TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT - A STUDY OF PRACTICES IN IRISH BASED COMPANIES

BY
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JULY 1992
I would like to dedicate this thesis to those I love best:

My family who support me in all that I do, and Mike who is always there when I need him, who had the patience to put up with me for the duration of the research, and who provided the encouragement needed when it seemed that the workload was insurmountable.

Thank you
ABSTRACT

This thesis represents an exploratory study of training and development practices in Irish based companies, and seeks to ascertain the degree to which these practices reflect a strategic orientation. In particular, it examines the main training and development activities undertaken, the role of the training specialist, and the power of the training and development function.

The study had five main objectives: to review the extant literature in order to determine the factors promoting the emergence of Human Resource Development (HRD) as a key mechanism of employee development, and to highlight critical characteristics of strategic HRD; to examine the contingent nature of the HRD concept, and thereby identify key contextual organisational characteristics that impact upon the functioning of HRD; to examine current employee development practices in Ireland in order to assess whether training and development activities reflect a strategic orientation, or are moving towards a strategic model of employee development; to identify whether the contextual factors identified in the literature affect the nature of training and development practices in Ireland; and to examine the role of the training specialist in Ireland and the relative status of the training and development function.

In order to fulfill these objectives, an extensive body of literature was reviewed and a questionnaire survey was carried out on a sample of Irish based companies.

The literature review indicated that the traditional model of training and development is insufficient to meet the changing needs of modern organisations. Specific factors prompting the emergence of Human Resource Development initiatives include the need to move from the provision of a narrow technical skills base, to a situation where employees are supplied with competencies in a range of varying skills to meet the demands of changing technologies. Several characteristics of strategic HRD were identified which focus on the need for the function to be perceived as contributing to organisational effectiveness, and fully integrated into the corporate goals and objectives of the organisation.

The literature further suggested that HRD is contextually bound, and several organisational characteristics, such as size, structure, technology, culture, power and stakeholders, implicitly determine the extent to which the function achieves a strategic orientation. The strategic imperative of the function was also held to be contingent upon the nature of the individuals being developed, and the value they place on training and development.

A process model of strategic training and development, outlining the external triggers, internal organisational triggers, organisation specific contextual factors and key facilitating mechanisms was presented.

The results of the questionnaire survey indicated that, while a considerable amount
of systematic training and development is being undertaken, the orientation of these practices remains operational in nature, with little evidence of a concerted effort to engage in strategic activities. The central focus of current practices seems to lie with short term results as opposed to long term effectiveness.

The training specialists were found to be well educated and operated at management level in the hierarchy. However, they felt that their power was relatively limited, and were not afforded the opportunity to contribute at the strategic level in many instances.

In relation to the power of the training and development function, results indicated the existence of considerable horizontal power, with high levels of centrality and low levels of substitutibility emerging.

Analysis suggested the existence of a number of contingent relationships between selected training and development variables (number of days training, power of the function, training activities undertaken, size of training budget) and key contextual variables (culture, internal labour market, external environment).

Overall, the study provides a picture of the nature and scope of training and development in Ireland, in 1992, and, in light of the findings, the process model set down in chapter six is seen to have at least some explanatory power. It is therefore worthy of further investigation, particularly in the Irish context, given the existing paucity of relevant literature.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is recognised that a number of individuals provided invaluable assistance to the author for the duration of this research, and so this opportunity is taken to sincerely thank them for their interest:

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PREFACE

Modern organisations are far more flexible and participative than were their counterparts of earlier years. The external environments within which they operate are becoming increasingly more complex, and subjected to a high level of uncertainty, and are resulting in organisations beginning to move from a narrow technical skills focus, which was traditionally associated with training and development initiatives, towards a more flexible orientation that values accountability, creativity and commitment. This relatively recent focus on new and innovative ways of managing employees, is as a result of a substantial body of literature that has its base in the training literature, and had prompted the emergence of a broader concept, that of Human Resource Development.

Human Resource Development differs significantly from traditional training and development in that it promotes long term developmental processes that are highly integrated with explicit corporate and business strategies. Its basic premise is therefore to achieve a “fit”, as it were, between the goals and objectives of both the organisation and the individuals concerned, and to build up a facilitative internal infrastructure that promotes continuous learning and development at all levels.

Human resources are increasing being viewed as critical competitive weapon for successful organisation functioning. The adoption of human resource development as a key employee development mechanism stems from a belief that employees represent a critical organisation resource, which, if effectively managed, from a strategic point of view, are seen to contribute significantly to the attainment of the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation.

This thesis sought to examine the current state of play in Ireland. Previous research on training and development practices in Ireland were felt to be either dated, or
unnecessarily limited to reporting levels of external formal course usage. Little is
know about the scope of training and development itself, the activities that are
undertaken, the level in the organisation at which it operates, or indeed the type of
individual who is responsible for training and development activities. In light of the
paucity of relevant information in this area, this study was designed to collect
information of this nature, and, in doing so, had five particular objectives:

1. To comprehensively review the extant literature in order to determine the
   factors promoting the emergence of human resource development (HRD)
   as a key mechanism of employee development, and to highlight critical
   characteristics of strategic HRD;

2. To examine the contingent nature of the HRD concept, and thereby identify
   key contextual organisational characteristics that impact upon the
   functioning of HRD.

3. To examine current employee development practices in Ireland in order to
   assess whether training and development activities reflect a strategic
   orientation, or are moving towards a strategic model of employee
   development.

4. To identify whether the contextual factors identified in the literature affect
   training and development practices in Ireland.

5. To examine the role of the training specialist in Ireland and the relative status
   of the training and development function.

Chapter 1 examines the development of training practices in Ireland. Both
statutory and institutional reforms are discussed, with reference to the Vocational
and Apprenticeship Acts, the Industrial Training Act, and the establishment of an
industrial and commercial training infrastructure to promote the training of
employees in Industry. Management training and development is also discussed,
and selected studies on training and development practices are reviewed.

Chapter 2 examines the concept of strategic HRD. Several definitions are provided, and key factors prompting its emergence are presented. Several models appearing in the extant literature are discussed, and particular limitation of the concept are examined.

Chapter 3 develops further the external triggers for strategic HRD. Heightened competition, the globalisation of world markets, the need for workforce flexibility and the emergence of skill shortages, coupled with the growing realisation that human resources represent a strategic weapon for competitive advantage, are all discussed as factors prompting the necessity for the utilisation of strategic HRD.

Chapter 4 reviews the context within which HRD operates. The importance of such organisational variables as size, structure, technology, culture, power and stakeholders as key determinants of a strategically oriented HRD function, are thematically discussed.

Chapter 5 examines the nature of the individual, and the importance of understanding that individuals perceptions of training and development, and the manner in which they learn, will determine, to some extent, the success, or otherwise of HRD outcomes.

Chapter 6 provides a synthesis of the literature reviewed, and a process model of strategic training and development/HRD is presented. The model highlights the external triggers for training, and examines the contextual factors that impinge upon the functioning of training and development.

Chapter 7 describes the research methodology. Positive and naturalism as approaches to conducting research are discussed, and the methodology employed
in the present study is rooted within this framework. The development of the questionnaire is explained, along with the sample frame, and the methods of analysis used.

**Chapters 8, 9, 10 & 11** present the research findings. Chapter 8 concentrates on presenting a profile of the respondent organisations, while chapter 9 profiles the training specialists. Chapter 10 examines training and development expenditure, and the activities undertaken and chapter 11, through correlation analysis, examines some of the determinants of an effective training and development function.

Finally **chapter 12** presents a summary of salient issues emerging from the research, and outlines some directions for future research.
SECTION ONE:
THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
CHAPTER 1: THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Introduction

1.2 The Transition From Training to HRD

1.3 The Development of Training Practices in Ireland
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   1.3.2 Institutional Reform
       - Industrial Training Act 1967
       - Levy/Grant scheme
   1.3.3 The Transition Period of the 1970s
   1.3.4 A Phase of Integration - 1986 to date
       - White Paper on Manpower Policy 1986
       - Labour Services Act 1987

1.4 Management Training and Development

1.5 Training Practices in Irish Companies
   1.5.1 Official statistics
   1.5.2 Survey data

1.6 The Specialist Training Function

1.7 Summary
1.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter introduces the reader to the scope of training and development, and in particular to the modern notion of human resource development (HRD). It must be recognised that, while the term HRD is, in many instances, confused with training and development practices, they are inherently different. While the concepts share many similarities, there are, in fact, a number of important distinctions that can be drawn in terms of how they operate, and it is to this end that this chapter is committed.

The initial focus of this chapter involves the charting of the development of the HRD concept, from its initial inception in the training literature, to the transition from training generally to more modern employee development practices. Secondly, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the history of training and development practices in Ireland to date, the reason being that one cannot realistically indicate the direction in which Irish organisations must develop without first understanding where we, as a nation, have come from, and to what stage we have progressed.

1.2 THE TRANSITION FROM TRAINING TO HRD
Training as a topic was introduced early in the history of Psychology and Scientific Management. The development of the training profession has been interesting in the manner in which it has been influenced by the Behavioural scientists during the present century. Prior to the turn of the century, the notion of training was largely ignored, due for the most part, to the type of production processes in operation at that time. Craft workers and apprentices were the only individuals to receive any form of recognised training but, with the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century, came the impetus for change, and the era of training was born. The first documented work of importance was that of Taylor (1911). His principles of
scientific management focused attention on the analysis of individual jobs to
determine the most productive manner of carrying them out. Munsterberg (1913)
focused on training as well as selection issues in the military during the First World
War. Both emphasised the importance of worker selection and viewed training as
critical for replacing the inefficient, casual work habits that employees developed
on their own, with efficient, parsimonious procedures.

Further research into the management of people was conducted by Mayo (1941)
in his Hawthorne Experiments. Results from his research introduced the notion that
individuals had feelings and needs that must be satisfied if managers were to be
successful in motivating them. Following World War Two, the work of Herzberg,
Likert, Maslow and McGregor gained prominence, in an effort to ascertain what
employees wanted from their jobs, and, concomitantly, what the pointers were for
motivating them. With the increased need for greater productivity, numerous
studies were completed in order to ascertain why production levels were so low.
These studies indicated that the problem lay in the lack of skilled employees, and
the logical solution pointed towards the introduction of systematic training for all
workers.

Training entered a boom period. For the first time employees were considered in a
humanistic light, where organisations recognised that by improving the lot of
employees at work and, as a consequence, increasing their motivation to achieve
greater outputs, organisations would reap greater profits and the individual greater
job satisfaction. Within the next 25 years or so, there was a plethora of work
completed in the area of training. Campbell (1971) made the following observation:

"By and large, the training and development literature is voluminous, non-empirical, non-theoretical, poorly
written and dull. As noted elsewhere it is faddish to an extreme."
This comment led other observers to offer a decade of complaints about the faddish nature of training, and the failure of the concept in general. Training practices were further expanded to include developmental opportunities for the individual employee. Scott & Meyer (1991) indicated that this expansion was due mainly to the following:

* Modern organisation having complex work requirements that call for workers trained in specialist technologies, and for managers who can cope with more complex internal systems and external environments,

* Modern organisations obtaining increased social control from having participants who carry their own internalised commitments: at the same time participants have increased their control over organisational resources, and one of the benefits they claim is training.

* In modern organisations training and development are increasingly viewed as a right of membership, and as a requisite for elevation to an elite position.

It would appear then that the concept and practice of HRD is widely held to have evolved out of the area of training. The essence of this evolutionary process is that employees are now viewed as a valuable resource which, if effectively managed rather than administered, from a strategic point of view, will contribute significantly to organisational effectiveness, and thus will be a source of competitive advantage to the organisation concerned. Describing people as a resource is a relatively recent practice. The non-recognition of people as resources has led, in the past, to less attention being paid to the task of managing people as distinct from other resources. However, the concept itself is not new. Over 30 years ago, in his classic text 'The practice of management', Peter Drucker (1961) indicated that:

"man, alone of all the resources available to man, can grow and develop.........implies the consideration of human beings as a resource ....... Managers and workers together represent the human resources of an organisation".
This broad, general perspective of HRD embodies a number of specific departures from the previous practice of training. These particular departures are characteristic of the move from Personnel Management to HRM generally (Beaumont 1992) and HRD specifically:

1. The practice of employment planning has moved beyond its early, relatively narrow technical focus and concern with forecasting work, to a concern with establishing linkages between human resource planning and the larger organisational strategy and business planning of the organisation.

2. The early concern of training and development with the job satisfaction of the individual employee developed into an interest in the notion of ‘organisation climate’, which has further evolved into a focus on ‘organisation culture’.

3. The view is taken that HRD can make a distinctive, positive contribution to organisational effectiveness - a bottom line contribution.

4. The relatively narrow focus of training on the teaching and learning of individual job skills has been broadened into a concern with developing (via both training and non-training methods) the full, longer-term potential of employees.

5. The relatively limited power and status of the training and development function in individual organisations, due to its inability to demonstrate a tangible contribution to individual organisational performance.

6. The focus on self-development and action learning that characterised the late 1970s and 1980s led to the personal growth of a rather limited number of the fortunate few, but did not move the whole organisation forward. It was sometimes used as an excuse to provide no developmental opportunities at all - an issue that was perceived as inequitable and in need of radical change.
It can be seen therefore, that the overriding theme which is held to differentiate HRD from its predecessor, training and development, is the notion of it being an organisation-wide philosophy, which is much broader and less problem-centred, and has a longer-term orientation than training and development.

The view is widely held that there needs to be an explicit, complementary relationship between the internal HRD strategy of individual organisations, and their larger business strategy. As Beer & Spector (1985) comment:

"A business enterprise has an external strategy; a chosen way of competing in the marketplace. It also needs an internal strategy: a strategy for how its internal resources are to be developed, deployed, motivated and controlled... The external and internal strategies must be linked."

HRD instils human resource policies that promote continuous learning, teamwork, participation and flexibility. These are translated into:

- Relatively well-developed internal labour market arrangements (patterns of promotion, training and individual career development)
- Flexible work organisation systems
- High levels of individual employee and work group participation in task-related decisions
- Extensive internal communications arrangements

HRD is concerned with the continuing education of the individual manager/employee at all stages of his/her career, since a growing career is considered a strong motivating factor that bolsters work satisfaction and reduces feelings of job stagnation. Therefore it is considered not only to be concerned with education and training, but also with the broader concept of development which implies improvement. This description may refer to a wide range of different activities - internal and external, formal and informal. HRD is used essentially as an
indication of a complex process of raising employee ability in order to improve the effectiveness of individual actions (Ashton, 1979).

Having outlined the transition from training to HRD, it now becomes necessary to identify where Irish Industry stands on the continuum. Theory and practice appear to accept that training alone, per se, is an incomplete form of employee development, and that organisations must adopt the approach that employees are a valuable resources that need to be strategically developed to ensure future competitiveness. To this end it is important to understand how the practice of training and development has evolved in Irish organisations, and estimate to what degree it encapsulates elements of strategic HRD.

1.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PRACTICES IN IRELAND

The most pervasive influence on Ireland's economic development was her close connection with the British Empire. The history of training in Ireland can be traced back to the emergence of the Guild System, which was introduced through the Norman conquest of Britain in the 11th century, and followed the invaders into Ireland. This commence the British influence on trade and trade training in Ireland.

THE GUILD SYSTEM

The Guild system was a self-contained and self-perpetuating system which, through a process of controlled apprenticeships, provided each craft with a ready supply of trained craftsmen, but in numbers that left the power and control of each Guild in the hands of the few, and thus proved an effective means of controlling and regulating trade in Industry. The gradual decline of the Guilds in Europe and Britain was brought about by the evolution of the factory system of production in the late 18th century, which utilised the concept of division of labour, and the mechanisation of the production process. As the notion of semi-skilled labour began to develop, and with it the idea of technical education, it was recognised that
the time had come to introduce some measure of reform to fill the void left by the
Guild system. Following the establishment of the City and Guilds of London in
1878, the British Government enacted the Technical Instruction Act 1891, which
made provisions for Local Authority funding of technical education which had
previously been privately funded. This system was subsequently adopted in Ireland
through the Agricultural and Technical Instruction (Irl) Act 1898 which introduced
the first form of regulated apprenticeship in Ireland.

1.3.1. STATUTORY REFORM
Following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, it was recognised that
technical training in Ireland was proving of little value to apprentices. The system
was heavily criticised, in particular for its inability to meet the needs of Trade,
Industry and Agriculture and it was recommended that major statutory reform was
necessary to alleviate the inconsistencies of the previous system.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT 1930
One of the more important outcomes of the 1930 Act was the establishment of
Vocational Education Committees (VECs) to provide, or assist in the provision of a
system of continuing education in their area. It was also recommended that
apprenticeship committees be set up for the skilled trade, to regulate
apprenticeships, and decide on the form of technical training required. However,
despite these new initiatives, the overall picture remained much the same, as there
was no compulsion on employers to send apprentices on courses run by the VECs,
and many continued their practices unchanged.

APPRENTICESHIP ACT 1931
In an attempt to reorganise the apprenticeship scheme, the Government introduced
the Apprenticeship Act which empowered the then Minister for Industry and
Commerce to set up apprenticeship committees with responsibility for regulating apprenticeship training in areas designated under the Act. These committees introduced rules governing the length of an apprenticeship, age limits for entry and education requirements, wage levels and the number of hours to be worked, the regulation of training of apprentices and made it compulsory for employers to release apprentices to vocational schools which were within three miles of the workplace, and provided the particular training necessary. Thus, the coordination of each trade was put into operation. The resulting system of vocational training was examined by a Government Commission in 1943, which found that while some sectors of Industry had organised apprenticeship systems, improvement and extension of such training was required.

**APPRENTICESHIP ACT 1959**

A new Apprenticeship Act was passed in 1959 which attempted to redress the problems caused by the multiple responsibilities allocated under the 1931 Act. This latest Act was directly applicable to most trades and industries, and facilitated the establishment of a National Apprenticeship Board - An Cheard Chomhairle - which was to become the overall coordinating body of the apprenticeship scheme. It was granted the authority to examine the methods used in any trade, for the recruitment and training of apprentices and had a number of specific activities which included the setting down of appropriate education qualifications, ensuring the release of apprentices to technical colleges and the provision of on-the-job training while at work, and the supervision of the progress of apprentices through a system of examination of the practice and theory of trade.

The Irish economy was inwardly focused as a result of the policies adopted by DeValera, which concentrated on the imposition of trade barriers and the preservation of ownership of industry at national level. Foreign ownership was
barred, and the breakdown of Anglo-Irish relations further depressed the economy. The early 1950s heralded a period of mass emigration, particularly to Britain, which was in the process of rebuilding her economy after the destruction of the war years, and, unlike Ireland was attempting to retrain her workforce, focusing particularly on youth employment.

Ireland was slow to recognise the need for training outside of the apprenticeship system. The voluntarist system in operation in Britain, which allowed the two sides of industry to pursue their interests in relative harmony, was much in evidence, where training was thought to be the preserve of joint negotiation between both sides of industry, with the government acting in a purely advisory and facilitative capacity. The Irish industrial sector was left to its own devices to provide the skills necessary for its growth and development. DeValera’s philosophy of keeping Ireland for the Irish, with little emphasis on export markets and foreign trade left marginal opportunity for expansion of indigenous industry, and even less for the importing of new technologies and systems from abroad.

By the end of the 1950s, there was no shortage of criticism of the existing training system. It was suggested that direct financial aid from the government be given to companies in respect of apprenticeship training, and that firms that did not themselves train, might contribute to the training costs of other companies through some sort of statutory training levy, similar to that introduced in Britain years earlier.

In the early 1960s, Ireland entered an era of increased industrialisation, and, under the direction of the Lemass government, adopted a policy of export-led growth. It became increasingly evident that the voluntarist system was not equipped to meet national needs. There was an insufficient number of skilled workers, the content of many apprenticeships was narrow, and training outside of the apprenticeship
system was conspicuous by its absence. Ireland lagged behind her mainland European competitors in terms of the average skill level and educational qualifications of her workforce.

1.3.2 INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Arising out of the recognition that the voluntarist system had failed to adequately meet the needs of industry, a White Paper on Manpower Policy was brought out in 1965 which advanced the proposed establishment of an Industrial Training Authority, recommending that a more positive course of action was needed by way of state intervention in training. This could be achieved through the regulation of standards, precise prescribed syllabuses, and some form of financial aid package to encourage and support training generally. To facilitate this, the Government enacted further legislation.

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING ACT 1967.

The purpose of this Act was to make better provisions for industrial and commercial training, and to establish AnCO - An Comhairle Oiluna. AnCO was empowered to assume full responsibility for all industrial training, including apprenticeships. AnCO provided three main areas of training:

Training advisory service to assess company training needs, draw up training programmes and sanction grants to industry.

