

# HR Insights

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## Cross-training Employees

To increase employee flexibility and further utilize their skills, many companies engage in cross-training efforts at their organizations. This process involves training employees on various tasks performed at the organization so they can complete the duties of others. This technique is beneficial to the organization and presents new educational opportunities for employees. Plus, it is far less expensive and labor-intensive than hiring new staff members to perform these tasks.

### Your Game Plan

Before starting a cross-training program at your organization, you must develop a solid game plan to dictate how the process will work. First, identify what skills and knowledge are needed to fill gaps in production. Then, identify the employees who may possess those skills and knowledge, or are willing to learn them to fill the gaps.

It is wise to utilize performance reviews to gauge which employees may be good cross-training candidates based on their work ethic, skills and desire to learn new things. Once the training process is complete and the cross-trained employees start working on different tasks, effectively incorporate them into the day-to-day operations of the new departments where they are now involved.

### Benefits of Cross-training

There are several benefits of cross-training for employers and employees alike, such as:

- Enabling the organization to move employees who have been lacking in their performance. By being moved to a different role or given different

responsibilities, they may be rejuvenated and perform at a higher level.

- Employees gain confidence in knowing that they are skilled in different areas of the organization. This also gives them a diversified work experience.
- If an employee leaves the company for whatever reason, the interruption that this could cause is minimized because cross-trained employees can easily slide into the vacant position.
- Cross-training breaks up the monotony of doing the same tasks every day and allows for a change of pace—improving employee morale.
- It enforces a team-oriented environment by allowing employees to become involved with one another in supportive roles.
- Employees become more comfortable and knowledgeable about different areas of the company so the “us and them” attitude disappears as department lines are blurred.

Though not all employees will be thrilled about the opportunity to cross-train, most will be excited to engage in new activities and mix up their daily routines. Plus, your organization will experience rewards as employee knowledge flourishes.

