

# Organization Training Needs Analysis for King Saud University

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## ABSTRACT

King Saud University is the leading higher institution of learning in Saudi Arabia, which focuses on providing its students with the best quality of education. With more than 4600 staff members, the University provides educational and research activities with modern state of the art technology to give its students a rewarding experience. It caters to various audiences ranging from students, to professors, researchers of diverse fields, and non-academics. KSU also opens its doors to all types of students, whether local or international.

It provides skills acquisition training and workshops for its staff (including international trainings), in the fields of Arts and Sciences; thus, widening its scientific and literary expertise base (KSU, 2012).

**Keywords:** Training Needs, King Saud University.

## 1. Organizational Context

The University is aware of the roles of higher institutions of learning in the 21st century as being a breeding ground for creativity and innovation, and they are committed to being invaluable agents of knowledge.

The University also extends its services to benefit local and national communities. It achieves this by providing various volunteer and community services including free dental checkups/treatments and blood banks. It supplies the Saudi people and market invaluable academic service, meets the nation's growing needs in the areas of medicine, engineering, humanities and development (KSU, 2012).

## 2. Determine the Need for Conducting a Training Needs Analysis

Being a technologically advanced University, implementing new standards procedures and systems may prove to trigger a training need because people will need to be updated on these new developments. Teachers/Instructors would have to be up to date on the latest innovations to pass down the knowledge to students. They would also have to be willing to incorporate different styles of learning, especially for the students who may not be used to the university's methods.

Separate and female campuses could prove to be a challenge, especially to the international students who are used to having both genders on the same campus in their universities. It could mean a decline in the turnover of students. There are also a lot of universities out there offering the same services as KSU, and possibly offering better salaries for its staff. Many of them are globally recognized and could serve as stiff competition for KSU, thus reducing their staff strength.

Furthermore, various students, especially the international ones, may have different needs, which have to be addressed. KSU will have to be flexible so as to meet all these needs. Lastly, new laws and policies by governing bodies can cause triggers.

Everyone in the institution is affected, either for the better, or for the worse by trigger factors of training. From the students who will be the first beneficiaries of new developments, to the administrative supervisors and the deans and rectors who make decisions as to whether these developments should be implemented or not. If new developments are accepted and carried out with positive results, the university's image will be boosted, the students get to expand their knowledge base, and the top management staff will be commended for their sound judgment and will be trusted even more by their subordinates.

The **mission** statement of the organization I chose, which is King Saud University in Saudi Arabia (KSU), is "to provide students with a quality education, conduct valuable research, serve the national and international societies and contribute to Saudi Arabia's knowledge society through learning, creativity, the use of current and developing technologies and effective international partnership" (KSU, 2012). Their reason of existence, which could also be said to be their **purpose**, is "to be a world-class University and leader in developing Saudi Arabia's knowledge society" (KSU, 2012). The University pursues its purpose through its values, which include: "Quality & Excellence, Leadership & Teamwork, Freedom of Inquiry, Fairness & Integrity, Transparency & Accountability and Lifelong Learning" (KSU, 2012).

The **objectives** of this organization include “establishing flexibility and accountability” and ensuring a “sustainable environment for the pursuit of excellence” (KSU, 2012). They also aim to establish “excellence in all fields of scholarship and research, maintain a distinctive faculty possessing the highest credentials and abilities, provide graduate students with the best education and opportunities that will enhance their knowledge, skills and relevant experience” (KSU, 2012). Also their objectives include “Building bridges locally, nationally and internationally and provide a supportive learning environment for faculty, staff and students” (KSU, 2012).

KSU’s **goals** are to develop the skills and talents of its students by focusing on a qualitative education system. This they will do through strong government support and many highly skilled professionals and administrators. They also aim to cultivate the students’ enthusiasm by widening its literary and scientific base and maintaining a competitive edge in the fields of Arts and Science (KSU, 2012).