Training for individuals through training centres which provided a variety of courses for unemployed or redundant workers, those seeking re-training for new skills, school leavers, and so forth.

Apprenticeship training which detailed provisions for the training of apprentices.

A close perusal of the 1967 Act indicates that the main criterion behind the establishment of AnCO was to provide and promote training at all levels in
commerce and industry, and to regulate that training. However, despite the efforts of AnCO, skill shortages were still apparent in many sectors of the Irish economy, to the extent that the National Manpower Service (NMS) was established in 1970 in an attempt to rectify the situation, and foster a recruitment drive to fit suitably skilled individuals into the vacancies that existed. Since Ireland's accession into the EEC in 1973, one of the most significant developments in the financing and furtherance of training has been the contribution of monies from the European Social Fund, of which AnCO was a primary beneficiary.

**LEVY / GRANT SCHEME:**

Funding for AnCO was provided in the main, by the Government, but the Industrial Training Act also allowed for the imposition of a levy/grant scheme on companies to underwrite training costs. This levy was imposed right across all industries, and varied with the size of the company, gross payroll levels, and amount of training pursued. This levy ranged from .25% to 1.25% of total emoluments, depending on the variables outlined above. The Act allowed for grants to be made by AnCO to companies that complied with set training standards which could consist of up to, and including 80% of course fees.

1.3.3 THE TRANSITION PERIOD OF THE 1970s

The early 1970s saw a considerable upsurge in economic activity with the influx of foreign multinationals, creating valuable employment for skilled and semi skilled workers. The buoyancy was short lived however. The Irish economy drifted into crisis from the mid 1970s onwards due to the recession brought about by the oil price shocks and resultant escalating unemployment. High levels of Government borrowing for current expenditure led to a soaring foreign debt, with little indication of the recession ending. As a result, Government spending on education and training was severely curtailed, and companies, faced with rising costs and
reduced markets cut back on non-essential spending. As a consequence, training and development activities were relegated to the sidelines.

The economic conditions of the late 1970s put AnCO in the spotlight. The multiplicity of agencies in pursuit of scarce resources was now a major problem. Duplication of functions was widespread, and AnCO came in for severe criticism. The more salient of these criticisms concerned:

- The dubious quality of training received from AnCO, and its competency to provide such a wide range of training activities.
- Evidence of over-dependence on AnCO as a supporter of training.
- AnCO's concept of training was felt, by many employers, to be overtly concerned with paperwork, and often resulted in training specialists being judged by their ability to recover the levy, rather than the effectiveness of their training activities.
- The lack a strategic focus, and the industry-based nature of each scheme which did not allow for the development of an economy wide strategy for training.

A further significant development in the late 1970s and early 1980s was the formation of regional training organisations with State and Industry support. The first such organisation, the Regional Management Centre (RMC), was set up in 1977 by AnCO, Shannon Development Company and Education and Industry representatives, and by the early 1980s, RMCs had begun to make a significant contribution to the training needs of industry. A study undertaken by the University of Limerick (then NIHE) in 1982 examined the impact of such organisations on industry and cited a number of important advantages:

1. They enabled a more even distribution of external training facilities. Until 1980, the West, Mid west and Southern regions of Ireland were poorly serviced.
2. Local training centres facilitated smaller companies which could not afford more expensive training services.
3. Local training organisations had the potential to foster a better relationship with
client organisations, and, as a result, provide training that was more job related.

However, particular limitations of the RMCs were also cited by survey respondents:
a) Some organisations expressed a preference for on-the-job training and therefore did not attribute value to external training resources.
b) A proliferation of training and advisory bodies set up existence around this period which resulted in duplication of services. Training facilities were being underutilised, and respondents questioned the quality of courses provided by some private training organisations.
c) The professionalism of some regional organisations was doubted by some respondents.

Despite these reservations, regional training organisations had carved out a significant role in the Irish training system and continued to facilitate the needs of local Industries.

1.3.4 A PHASE OF INTEGRATION - 1986 TO DATE

A combination of economic, social and institutional factors were responsible for prompting the Irish training and development system into a new phase - one of integration.

WHITE PAPER ON MANPOWER POLICY 1986

The 1986 White Paper examined the role of all actors involved in manpower policy, and issued the following proposals:

1. While the primary responsibility for providing training existed with employers, government intervention was necessary to ensure that the quality and quantity of training available conformed to policy objectives.

2. Multiplicity of agencies responsible for training and development be addressed through the amalgamation of a number of agencies into one authority, in an effort to
develop and co-ordinate services where necessary.

3. Re-organisation of the levy/grant scheme to make it more selective - to specify what types of training were eligible.

4. Identification of deficiencies in management training to be examined under a committee set up to provide "a clear articulation of the management training needs of Irish business", and this committee to be represented by Industry, AnCO, IMI, IDA and relevant government bodies.

5. That the apprenticeship training scheme be revised and modernised along the following:
   - based on standards achieved, rather than time served
   - achieve a satisfactory balance between supply and demand
   - reduce the financial cost to the State, while maintaining quality

The White Paper caused considerable consternation among the actors involved in training and development, and represented a radical step forward for the nature of training and development in Ireland.

**LABOUR SERVICES ACT 1987**

The White Paper provided the impetus for the Government to make significant institutional reforms, and streamline the training system in Ireland. The enactment of the Labour Services Act was the first attempt in 20 years, at State level, to reform the training system and bring it more into line with economic objectives pursued by the government. The Act provided for the establishment of FAS (Foras Aiseanna Saothair), an amalgamation of AnCO, the National Manpower Service and the Youth Employment Agency. The Minister for Labour outlined that FAS:

"should adopt a customer-centred approach, regionalise its operations, achieve maximum cost savings, and give a high priority to meeting the needs of the long-term unemployed and unqualified school leavers."
The Act set out a number of key functions for FAS, among the most salient of which were the provision of training and retraining for Industry and the management of particular employment schemes to assist in the reduction of unemployment in Ireland.

The period 1987 - 1991 represented a time of significant change, with a shift in activities away from company based facilitation initiatives towards an expansion of community and youth employment type training programmes. Today FAS operates largely as an integrated localised service with 80,000 people participated in training programmes, while over 40,000 people participated in employment schemes over this three year period. Total expenditure by FAS on such activities amounted to £400m, of which approximately £196m was spent in 1990.

While a considerable amount of FAS activities are directed towards reducing unemployment and community initiatives, it continues to provide service to industry. This service now operates on a regional basis through the medium of training advisors. There are also industry experts at national level, who oversee the development of FAS's activities related to the various industrial sectors. These experts liaise with the Industrial Training Committees, which oversee the overall identification and planning of training in their respective sectors.

1.4. MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Good management is vital to the success of any organisation in the private or public sector, and is ultimately crucial for national economic performance. In recent years the suggestion has been made that weak or obsolete management skills contribute to missed opportunities for expansion of output and employment. With the completion of the Free Market in 1992, there will be increased demand for the highest standard of management performance in the provision of goods and service. But how pervasive is management training and development, and to what
extent is the current system useful in catering for the needs of Irish managers? It is proposed at this stage to examine the nature of management training and development in Ireland in an effort to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the needs of Irish managers and Irish industry.

Since the foundation of the State there has been much talk about apprenticeship training, operator training, skills development, youth employment schemes and so forth. However, little consideration was given to management training, except for initiatives adopted by individual companies. The 1986 White Paper on Manpower Policy made explicit reference to this lack of attention, and recommended the setting up of an appropriate committee to deal with the problem. The Minister for Labour responded to this by establishing the Advisory Committee on Management Training and Development in Ireland to make recommendations on how the formation of managers can contribute more effectively to economic development. The function of this committee, in the words of the Minister, was to:

"..identify whether we can fashion a coherent system for the development of Irish managers that would be respectable and far-reaching, providing for the achievement of standards equivalent to those which we rightly expect from those engaged in the well-established professions".

In effect, the terms of reference for the report were to indicate the quantity and quality of current provisions for the development of managers, and to examine current funding arrangements, in order to establish whether State resources provided the best possible return. The committee reported in 1989 under the auspicious title of "Managers for Ireland: The Case for the Development of Irish Managers" (commonly referred to as the "Galvin Report"), and it's findings focused on several issues of a disturbing nature:
ISSUE 1: The insufficient level of commitment and expenditure on management development initiatives

In particular, the committee reported that over one fifth of the top 1000 companies spent nothing on management development, while one half of them spent less than £5000 on management development activities. It also suggested that small, Irish owned, new companies were not taking advantage of management training initiatives, either because of perceived lack of relevance, or insufficient funds.

ISSUE 2: The perceived lack of understanding of what is involved, or what constitutes good practice in management training and development.

As there are no generally-accepted guidelines for management development in Ireland, the report suggested that organisations are insufficiently aware of either the range of training and development opportunities available, or for which situation particular methods are most appropriate.

ISSUE 3: The lack of a common core of relevant business knowledge and skills.

Many individuals who are promoted to managerial level as a result of their performance in their specialist function often lack a foundation in core business acumen that is considered necessary for managers, nor indeed, have they received any training in the particular skills of management.

ISSUE 4: The difficulties small businesses experience in implementing a policy for management development.

Managers in small companies are the least likely to receive adequate training and development, where the costs of formal training, both in monetary terms, and in lost time to the immediate needs of the business, act as a serious deterrent to adequate commitment to management development in small, indigenous industries.

ISSUE 5: The ambiguity and inconsistency of State's role in funding post experience management training

State spending on training operates mainly through a subsidy to the providers of
training initiatives, and not directly to the users. This spending lacks an overall guiding principle, and the State has little control over the effectiveness of the money it pays out.

**ISSUE 6:** The separate training of the public service and private sector managers.

The report suggests that this approach produces overlaps and duplication, and that a coherent policy incorporating both would be more effective.

The committee issued a number of recommendations, among the more salient being the proposed setting up of an Action Group for Management Development to spearhead a campaign of increasing national awareness and commitment to management training and development. Furthermore it suggested that guidelines on management development be drawn up to eliminate ambiguity, broadly common curriculum be offered by the providers of business education, State funding be redirected away from the providers to the direct support of users, and that incentives be offered to small businesses to encourage the drawing up and implementing of management training and development programmes. It further highlights the need for management development to be closely linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation, which, it indicates, is a core characteristic of the six case studies presented.

Particular criticisms of the report include the fact that those six companies are, in effect, a highly selective sample from Irish Industry, and hardly representative of Irish organisations, and while the report heavily criticised the providers of management as being "rigid, lacking innovation and insufficiently market focused", this was not addressed in the recommendations. The providers survey identified the MBA as the most significant management degree in Ireland, yet this was completely omitted in the issues, recommendations, or guidelines for business education in the report.
The Market Research Bureau of Ireland (MRBI) conducted research in 1991, on the current environment for management training and development in the corporate sector of Irish industry. Out of a total sample response of 495 organisations, some 74% availed of at least one of three main types of management development course, with course usage highest within the non-commercial public sector (90%), and in the Financial services sector (92%). The survey also indicates that company size is a significant factor in determining usage of formal courses, a point that was also noted in the Galvin Report.

In addition, the survey indicated that both the State and Semi-State sectors have a significantly higher usage level (97%) than the private commercial sector (72%). Furthermore, within the private sector, foreign owned companies are much more likely to be course users than Irish owned organisations - 89% as against 64% respectively.

Critical elements examined in the survey were the factors that influenced the use of external courses among Irish managers. The study revealed that, in the majority of cases, training occurs as the perceived need arises (42%), or where individual performance appraisal points to a particular skill gap (34%). In medium sized organisations, and also among foreign owned concerns, the personal decision, or request of the individual concerned is a significant factor at play.

In order to accurately assess what procedures are adopted when deciding on course attendance, respondents were asked to identify the procedure that best reflected their organisation's practice regarding attendance of managers on such courses, and who in the organisation makes the decision that managers should attend courses. The more salient of the results were:

- 52% of respondents indicated that management decides on course attendance as and when particular needs arise
- 54% of respondents indicated that the managing director/chief executive
decides which managers are to attend particular courses.

It can be seen from these results that the training activities of most organisations do not appear to have any strategic impetus, in that they occur as a perceived need arises, or where particular courses become available. The organisations surveyed did not plan their human resources in a strategic manner, nor did they appear overtly concerned with the developmental needs of their employees. These issues are worth highlighting at this time, since they will be useful for comparative purposes with the results of the present study.

1.5 TRAINING PRACTICES IN IRISH COMPANIES

Until recently, there has been no official information available concerning the extent of training of the employed workforce in Ireland. Fox (1990) suggests that problems continuously arise in drawing up statistics of training, principally because:

* Different organisations have varying concepts of what training is. In particular, distinctions between education, vocational education and vocational training are drawn, which lead to confusion and ambiguity.

* Distinctions are often made between formal and informal training. Many individuals in employment receive on-the-job training (OJT), which is primarily learning by doing. It is very hard to measure the extent of such training, and hence statistics on training often fail to include such figures.

* Problems arise because of the pervasiveness of training within the economy. There are a large number of institutions providing training, and organisations across all sectors of the economy train their employees, and the State has no administrative reason to obtain statistics on such activities.

For the purpose of this chapter, it is proposed to examine two sources of data, in order to present, where information allows, a comprehensive picture of training and development in Irish industry, and to estimate expenditure costs of these activities. Both official statistics and survey data are therefore presented.
1.5.1. OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) gathers statistics on training through the Labour Force Survey and the Labour Costs Survey. The former provides useful information on the incidents of training, while the latter focuses on the number of trainees and expenditure.

1. Labour Force Survey:

AnCO (1987) published a summary of a Labour Force Survey of persons in employment aged 15-49. The results of this survey indicated that:

* 70,000 of those surveyed had received some education/training during the four weeks prior to the survey. This represents 8% of all employed in that age group, or 6.5% of all employed.

* 71% of this training was further training for the present job, 17% was first vocational training, 6.5% was retraining for other jobs, and the remainder was for more general education.

* Disparities were discovered regarding the extent of training received by younger employees compared with that received by older employees. It was found that the percentage of training received by employees tends to decrease as they age.

Another interesting feature highlighted by the survey was that only 4,600 persons were re-trained for different jobs, and, out of 300,000 employed persons aged between 45 and 49 in Ireland, only 600 were being trained. Training was further evaluated by occupation, and reflects the position that those most in need of training - lower skilled groups - receive relatively little training.

While the Labour Force Survey statistics are useful in depicting trends, and indicating the present situation, they do not highlight the duration of training initiatives, and hence cannot be used to provide statistics on an annual basis, nor at a particular point in time. Similarly, they give no indication of the volume of training activities being carried out, or the costs involved.
2. Labour Costs Survey:

The CSO carried out Labour Costs Surveys in 1984 and 1988, and one of the items of labour costs identified in the survey were training costs. The results suggested that the "typical" firm in industry and wholesale/retail had a training cost of about £200 per employee, which represents over 1% of total labour costs. A particular drawback of using the survey as a valid measure of training expenditure is that it excludes employees not classified as apprentices or trainees, and, even in the latter category, figures produced include the wage costs as well as all other costs. Hence, while it is useful within a narrow sphere, it underestimates the extent of total training expenditure in the economy.

1.5.2 SURVEY DATA

O'Suilleabhail & Kerr (1989), in conjunction with CEDEFOP, the European Centre for Vocational Training, conducted a survey of the financing of continuing vocational training in Ireland. The results indicate that about £43m of public money is being spent on training of employed people, with approximately 60,000 people benefiting from this expenditure. The IDA accounts for the largest element of expenditure at £10.6m, a sizable percentage of which is ESF funding.

In 1989, FAS, in conjunction with the Market Research Bureau of Ireland (MRBI) undertook a survey of training initiatives in Industry and Services. This survey was conducted on a sample of 474 companies in the FAS designated Industry and Services sectors. The survey obtained information on the extent and duration of training during the previous year, some of which is presented below.

* Total employment in the sector covered was 961,800 persons. During the previous 12 months 404,300 (42%) of persons employed received some training.
* Of these, 206,888 (21%) received formal, off-the-job training. This indicates that less than 25% of employees received any formal training during the last year.
* 50% of employees in Industry received training, compared with only 38% of Services employees. However, 56% of the latter was formal training, while the comparative figure in Industry was only 21%.

* Training activity was much greater in larger firms. In 65% of very small firms no-one had received any off-the-job training. In only 10% of large firms was this the case, which supports earlier evidence that small firms do not generally utilise training interventions to the degree that larger firms do.

* Most off-the-job training was of a short duration - on average every employee receives one day of formal training per year.

The survey was unsuccessful in establishing the extent or quality of on-the-job training - in many instances because individuals tend to indicate some OJT, rather than admit to no training at all. All of the results point to a significant amount of training being carried out in Ireland, but as yet there have been very few published statistics on the training of employees within the EC, thus making it difficult to ascertain how Ireland compares with other member States. Current data on EC employees' training is not adequate, and hence it is not possible to make reliable comparisons between countries.

1.6 THE SPECIALIST TRAINING FUNCTION

An AnCO survey (1982) on the role of training managers in Irish Industry, found that the training function is well established in Irish organisations. It identified two particular types of senior training specialist:

a) those with a larger occupational role - such as personnel managers - but who spend a high proportion of their time in training (75% of cases), and

b) those with a primary involvement in training, such as training managers/specialists (25%).

The survey identified that the principal area of focus was on operative training and management development. It also found that training specialists were very
concerned with the financial assessment of training and development in cost/benefit terms. Most training in the organisations surveyed was undertaken within companies, although many also used external training. The survey also examined top management attitudes towards training. Again, a positive picture emerges, with the vast majority recognising the importance of employee development, and the specialist training function.

In her survey of personnel practices in Ireland, Shivanath (1986) found that training and development constituted a primary activity within the specialist personnel function. She found that most employee development activities were undertaken jointly with line management, except for the more administrative task of liaising with AnCO (FAS), which was generally the sole remit of the personnel function.

1.7 SUMMARY:
It is generally recognised that the concept of HRD has evolved out of the training literature, and marks a conscious attempt to develop employees to meet the changing needs of industry. To this end, employees are perceived as valuable resources which, if effectively managed, rather than administered, from a strategic point of view, will contribute significantly to organisation effectiveness.

In order to ascertain and understand the nature of current employee development practices in Irish Industry, it was first necessary to examine the emergence and development of the training concept in Ireland. To this end, the table below summarises this development which can be seen to have evolved through a number of distinct phases.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1098</td>
<td>Norman Invasion</td>
<td>Introduction of the Guild system of operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Industrial Revolution</td>
<td>Evolution of factory system of production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Agricultural &amp; Technical Instruction (Irl) Act</td>
<td>First form of regulated apprenticeship in Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Vocational Education Act</td>
<td>Established VECs to provide a nationwide system of continuing education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Apprenticeship Act</td>
<td>Set up Apprenticeship Committees to regulate apprenticeship training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Apprenticeship Act</td>
<td>Established An Cheard Chomhairle to coordinate and regulate the apprenticeship system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Industrial Training Act</td>
<td>Set up AnCO to assume full responsibility for all Industrial and Commercial training, including apprenticeships, and to promote training at all levels of Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Labour Services Act</td>
<td>Established FAS - The amalgamation of AnCO, NMS and the YEA - to provide, coordinate and promote training activities in Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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This historical overview shows us that most of the action taken by governments and their agents, and indeed industry itself, was reactive - taken afterwards, when the detrimental effects of economic policy were clearly visible.

Statistical data examined by the author suggests that, while a significant amount of money is being spent on training in Ireland, the degree to which this results in 'effective' training initiatives is questionable. Similarly, there appears to be no strategic impetus governing these training activities, with the result that training practices do not appear strategic in orientation. The numerous surveys reviewed by the author indicate quite clearly that the training initiative in Ireland is insufficient to meet the needs of industry. While only a relatively small proportion of employees receive some formal training and development yearly, the very nature of this training reflects the underlying ethos behind it - training occurs as a perceived need arises, and appears to have no strategic imperative. To this end Irish Industry
would appear to practice elements of the traditional training and development model, and have not adopted more strategic oriented HRD.

Overall, the material examined suggests that Ireland’s training strategy has focused too much on an occupational approach to training as a means of combating mass unemployment with the result that training initiatives are undertaken that are neither directly, or immediately related to business needs. The result of such a focus has been a reduction in the perceived value of training for organisations. There has also arisen the perception that training is something that can readily be provided by external agencies, which has had the effect of perhaps limiting the number of training officers operating at management level within organisations, and concomitantly the perception of HRD as a valuable strategic tool. Finally, the cumulative effect of governmental investment in training has resulted in a situation whereby organisations are now heavily dependent on such funding, to the extent that queries whether organisations train only to the extent that they can recoup the financial outlay.

