

# Invest in Consistent Employee Training

by **CHARLES CONTRERAS**, *Zoetis*

When you first drive onto an expressway and you're not sure what the speed limit is, do you go as fast as you can or hold back until you see a sign?

That's the kind of dilemma that

untrained employees face. They aren't sure what to do. They can't operate at maximum performance output because they are under pressure to do well and avoid making mistakes. Properly trained employees understand the rules. They know they are doing a good job, are less

stressed and use their energy toward being more productive.

Here are some more reasons why operations need employee development at all levels, from new employees to leadership positions:

● **Less risk:** Administering the wrong

product. Treating an animal incorrectly. You need to avoid these huge risk factors on your operation. One mistake from an untrained employee could cost you. Why risk your reputation?

- **Consistency:** When you have a good training program, you'll have a much more dependable output regardless of employee experience. You'll see more consistent compliance with protocols, and workers will understand why following these protocols is important. And when employees follow protocols, production improves.
- **Better company culture:** Employees want to do a good job. Lack of proper training is frustrating for them. Workers can't know if they are doing a good job if they don't know what the job requires. This creates stress and a culture of disengaged employees, which can lead to higher turnover. Proper training helps communicate the value of employees' roles, driving engagement and motivation for employees to put forth extra effort from the beginning.
- **It allows the business to grow:** Having fully developed employees will allow you to focus on bigger strategic goals. You'll have confidence that employees know how to operate effectively, and they'll have confidence, too, which improves efficiency. No one will have to wait on owners or managers for instruction.

The first step toward business success is formalizing a training program. To establish an effective program, information needs to be consistent. It needs to be presented so workers can understand and remember it. The length of training time has to be practical. You also need to be able to assess whether the training program is working.

Online programs can help because the information is always available and delivered consistently. Assessments can ensure whether employees remember what they learn. Developing managerial and supervisory skills through leadership development courses also can improve engagement and leadership on the operation.

Making time to develop a formal, consistent employee-training program is not only valuable, but also essential for the continued success of your operation, agribusiness, veterinary clinic or equine facility. Unfortunately, training is often viewed more as an expense than an investment. Owners and managers want to make sure employees are going to stay before they spend time and money on training. However, if you invest in training first, employees have more of a reason to stay.



**Editor's Note:** Charles Contreras is PeopleFirst™ business solutions manager for Zoetis. PeopleFirst is a comprehensive human capital solutions program. Visit [growpeoplefirst.com](http://growpeoplefirst.com) to learn more.