#### **SWOT Analysis**

The **strengths** of the University include the fact that its tuition is free for home students, and generous scholarships are given to both home and international students. Programs like Medicine and Engineering are delivered in both Arabic and English, and for programs not delivered in English, Arabic lessons are provided for non-speaking students. The University offers diverse programs and trainings, and workshops are constantly organized for staff and employees, including international/overseas trainings. KSU also gives back to the community by organizing volunteer services like free dental checkups and treatments. This shows that this organization goes through great lengths and spares no expense to ensure it remains in the forefront of academia (Training implications). However, the fact that the male and female campuses are separated, is a **weakness that** could deter potential international students/ lecturers, who are liberal minded, from attending. Also better pay packages at other higher institutions of learning can make skilled staff flock to those places.

This university offers the **opportunity** for its students to integrate with other cultures, since it is an international school. Here they can form lifelong friendships/relationships with classmates. In addition, students get the chance to study in more than one language, and become bilingual. Its academic programs therefore must include activities that improve knowledge, skill, and build bridges locally and internationally.

Unfortunately, a lot of higher institutions out there offer the same services. This could serve as a **threat** to KSU. Also policies and government legislation could either make or mar the organization’s visions and aims.

King Saud University must continually evolve so as to avoid monotony, keep current students satisfied, and attract prospective students and employees. This they must do without compromising their standards, but taking societal rules and regulations into consideration.

In conclusion, competition from other higher institutions of learning, in terms of salary structure can have implications on training needs analysis. Government rules and policies, and also rankings from accrediting bodies can also affect training intervention. All in all, KSU must keep taking positive measures to ensure it keeps

being the higher institution of learning, while adhering to government rules and regulations, and also satisfying its staff. Excellence, quality, accountability, transparency, and academic freedom are standards that must never be compromised.

### **3. Determine the Objective(s) for the Training Needs Analysis**

The aim of this training need analysis is to:

KSU is not recognized as an international university because of the lack of international advertising, even though KSU has all of the qualities necessary to be recognized as an international university.

### **4. Identify the Target Population**

The most crucial target populations to work with are:

- Collegiate Students
- Employees of higher institutions (including management or senior level staff)
- Parents and guardians
- Human Resource Personnel
- Industry experts or observers (Pink Elephant Training, 2011)

It is my belief that they are the most knowledgeable in this regard, and most directly affected by any positive or negative changes made in higher institutions of learning (NCHH, n.d.).

For the purpose of this assignment, I have chosen to work with students, employees and human resource personnel at a graduation ceremony of King Saud University.(an assumption) I am taking advantage of the fact that such key participants are conglomerated in a particular place at a point in time.(NOAA, n.d.)

### **5. Select Methods for Gathering Data**

Various methods exist for gathering data for Training Need Analysis. They include:

- Surveys and Questionnaires
- Interviews (telephone, face to face or online)
- Focus group
- Site observations (UIC, n.d.)
- Using existing records and reports (NOAA, n.d)

For this Training Needs Assessment, I have chosen to use Oral Interview / Oral survey.

The rationale for choosing these methods is-

- It is an easy way to assess needs and satisfaction, and get quick feedback on opinions from key participants and stakeholders.
- Information can be gathered from a large number of people (Quantitative Data).
- “Allows you to capture a large amount of feedback / data in a short amount of time”(Learning Space Toolkit).
- The interview questions can be reused in whole or parts (Learning Space Toolkit).
- Higher rate of response, as compared to sending out a large number of questionnaires and only getting a few returned from unidentified volunteers (NOAA, n.d.).

- It ensures that the same kind of data is obtained from all sources, making data easy to analyze and compile (Pacurari, 2012).
- Inexpensive and not time consuming (Pink Elephant, 2011).

#### **Target group #1-**

#### **Participants: Graduating Students**

#### **KSU graduation ceremony**

#### **Focus Questions**

1. Where did you learn about KSU?
  - a. Internet search engines
  - b. KSU website
  - c. Friends.
  - d. Other
2. What has your experience been like?
3. In what areas do you think KSU needs to improve?
4. Are the lectures taught in an acceptable way? Yes / No
5. Do you think the campus environment is conducive for learning? Yes / No
6. Would you recommend this school to your friends? Yes / No

#### **Target group #2**

#### **Participants: International Students in surrounding countries/continents who may or may not have heard about KSU**

#### **Focus Questions**

1. Have you heard about KSU? Yes/ No
2. If yes, where did you learn about KSU?
  - a. Internet search engines
  - b. KSU website
  - c. Friends.
  - d. Other
3. What are your expectations of the school?
4. Would you recommend this University to your friends?
5. Additional comments or suggestions.