Having charted the development of training in Ireland, it now becomes pertinent to examine the nature of HRD initiatives and the strategic imperative of the concept.
CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC HRD

2.1 Introduction

2.2 The Emergence of HRD

2.3 Strategic HRD Defined

2.4 Characteristics of Strategic HRD
   - Integration with organisation mission and goals
   - Strategic planning and policy formulation
   - Top management support
   - Environmental scanning
   - Line management involvement
   - Cultural recognition

2.5 Models for training/HRD practice
   - Unsystematic Model
   - Problem Centred Model
   - Systematic Training Model
   - Cycle of Training Model
   - HRD Effectiveness Improvement Model
   - Business Focused Strategic Model

2.6 Limitations of the HRD literature

2.7 Summary

28
2.1 INTRODUCTION

Having briefly examined the evolution of training practices, and elaborated on the general trend from specific training to more broadly defined strategic HRD, it becomes pertinent, at this stage, to explore the concept of HRD more fully. While many claims have been made for the efficacy of HRD, there are numerous definitions and, predictably, many confusions concerning its functioning. This chapter focuses on the concept of HRD, examining the impetus behind HRD, defining its nature, extracting key characteristics of the concept from existing literature bases, and outlining the evolution of particular developmental models as they emerged out of the traditional training function. Finally, particular criticisms of the extant literature are examined, and applied to the HRD concept.

2.2 THE EMERGENCE OF HRD

In recent times, much has been written about the development of human resources as a means of increasing the effectiveness of the organisation. This burgeoning interest in HRD can, perhaps, be attributed both to the popularisation of Porter's (1980;1990) notion of competitive advantage and the idea of excellent companies that has emerged from the works of, among others, Peters and Waterman (1982), Ouchi (1981) and Pettigrew et al (1988). This 'excellent' literature indicates that employees' patterns of behaviour should be guided by, and consistent with, the values and philosophies of the top executives in the organisation, the latter being shaped by the particular business or competitive strategy adopted by the organisation. The idea that organisations are excellent in their organisation culture, and that the relevant characteristics can be discriminated and copied, has, according to Pettigrew (1988) been expanded into analysis of the management of human resources more generally, and linked to the business strategy literature, in the belief that human resources are a means of achieving competitive advantage.
Virtually any new development in employment management has been cited as an example of HRD in practice, and beginning to appear, within organisations and academia is a growing awareness of the importance of linking HRD with business management. Song (1982) developed such a link through his manager-strategy match paradigm, the notion of tying business strategy to top management characteristics. A more recent phenomenon however, involves matching strategy with personnel and human relations practices in an effort to evaluate how organisations can gain competitive advantage through optimum utilisation of human assets (Schuler and Mcmillan 1984).

The 1980s in particular witnessed far more rapid and dramatic changes than any other recent period, and many of these changes - demographic shifts, heightened competition, changing work patterns and more complex technology - have significant implications for the management of the whole human resources field. Practices relating to human resources are changing, as individuals and organisations create new responses to the challenges facing them today. McLagan (1989) identified four major areas of organisation change, that have significant effects on development-oriented practices, in and around the workplace:

* Pressures of workforce productivity will intensify, leading to a move beyond obvious efficiency gains to more systematic practices of achieving higher quality products and services, while remaining low cost producers.

* The pace of change will continue to accelerate, with cycle times reduced, indicating that time will become a more valuable resource, and thus, the organisation that economises on time will have a competitive advantage.

* Business strategies will become more dependent on the quality and versatility of the human resources - organisation strategies will not be delivered if the employees are not capable or committed.
Work structures and design will change dramatically, building on changes that have already begun. Hierarchies will melt into, or become displaced by flatter and more flexible organisation design, and boundaries between individual jobs will blur, leading to team accountability and more flexible, multi-skilled job designs. Similarly, recent ASTD research has identified changes in the workforce that will stimulate new HRD responses:

* The workforce will become more diverse, with an increased number of female employees, multinational employees, and the challenges that relate to an older workforce. It becomes apparent that management practices, communication processes and development issues will, and must change.

* More individuals will do knowledge work, which requires judgment, flexibility and personal commitment, rather than submission to procedures.

* Under the auspices of meaningful work and involvement, a value shift will occur, where skills will be viewed as a resource to be utilised, and thus employees will expect to participate in decisions as well as in the wealth they help create.

A number of these changes are becoming increasingly apparent with the growth in job restructuring initiatives and the popularisation of employee share incentive schemes. In the present competitive environment, there will clearly be great economic and personal advantage in being able to optimise the performance of individuals, teams and the entire organisation. These forces are prompting the emergence of strategic HRD in many organisations. In the past training and development has been excluded from strategic planning because of the perception of it being a reactive, service function - a type of support role. However the charter of most HRD functions is to aid human resources in becoming more competitive and productive, and to aid the organisation in achieving its mission.
2.3 STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEFINED

It is perhaps pertinent at this stage to define the term strategic HRD, as it has been too loosely applied to a wide variety of activities. A definition of strategic HRD explains the true nature of the concept, and may be used to differentiate HRD from other fields with which it has traditionally overlapped in purpose. At a recent conference in Britain (1988), HRD was generally described as:

"Organised learning experiences provided by employers, within specific periods of time, for performance improvement or personal growth."

Garavan (1990) defines HRD as:

"The strategic management of training, development and management/professional education interventions so as to achieve the objectives of the organisation, while, at the same time ensuring the full utilisation of the knowledge and skills of individual employees."

Gilley and Eggland (1989) view the concept in terms of the:

"...advancement of knowledge, skills and competencies, and the improved behaviour of people within the organisation, for both their professional and personal use."

These definitions support the view that strategic HRD refers to the development of a strategic corporate approach to workforce management. Its basic premise is that organisations incorporate human resource considerations into strategic decision making, establish a corporate human resource philosophy, and develop strategies and policies which complement business strategy, and maximise the utilisation of human resources.

Fombrum et al (1984) identify the goal or objective of strategic HRD as:

"Aligning the formal structure and human resource systems so that they drive the strategy objective of the organisation"
The ASTD (1986) have noted that:

"Human resource activities are no longer a group of diverse practices on the periphery of a few organisations. The field has moved from beyond isolated attempts to teach specific skills to workers, to include complex strategic systems for solving critical organisational problems, and meeting competitive challenges in the global marketplace."

while Schuler and Walker (1990) identify strategic HRD as a set of processes jointly shared by human resources and line managers to solve people-related business issues. Through strategic HRD, Human Resource Management seeks to add value by identifying those issues, assessing them, evaluating them, and finally, resolving those most critical to the organisation's competitiveness, and ultimately to its success. These definitions of HRD reflect both a focus on the individual, and also a philosophical commitment to the professional advancement of individuals within the organisation. Enshrined within this focus are three important implications for the organisation:

1. HRD should be directed towards the organisation's goals, and not necessarily the individual employees' goals.
2. Definitive articulated strategies must be in place to foster this direction.
3. A systematic process must be incorporated to link one to the other.

The reasoning behind this focus is an attempt to create overall effectiveness, therefore narrowing the gap between individual and organisational goals.

If employee development is crucial to the implementation of organisational strategies, the question of the relationship of development to the performance of the organisation is, therefore, highly relevant. This relationship has been given particular credence recently:

"Individuals are now the only source of sustainable competitive advantage. Efforts must be focused on mobilising their commitment and encouraging self-development, and lifetime learning."

(CBI; 1989)
It is evident that development - individual or organisational - cannot occur unless people participate in activities designed to introduce new knowledge and skills, and to improve behaviour. This is the primary concern of strategic HRD - the introduction of organised learning activities designed to foster increased knowledge and skills, with the overriding objective of increasing organisation effectiveness through the strategic development of its human resources.

The foregoing illustrates that the unique contribution that strategic HRD makes to the productivity effort is through learning. While there are other methods to increase productivity that are necessary, and while learning alone will not necessarily improve productivity, it remains that, where learning is needed and not provided, it is doubtful if meaningful productivity will increase. Nadler (1984) identifies three activity areas found within these 'learning experiences' of the HRD effort:

**Training** - 'learning related to the present job of the learner'. There are many reasons for providing training, but the discussion here will be limited to those relating to productivity. Each training intervention requires some change in performance, and, for the most part, new performance requires some kind of learning, either formal classroom training, or informal on-the-job training.

**Education** - 'Learning to prepare the individual for a different, but identified job'. It is important to make this distinction between training and education for, if it is clear, it can provide mutual expectations for the learner, supervisor and management. Education is concerned with preparing individuals for new jobs, and the involvement of HRD should begin long before the employee is presented with the particular specifications.

**Development** - 'Learning for growth of the individual, but not related to a specific present or future job'. In general, development is not job specific, but rather a means of developing an individual to his/her full potential, and, as such is not
specifically related to productivity.

One can also adopt an holistic perspective, and view strategic HRD as a subset of the overall human resource discipline. Specifically, it may be seen as comprising of three immediate areas that use development as their primary process.

* Training and Development - identifying, evaluating and helping develop, through planned learning, the key competencies that enable individuals to perform current or future jobs.

* Organisation Development - ensuring healthy inter-and intra-unit relationships, and helping groups initiate and manage change.

* Career Development - ensuring the alignment of individual career planning, and organisational career management processes, to achieve the optimum match of individual and organisation needs.

While other areas may rely on development as a key process, that role is not primary. It may be derived from the above that strategic HRD may also be viewed as the integrated utilisation of the above three concepts to improve individual, group and organisational effectiveness. Unfortunately HRD is rarely used in this strategic manner. Greenhalgh (1983) suggests that in most organisations, 'development' is interpreted as giving people knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance in their current job, and is seldom seen as a strategic alternative to external recruitment for critical positions. He further proposes that top management’s initial reaction to an external crisis tends to be reactive; to put stress on technology and capital equipment, rather than on using and developing people, and to be fragmented and not coupled with long-term business objectives. Roth (1986) similarly found that changes tend to originate from economic crises, rather from a desire to increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Utilising strategic HRD to lessen the impact of turbulence is often dismissed by
employers who are more concerned with manipulating finances than utilising their employees. One could argue, however, that the organisation which has flexible human resources increases its chances of success to the extent that it responds in a manner consistent with long-term objectives.

Hayes & Jaikumar (1985) suggest that, to develop a more flexible, adaptive workforce, one needs more adaptive organisations with developmental cultures - companies that promote human learning at all levels. The problems of new technology are not technical ones; they are intellectual ones.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIC HRD

There is a continuously emerging literature on the nature of strategic HRD activities (Zenger 1985; Hales 1986; Garavan 1990; Keep, 1992), and therefore it becomes possible to extract a number of key characteristics of the concept.

* INTEGRATION WITH ORGANISATION MISSIONS AND GOALS:

One pertinent feature of strategic HRD emerging from the literature is the integration of training and development into wider business planning. Human resource concerns are approached as people-related business concerns, in an effort to achieve strategic business objectives. Strategic HRD orders the relationship between competitive performance and human resources in different ways. It is explicit in viewing employees and human resource policies as a means of achieving strategic objectives - matching people to strategy, not strategy to people - and assuming that 'fit' is a key determinant of performance (Galbraith & Nathanson 1978). The clearer and more focused the strategy, the easier it is to link strategy with the development of human resources. Barham et al (1987) suggest that strategic HRD involves the refocussing of training and development activities away from fragmented to more central initiatives. They suggest that this may be
achieved either through linkage with organisational goals (formalised approach), or systematic integration with organisational needs, to the extent that it is seen as necessary for the survival of the enterprise (focused approach). Zenger (1985), and Zenger & Blitzen (1981) similarly stress this link with organisational goals, coupled with the ability to develop plans that reflect the organisations tactical objectives.

Therefore, the HRD function focuses specifically on designing staffing patterns that match the strategic plans, and creates more strategically motivated development and employee relations policies. Fombrun (1988) identifies a number of areas in which development fails to be done strategically. Most notable of these are:
- The time span is often too short. The focus is frequently on skill requirements in new or present assignments, rather for requirements for positions into the future.
- There is often inadequate attention devoted to identification of future skill needs, compared with the growth of these skills.

To be strategic about development involves analysing future business opportunities and plans, and thinking systematically about future skills that will be necessary to implement those plans. As a consequence, HRD considerations must achieve strategic fit with organisational objectives, in an effort to order the relationship between individual performance and competitive advantage. This strategic fit is evidenced by organisations linking manpower plans to business plans, and effecting changes in skill supply activities as a result, operating top down employment policies, and gearing business strategies to perceived human resource strengths.

*STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY FORMULATION*

An essential feature of the corporate planning process is the formulation of business plans and processes (Johnson & Schultz 1989). For HRD to be strategic in its focus, it too must undertake similar activities. Strategic planning deliberately
sets a general direction towards a vision of what a HRD function should become, and will achieve (Pattan 1986). Because it focuses on the future, it is often termed vision driven, as the vision influences the decisions and action taken which lead to its attainment.

Hales (1986) delineates a number of propositions for the development of strategic HRD plans:

- A strategic business plan must exist before a strategic HRD plan can be developed. A HRD plan developed separately from the business plan will remain short-term and operational in focus.

- Strategic HRD plans require top management sanction and involvement, in an effort to align them with the organisation's missions.

- HRD plans are derived from both strategic business plans, and an analysis of the internal and external environment, the latter forming a critical base from which decisions are made concerning HRD plans.

Strategic HRD plans differ from traditional or tactical training and development plans. They incorporate a long-term objective, define a broad organisational direction, and utilise a top-down approach, at least in part. They define long-range objectives and resources needed for realising its vision. By contrast, traditional training and development is short-term and operational in nature, and utilises a bottom-up approach - reactive as opposed to proactive.

Hendry & Pettigrew (1986) indicate that HRD planning only becomes strategic when it includes the monitoring of environmental trends, and the modelling of alternatives. When the implications of this kind of monitoring are fed into the business planning process on an on-going and long-term basis, the opportunity may be presented for HRD planning to influence business plans, rather than simply reacting to them.
Based on an analysis of the current situation, and of the future, objectives are specific, time bound, and measurable markers along the road to a strategic vision. Those likely targeted HRD activities and outcomes are responses to future business plans, production technology and work design, all of which require new employee skills.

Much of the training literature has, until recently, ignored, for the most part, the concept of policy formulation. However, at the strategic level, one of the elemental influences on HRD is the basic policies of the organisation. Fombrun et al (1986) indicate that:

"The most critical influences on employee learning lie in the basic organisation design, and the human resource policies of the firm."

The growing literature on strategic HRD has prompted several authors to ponder the significance of policy formulation and, from this body of knowledge (see Kenny & Reid 1986, Torrington & Hall 1987, Harrison 1988, Nadler & Wiggs, Craig 1986, Gunnigle & Flood, 1990) it is possible to outline a number of reasons why policy formulation is critical to strategic HRD:

- it provides operational guidelines for management investing in strategic HRD
- it aids management in identifying and implementing appropriate HRD activities for resolving organisational problems, and exploiting new business opportunities
- it delineates ownership of the function and allocates responsibility
- a clear policy statement helps to define the relationship that exists between organisational objectives, and its commitment to the HRD function
- it provides a framework against which HRD activities can be evaluated, and thus infuses it with a strategic orientation.

Human resource policies are based largely on deeply-held values in the
organisational culture regarding the appropriate ways to teach employees. Nadler & Wiggs (1986) identify six characteristics of an effective HRD policy: It should reflect the goals of the organisation; be clearly written and communicated; identify acceptable activity; capable of being applied; internally consistent and flexible.

Some policies that affect the development of employees are the following:
- Promotion from within - implies a corporate commitment to staff development
- Employment security - Forces managers to 'think development' when recruiting
- Internal mobility through cross-business and cross-functional transfers to promote learning from experience
- Maximum and minimum incumbency times - to ensure employees who plateau in their careers are not ignored, but are given an opportunity for further development
- Linking promotion to subordinate development - where managers are not promoted until they have developed one or more subordinates for promotion

Each of the policies outlined above forces organisations to think strategically about their employees and how they can contribute to organisation effectiveness.

*TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT*

The literature further indicates that strategic HRD must command the support and participation of top management. More notably, where top management at board level view HRD as critical to organisational success, the function wields a greater influence in strategic planning. The degree to which the HRD function achieves the goal of being a responsive resource is greatly determined by the extent to which the organisation perceives the function to be effective. Because top management operate at the strategic level of the organisation, and because top management represent the strategic planners, they should also be involved in human resource
planning and development.

Sakland (1976), Hall & Hall (1976), Reypert (1981) and Wellington (1981) cite the active involvement of top management as critical to the success of strategic HRD policies. Brim-Donohoe (1981), in examining the reasons why HRD departments fail in organisations, suggests that the function often lacks the support of top managers, and is not given credence by decision makers at strategic levels in the organisation.

Hall (1971) indicates that the most critical element, at strategic level, is top management’s commitment to employment continuity. He suggests that this policy drives a long-term commitment to the relationship between the organisation and the employee, and, more specifically, to on-going development as a means of keeping the employee competitive. By fostering life-long learning and development, management can help employees remain adaptable and employable.

The reality however, does not always accurately reflect prescribed theory. In many circumstances, top management are not committed to HRD initiatives. Garavan (1990) suggests a number of reasons for this:
- many top managers are not always systematically trained or developed as managers, and hence tend to devalue training and development, especially where such activities are perceived as a threat to their own position.
- top managers are often too busy to consider the benefits of HRD, or identify what resources and facilities are available.
- where organisation survival is the priority, long-term investment in HRD is perceived as a luxury, as opposed to a necessity.

Guest (1987) argues that strong corporate leadership, and a strategic vision which incorporates human resources as a key component of corporate strategy, are essential to the effective implementation of strategic HRD. Leadership is the critical
element. It is through the will and ability of chief executives and general managers that people will become an integral part of the strategic planning process, and a source of competitive advantage.

Kenny & Reid (1986) argue that the attitudes of managers, and particularly those of senior managers, can be either a major resource, or a potentially crippling disability, in that attitudes may determine both the extent to which HRD practitioners will receive resources, and the organisational level at which initiatives will be developed. Finally, Hayes & Jaikumar (1988) caution that strategic HRD should not be achieved solely through direct top management control of development programmes and systems. They indicate that there should be a shift, at top management level, from a control orientation to one of facilitating employee learning. Management focus should not be on enforcing standards, but on removing constraints, assisting development, and unleashing the employee's energy, information and creativity. These latter qualities are the precise qualities demanded by new technologies and global markets.

* ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

The strategic HRD function is market oriented, and hence must have continuous knowledge of its external environment. Higgs (1989) indicates that the function must have the capacity to analyse the external environment in terms of the opportunities and threats which it presents, in the context of both the business and HRD strategy. Olson (1986) similarly illustrates how elements of the organisation's environment shape the type of HRD activities it engages in:

* Large companies spend heavily on training, mainly because they have outgrown their ability to meet their skill needs with workers trained externally.
* High Technology companies, because of their short product life cycles, invest heavily in HRD because of the perception of it as a necessary weapon in their
capacity to develop new products, and adapt to market trends.

* Firms operating in highly competitive industries view training as a strategic tool, which allows them to deal effectively with skill shortages.

Pettigrew, Sparrow & Hendry (1988) modelled specific driving forces, which help explain an organisation's propensity for generating HRD activities. Most significantly, where these factors identify a skill shortage, they act as a force to trigger training within the organisation, in an attempt to change the skill profile supplied.

It can be construed that, where the external environment is competitive in nature, it can present major opportunities for the HRD function, since it highlights the role of human resources as a key component of business success. This, in turn, according to Garavan (1990), will present the opportunity to discuss strategic HRD initiatives at the highest level.

**LINE MANAGEMENT INVOLVEMENT**

Schuler & Walker (1990) identify line management involvement in human resource concerns as critical to the practice of strategic HRD. They advocate an issues orientation, whereby human resource and line managers jointly identify issues critical to the function's effectiveness, therefore ensuring that human resource concerns are not ignored, or pushed out of the way. Webster (1990) identifies the responsibility for training and development as lying with line management:

"...... for, unless the line owns it, HRD will always be seen as something that occurs outside the mainstream."

In his research, Leicester (1989) cited the failure of line management to take responsibility for the development of employees as one critical factor concerning the apathetic nature of training in British Industry.
Traditionally, HRD was held to be the responsibility of the personnel/training department, or indeed the training specialist. Today, however, this perception has changed as organisations identify the key role line managers play in employee development. Ashton (1984), recognising the expanded role of line management, concludes:

"Such increased involvement is more often associated with the application of new methods which are more work-and-action based, rather than off-the-job or systems based."

