the high-tech community, three new trainings have been developed and were successfully launched in 2013. These are "Thermal Effects in Mechatronics", "Actuation & Power Electronics", and very



The three Mechatronics Academy initiators, from left to right: Adrian Rankers, Jan van Eijk and Maarten Steinbuch.

recently "Metrology & Calibration of Mechatronic Systems". For next year, the new training "Advanced Mechatronic System Design" has been scheduled. All trainings of the Mechatronics Academy are part of the CPE framework of DSPE (www.dspe.nl/certification).

WWW.MECHATRONICS-ACADEMY.NL