#### **Target group #3**

#### **Participants: Employees of KSU**

#### **KSU Graduation Ceremony**

#### **Focus Questions**

On a scale of 1-5, the employees were asked to make ratings on the following

1. Compensation and Benefits
2. Management
3. Job Security and Advancement
4. Job Culture/ Environment
5. Job Work/ Life Balance

(Indeed.com, glassdoor.com)

#### **Target group #4**

#### **Participants: Human resource personnel / recruiters/ recruitment agencies**

#### **KSU Graduation Ceremony**

#### **Focus Questions**

1. Where did you learn about KSU?
  - a. Internet search engines
  - b. KSU website
  - c. Friends.
  - d. Other
2. Would you employ a KSU graduate? Yes/ No?
3. Please give reasons to your answer above, whether yes or no.
4. Would you recommend this University to other recruiters or organizations?

5. Additional comments or suggestions?

## 6. Collect, Analyze and Compile the Data

### Results from group #1

80% said they had learned about the University from their friends, while 20% said they had learned from internet search engines. 90% reported an above average school experience, 75%, an acceptable method of lecturing, and 82%, a conducive learning environment. 91% said they would recommend the school to their friends.

### Results from group#2

40% said they had never heard of the school. Of the remaining 60% who had heard of KSU, 50% had learned about the school from their friends, and the other 50% from other sources. 70% had high expectations of the school, and another 67% said they would recommend the school to their friends.

### Results from group#3

Out of the 12 staff interviewed 67% rated it 4 out of 5 in terms of job culture, work environment, job/life balance. 16% rated it 3 out of 5 in terms of work environment. 25% rated it 2 out of 5 in terms of benefits and compensation. 50% were dissatisfied about the way management ran the University and rated them 2 out of 5. Only 40% said they would recommend the University to their peers (Indeed.com, glassdoor.com).

### Result from group#4

70% said they had learnt about KSU from Internet search engines. 73% said they would employ a KSU graduate without much deliberating. And 60% said they would recommend the University to other recruiting agencies.

## 7. Identify areas of need

Based on my analysis of the data, it is obvious that KSU is on the right track in terms of academics, but needs to gain a more international presence. The school is relatively unknown outside the Middle East. The University also has a lot of dissatisfied employees. In line with that, the school authorities need to improve in the area of staff compensation and remuneration. They are also lacking in the area of a conducive working environment, and the way management treats their staff. This needs to be improved if their employees are to have a great experience. Surveys show only 16% rated it a good work environment. Also only 25% were satisfied with their benefits and compensation. Additionally 50% were unhappy with the way management ran the institution. KSU also needs to make their graduates more 'employable', and more job market worthy.

Therefore, I will prioritize the areas of need base on their impact on KSU's mission, goals, and business strategies as follows:

1. More international media awareness about the school
2. Improved staff compensation and benefits
3. Better graduating students who are well equipped for the labor market.

## 8. Make Recommendations for Specific Training Programs/Interventions.

I would recommend that KSU open various satellite campuses around the world. This will make sure their international base grows, in line with their mission to “serve national and international societies.” I would also suggest creating more awareness about the University, and the services it offers, through more media advertisements. In the surveys taken 50% of students indicated they learned of the school from their friends and 50% said from other sources. KSU should also invite a lot of noble professors or lecturers, both local and international to lecture students. Surveys of the staff showed that 67% of the faculty rated 4 out of 5 in terms of work culture, work environment, and job/life balance. These numbers would entice more qualified professors. On the other hand another survey indicated only 40% would recommend the University to their peers. This percentage is troubling, which is why the staff needs to be more diverse. This I believe will make the school more appealing. On the other hand, guidance counselors and mentors should be provided for each and every student. The students should be advised on the advantages of getting good grades, and encouraged to graduate as well, so that they can secure better jobs in the future. The management of King Saud University needs to increase employees’ benefits and improve their pay structure. They also need to be more professional about their administration, and create more avenues for staff growth and advancement. Finally, I would recommend that King Saud University keeps forging ahead, and continue to keep abreast of latest development and technology, so as to implement it into the curriculum.

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