Line managers are authorised to direct the work of others, and, as such, are in charge of accomplishing the basic goals of the organisation. Leicester (1989) illuminated the key task of line management as the

"achievement ......... of that department's function, through the use of the employees of that department, in order that the whole organisation may achieve its corporate goals."

He/she is ideally placed to assess, on a continuous basis, the training and development needs of subordinates, and provide advice, counselling and direction as needed. Similarly, Gunnigle & Flood (1990), Garavan (1990), Mumford (1989) and Zenger (1985) have indicated that strategically focused HRD functions have generated the enthusiastic involvement of line management.

It becomes evident, however, that the relationship between line managers and the HRD function is not always congruent. Research by Garavan (1990), Mumford (1989) and Ashton (1984) identifies a number of issues which must be considered by a strategically oriented HRD function:

* A lack of consensus concerning ownership of the HRD function may lead to disparity, and a focusing away from the strategic aims of the organisation.
Line managers may often lack the competence to appraise performance, identify skill gaps, and counsel employees. Aligned with these competence difficulties may often exist a lack of motivation, accruing from the long-term focus of HRD initiatives, where line managers perceive very little impact on current performance from their involvement in the development of subordinates.

Ashton identifies role definition as an issue critical to the line managers reluctance to become involved in HRD. He argues that different HRD activities require varying degrees of line involvement. This suggests that some form of role clarification is necessary as a basis for developing a strategic HRD function, otherwise problems will arise concerning ownership of the function. It can be seen that strategic HRD functions must explicate the involvement of the line function in deciding on human resource initiatives, and that line managers must be persuaded that their input to the human resource function is critical to its strategic effect.

CULTURAL RECOGNITION
The importance of the concept of organisation culture has, relatively recently, come to the fore as an important factor at all levels of HRD activities. There exists a growing literature on the need to achieve a 'fit' between organisation strategy and culture (see Ogbanna & Wilkinson 1988, Beck & Jones 1988, Edwards & Klerner 1988) but a paucity of relevant research in relation to HRD (Wright 1983, Denison 1984) of the importance of culture in relation to the implementation of HRD strategies.

Perhaps the most noteworthy contribution to this particular topic is that of Schein (1985), where he examined how culture affects critical elements through the delineation of an organisation's life cycle. Figure 2.1 presents a summary of the
link between the life-cycle stage, key cultural/strategic features, and the implications of those for HRD activities. An examination of these various perspectives is essential to establish strategic options, policies and plans that fit the strategic logic and cultural webs found in organisations.

**Figure 2.1: Life Cycle Stages of Organisations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE CYCLE STAGE</th>
<th>KEY CULTURE/STRATEGIC FEATURES</th>
<th>IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC HRD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embryonic</td>
<td>High levels of cohesion</td>
<td>Owner may not perceive need for HRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dominant role of founder</td>
<td>Limited management expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside help not valued</td>
<td>Changes may be unplanned /ad hoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of procedures and planning systems</td>
<td>HRD may have to market its services aggressively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politics play an important role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth changes</td>
<td>Large variety of cultural development</td>
<td>Initiation of career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levels of cohesion decline</td>
<td>Introducing new recruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergence of middle management</td>
<td>Management development activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tensions/conflict may arise</td>
<td>Dealing with ambiguity /uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trying to get people to accept new ways of thinking</td>
<td>Development of high performing teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversification of business activities</td>
<td>Involvement in the management of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reinforcement of cultural values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Institutionalisation of values and beliefs</td>
<td>HRD function should be well established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evolutionary rather than revolutionary changes</td>
<td>Maintenance of HRD activities may be more appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inertia may emerge in the organisation</td>
<td>Lack of career opportunities may require novel HRD approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic logic may be rejected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline</td>
<td>Culture may act as a defence against a hostile environment</td>
<td>Management of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major decisions may have to be taken</td>
<td>Focus on changing the culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readjustment may be judged necessary</td>
<td>Reassure employees that problems are being dealt with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organising problem centred/project task forces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Adapted from Schein, E. (1985) "Organisation culture and leadership" Jossey Bass, in Garavan, T. (1990) "Strategic HRD" JEIT

Wright (1986) argues that the first step in cultural recognition is the undertaking of a cultural profile or audit, to examine both the present and desired cultural profile.
HRD activities could then be strategically focused at making the transition from the present to the desired culture. Ogbanna & Wilkinson (1988), Peters & Waterman (1982), Ouchi (1983) and Smith (1986) all argue that HRD cannot ignore the prevailing and desired culture of the organisation, and suggest that the function has a key role to play in maintaining and changing that culture.

Hussey (1988) suggests that a climate needs to be created in the organisation where the commitment of the individual to self development, and of the company to making this possible, is seen as the norm. This requires a value system which views continuous development as essential, and a normal part of work, with excellence as the only acceptable level for the way all jobs are performed. He further indicates that there must be a support mechanism available, to provide counselling to managers on how to encourage self development among their subordinates.

2.5 MODELS OF TRAINING/HRD PRACTICE

One of the main factors which has characterised the field of HRD over the last number of years is the continuing and, some would argue, growing gap between theory and practice. Donnelly (1987) suggests that we tend to operate in a pragmatic environment in which theory, where it exists, is often deduced from successful practice, and where practice is based on a judicious mixture of intuition and experience. One particular outcome of this has been the proliferation of ‘state of the art’ development models, which, he suggests:

"...can quickly become outdated, oversimplifications in an area that is becoming increasingly diverse and complicated. It is essential that we continually analyse, question and, where necessary, modify what may be viewed as received truths within the area of training: time can have a halo effect on the individual."
He further suggests that training practices prior to the early 1960s were characterised largely by ad-hoc approaches, where training was seen as an activity suitable only for a minority of skilled employees (apprentices), and there was no concept of training being central to corporate planning or strategy. However, from the mid 1960s onwards, faced with heightened international competition, it was increasingly recognised that one of the reasons for reduced competitiveness was organisations' poor record of training. Levels of sophistication of HRD initiatives must be related accurately to projected technical and organisational changes, which should flow from corporate and manpower plans. Policies traditionally emanated from practitioners, which may have an inherent weakness in that they may facilitate the abdication by senior management of their legitimate training responsibilities, and may actually widen the gap between training activities and actual organisational requirements.

This section sets out to chart the evolution of employee development models, from the traditional approaches taken to training, to the more strategic models of HRD promoted today. See figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2. A continuum of Training and Development Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATIONAL</th>
<th>STRATEGIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsystematic Model</td>
<td>Effectiveness Improvement Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Centred Model</td>
<td>Business focused Strategic Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle of Training Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.1 UNSYSTEMATIC MODEL

The organisation that adopts an unsystematic approach to training views it, and the training function generally as a cost to be minimised at all times. Training, when carried out, is completed in an ad-hoc manner and is reactive in nature - only
undertaken in times of extreme external pressure. Training is not perceived as a cost-effective contributor to the achievement of organisation objectives, but rather as an expense to be incurred. Training practices are introduced in an unplanned fashion, with no clearly defined policies in place for their utilisation. Kenny & Reid (1986) indicate that employees are largely responsible for their own training, with no facilitative counselling back-up. Management Development is practically non-existent and, should the organisation employ a training specialist, he/she is afforded negligible power, authority or influence in the organisation.

It is the author's contention that, in today's competitive environment, organisations cannot afford to practice unsystematic training. It is increasingly recognised that the organisation that fails to adopt a proactive, planned approach to employee development will not achieve optimum utilisation of its resources and will fail to maximise its potential in a given industry. Coupled with this, the growing trend of employees taking control of their own development, and the expectation that employer organisations will facilitate this development through systematic, proactive training and development opportunities, highlights the point that unplanned, ah-hoc training is neither desirable nor acceptable.

2.5.2 PROBLEM-CENTRED MODEL

Buckley & Caple (1990) suggest that this approach to training is based upon urgent needs requiring

"quick, accurate problem identification before taking remedial action."

It is a highly reactive process which involves the identification and prioritising of performance problems, coupled with the generation and evaluation of results. Kenny & Reid (1986) indicate that this approach is useful in situations where:

- The need for training is urgent, but resources are not available for a more extensive analysis
- A fuller, more extensive analysis is unnecessary ie. where an employee’s work is unsatisfactory, except in a specific area
- The firm operates in a highly dynamic Industry or in very uncertain markets

Essentially this approach advocates the identification, by the training specialist, of the most pressing problem or training need, and taking action to deal with it. It is seen to produce immediate, cost-effective results, but can also have detrimental repercussions where the specialist exercises poor priority choice in problem analysis. While this approach has merited considerable attention in the past, one must recognise that organisations cannot hope to be successful in the future (and I use the word successful in its broadest sense) through this constant reliance on the expertise of one certain individual. Attention has already been drawn to the potential problem of inaccurate problem analysis and priority scheduling. Organisations can no longer afford to view training and development as a peripheral activity, to be dealt with as problems arise. There are numerous other organisations in any given industry that adopt a proactive stance and are seen to be extremely effective in achieving their corporate objectives.

2.5.3 SYSTEMATIC TRAINING MODEL

The emergence of systems thinking and operational research typified the approach to management and organisational problems from the 1960s onwards in an attempt to provide rational, analytic, highly structured, quantitative data (Taylor 1991). Boydell (1970) was perhaps the pioneer of the systematic training model. This model was developed in an attempt to ‘professionalise’ the activity of training, and thereby establish the credibility of trainers and the training function.

The original systematic model included 10 sequential steps to effective training - from the identification of training needs to evaluation and follow-up. This original process has subsequently been modified and adapted by numerous theorists to
the extent that modern systematic models typically comprise of four main steps:

1. Assessment and identification of organisation training needs (macro level)
2. Assessment of job training requirements (micro level)
3. Programme design
4. Evaluation or feedback

The model is viewed as a rational means of directing the organisation's resources. Based on an examination of organisational problems, threats and opportunities, top management sets the overall objectives, which are then broken down into manageable functional targets to be pursued by functional specialists working through their own sequence of stages.

However, the increasing complexity of HRD activities creates a need for the extension of these models, in order to effectively utilise human resources in an effort to attain and sustain competitive advantage. Kenny & Reid (1986) indicate that the traditional four-stage format is too simple to cover the complexity of current training activities, and that evaluation must be an inherent feature of every HRD cycle. Taylor (1991) suggests that this particular model may have limited applicability in situations characterised by:

- a stable environment and a clear set of goals
- a high degree of employee identification with the goals of the organisation
- the major requirement from employees being compliance with routine, rather than commitment to flexibility
- outcomes which can, and need to be measured

Taylor (1991) identifies a number of inherent problems which can be associated with the systematic training model:

1. The initial step of analysing training needs places a heavy emphasis on
breaking things down into component parts in a mechanistic fashion which, in reality, can only be applied to a limited number of jobs, and often misses the important inter-relationships, networks, power relationships and cultural values, all of which influence learning in the organisation.

2. A key presumption of the model is that the trainer, trainee, line manager and other interested parties will be able to agree on, and be equally committed to the learning objectives formulated for the training initiative. This formulation of objectives tends to imply a desire to control learning which can become limiting in that any valuable learning that takes place, that does not conform to these objectives, will be curtailed.

3. A further presumption is that, once objectives and plans are drawn up, the resources are then acted upon. It fails to recognise that individuals differ in the ways in which they learn, the speed at which they learn, and the degree to which they are motivated to learn.

Donnelly (1987) identifies two particular weaknesses of the systematic model:
* One pertinent weakness of the model lies in its assumption that it is feasible to enter into an organisation-wide assessment of training without having due consideration for the availability of budgets, managerial attitudes, the professionalism of trainers, and the potential capacity of the organisation to undertake changes within the cultural constraints of the present organisation philosophy. These factors will largely determine the extent, content and viability of subsequent assessments, and the acceptability and potential for success of future HRD activities.
* Furthermore the model fails to consider the pre-entry requirements for moving from one stage to another. Mumford (1984) underlines the importance of such pre-entry requirements when arguing the need to determine ways in which individuals learn, and the importance of attitudes in the job environment.
Taylor (1991) suggests that:

"This model, on its own, does not offer a theoretically explanatory device to account for the wide variations in training practices hence, while it may hold good for certain types of learning situations, it is at best incomplete, and at worst misleading. It cannot, on its own be regarded as generally valid."

The above arguments suggest that the use of the systematic model can no longer be justified, as it fails to meet the basic requirements of HRD, and is no longer relevant to current HRD interventions. This traditional model was typically income and results oriented, and focused on the learning of discrete skills that transfer readily to the workplace, producing immediate results. However, it neglects the multiplicity of factors that must be considered in today's HRD efforts, and, while it may be easily understood, gives an oversimplified view of the HRD function.

The following two models to be examined shall be considered in tandem by the author, since it can be observed that the latter is, in fact, a further development of the initial one. For this reason the models shall be critically examined by the author together as opposed to a separate evaluation of each one as they are presented.

2.5.4 CYCLE OF TRAINING MODEL

Donnelly (1987) devised the cycle of training model as an alternative to the traditional four-stage model. It comprises four main sections, with a series of sub sections, illustrating the pre-entry requirements which are used to help ensure the relevance of later activities.

The model is based on the assumptions that:

- One must account for the plurality of interests of the various stakeholders in the organisation, and their interactions with each other.
- One must recognise the different types of learning required within organisations at different levels, at different times, varying at one end of the spectrum from highly
specific and programmed skill learning to highly unstructured, attitudinal 'learning
to learn' kind of learning at the other end.
- One should recognise learning as a total organisational process and not merely a
functional specialism.

The model depicts four main blocks in the cycle:

* Resource availability
  This initial block lists the main pre-assessment factors which the practitioner must
check before initiating the assessment.

* Assessment of training needs: The organisation
  This block comprises the major areas of concern in an organisation-wide
assessment, and includes factors external to the organisation, but likely to have
implications for future training activities.

* Assessment of training needs: The job
  The focus in this section is on the learning problems associated with the job, and
the activities concerned with job training analysis.

* Programme design
  The final block is concerned with the design of training interventions, from the
initial definition of behavioural objectives, to the implementation of HRD.

Donnelly (1987) suggests that this model underlines the importance of factors such
as the availability of capital, cultural values, policies, allocation of responsibilities,
and includes evaluation as an integral activity within the model itself.

2.5.5 HRD EFFECTIVENESS IMPROVEMENT MODEL
Chalofsky & Reinhart (1988) proposed the HRD effectiveness model, which is
based on three fundamental criteria:
1. Close relationships with line and staff management
2. A highly professional HRD staff
3. A track record of high quality products and services

They suggest that the degree to which the HRD function is effective depends upon the three points highlighted above. The model advocates the use of a performance audit process to evaluate training and development activities. Essentially it represents a form of discrepancy analysis, and is concerned with the impact of any discrepancy - positive or negative - between the criteria and standards and actual accomplishments. The authors indicate that the process assumes the following:
- A programme evaluation is warranted in order to make sound decisions regarding the need to improve, change or maintain HRD practices and activities.
- A problem solving or goal setting activity will be necessary to improve the HRD function.
- The HRD staff is committed to the change process required by the evaluation.

On examination, a number of important shortcomings can be distinguished in each of the above two models. Such shortcomings are worthy of note, since they serve to underline the inherent disparities between the focus of HRD per se, and that of strategic HRD initiatives. They also indicate the extent to which HRD departments will achieve effectiveness, and a position of power within the organisation.

1. There is a decided lack of incorporation of human resource considerations into the strategic planning process of the organisation as a whole. Earlier discussion centred on the need for HRD to be involved at the business strategy level, and thereby avoid the problem of human resource issues being considered only after all other areas had been dealt with, as was the traditional practice.

2. There is no facilitation of line management involvement in the HRD process. As indicated earlier, line managers have an inherent responsibility for the training and development of their subordinates, to ensure that optimum utilisation of human resources occurs.
3. The support and commitment of senior management is not stressed in either of the models - a particular weakness when one considers that theorists have shown that HRD initiatives will not achieve optimum efficiency and effectiveness without the implicit and explicit sanction and input from top level management. In effect, the models allow the opportunity for senior managers to abdicate their responsibilities towards the process of HRD. This may also serve as an indicator that the HRD function itself may hold a position of low status within the organisation, where senior level management are not sufficiently aware of, or are indifferent to the contributions made by HRD professionals.

4. The organisation culture has not been given adequate consideration in terms of possible constraints it may impose on particular HRD interventions. The following chapter will examine the effects of the organisation’s culture on HRD initiatives in greater detail.

5. A final shortcoming of the models under examination lies in their problem-solving ethos. They are, in effect, reactive as opposed to proactive in nature. Note that each begins with some form of needs analysis, whereby action is taken only where a problem or need exists. This ideology is inherently incompatible with the strategic HRD concept, which is characterised by it’s long-term, proactive stance. Should organisations adopt this reactive-type model, that is, take action only when a particular need arises, then organisations cannot purport to establish or own a strategic HRD function, which prides itself on anticipating future problems, and undertaking preventative as opposed to corrective action.

2.5.6 BUSINESS-FOCUSED STRATEGIC MODEL
Developed by Pettigrew, Hendry & Sparrow (1988), this model suggests that the propensity of an organisation to train and develop its employees is enhanced when a sufficient combination of positive factors are in operation. Four categories of
positive factors are elucidated, notably business strategic; the external/internal labour market; internal actors, systems, philosophy and management organisation; and external training stimuli and support. See figure 2.3 below for clarification.

Figure 2.3: Business Focused Strategic Model

**External Labour Market**
Skills not readily available in external market

**Internal Labour Market**
- Reduced employee numbers leading to multi-skilling
- High attrition when organisation is expanding; or moving up-market
- High quality recruitment, retention and promotion

**Business Strategic**
- Simple products or tasks
- Technological or product-market changes signalling "skill gap"
- Relative importance of spending on training to survival

**Internal actors and systems**
- Top management, commitment, training champions and a training philosophy
- Developed training organisation and systems
- Line management responsibility for resources and performance
- Mechanisms to relieve line management of budgetary and time constraints
- Trade union membership

**External support for training**
- External training infrastructure and linkages
- Training incorporated in customer-supplier relationships
- Customer quality requirements
- Health and safety legislation
- Group support and facilities to subsidiaries
- External sources of finance

**Source:** Pettigrew, A, Hendry, C & Sparrow, P. "The forces that trigger training" Personnel Management, December 1988
As with most change initiatives, environmental forces represent the catalyst for driving some form of employee development, particularly where significant technological developments signal emerging skill gaps. To this end, the model stresses the importance of strategic monitoring of the external environment to anticipate changing needs, and similarly that the organisation adopt some form of strategic planning to cope with these changes.

The extent to which external pressures will facilitate HRD in the organisation is largely dependent on the availability of the requisite skills in the external labour market. Where these skills exist externally, the organisation may decide to recruit rather than develop its internal labour market. However, with the pervasive spread of new technologies today, and, concomitantly, the increased competitiveness of product markets, more and more organisations are recognising the value of enskilling their own employees, and preparing for the day when the requisite skills will no longer be available externally. To this end the quality of the internal labour market is upgraded and maintained through high quality recruitment, selection, promotion, multi-skilling and flexibility.

Pettigrew et al (1988) suggest that several elements of the internal labour market are critical to the effectiveness of HRD initiatives. They explicate a number of these critical factors ie. not only should the function have the support of top management, but the organisation should promote a training philosophy, and foster a learning culture that promotes continuous development. The authors recognise the important role that line managers play in the development of employees, but acknowledge that many such managers are constrained by time and budgetary concerns which, in many instances limits their involvement, hence the necessity for strategic planning and coordinating of activities to release the pressures placed upon line management, and allow for their input into the HRD function.

The model further examines the external training infrastructure, in terms of the
extent to which it facilitates organisational training and development ie. external sources of finance to offset training costs, training levies, legislation, suppliers and customers. Similarly, it indicates that opportunities for development may be severely curtailed where the organisation makes use of only a few people with a particular skill, and where this requires a long training period and heavy investment, and a preference for temporary forms of recruitment, such as the use of contract labour.

Finally, the authors conclude that effecting change in training and HRD involves thinking in broad HRM terms and creating a wide set of pressure points for change which can produce positive spirals of activity. They suggest that:

“A philosophy of continuous development is necessary to cement attention to formal, structured training. Only when the underlying approach is right does training and development become properly resources and embedded in a wide-ranging and inclusive approach to managing people. The most effective way to change attitudes and practices towards training is to address human resource development and management issues directly, rather than dwell on more narrowly conceived training issues.”

(Pettigrew, Hendry & Sparrow;1988)

Having examined a number of varying models concerned with the development of employees, it can be seen that the the business-focused, strategic model explicated above most reflects a strategic impetus. It encompasses a variety of issues that were earlier detailed as characteristics of strategic HRD. It (the model) promotes strategic thinking and planning, and encourages the development of a facilitative learning culture. It also takes cognisance of the external environment and labour market conditions, and delineates certain circumstances within which HRD will not achieve a high profile.

Table 2.1 below presents the reader with a comparative summary of these models, under a number of headings, namely key characteristics, type of orientation
(operative V strategic), and inherent weaknesses or limitations.

Table 2.1: A Comparative Summary of Training and Development/HRD Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>LIMITATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsystematic Model</td>
<td>Unplanned approach to training and development No training policies Individuals largely responsible for their own development</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Ad-hoc, reactive Training viewed as a cost rather than an asset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Centred Model</td>
<td>Involves the identification and prioritising of performance problems coupled with generation and evaluation of results</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Very reactive High risk of inaccurate identification of priority problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Model</td>
<td>Grounded in systems theory Highly structured Rational means of directing organisation resources A cycle of events, from identification of needs to evaluation of outcomes</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Too simplistic Low applicability in times of uncertainty Does not recognise individual differences Fails to consider the context within which training occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle of Training Model</td>
<td>Adopts a stakeholder approach Considers learning a total organisational process Consider wider organisational implications</td>
<td>Semi strategic</td>
<td>No incorporation of human resource considerations into strategic business planning No facilitation of line mngt. involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness Improvement Process</td>
<td>Advocates close relationships with line and staff mngt. Utilises performance audit process for evaluation</td>
<td>Semi strategic</td>
<td>No incorporation of human resources into strategic planning Support of top management not stressed Culture not considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Focused Strategic Model</td>
<td>Relates training needs to business requirements Identifies external triggers for change Stipulates the necessity for top management and line management support</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Inadequate consideration of the context within which training and development/HRD takes place Fails to consider the nature of individual employees and their approach to learning Overtly prescriptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE HRD LITERATURE

Clearly, while the recent strategic HRD literature has its roots in earlier, more operational oriented practices, there are, as has been pointed out, key emerging differences between the two concepts, most notably, a shift in the importance of human resources as a competitive tool. However, it also needs to be understood that the strategic HRD literature does not offer a panacea for all organisational issues, and consequently various limitations exist in the extant literature.

Beaumont (1992) cites numerous criticisms of the HRM literature, that can similarly be levelled at the HRD movement.

1. There is nothing new about the concept of HRD. It is simply the latest stage in the development of a body of thought that began with the Human Relations literature in the 1940s, and has evolved through the Organisation Development and Change literature of the last twenty years.
   - It embodies some of the leading assumptions of the Human Relations School of thought (that increased job satisfaction will lead to increased productivity), which empirical research has not tended to substantiate (Dunham & Smith, 1979).
   - The emphasis on the need to successfully integrate human resources and technological developments is little more than the basic message of Socio-Technical Systems Theory (Trist, 1981)
   - The major emphasis on the importance of a competitive, unstable market environment in stimulating the need for flexible work practices, and a close individual employee-organisation identification process is simply rediscovering the Organic Management Systems Theory of Burns & Stalker (1961)

2. The academic literature is running ahead of actual organisational practices—most organisations do not closely integrate human resources and strategic planning.

3. HRD is most applicable in non-union organisations because of the difficulties
inherent in introducing change initiatives in highly unionised firms.

4. The literature is of a highly descriptive and prescriptive nature - it is 'politically naive' in the sense that it is based very largely on a rational decision-making paradigm, which almost totally ignores the all-important realities of organisational politics and differential sub-unit power within the management hierarchy. As a result, questions concerning the practical means of implementing new innovative HRD policies are very largely neglected; the literature simply suggests that the very weight of environmental pressures will necessarily convince senior managers of the need for such a change.

5. The literature claims to be 'bottom line' oriented - the contribution that HRD initiatives have on productivity levels and overall organisation performance. Scott (1977) points out that the question of how one measures organisation effectiveness is, in itself, a controversial one. Lewin (1989) indicates that existing studies on individual practices, particularly employee involvement ones, tend to reveal few strong relationships with various measures of organisational performance.

Gunnigle (1991) similarly outlines a number of factors militating against the widespread adoption of strategic HRD:
- The continuing trend towards increased organisation size and diversity will, argues Gunnigle, quoting Purcell (1989), lead to greater emphasis on financial control criteria, rendering human resource considerations a minor corporate concern.
- The traditional role of the Personnel Function in Ireland, which is grounded in pluralist Industrial relations principles, and characterised by low trust relationships between management and employees is not conducive to strategic HRD initiatives.

Scott & Meyer (1991) allude to particular factors that may hinder the adoption of
strategic HRD initiatives:
a) The critical element of strategic HRD most often missing is the linkage of development needs and activities to an explicit organisational mission and strategy. Many organisations invest considerable resources to train and develop employees, but they never really examine how this training and development can effectively promote organisational objectives, or how development activities should be altered in light of business plans. Even more rare is the recognition that business plans should be altered in relation to expected future employee capabilities.

b) Another hindrance to strategic HRD in many organisations is that the time span for development is often too short. The focus is frequently on skill requirements in new or present requirements, rather than on requirements for positions five to ten years in the future.

c) Inadequate energy is devoted to identification of future skill needs. To be strategic about development means to analyse future business opportunities and plans, and to think deductively about the future employee skills necessary to implement these plans.

Overall, therefore, while these limitations, on their own, are valid, the key contribution of the strategic HRD literature, lies in creating an awareness of the contextually bound nature of employee development initiatives. This was less evident in the traditional training and development literature.

2.7 SUMMARY
Strategic HRD refers to the development of a strategic corporate approach to workforce management, which reflects both a focus on the individual, and also an organisational commitment to the professional advancement of employees within
that organisation. It is a process of enhancing an individual's present and future career effectiveness, while ensuring that the mission and objectives of both the organisation and the employees are congruent. Several characteristics of strategic HRD emerge which serve to differentiate it from traditional/operational approaches taken to the development of employees. Figure 2.4 below provides a summary of these differences:

Several models were examined by the author that serve to chart the evolution of employee development. Traditional training models were found to be highly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATIONAL TRAINING</th>
<th>STRATEGIC HRD</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little or no integration with organisation missions and goals</td>
<td>High integration with organisation missions and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low level of senior management involvement</td>
<td>High senior management support and commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term and reactive in nature</td>
<td>Long-term and proactive in orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No or negligible line management involvement</td>
<td>High line management involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not overly concerned with achieving a 'fit' with organisation culture</td>
<td>Concerned with building up a supportive organisation culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily concerned with individual employee development</td>
<td>Primarily concerned with meeting the needs of the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not necessarily specialised</td>
<td>Functionally specialised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus more on compliance than commitment</td>
<td>High levels of employee commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation focused on minimising costs</td>
<td>Evaluation focused on the maximum utilisation of human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written plans and policies rarely in place</td>
<td>Written strategic plans and policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low priority placed on environmental scanning</td>
<td>High level of environmental scanning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reactive in nature, concerned with present training needs, and focused on discrete business skills. The more recent models developed are highly proactive and concerned with providing employees with an array of knowledge and skills that can be readily adapted to suit the changing environment. To this end, the latter models depict the changing focus away from traditional training to the more strategic HRD. Finally, the author noted particular criticisms that may be levelled at the HRD literature generally. These included the idea that HRD is not, in fact, a new concept in itself, but rather a continuation of the Human Relations School of Thought begun in the 1940, and a furtherance of the Organisation Development movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Other criticisms that emerged include the premise that theory is moving far ahead of what is actually being practised in organisations, the literature is too prescriptive, and is politically naive in that it ignores the political nature of organisations.

Having expanded at length on the nature of strategic HRD, it remains to indicate its relevance to Industry today, examine the context within which HRD operates, and assess the impact of particular organisational variables on HRD functioning.
SECTION TWO:
CONTINGENCY VARIABLES IMPACTING UPON STRATEGIC HRD
CHAPTER 3: THE TRIGGERS FOR STRATEGIC HRD

3.1 Introduction

3.2 The Changing Economy Of The 1990s

3.3 Workforce Flexibility

3.4 Skill Shortages

3.5 Competitive Advantage Through Human Resources

3.6 Summary
3.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, Ireland has been the focus of much debate concerning the uncompetitiveness of her indigenous firms in the traded area, and the overall consequences for economic growth, employment and the balance of payments. Apart from Ireland's resource deficiency, peripheral location, population growth and unhappy history, explanations include:

"...poorly trained managers,...inadequate investment in technology, marketing, equipment and human resources."

(Wrigley; 1988)

In the preceding chapters we have examined the historical antecedents of HRD in Ireland, and the particular nature of strategic HRD. But why is strategic HRD so important to organisations today? What does it offer the company that invests heavily in it? This chapter proposes to answer these, and other questions by examining the forces driving the need for strategic HRD in Industry and reviewing the extant literature dealing with the notion of achieving competitive advantage through human resources.

3.2 THE CHANGING ECONOMY OF THE 1990s

In the 1990s, the dominant influences on the Irish economy are likely to be the rapid and pervasive spread of new technologies and, on the assumption that protectionist tendencies will be overcome, expanding world markets and growing international competition. While this will create new opportunities for growth and prosperity, success or failure in coping with these challenges will largely depend on whether labour markets prove to be sufficiently flexible, and whether this flexibility can be achieved in a socially acceptable manner. The second half of the 1980s has witnessed considerable progress in sustained economic growth, and expanding employment in the OECD countries generally
(OECD 1988). Progress made in structural reform has contributed to better performance, while the continuous internationalisation of the world economy, and the transition from planned to market economies in many Eastern European countries has led to a boosting of world trade and economic growth. What impact will these changes have on the Irish economy?

* Under investment in human capital, resulting from low profitability of private industry during the recession has led to a skill gap in many industries. This will become increasingly obvious as new technologies spread rapidly, and an information society comes into being.

* The slowdown in the growth of the working age population will result in a reduction in the number of young people entering the labour market in the future. Companies that have relied on a 'vintage' approach to renew their human capital stock - on young people being equipped with the requisite skills, and familiar with the new technologies - may encounter difficulties in the future. The crisis facing many organisations will not be a scarcity of potential employees, but rather a scarcity of high calibre individuals with all of the skills and knowledge necessary to make a company a success in the demanding marketplace of the 1990s.

* With the proliferation of new technologies, which affect both office and manufacturing environments, jobs generally are becoming more skill intensive; the very pace of change requires more versatile workers, capable of improving their skills throughout their working life. The main justification for investment in new technology is to gain improvements in productivity, by reducing the number of people employed to achieve a given output (Barrow & Loughlin 1992). However, one of the implications of this is that a higher level of technology requires a more educated workforce, thus additional investment in human capital will be required to counter emerging skill gaps.
* In response to growing pressures of structural change, jobs will become more varied, in terms of conditions and requirements, and also in the long term employment and career opportunities they offer. Organisations must face this changing nature of employment by increasing their support and commitment to the development of their human assets.

Barrow & Loughlin (1992) further identify a number of changes in the economy that will have repercussions for the organisation:

* The most visible manifestation of increased competition is 1992 and the completion of the Single European Market. They suggest that one particular offshoot of this is likely to be the restructuring of many industries as additional organisations compete in the same market sector. Organisations will have to reduce their cost base, achieve a consistently high level of service and quality, and invest in new product development. The clear implication is that a smaller workforce will have to achieve a progressively higher standard of output, which indicates that employees will have to be sufficiently developed to attain the standard of flexibility that will be required of them.

* Changes in consumer tastes and lifestyles will result in new product requirements which indicates the opening up of more niche markets. Barrow & Loughlin (1992) indicate that organisations will need to have decentralised operations with flexible people and flexible production processes that can switch products rapidly in response to market requirements.

* The relative growth in the importance of both quality and service, and the relative decline of price as a distinguishing factor implies that companies can no longer simply rely on being low cost producers, particularly if this undermines their ability to deliver consistent quality, or a high level of service.
In the last decade an increasing number of Irish organisations have become actively involved in international business ventures, and will continue to do so with the opening up of the European market in 1992. The small size of Ireland's domestic market, and concerted efforts by the Irish government to increase value-added exports are but two of the factors that have contributed to this growth in global activities. Irish organisations are faced with many challenges as a consequence of this push to internationalise - increased competition from foreign organisations operating in the same industry, too few skilled personnel available, who are necessary to establish Irish companies as competitive entities, underutilisation of human assets leading to increased pressures on capital assets, resulting in erosion of marginal competitive advantage.

One important challenge facing Irish organisations is the need to develop human resource strategies congruent with the business strategies required to compete in a global economy. Hence the need for human resource managers to be involved in the decision making process to ensure that HRD activities be aligned properly with the overall business strategy. It therefore becomes obvious that, if the Irish economy wishes to compete effectively on an international scale, it must pursue a policy to develop human resources, and adjust manpower resources to structural changes, with a view to fostering economic growth.

3.3 WORKFORCE FLEXIBILITY

Workforce flexibility generally refers to the extent and speed of skill adjustment to changing labour market conditions. The economic environment in which Irish industry operates argues for a workforce that can readily adapt to structural changes and develop new skills. In modern labour markets there are normally two sources of flexibility:

1. Functional (internal) flexibility which allows employees who enjoy job security
and company-based training to accept technological changes, to be redeployed, and to adjust to new work assignments.

2. Numerical (external) flexibility which permits companies to adjust the size of their total workforce to fluctuations in product demand.

It is recognised, however, that it is seldom possible to rely on one approach alone, hence a reasonable balance must be found between internal and external flexibility. One particular outcome of this increased search for flexibility has been the growth in 'atypical' employment. Gunnigle and Flood (1990) describe this 'atypical' employment as

"Any form of employment which deviates from the full-time permanent and often pensionable job with a single employer"

They associate this growth in atypical employment with shifts in the sectoral composition of employment, away from industry and towards a service sector economy. In addition, they cite the rise in female labour force participation rates, increased unemployment, and the preference of some employers to avoid the restrictions of providing full-time employment as contributing to this growth.

How does this translate into the workplace? One would expect that firms faced with considerable market uncertainty are more likely to employ part-time and temporary workers, than create full time positions, thus allowing for greater flexibility on the part of the organisation. As a result two distinct categories of employee will develop - a core or primary labour market group of full time employees, and a periphery or secondary labour market group of part-time and temporary employees.

It can be deduced from the above that these core employees receive whatever training and development opportunities are available, hence they tend to be representative of the organisation's skilled resources. Core employees tend to
receive increased amounts of on-the-job training which, in many cases is job specific and cannot be sold on the open market. Thus, in boom periods such training serves to tie the employees to the organisation, and in slack periods the organisation tends to retain such employees in order to reap the benefits of its training investment over the longest possible time.

Unfortunately only skilled employees benefit from this emphasis on flexibility. Unskilled workers tend to be hired and fired frequently, and thus used as a buffer between a relatively protected core labour force and cyclical fluctuations of demand.

Workforce flexibility is becoming increasingly important, particularly with the need for Irish organisations to become more competitive. Similarly, the rate of technological change is placing increased pressure on organisations to have available a workforce that can readily adapt to such pervasive changes. This emphasis on flexibility highlights the necessity for organisations to invest strategically in their human resources in order to improve their performance against international competitors.

3.4 SKILL SHORTAGES

To a large extent, skills have value only in so far as they serve to satisfy the requirements of organisations. They are a means to an end in that they have value only when they fit the context of the organisation, in terms of bringing about the execution of business strategy, but have little intrinsic value given the speed of technological change. Collins & Sinclair (1991) suggest that skill shortages can be related to the failure to link skills development to the business strategy, and the concomitant development of a new ‘skills mix’ by which to attain competitive advantage.
The driving force in attaining competitive advantage is often perceived to lie in the use of new technologies, particularly information technology (IT). It must be recognised, however, that it is not IT per se that leads to increased competitiveness, but rather the manner in which individuals are motivated and challenged into using these systems in alignment with business strategy, and in an on-going developmental fashion.

In essence these skill shortages currently being faced by organisations is less a lack of individuals with the relevant skills, but rather the problem of getting the new skills mix right, and fully exploiting their application, for it is the mix of skills present within the organisation to meet its business strategy that will determine its success (Collins & Sinclair; 1991).

The exploitation of information resources and new technology requires a radically different approach to that currently in use. The current trend for organisations to downsize and demass can perhaps be perceived as a reaction to what is seen as necessary to compete effectively in the future, and the implication appears that, by simply altering the organisation structure and the tasks of remaining employees, the organisation increases its ability to compete. However, there is a failure to recognise that those left behind require a new skill mix in order to work towards the achievement of business strategies.

It would appear that organisations must adopt a proactive approach to managing their workforce. This involves widening the scope of training and development from a narrow focus on specific skills, to developing a workforce that can apply their skills to a wide range of situations, and concomitantly increase functional flexibility. Adopting a proactive approach to employment would suggest that employees require a deeper understanding, not only of their own roles, but also those of
others, and of the ways in which they interact, in order that jobs are designed or redesigned in line with business needs. The proactive worker cannot be viewed in a vacuum, however. Employees do not suddenly become proactive, much depends on the prevailing organisation climate. Where the culture of the organisation inhibits innovation, devalues participation and generates the philosophy that individuals need not excel in their jobs, then a proactive initiative will be virtually impossible to introduce and adopt. In such situations, a change in organisation culture may be necessary to develop commitment to proactivity.

In essence, skill shortages arise where the organisation fails to strategically consider its human resources. Skills development should not occur in isolation, but rather as part of a strategic initiative, focusing on attaining or sustaining competitiveness through the utilisation of human resources.

3.5 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCES

Companies are continuously being urged to strive to attain competitive advantage, and to utilise a variety of tools to achieve this - total quality management, information technology and so forth. However, these are merely means of assisting an organisation in designing a business strategy which tackles the question of achieving competitive advantage. It must be remembered that the execution of strategy lies in the hands of individuals - therefore, no matter how good the strategy is, if it is poorly executed by failing to take account of the ‘people’ element, it is doomed to failure at worst, and partial success at best.

The key to competitive advantage is the organisation itself - people possess the abilities and skills that must be developed, channelled and exploited to attain a sustainable advantage over competitors. If the primary factor in obtaining this competitive advantage is perceived to be the workforce, then the organisation must adopt the perspective that employees are part of the global value chain of that
organisation, and need to be considered at every stage of the strategic planning process. Failure to involve human resources in strategic planning increases the probability that employees will be under utilised and the organisation's performance will not be as efficient and effective and it is capable of attaining.

The argument that there is no obvious relationship between organisation performance and investment in employee development is one that has been cited by numerous authors and personnel practitioners over the years. The reasoning behind this stems from the fact that there is

"...a paucity of hard, detailed evidence of direct causal link....... between investment in education and training, and the return in the form of increased performance"

(Keep & Mayhew; 1987)

However, Miller (1990) suggests that such an argument becomes redundant when one considers the large number of other managerial activities, especially those associated with strategy development, that receive increased investment, yet fail to indicate how such increased spending leads to increased organisational effectiveness. One may question such a comparison, but the critical point it underlines is that one must not avoid investment in strategic HRD initiatives simply because the cost effectiveness of doing so is not conclusively proven. But let us not digress from the discussion at, and focus on whether human resources represent the pivot upon which competitive advantage rests? In order for some experimental base to emerge, however, there is a need for some theoretical development of what the link between HRD strategy and organisation performance might be. But before this can be achieved, one must first develop an understanding of the notion of strategy before deciding if, and how, human resources can assist the organisation to become more competitive.

Thompson & Strickland (1989) describe organisation strategy in terms of:
"the pattern of moves and approaches devised by management to produce successful organisation performance."

while Johnson & Scholes (1988) identify the characteristics of strategy and strategic decisions as:

- concerned with the scope of an organisation's activities
- matching of the organisation to the environment in which it operates
- matching the organisation's activities to its resource capability
- affecting the organisation's long-term direction and operational decisions.

Hickson et al (1986) suggest that the term strategy is used to indicate that the focus is on those decisions which have a major and long-term effect on the behaviour of the firm, as opposed to day-to-day operating decisions.

Strategy formulation and implementation are core management functions. The term strategy formulation refers to the entire management function of establishing organisation direction, setting objectives, and devising a managerial plan for the organisation to pursue. To meet the challenges of the future, organisations must think strategically, and possess a fundamental understanding of their industrial structure, the nature of the competition, and the means through which value is created in the firm. McEwan et al (1988) indicate that strategic thinking and business planning encompasses a continuous process within which financial, production, marketing and other goals are set, monitored, evaluated and adjusted. Organisations must choose the best strategic alternative, but:

"if the people in the company are not mobilised to produce the right quality product or service, on time and every time, then the enterprise will fail. Thus people must be considered a factor of equal importance to financial, marketing, production and so forth in the business planning equation, because they are the medium through which plans are turned into successful reality."

(McEwen, Carmichael, Short & Steel; 1988)
The human factor is increasingly recognised as critical to organisation success. As Lorange (1986) commented:

"The human resource is a strategic resource that should be managed in a more explicit, proactive manner. Without the growth of human resources as a strategic resource within a corporation, it will be difficult to secure the long-term strategic future of the corporation, even though financial resources might be adequate."

Porter (1990) advanced the notion that any development process will enhance the human capital of the organisation, and will be an appropriate investment. In his expansive study of the competitive advantage of nations, Porter indicates that nations succeed:

"where local circumstances provide an impetus for firms to pursue competitive strategies early and aggressively........ and where the skills and resources necessary are available. ....What works well in the country must lead to competitive advantage in the industry."

Porter further cited human resources as one of the most important advanced factors necessary for competitive advantage - highly developed, flexible individuals, displaying high levels of organisation commitment. In his study of competitive nations, Porter compared individual countries across a broad spectrum of Industries, and consistently identified human resources as critical to competitive advantage. He went further to conclude that:

"There is little doubt from our research that education and training are decisive in national competitive advantage. The nations we studied that invested most heavily in education and training had advantages in many industries that could be traced in part to human resources ...... those industries that were the most competitive were those that specialised heavily in training...."
The move towards a strategic approach to people has come about for a variety of reasons. In most cases, it represents a response to rapidly changing technology, market diversification and heightened competition. New products and services lead to changes in production methods, internal organisation and work practices in order that the organisation may survive and compete. Combined with this reorganisation of strategy and resources appears the growing recognition that the mobilisation of the organisation's human resources is a necessary prerequisite for tight, efficient and productive operationalisation of the organisation's mission.

The notion of people as an integral segment within the formulation and implementation of business strategy is not new. A number of large organisations (IBM, Polaroid, Marks & Spencer) have consistently regarded their employees as a major resource and, in academic circles, a number of prolific theorists have stressed the need for people to be included in the strategic equations and business plans of firms (Porter, 1990; Hendry & Pettigrew, 1986; Goldsmith & Clutterbuck, 1985; Fombrun, Tichy & Devanna, 1984; Beer, 1980).

Success through people is part of a whole process which involves analysis of competitive forces and customer needs, together with the formulation of a strategic business plan. Thus the business planning process is a set of inter-linked activities and decisions, which, all too often renders the specific impact of human resource strategies difficult to assess. McEwen et al (1988), in conjunction with the Manpower Services Committee (MSC), and the National Economic Development Office (NEDO) in the U.K., identified a number of tangible benefits accruing from the mobilisation of the talents and capabilities of the workplace. By taking consideration of human resource issues in their strategic planning, organisations recorded the following benefits; Improved company performance; Improved industrial relations; Lower absenteeism and labour turnover; Successful changes in work practices; Turnaround; Increased productivity and efficiency; Increased
capacity for change.

Much of the research serves to indicate that, while human resource considerations may be perceived as important, they are, however, treated as secondary within the consideration of strategic issues. Why is this? According to Lengnick-Hall (1988):

"rarely are human resources seen as a strategic capacity from which competitive choices should be devised. When human resources are used to determine strategic direction, the approach is often unidirectional from human resource problems to strategy solutions, rather than interactive. Consequently, the potential contribution that human resources might make to the competitive position of the firm is unnecessarily limited"

The need for a strategic human resources role appears to exist. Traditionally human resources have been considered a factor only after the strategic business decisions have been made. In today’s environment, however, such an approach is no longer sufficient. Webster (1990) indicates that the old mechanical model of HRD is no longer viable, with its reliance on performance appraisal to set targets and identify training needs while Hegarty & Hoffman (1987) suggest that the ambiguity in human resources activities, and the relative weakness of the function in the corporate corridors of power, often leads to the situation where decisions are taken at strategic level without due consideration of their effects on the conduct of HRD. Miller (1991) suggests that the difficulty with traditional models of HRD is that they fail adequately to address the problems of matching the development needs of individuals to the strategic needs of organisations. He further states that:

"So long as these models persist, there is no likelihood of being able to establish any linkage between development activities, strategy and organisation performance, because these models do not relate one to the other."

There is a need for change, to enable the concept of HRD to become more strategic in orientation, in an effort to incorporate the needs of the individual with
those of the organisation, thereby achieving competitive advantage. As Purcell (1990) notes

"The management of people is increasingly required to fit the strategies and structures of the organisation."

Beer et al (1985) argue that many organisation typically underutilise their human resources and, by virtue of this, organisations which have a coherent strategy to utilise their human resources will often achieve an 'edge' on competitors who fail in this capacity. Cook & Ferris (1986) focused their research on firms in three industries that had been hard hit by competitive and other environmental forces, and how each dealt with these challenges. They also measured the extent to which those firms were strategic in their approach to human resources (ie. took a long-term view of decision making, linked human resource activities with business objectives and plans, and chose actions that were part of the integrated plan of attack). The study found that the firms that adapted most successfully to the environmental changes were those that tended to adopt more strategic HRD initiatives. The higher performing companies tended to have planned and integrated strategies in which the human resources were critical and linked to strategic planning. Less effective firms were more likely to see human resources as disposable assets, and to use crisis management techniques to deal with sudden changes.

3.6 SUMMARY

The Ireland of today has changed considerably over the decades. The country has moved from a strong dependence on agriculture and traditional industries producing for the home market, to modern, export-oriented industries such as electronics, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Many of her companies are foreign multinationals, whose influence on indigenous Irish industry has been considerable.
As a nation we have been forced to look ahead to 1992 and the Single Market, and Irish industry has been forced to carry out an in-depth examination of its efficiency and effectiveness in light of the ever increasing competitive nature of the marketplace.

Several changes in the external environment have been identified:

- The changing face of the global market, as a consequence of the opening up of the Eastern Bloc countries and the imminent Single European Market, resulting in the increased competitiveness of product markets
- The pervasive spread of new technologies, resulting in changing work design and methods of production
- The increasing tendency towards flexibility - both functional and numerical - resulting in a trend towards a core/periphery workforce and 'atypical' employment
- The inability of many employees, armed with insufficient skills, to adapt to the strident proliferation of new technologies resulting in the emergence of skills gaps.
- The documented success of several organisation who expend considerable financial resources on the development of their employees resulting in the growing recognition that employees may well represent the most valuable resource organisations possess in their search for competitiveness.

Is is evident that the external environment within which the organisation operates can have a significant effect on the nature of strategic HRD or the functioning of that department. We have highlighted a number of specific influences on HRD such as changes in society (dual career families and the gradual aging of the labour force), the degree of competition faced in product markets, government regulations or union power. It must be remembered that while external pressures vary in their intensity, and organisations respond differently to them, the role of the HRD
specialist is always to analyse and prepare the organisation for changes in its external environment. How can this be achieved? By ensuring that the organisation fosters the development of high calibre human resources who possess the following characteristics:

- A high level of education - both technical skills and broader business issues to ensure they recognise how their jobs fit into the overall strategy of the organisation.
- The ability to learn new skills and continually adapt to changing circumstances.
- The ability to take responsibility for their own jobs and work without supervision.
- A good level of interpersonal skills.
- The ability to solve problems, think creatively and contribute ideas to the effective operating of the organisation.

Now that the context of strategic HRD has been elucidated, one must take cognisance of the fact that the HRD function does not operate in isolation. Therefore, the next section delineates the contingent nature of HRD, and examines a number of variables that affect the nature of HRD within a particular organisational setting.
CHAPTER 4: THE CONTEXT OF STRATEGIC HRD

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Organisation Structure

4.3 Organisation Size

4.4 Organisation Technology

4.5 Organisation Power and Politics

4.6 Organisation Culture

4.7 Organisation Stakeholders

4.8 Summary
4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having examined the particular forces 'pushing' strategic HRD in organisation, it remains to focus in on the organisation setting within which HRD operates. It must be recognised that the concept of strategic HRD does not exist in isolation. Indeed, a contingency approach to strategic HRD is based on the premise that there is no universally appropriate development initiative that applies equally to all organisations, in all circumstances. Instead it proposes that particular features of any initiative, in the area of HRD will depend, to a large degree, on the specific circumstances in which the organisation finds itself. In other words, organisations will be structured and will function in an attempt to cope with particular organisational factors or contingencies.

This chapter proposes to examine the influence of a number of contingency variables, or particular organisational features, that may affect the extent to which energy is devoted to strategic employee development. The author considers the following to be most pertinent to the issue under discussion:

- Organisation structure
- Organisation culture
- Organisation size
- Organisation power and politics
- Organisation technology
- Organisation stakeholders

It must be prefaced, however, that the research on a number of these variables, within the specific context of strategic HRD, is limited at best.

4.2 ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Robbins (1990) describes an organisation as a consciously coordinated social entity, with a relatively identifiable boundary. It comprises groups of individuals who interact with each other in a premeditated manner. It represents the array of future jobs available to the organisation. Because most employee learning takes place in the job, these job opportunities represent learning opportunities. The more
management utilise staff in a strategic manner, to 'grow' people as well as fill jobs, the more development and adaptability become associated with running the business. While there is no complete agreement among theorists as to what exactly constitutes structure, acceptance of three components is generally widespread:

a) Complexity which refers to the degree to which either the depth of an organisation's hierarchy (vertical differentiation) or jobs are specialised in the organisation (horizontal differentiation);

b) Formality which is concerned with the extent to which rules, procedures, instructions and communications are written, and the degree to which jobs are standardised;

c) Centrality which reflects the degree to which decision making is centralised at a single point in the organisation.

Since it has previously been established that strategic HRD facilitates organisational effectiveness through the strategic use of human resources. Bearing in mind the contingent nature of organisations, it remains to assess the effect of organisation structure on the nature of this strategic HRD effort.

A highly complex organisation can be viewed in terms of functional specialisation. This division of labour can be seen to increase effectiveness in two particular ways:

- Increases in the levels of skill through repeated performance of a particular task
- Reduction in time wasted from changing jobs.

Training for functional specialisation is more efficient from the organisation's perspective, in that it is easier and less costly to train employees to complete a specific and repeated task, than to train for difficult and more complex activities.

In terms of vertical differentiation, one can perhaps surmise that the more levels that exist between top management and workforce operatives, the greater the potential for communication overload or distortion, and the more difficult it becomes.
to co-ordinate the decision making process. While tall structures provide clear supervision, and tighter control, they may also inhibit effective communication, where the layers of hierarchy act as barriers. Worthy (1950) suggested that flat structures lead to increased profit and employee motivation, a notion that has been severely criticised by Porter & Lawlor (1968). Notwithstanding, while flat structures have a shorter and more simple communication chain, development opportunities may be severely constrained, particularly for first-time supervisors and junior managers seeking promotion.

What specific effects on strategic HRD initiatives can be attributed to organisation structure? Paauwe (1991) in his study of the factors that shape HRM policies adopted Mintzbergs (1979) structural configurations, in order to examine whether different structures affects training and development activities. In recounting his findings, it also becomes necessary to differentiate between Mintzberg’s structural types.

a) Simple structure - consists of one large unit with one or two top managers, and a group of operators who do the basic work. Power is centralised at the top, and managers are dominant through their direct supervision of operatives. There is little formalisation and hence little use is made of planning and training. Paauwe found that, within this structure, changes in HRD/Training policies are top down; there is usually no-one specialising in training and development; the manager is the sole coordinator, and the emphasis is placed on control.

b) Professional Bureaucracy - an organisation type that has to rely on trained professionals to carry out its operating tasks, hence the emphasis lies on standardisation of skills to achieve the necessary coordination. Trained personnel have considerable control over their work, and decision making autonomy flows down through the organisation. Paauwe found that in such a structure, training and development activities are
formalised and carefully planned, and, although HRD/training policies are initiated at the top, the scope of the function is large, and its contributions evident throughout the organisation. He suggested therefore that, as organisations become more complex and differentiated, concomitant shifts will occur in aspects of HRD/training.

c) Machine Bureaucracy - characteristic of a very large organisation, with an elaborate techno-structure in place to design and maintain systems of work standardisation.

Paauwe found that, within this type of structure, the HRD department is both centralised and formalised, and plays an active role in policy formulation.

It is suggested therefore that, as organisations increase in size, and become more complex, autonomy is pushed down the organisation, granting the HRD function more input into policy formulation, and increasing the scope of the function. Garavan (1990) in linking HRD activities to differing organisation structures, provides a detailed explanation of the degree to which the scope and authority granted to the HRD function varies across differing structures.

Figure 4.1 over identifies particular implications of specific structural configurations on HRD functioning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE</th>
<th>HRD Systems</th>
<th>HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>Job-related training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FUNCTIONAL</td>
<td>HRD seen in maintenance terms</td>
<td>Focus on single function</td>
<td>Not perceived as priority</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Single product)</td>
<td>Limited power of HRD specialist</td>
<td>Unsystematic</td>
<td>Individual bears costs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Little focus on business needs</td>
<td>Needs are unclear</td>
<td>Sen as a luxury by top managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MD needs subjectively determined</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUNCTIONAL</td>
<td>HRD functions clearly defined</td>
<td>Emphasis on job rotation</td>
<td>Organisation aware of external training agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Vertical integration)</td>
<td>Problem-centred orientation</td>
<td>Greater emphasis on performance and productivity (measures are still subjective)</td>
<td>Org. bears costs of some personal development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conscious of business needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Experienced worker standards established</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRATEGIC BUSINESS UNIT (SBU)</td>
<td>Greater strategic focus</td>
<td>Emphasis on developing management teams</td>
<td>Investment in executive devl.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on measurement of results</td>
<td>Awareness of cross functional expertise</td>
<td>Managers urged to broaden</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HRD specialist significant status and power</td>
<td>Production of developmental sequences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Medium term focus of plans</td>
<td>Greater use of structural MD approaches</td>
<td>Financial assistance systems in place</td>
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<td>Personal devl. encouraged</td>
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<td>MULTI-DIVISIONAL MATRIX</td>
<td>Corporate perspective</td>
<td>Formal developmental systems</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explicit HRD mission, policies and plans</td>
<td>Cross-functional/divisional or corporate focus</td>
<td>Perceived as an investment in employees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clear criteria for evaluating success</td>
<td>Emphasis on conflict handling, political and interpersonal skills development</td>
<td>Greater use of MBA etc to develop future managers who may now have a technical background</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Specific means of achieving strategy-HRD link</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-skilling Specialist technical training</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLOBAL ORGANISATION</td>
<td>Corporate HRD function</td>
<td>Functional/generalist orientation required of managers</td>
<td>Focus on cross divisional, subsiduary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Standardisation of policies and planning mechanisms</td>
<td>Systems for goal setting usually multiple goals</td>
<td>Corporate executive development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HRD involved in strategy formulation and implementation stages</td>
<td>Interdepartmental/ team relationships important</td>
<td>Large financial investment</td>
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<td>Professional development an upgrading and conversion mechanism</td>
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<td>Systems for OJT very advanced - CBT, IT...</td>
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<td>Advanced systems of Cross-training/multi-skilling</td>
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<td>Technical training specialists</td>
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<td>Systematic evaluation of standards</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Garavan T. (1990) “Strategic HRD” Journal of European Industrial Training 15,1
The table supports Paauwe's findings in that, as the organisation adopts more flexible structures, HRD becomes more integrated into the organisation and enjoys a greater capacity to become involved in strategic planning and policy formulation.

Adopting a more holistic perspective one can conceive of a highly centralised organisation having formal authority vested at the top of the organisation hierarchy. Within such structures, often referred to as bureaucracies, decision making is at the discretion of a chosen few, and individuals typically resist change. Mullins (1990) suggests that decentralised structures, on the other hand, allow for greater involvement of the HRD function through the facilitation of:
- an increased propensity to change
- more opportunity for detailed input to decision making
- increased motivation through participation
- increased training and development opportunities for lower level managers through delegation
- reduced incidents of information overload and distorted information

From a broad perspective one can infer the following relationships between organisation structure and strategic HRD.
- An organisation high in complexity, in terms of horizontal and vertical differentiation, would tend to provide few opportunities for the HRD function to become involved in strategic concepts. A high level of horizontal differentiation provides few opportunities for broad skill development, and few promotional opportunities outside of the individuals narrow functional specialisation. Similarly, where high vertical differentiation exists, the HRD function is less likely to be involved in strategic decision making, which is typically concentrated at the top of the hierarchy.
- An organisation characterised by high formalisation provides few developmental
opportunities for employees, and, where jobs are typically governed by stringent rules and procedures, individual departments have little room for discretionary activities. Scott & Meyer (1991) suggest that bureaucratic control occurs where organisations become more formalised ie. where training is viewed as a logical component of existing bureaucratic controls.

* Where power and authority are centralised at the top of the organisation's hierarchy, the HRD function has less opportunity to become involved in strategic planning. All other things being equal - power, size, technology ... - the function has little discretion over the strategic use of human resources. The inverse is also true. A highly decentralised organisation structure allows departments further down in the organisation greater power and discretion in terms of strategic planning and decision making.

4.3 ORGANISATION SIZE

Much of the readings on organisation size tends to infer a causal relationship between changing size and particular structural configurations (See Child; 1973; Mintzberg; 1979; Hill; 1972; Aldrich; 1972; Hall; 1977; Miller; 1978).

Child (1973) suggests that:

"Larger organisations are more specialised, have more rules, documentation, more extended hierarchies and a greater decentralisation of decision making further down such hierarchies."

However, an overview of the arguments proposed indicate that the relationship between size and structure is not clear at all. While one might tend to assume that, as an organisation increases in size it becomes more complex, more formalised and less centralised, one cannot simply generalise across the board - it would appear that the relationship is situation specific.
Having said that, and, for the purpose of the discussion in hand - the effect, or otherwise, of size on strategic HRD functioning - the author proposes to tentatively hypothesise on the nature of this relationship (research undertaken by the author, described at a later stage in this dissertation examines this relationship in greater detail). Most of the literature cited has attempted to form a correlation between organisation size and structure, without referring to the implications of size on individual departments within the organisation structure.

Hyman (1992) in his survey of training practices in Scottish firms, found that training responsibilities vary considerably between large and smaller organisations. His findings indicated that most organisations employing less than 50 employees did not have a specialist training function, where training decisions were typically the responsibility of senior management. Training itself was largely unstructured and a minor concern in these organisations.

In medium sized companies, Hyman found that there was a greater tendency to elect someone to be responsible for training, but a training department was not likely to exist. Training expenditure was determined at Board or senior management level, and the training 'specialist' was given an opportunity to become marginally involved in policy decisions.

In large companies, it was found that a training department was likely to exist, with the training manager reporting at senior management/director level. Training expenditure decisions were still made at the top of the organisation, but the training manager had more discretion over training activities/programmes.

As organisations increase in size, they tend to become more complex, where division of labour is seen as a function of size. Larger organisations are also more likely to be formalised, and formalisation is associated with bureaucratic controls. It is also associated with the development of a Personnel Department, and such a department is more likely to establish a variety of personnel control mechanisms,

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including training.

One would also tend to expect an increase in size to manifest itself in an increased propensity to decentralise as a result. What are the implications of this for strategic HRD functioning? The author submits that the HRD function would receive greater autonomy in a decentralised environment, where power and authority are devolved down the hierarchy. In such an organisation, one would encounter some form of autonomous or self directed work-group structures, which allow for better optimisation of human resources and greater developmental opportunities for the individual.

4.4 ORGANISATION TECHNOLOGY

To understand the impact of changing technology on work practices, it is first necessary to outline what we understand by the term. Robbins (1990) describes technology as the information, equipment, techniques and processes required to transmit inputs into outputs. Interest in technology as a major component of organisational analysis was sparked by the work of Woodward (1958; 1965), Perrow (1967) and Thompson (1967). See also studies by Burns & Stalker (1961), Emery & Trist (1965), Lawrence & Lorsch (1967).

Organisations within any given industry have to adapt their conventional core technology to be competitive. A recent OECD report (1990) has suggested that the social environment has not been sufficiently adaptive to, and supportive of, a rapid diffusion and exploitation of these technologies. The reluctance of firms to change their work organisation, labour relations, decision making structures and management styles means that the spread of information technologies is currently slower than it could be, or is not achieving its full potential productivity gains.

What implications does technology hold for strategic HRD functioning in the
organisation? What developmental opportunities will be presented to the HRD department, in terms of changing work patterns, job restructuring and so forth?

The characteristics of internal labour markets, and the way they function, are likely to change substantially under the influence of new technology, especially information technology. The full exploitation of new technologies implies a shift away from the 'Taylorist' model of production, which is based on fragmented work tasks, long production runs and hierarchial control. In contrast, the new technology types permit shorter production runs, and a heightened response to changing market needs. Employees must be capable of mastering a greater number of more varied skills, since work tasks can no longer be fragmented to the same degree, and small-batch production does not allow for the same degree of trial and error as was possible in the case of mass production. Also required are behavioural skills and attitudes relating to initiative, judgment and communication.

Walton (1985) indicates a number of areas in which new technologies may impact upon the organisation's human resources:

* Applications of new technologies sometimes narrow the scope of jobs, and sometimes broaden them (deskilling and enskilling).

* May emphasise the individual nature of task performance, or promote the interdependent nature of the work of groups of employees.

* May change the locus of decision making towards centralisation or decentralisation, with implications for the steepness of the hierarchy.

* May create performance measurement systems that emphasise learning and self control, or surveillance and hierarchial control.

* May transfer certain work conditions from the unionised workforce to supervisory and/or professional groups, or they may provide developmental opportunities for employees.

* Can increase the flexibility of work schedules to accommodate human
preferences, or they can decrease flexibility and introduce shift work operations.

* May often contribute to social isolation, but sometimes have the opposite effect.

Gunnigle & Flood (1990) similarly outline a number of implications of new technology:

1. New technology can deskill work operations (where automation or partial automation is pursued), or alternatively result in enhanced skill acquisitions, where employees carry out their own quality control and process inspections.

2. New technology can have job qualification implications, where employees are unable to acquire the necessary skills. Similarly, it can result in eliminating certain positions within the company, which may distort career planning.

3. New technology may lead to problems related to job satisfaction, where the process introduces routineness to jobs which before required the employee to use discretion. Similarly, feelings of alienation may arise when particular social groups are disbanded, or supervision is increased.

Enterprise based skill development will be more effective where employees are motivated to constantly extend and enlarge their skills on the job. It has been argued (OECD 1988b) that payment linked to general competence rather than to immediate performance and productivity could have this effect, as employees would be rewarded according to their potential, and not simply for their current output. This potential could be increased by adding new skills, but also by motivation, versatility and other positive work attitudes. Within such a system, the individual and the organisation are better prepared to cope with technological change, and to work out mutually acceptable solutions for redefining jobs and redeploying human resources within the enterprise.

Similarly, benefits would accrue from overcoming rigid and narrow job
classifications and demarcations, which are continually under pressure from international competition and technological change. Given the uncertainty facing organisations, and the unknown quality and quantity of future changes, there is a premium on multi-skilling and the blurring of occupational boundaries. In large Japanese firms, for instance, the classification of workers by occupation is virtually unknown, and this accounts for much of their internal flexibility, allowing for a more ready adaption to change.

A further element in the future development of human resources is new methods and styles of management. With the projected semi-demise of fragmented work tasks, hierarchial control will become more difficult, and may give way to more participative forms of workforce management. Worker participation in decision making, and the various models of co-determination have been the subject of lengthy debate over the years, but it not proposed to entertain such discussion at this stage, but rather to suggest that this debate is likely to be revised as a result of pressures from new technologies, and the associated need to modify work organisation. According to a recent OECD report (1988) on new technologies, prepared by a group of independent experts, the competitive strength of enterprises, industries and national economies will depend on these innovative developments. It becomes evident, therefore that the rate of technological change requires that organisations pay due regard to their human resources in an effort to remain competitive, and offset such problems as skills shortages and skill obsolescence.

4.5 ORGANISATION POWER AND POLITICS
Organisations and power are synonymous in many ways. Organisations may be described as power systems in terms of the ways in which individuals conform to organisational rules and procedures. They are also political systems in terms of the
allocation of resources. Most theorists dealing with the concept of power are in general agreement that it has to do with relationships between two or more actors, in which the behaviour of one is affected by the other (see Pfeffer, 1978; Dahl, 1957; Bierstedt, 1950; Blau, 1964; Kaplan, 1964; Weber, 1947).

In relating power to the HRD function, it becomes evident that the degree of power the function holds within the organisation will determine, to a large extent, the activities it pursues. Traditionally, the training and development function held little or no power, and had marginal influence over organisational functioning. For this reason, training and development issues were relegated to the sideline, and, in times of recession, cutbacks in these and related activities were the norm.

Theorists have indicated that organisational units and individuals in organisations obtain their power through their control of both power bases and power sources, (see French & Raven, 1968; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1977; King, 1989; Daft, 1989; Mackay & Worsfield, 1991). From this literature it is possible to identify two potentially useful power bases for the training specialist/training and development function. Table 4.1 below presents these power bases.
Table 4.1: Power Bases of the Training and Development Function

1. INDIVIDUAL POWER BASES

A) Expert Power Arises from specialist knowledge/skill upon which others depend. The degree of dependency reflects the relative power of the holder which will increase dramatically where there is a scarcity of this particular knowledge/skill. The degree to which this power can be used effectively is contingent upon the holder's understanding of the corporate objectives of the organisation, and his competency in identifying problem areas and diagnosing solutions.

B) Charisma Arises from interpersonal relationships and skills, and the ability to earn the respect of others. This type of power is earned rather than granted, and is dependent upon the holder's ability to act as a visionary for others in the organisation. It is also useful for establishing political coalitions.

2. ORGANISATIONAL POWER BASES

A) Position Refers to one's position within the organisational hierarchy, and the amount of legitimate authority vested in that position. It is not a guaranteed source of power, hence it is usually augmented with other types of personal power, or the political process.

B) Resource Derived from control of resources or information that is critical to others in the organisation. There must be a strong dependency on these resources/information, and this relationship is usually strengthened in times of turbulence or heightened competition.

It emerges, therefore, that where the HRD function is well positioned in the organisation, the HRD specialist is perceived as an expert, and it controls resources that are critical to the organisation, then the function itself has a greater discretion in organisational activities. One pertinent example is the situation where the organisation faces strong competition in a highly competitive product market, one where technology is constantly changing and there is a shortage of skilled labour on the open market. In such an organisation the HRD function controls a valuable resource - skilled employees - and has an increased power base as a result. For this reason, it has an increased capacity to become involved in strategic decision making, and can initiate strategic HRD activities designed to utilise human resources as a means of attaining and sustaining competitive advantage. Similarly,
where other power sources within the organisation openly support the HRD function, ie. senior level management, then it is in a position of greater strength as a result, and is more actively involved in business planning.

Another key determinant of functional success is political acumen and the ability to utilise one’s political skills to best advantage, where politics is viewed as the use of power to influence decisions (Daft, 1989). Moorby (1991) defines organisation politics as the process of exercising power with the appropriate mandate, and identifies a number of steps that need to be taken to ensure successful HRD:
1. Find out who the important players are, and what is important to them.
2. Establish what results top management from HRD, and the degree to which these are comparable with the political interests of others.
3. Obtain budget parameters.
4. Reach a situation where top management agrees the policy, direction and strategy of HRD, and is kept informed of progress.
5. Introduce senior managers into the design stage of all new initiatives.

Through careful planning and coordination, the HRD function can elicit the support of the legitimate political powers in the organisation, and from there expand it’s own power base, and become involved in a little politics of its own. Coalition building has long been seen as political tactic that serves to increase power bases in the organisation. For the HRD function, a close coalition with senior managers will strengthen the function’s power position, as perhaps, will a political union with line managers serve to reinforce the need for strategic HRD initiatives.

It remains, therefore, that if the HRD function has a strategic orientation, and has considerable power and influence, there will be a strong concern for employee development. Conversely, the weaker the function, the more concerned it will be with short-term visible activities (which HRD is usually not). Similarly, if the HRD
function does not view itself in strategic terms, it will not be proactive.

4.6 ORGANISATION CULTURE

Culture may be described as the commonly held, and relatively stable set of behaviours that link the organisation together - the collective experiences of individuals in a particular organisation which denotes how and why they react to particular things in particular ways.

How important is culture to the organisation? Deal & Kennedy (1982) researched a number of American companies in an attempt to ascertain what factors lead to consistently outstanding performance in a given industry. They found that, over a protracted period of time, the companies that were the most successful were those which portrayed a tendency to hold firm to a particular belief or ethos, specific to that company (i.e. quality is the cornerstone of this business). This particular value system had permeated through every layer in the organisations' hierarchies.

Pettigrew, Hendry & Sparrow (1988) and Ogbanna & Wilkinson (1988) perceive organisation culture as a key factor in promoting HRD. They suggest that the organisation culture can indicate the likely commitment to HRD if a suitable learning environment exists. Peters & Waterman argue that HRD efforts cannot ignore the prevailing and desired culture of the organisation. Each culture has its own characteristics and variables which must have an influence in designing HRD initiatives.

Culture, therefore, is viewed as normative values and beliefs which enforce a relatively homogeneous, fixed set of behaviours. Because culture is fossilised in habit, it tends to resist change, and may often frustrate strategy formulation and implementation. Salaman (1983) proposes that:
"management is an art not a science, and that while a carefully shaped strategy may make or break a company, the corporate culture may make or break a strategy."

Smircich (1983) views culture as a critical variable which determines how well the organisation copes with its strategic imperative: the need to remain or become competitive in the face of changing economic circumstances. If culture blinds individuals to the need for change, or causes them to resist it, then cultural blocks must be eliminated.

It thus emerges that the prevailing culture of the organisation has significant effects on the functioning of the organisation, and on HRD initiatives. What is needed is a developmental climate where the value of developing employees is built into the fabric of the culture. Williamson (1975) suggested that organisations which have clans, as opposed to hierarchies, have denser human relationships and networks, and place more value on the individual and individual development.

The need for the HRD function to be strategic in its orientation is steeped in the notion that human resources can contribute substantially to the economic wellbeing of the organisation - that human resources are a means of attaining competitive advantage. However, the HRD function does not operate in a vacuum; it is embedded in the culture of the organisation. Initiatives proposed by the HRD function can only achieve fruition if the individuals concerned are willing to accept developmental opportunities, and believe in their viability. Hackman & Oldham (1976), in their proposal for job enrichment, acknowledged that the prevailing culture of the organisation, and the particular characteristics of the employees involved in such an initiative, will greatly determine the viability of such programmes. Individuals who are highly motivated, and possess a strong need for achievement, will react more favourably to initiatives designed to increase the
scope and level of their jobs, than will an individual who holds an instrumental approach to work.

The organisation cannot hope to achieve workforce flexibility if the employees do not want to change existing work practices, and will resist any new initiative designed to change the existing status quo. For this reason the prevailing organisation culture will determine the extent and nature of strategic HRD initiatives, and, where resistance is widespread, the HRD function must exercise its discretion in paving the way for a new cultural ethos to emerge, by persuading individuals that change is not necessarily a harmful entity, and overcoming resistance in this way. As Williams et al (1990) suggest:

"Culture is a significant contributor to strategic analysis and the development of strategy. Since culture influences what other members of the organisation attest to, how they interpret this information and react, it is a significant determinant of the success of strategic implementation. Culture influences the ability of the organisation both to conceive and to implement a new strategy."

It emerges, therefore, that organisation culture is an important dynamic, critical to success in change initiatives. However, it is also a key dynamic in the strategic HRD context, hence it becomes imperative that the organisation foster a culture type that is facilitative of the development of human resources - it must become a learning organisation. Pedler, Boydell & Burgoyne (1992) define a learning organisation as:

"One which facilitates the learning of all of its members and thus continually transforms itself."

while Fiol & Lyles (1985) indicate that organisation learning is:

"The process of improving actions through both knowledge and understanding."
The whole concept of the learning organisation is based on the premise that training and development programmes, however carefully designed, are never sufficient. Barrow & McLoughlin (1992) suggest that there is now a greater need than ever for organisations to become learning enterprises because:

"The traditional organisation structure, with clearly defined hierarchies that exercise strong control, are ill suited to a period of profound and rapid change."

They further indicate that, to maximise their effectiveness, organisations must reduce their reliance on hierarchies in favour of cross-functional teams, flatter structures and less supervision.

Easterby-Smith (1990) notes three particular organisation responses to external pressures or crises - re-organisation of structure, a change of the systems that control behaviour, or a change the culture of the organisation. The latter response involves changing the beliefs that the organisation holds about itself, and the strategies that support this. He maintains that, viewed from this perspective, learning involves the creation of a culture that is appropriate for, and adaptive to internal and external organisation conditions.

Silverman & Jones (1976) indicated that most organisations try to select individuals who will fit into their particular culture, and thus tend to recruit in their own image. However, too much homogeneity may lead to a reduction of the potential for innovation which stifles creative thinking. The effects of such a prevailing culture on HRD functioning can be devastating, since it propagates the notion that any change initiative is unnecessary, and deviant behaviour and risk-taking are unacceptable.

Therefore, where the prevailing culture is perceived to be detrimental to the
introduction of strategic HRD initiatives, the HRD function must adopt one, or several strategies to overcome this ie. introduce an organisation development intervention aimed at changing beliefs and behaviour patterns over time. A further strategy aimed at fostering a facilitative culture involves the management of socialisation. The more an organisation actively manages the socialisation of employees at work, the more stress there is on individual development, because it is serving a critical function of the organisation.

Easterby-Smith (1990), basing his work on earlier classifications by Hedberg (1981), highlights particular ways in which an organisation can foster a learning culture:

* Promote an appreciation of how the learning process operates, how organisation learning differs from individual learning, and how hierarchies, power, formal systems and other internal mechanisms affect this. Put succinctly, the primary step is to raise the level of awareness of learning.
* Promote experimentation and innovation which involves adopting a strategic approach to people, structure, reward systems and control systems.
* Encourage more flexibility in the structure of the organisation through the use of job rotation, planned experience and transient project groupings. In this way, individuals will become accustomed to change, and to learning new goals.

It becomes evident that the organisation culture can become the pivotal force upon which the effectiveness of strategic HRD initiatives hinges, hence it remains critical that a learning culture be fostered to facilitate employee development. A learning organisation may be seen to advance HRD functioning in terms of the following:

- it promotes job flexibility and multi-skilling
- it encourages self development
- it is committed to participative decision making
- it utilises policies such as internal promotion, career ladders, formal development initiatives, and so forth
- it facilitates the adoption of new work systems
- it encourages innovation and risk taking
- it seeks commitment rather than compliance from employees
- it views employees as valuable assets capable of promoting competitiveness

Evidently then, the prevailing organisation culture must not be neglected when deciding on the introduction of some form of employee development initiative, since research has indicated that it can serve to increase the probability of success of the initiative, or render it of marginal value, at best.

4.7 ORGANISATION STAKEHOLDERS

Rowe et al (1989) define a stakeholder as:

"Anyone whose actions can affect the organisation or who is affected by the organisation's actions."

An organisation's stakeholders may therefore be comprised of those individuals/interest groups who have an interest in the financial well being of the company. All have an impact on how the organisation runs, and, in many ways, affect each other. The importance of identifying these stakeholders has only recently been acknowledged as critical to effective organisational functioning (see Taylor & Sparkes, 1979; Rowe et al, 1989; Maranville, 1989; Ulrich, 1989; Aggarwal & Chandra, 1990; Miller & Lewis, 1991; Carroll, 1991;), and a number of reasons can be cited for this new focus:

* An organisation's strategy must not only be directed at delivering quality products to customers and producing maximum return on investments, but must also satisfy all of the organisation's stakeholders
* Stakeholder analysis forces the organisation to focus on its relationships with
specific stakeholder groups, and to take these considerations into account when formulating corporate strategies. The continued cooperation and commitment of the organisation's stakeholders to these strategies therefore become a necessary prerequisite for organisation effectiveness.

* Organisations today must not only fulfil economic and legal obligations, but have also been accredited with 'corporate responsibilities', which include ethical and discretionary obligations. Stakeholder analysis is therefore utilised to delineate the specific groups or persons an organisation should consider in corporate social responsibility orientation.

* Since the effectiveness of human resource utilisation is dependent upon the perceptions of the users and those affected by it, stakeholder analysis may be used to provide a measure of this effectiveness.

Aggarwal & Chandra (1990) indicate that if an organisation identifies its stakeholders, there will be greater levels of loyalty among these interest groups, and the commitment of these stakeholders can provide the operating and strategic flexibility required by organisations in a turbulent environment. Since the training and development function has traditionally operated outside of the central business arena of the organisation, an effective method of operating more strategically could lie in identifying its particular organisational stakeholders, and building a cohesive network around these interest groups. But who are these training and development/HRD stakeholders? Building on the work of Rowe et al (1989), it is possible to identify six key stakeholders:

1. Top Management - It was earlier suggested that top management support and commitment is essential for strategic employee development, therefore top management represent a powerful avenue towards strategic functioning. Where top managers believe in the value of well developed employees, and view them as an essential means of achieving competitive advantage, then human resource
policies and plans will be strategically oriented to facilitate this achievement.

2. Personnel Managers - Since HRD is primarily concerned with developing the employee to his/her full potential in furtherance of organisational objectives, it is but one cog in the human resource wheel. There needs to be congruence between the policies of the HRD and Personnel departments in order that both operate to achieve the same goal - the positioning of human resource considerations at a strategic level in the organisation.

3. Training Specialist - If the HRD function is to operate strategically, the coordinator of this function must believe that human resource considerations are an integral aspect of organisational competitiveness, and be in a position where he/she can feed back the contributions of the function to other key stakeholders.

4. Line Managers - Line managers have an inherent responsibility for the contributions made by individual employees in their job. They in a position to determine the training and development needs of subordinates, and must work closely with the training specialist to ensure the most appropriate development initiative is made available in the interests of the organisation as a whole. It therefore becomes critical that line managers are involved in all aspects of HRD in planning and policy formulation, and the design and delivery of training and development programmes.

5. Unions - Where unions favour training and development as a means of creating advancement opportunities for employees, their support will lend strength to the function's position in the organisation. However, they must be consulted on proposed new initiatives to ensure equity and fairness for all employees.

6. Employees - Since employees are directly affected by training and development, their input into their own development is crucial for any meaningful
benefits to accrue. The degree to which any HRD/training and development initiative is successful will depend upon its acceptance by employees.

It is evident, therefore, that the degree to which the HRD function operates at a strategic, is also contingent upon the perceptions of it's key stakeholders. The importance of stakeholder analysis must not be underestimated, especially for the HRD department, since it works with, and through individuals and is accountable to a number of different groups. Moss kanter (1986) adequately sums it up:

"When stakeholder needs and interests have been taken into account in the past, there is a bias for trust. Working it out is less acrimonious. Instead of wasting precious time battling their adversaries, excellent companies turn stakeholders into allies that figure out how to solve problems together."

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the notion that strategic HRD is contingent upon a number of variables that impact upon the nature and pervasiveness of its functioning. Several of these variables were examined, and on the basis that the literature relating to this particular relationship is limited, the author surmised on the extent to which these variables will affect strategic HRD functioning:

* STRUCTURE - As the organisation becomes more complex, it provides fewer opportunities for broad skill development and multiskilling, and the HRD function itself is less likely to be afforded the opportunity of involvement in strategic business planning. In a highly formalised environment, where power and authority are centred at the top of the organisation's hierarchy, the HRD function lacks the discretion to become involved in strategic decision making.

* SIZE - As organisations increase in size, there is a greater tendency to decentralise hence affording greater opportunities for individual development and
an increase in the strategic use of human resources.

* TECHNOLOGY - In industries where the rate of technological change is greatest ie. electronics sector, the HRD function has a greater probability of achieving a strategic orientation. New technology affords the HRD function greater autonomy in terms of the developmental opportunities made available, and the ever-increasing need to achieve functional flexibility.

* POWER - The extent to which the HRD function, or persons operating therein, retain power within the organisation will determine the degree to which the function is perceived as strategically important to the achievement of organisational objectives.

* CULTURE - The degree to which the HRD function achieves its objectives is largely dependent on the prevailing culture of the organisation. The HRD function attains its goals through the individual employees and, where the values, norms and beliefs of the organisation do not reflect those of the function, initiatives introduced to achieve these goals will be resisted at every stage of their implementation, rendering them marginally successful at best.

* STAKEHOLDERS - The effectiveness of the HRD function is contingent upon the degree to which it is perceived, as a positive contributor to the attainment of the organisation's goals and objectives. Where its' stakeholders are strongly committed to employee development, the HRD function is afforded greater opportunity to operate strategically.

Having outlined the contingent nature of HRD, it remains to conclude this section with an examination of employees themselves, and their impact on the HRD function.
CHAPTER 5: INDIVIDUAL FACTORS AND STRATEGIC HRD

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Psychological Definitions of Man
   5.2.1 Rational or Emotional view
   5.2.2 Behaviourist or Phenomenological view
   5.2.3 Economic or Self-actualising view
   5.2.4 McGregor’s Theory X or Theory Y view
   5.2.5 Dual Model Theory

5.3 Learning and the Individual

5.4 Change and the Individual

5.5 Summary
5.1 INTRODUCTION
To date we have focused on the context of strategic HRD, in terms of the particular forces driving the need for more effective utilisation of human resources, and particular contingent variables affecting strategic HRD functioning. This final chapter of the present section examines one other important aspect of the contextually bound strategic HRD concept, that is, the nature of the individual employee concerned. Individuals differ in their attitudes, values, outlooks, past experiences, abilities, dispositions and so forth, all of which emerge as critical factors influencing HRD initiatives. For this reason, this chapter provides a discussion of the psychological nature of man, in terms of the emphasis placed on, and the attention given to the individual, how individuals differ with respect to the learning process, and how individuals react to the introduction of organisation change.

5.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF MAN
There is an increasing tendency to adopt a theory of knowledge which gives priority to the study of man which, at its core, has the investigation of how individuals construct meaning, and with how aspects of the world are constituted in the individuals own terms. Much variety exists in the ways one can consider man, depending upon one's theoretical base, be it philosophy, psychology, sociology, cybernetics, psychotherapy, biology or systems theory. For the purpose of this research, it is proposed to concentrate on psychological explanation of man and his behaviour.
Ross (1931) pointed out that psychology literally means 'science of the soul', which emerged from philosophy and experimental physiology as an independent, scientific discipline during the 19th century. Pervin (1975) suggests that it encompasses two viewpoints:
1. Humanistic, man-centred and phenomenological
2. Scientific, pragmatic and empirical

The former is, according to Pervin, associated with the uniqueness of man, and emphasises free will and choice, whilst being unsympathetic to standardised techniques for the assessment of personality. This approach is seen as an effort to understand the world as it is experienced by individuals. The scientific approach is seen as considering all men to be alike, and emphasises determinism and drives. It prefers objective and standardised methods of personality assessment, vigorously adopting an empirical approach. This view considers phenomenology as a part of philosophy. A study of the individual is generally viewed as a source of hypothesis and not, in itself, a science. The goals are objectivity, reliability, standardisation and validity; empirical explanation as opposed to intuitive understanding.

Implicit in these two opposing viewpoints is a major difference in the emphasis placed on, and the attention given to the individual. The trend today, according to Beard (1982) is the adoption of what is termed the ‘humanistic’ inclination. Shotter (1975) suggests that man should be considered by reference to what is going on inside him. This view seeks to go beyond merely understanding man in his own terms, and promotes the use of experimental criteria of the inner world, rather than external observation of behaviour. He defines a person as:

"being able to deliberate before one acts, and, as a result make clear to oneself one's own reasons for action, is part of what it is to be an autonomous, responsible person, not reliant like a child upon others to complete and give meaning to one's actions."

Therefore, man exists in a stream of activity and arises out of social exchange. Psychologically, he is considered capable of determining how he will act, once the nature of the goals are clearly explained to him, and he is able to choose what to
do next. We are viewed as self-interpreting animals in that we have the capacity to formulate the significance that things have for us.

Arising from this perception have been numerous theories on the management of people, and their subsequent development. Several models have been developed to further the understanding of the individual at work, and his consequent work related behaviour. Porter, Lawlor & Hackman (1975) charted the following, most noteworthy perceptions of the individual, and their particular implications for the HRD function.

5.2.1 Rational or Emotional view:
The rational approach views the individual as a rational person who is capable of collecting and evaluating information in a systematic manner, and then makes decisions based on an objective analysis of the varying alternatives available. A manager holding this perspective would tend to view employees as logical, deductive people, and relate to them on this level. However, the human side of their personality - feelings, emotions and so forth - would tend to be ignored, for the most part.

The emotional approach holds that individuals are ruled primarily by their emotions, some of which are uncontrollable, hence a manager with this perspective would be concerned with unearthing the underlying psychological causes of particular work behaviour.

5.2.2 Behaviourist or Phenomenological view:
A behaviourist perspective holds that the individual's behaviour is essentially controlled by the environment within which he/she operates. Therefore, to change the behaviour of employees, management will change the environment to elicit the requisite responses.

The phenomenological approach views individuals as unpredictable, unique, and
subjective, but with potential for future development. In order to understand behaviour, therefore, management must have particular insights into the complex functioning of the individual’s brain, since this is the locus of all behaviour. Since this has yet to be understood in full, this particular approach to understanding and managing employees is seldom utilised.

5.2.3 Economic or Self-actualising view:
The economic approach to individuals holds that employees are motivated by economic rewards. It assumes that employees act in a rational manner in order to obtain material satisfaction in the form of money. A manager with this view would tend to regard financial incentives as the primary method of eliciting the requisite behaviour from subordinates, and for motivating them in the future. To this end, the workplace reflects a competitive environment within which each individual strives to further his own interests.
The self-actualising view, on the other hand, assumes that individuals wish to develop, use their potential and increase their competence. They want to continuously learn and further themselves. The managerial approach therefore, reflects this ethos of self-development through the establishment of a learning environment which promotes self-direction and responsibility for one’s own future.

5.2.4 McGregor’s Theory X or Theory Y view:
Douglas McGregor (1960) developed two sets of assumptions about managerial perceptions of individuals at work.
A theory X approach assumes that the individual is basically lazy and unmotivated, has an inherent dislike of work, and will avoid it where possible. Because of this, individuals must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment to expend effort in order to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Learning occurs only through conscious effort and out of necessity for satisfactory
performance. For this reason, employees require constant supervision, are continuously directed and are not given additional responsibility.

A theory Y approach to employee management assumes that the individual enjoys work, actively seeks new challenges and is a consciously coordinated agent of his/her own development. The employee is committed to the objectives of the organisation in proportion to the size of the rewards associated with their achievement. Learning is continuous and the employee welcomes added autonomy and responsibility.

The differences implicit in these two opposing assumptions lie in the value placed on the individual:

* Theory X adopts an instrumental approach to people - they are valued solely for their productivity, and are governed by a command-obey relationship.
* Theory Y approach involves empowering people through the development of their full potential. Employees are valued not only for their productivity, but also for their contributions to the organisation as a whole.

5.2.5 Dual model theory:

Miles (1975) identified a manager's role as being one of integrating organisational variables (goals, technology and structure) with human variables (capabilities, attitudes, values, needs and demographic characteristics) into an effective and efficient socio-technical system. This integration is achieved through such activities as selecting, appraising, directing, training, communicating and controlling. It also includes developing an appropriate organisation structure, designing individual jobs, developing people, and rewarding individuals for their contribution.

Miles further suggests that the manager's own perceptions regarding the managing concept partially determine the manner in which managerial activities are carried out. As a consequence, he devised three particular 'theories' of
management known as the Traditional, the Human Relations and the Human Resources models. Each model begins with basic assumptions about the individual; policies relating to these assumptions are then described; finally, the expected results are stated.

The important point made by Miles is that managers apparently subscribe, not only to one but to two models - one concerns the way they manage their subordinates, and the other with how they believe they should be managed by their superiors.

Which of the prescribed views listed above is correct, or the most valid?

It must be understood that each perspective represents a particular way in which individuals may be viewed, and are viewed by managers and organisations. The premise of the author's argument is that the manner in which individuals are perceived by the organisation and its managers, will be a critical determinant of any developmental practices undertaken by that organisation. Hence, a manager who subscribes to the economic view of the individual would tend to motivate his subordinates through the use of financial inducements i.e. certain behaviour will result in additional monies at the end of the week. But what happens when only half of his subordinates value increased money as a reward for particular behaviour, and the manager continues to view all of them as economic individuals? Will this particular approach motivate the 50% of his employees who strive for increased recognition, responsibility or autonomy in the organisation?

It is for this reason managers must recognise that all individuals are inherently different, and may thus have different expectations of the work situation. Some employees are concerned with financial rewards, to the exclusion of all else, others are concerned with the social relationships formed while at work, while still others strive for recognition and responsibility. Mischel (1968) highlighted particular characteristics that serve to differentiate individuals and their behaviour at work:
Competence - the ability and willingness to perform a task.

Constructs - the conceptual framework which governs how people perceive their environment.

Expectations - what individuals have learned to expect about their own and others' behaviour.

Values - what individuals believe to be important.

Self-regulatory plans - the goals individuals set themselves, and the plans they make to achieve them.

It would appear, therefore, that to manage human resources effectively, one must understand the factors that affect how people behave at work in order to influence their motivation and commitment. Armstrong (1991) indicates that the manner in which an individual behaves at work depends on three particular factors:

1. Personal characteristics which refer to:
   - abilities, aptitudes and personality
   - needs, goals and drives (motivation to work)
   - commitment to the organisation and its values

2. The environment in which the individual works:
   - the organisation context which includes its technology, culture, values, structures and management style
   - the influence of groups on individual behaviour

3. How, in light of the above factors, the individual adjusts to his/her role at work, taking into account any effort by the organisation to increase motivation and commitment, and to provide a good working environment.

It can be seen, therefore, that HRD cannot exist in isolation. Due care must be given to the human resources themselves, and their attitudes, motivations and willingness to participate in particular developmental strategies. Developmental
practices will succeed only to the extent that individuals are motivated and committed to the developmental process itself, and the organisation climate within which these initiatives occur is conducive to effective learning taking place.

5.3 LEARNING AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Much research in recent years has focused on learning and examines whether, how and under what conditions individuals learn. The one question that applies to all work contexts concerns how people acquire the various abilities needed to survive in a social world. Kenny & Reid (1986) indicate that people cannot be brought into an organisation to achieve any kind of common purpose without learning taking place, while Whipp (1991) suggests that learning becomes the central means of generating, maintaining and regenerating the knowledge necessary for a chosen competitive response. Hilgard & Bower (1975) define learning as:

"The process by which an activity originates, or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation, provided that the characteristics of the change in activity cannot be explained on the basis of native response tendencies or motivation."

Whipp (1991) proposes that learning refers, not just to the acquisition of new knowledge by the individual but rather:

"It refers to how those within firms collectively change their knowledge, values and shared mental models of their company and its markets. Learning therefore does not preclude training, it simply goes further."

Essentially, then, a balanced perspective of learning concerns how the individual differs from others, and the extent to which these differences interact with that individual's learning process to influence the way in which he/she acquires skills.
Monaghan (1985) distinguishes between two forms of learning - natural and deliberate. Natural learning occurs without institutional instruction, sometimes without awareness or conscious effort. French (1981) earlier described it as the in-born capacity of the individual to develop him/herself through his/her lifetime. Deliberate learning, in contrast, is that accruing through organised intervention, teaching methodology, the refinement of cognitive skills and directed achievement. Kelman (1958) in his discussion on learning theory and transfer, indicated that the response of learners to organised learning opportunities operate within a sequence of three phases - Compliance, Identification and Internalisation. He further reported that, if responses during training courses are restricted to the compliance and, to some extent, the identification phase, then the probability of the learning being artificial and impermanent, with low training effectiveness, when viewed from the perspective of the workforce, is high.

Revans (1982) identified four cardinal conditions of successful learning:
1. That the subjects are motivated to learn of their own volition, and not solely at the will of others.
2. That they may identify themselves with others who may not only share their needs, but who may also satisfy some of these needs.
3. That they can try out any new learning in actions of their own design.
4. That, within a reasonable lapse of time, they can attain first-hand knowledge of the results of their trials.

Armstrong (1991) identifies additional conditions required for learning to be effective. These include the relevance of the material; the degree to which it varies and learning becomes an active process; the appropriateness of both the learning technique used and the time frame within it is placed and, the setting of appropriate performance standards used. He also stressed the importance of providing
feedback to learners and cautioned that training specialists must recognise that there are different levels of learning and these need different techniques and take different time frames.

Perhaps the most critical condition for successful learning is the recognition that individuals differ in terms of their attitudes, abilities, competencies, and so forth, and these considerations must be borne in mind when designing any learning intervention. As each individual has his/her own way of learning new skills and knowledge, so also do they have their own particular pace at which new material is assimilated and internalised. For this reason, the organisation must take account of the individuals concerned when introducing any developmental process, and ensure that these programmes are specifically designed to suit the particular needs of the individuals concerned, and pitched at the level at which effective learning can occur.

Of particular note in this context are the phenomena of learning curves and the learning plateau. Learning curves measure a person's rate of progress as he/she moves through a learning session or programme. The curve charts the changes in performance brought about by the learning event, viz a graph tracing the improvement, or otherwise, of learners during the course of the programme. Buckley & Caple (1990) suggest that these learning curves prove useful to the trainer for a number of reasons:

- They provide diagnostic information that may help determine the effectiveness of the training tactics and methods employed.
- They can be used to provide feedback to the learners.
- They can alert the trainer to difficulties being experienced by the learners, as indicated by slow or no progress being made.

The learning plateau represents a period in the learning process when no obvious
progress is being made, and it may appear to the trainer that the learner is either incapable or insufficiently interested in further learning/development. Bass & Vaughan (1966) cite possible explanations for this plateauing effect:

- The 'Hierarchy of Habit Hypothesis' tends to suggest that certain skills are made up of a series of habits, 'positioned' in the form of a hierarchy, with those positioned higher up more complex in nature. The learning of complex habits is dependent on the learner first having mastered lower order habits, hence the plateau represents the learner's transition from lower to higher habits.

- For a variety of reasons such as boredom, fatigue and so forth, motivation wanes at several points during the course of learning, and the plateau sets in.

- Incorrect responses of bad habits are being eliminated, and while this is taking place, no new learning can occur.

Kenny & Reid (1986), referring to the work of Fleisman & Hempel (1955), suggest that specific abilities may vary in their degree of importance as competence in skills increases. Initial progress in learning may be dependent on one ability; however, in order to improve, the learner has to concentrate on another, now more relevant ability which has yet to be developed, and this may explain the existence of a plateau on an otherwise normal learning curve.

It can be seen that the principles and conditions of learning outlined above provide training/human resource specialists with general guidelines, within which the planning and design of learning events can occur. However, all trainers/specialists must appreciate that not all target populations react or respond uniformly to these principles and conditions, and hence must take cognisance of the reality that there can exist significant differences within and between training groups. As individuals react differently to the working environment, and have different expectations of the work situation, so also will this hold true of the learning process. For this reason,
developmental processes must allow some flexibility in their introduction and application. While it is not feasible to match training to each trainee's individual characteristics, Buckley & Caple (1990) suggest that it remains necessary to garner some knowledge of individual differences for two particular reasons:

a) It may help to explain why certain individuals are not behaving or responding as might be expected (similar to others).

b) It may offer an opportunity to deal with trainees on an individual, sub-group or group basis, where something is known about their styles and preferences.

5.4 CHANGE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

A major challenge facing organisations today is to manage change effectively since, to a certain extent all organisations exist in a changing environment and are themselves changing (Ephlin;1988). Since change is, in some respects, inevitable, the organisation is faced with the problem of how best to harness this change and use its consequences for the benefit of the organisation. Perhaps the most critical determinant of successful change is the workforce of the organisation.

Freud argued that:

"Healthy individual resist change in order to protect themselves from an environment that they cannot easily handle or control."

(Cited in Mooney;1991)

Change, no matter how obscure, has a tendency to be felt at the bottom of the organisation's hierarchy, and thus affects the individual employee. Depending upon the nature of this change, and the particular characteristics and propensities of the individual, reaction to the change will either be favourable or hostile, since, as social animals we tend to view new initiatives in terms of their particular effect on our own circumstances. Hellriegel et al (1989) outline a number of specific reasons why individuals tend to resist change:
1. Habit - individuals find it easier to respond to situations in an accustomed manner, hence an established habit may be a source of satisfaction for that individual. Habits allow individuals to adjust to, and cope with their world, and provide some measure of security - there is a sense of security in knowing that some things will remain the same. Where this security is threatened by unanticipated or unwanted change, then individuals are likely to resist that change.

2. Selective attention and retention - individuals tend to perceive those things that fit most comfortably into their current understanding of the world. Once this understanding of reality is established, it tends to resist any change. Individuals resist the possible impact of changes on their lives by:
   - reading/listening only to what they agree with,
   - conveniently forgetting any knowledge that could lead to other viewpoints, and
   - deliberately misinterpreting deviant information.

3. Dependence - people who are highly dependent on others in the work environment, particularly those low in self-esteem, tend to resist any change initiative until those they depend on endorse that change, and incorporate it into their behaviour.

4. Fear of the unknown - confronting the unknown renders most people wary or anxious. Uncertainty in the work environment stems, not only from the change initiative itself ie. relocation, but also from the potential consequences of that change ie. fear of being unable to cope with the job in a new area.

5. Economic reasons - individuals tend to resist change that adversely affects their financial standing. Changes in established work routine or job duties, that threaten the economic security of individuals is strongly resisted.

6. Security and regression - some individuals tend to seek security by regressing
to the past, particularly when present circumstances prove frustrating. Highly insecure individuals display a tendency to cling to old, unproductive behaviour patterns where they form an inability to cope with new ways of doing things.

Other reasons for resistance to change include the following:

- Little, if any employee participation in the change initiative.
- Disruption of social relationships at work which Lawrence (1954) cites as the one change that is most strongly resisted.
- Existence of group resistance. Asch (1952) and earlier studies by Mayo's Hawthorne Studies indicate that a highly cohesive group, resisting change, can reflect itself in individuals adopting that group perspective.
- Insufficient information communicated to individuals may result in distorted rumours abounding which may lead to resistance based on this misinformation.

The consequences of resistance may vary according to the strength of this resistance. Reaction to change is usually defensive, where the individual seeks to protect the status quo that he/she has an interest in maintaining. Resistance may also be overt, and may take the form of strikes, slow-downs, work to rules and so forth. Decreased commitment to the organisation, low motivation, increased turnover and absenteeism are all manifestations of implicit resistance to change. Accordingly, the organisation must develop some method of reducing this resistance, and future adverse reactions, to change initiatives, in order to ensure the organisation remains ‘successful’.

HRD plays an important role alleviating, to some degree, resistance to change. Since resistance to change is generally the manifestation of individual fear, or unwillingness to forego the status quo and adopt a different way of operating, individuals need to be educated, not only on the reasons why change is necessary
or desirable, but also in learning how to cope with the change itself. Different strategies are adopted by the organisation, depending on the nature of the change being introduced, and these may range from education and communication, on the one hand, through participation, to negotiation on the other. However, the premise of HRD is not simply to foist change upon the workforce, but rather to build up a facilitative internal environment that encourages new ways of doing things, and is actively supportive of continuous learning and development. This can be achieved through the introduction of appropriate policies and practices within the organisation which encourage innovation and development, but will also involve some form of organisation development initiative which will, over a protracted period of time, address the reforming of attitudes and behaviours of individuals so as to achieve congruence with the open, facilitative culture desired by the organisation.

5.5 SUMMARY

The premise of this chapter is to present each employee in the work situation as an individual, and to establish the principle that the manner in which employees are viewed, by both managers and the organisation, is a critical determinant of any developmental practice undertaken by that organisation. Any new initiative introduced to facilitate the advancement of employees, be it education, training, or development must take cognisance of the fact that each employee has a unique set of values, beliefs, attitudes, competencies and aspirations, and thus developmental programmes must be adequately flexible to facilitate these differences.

Individuals also differ in terms of how they learn, when they learn, at what pace they learn, and what particular style best facilitates their learning, hence the design of learning events must take account of these differences. It is not suggested that individual learning events be designed for each individual, but rather that human
resource specialists recognise that the bland application of one particular training or developmental programme cannot achieve optimum effectiveness in every situation.

For many organisations strategic HRD may represent a substantial value change from their traditional practices. As with any change initiative, one cannot expect to introduce new processes and philosophies without encountering some form of employee resistance. The point is reiterated that, as each person is a unique individual, they will tend to view change according to their own disposition and set of circumstances. This view may range from willing acceptance, at one end of the spectrum, to overt hostility at the other. Particular factors underlying resistance to change were examined - from the very human fear of the unknown, through insecurity and group norms, to economic considerations and misinformation. It was further noted that HRD plays an important role in reducing resistance to organisational change, and indeed acting as a change agent itself, through the procedures and policies it postulates within the workplace in order to achieve an optimum fit between the organisational objectives, and the goals and needs of the individual.
CHAPTER 6: A SYNTHESIS OF THE LITERATURE

6.1 Introduction

6.2 A Synthesis Derived

6.3 A Proposed Model
6.1 INTRODUCTION

To date the author has traced the history of the training and development in Ireland, and charted the emergence of HRD. Factors triggering this emergence were cited, as well as characteristics of strategic HRD, and various models of training/Human Resource Development. The changing external environment was examined and particular trends, with human resource implications, were discussed. The context within which HRD operates was further examined, in order to determine whether particular organisation characteristics, and the nature of the workforce, determined the extent to which HRD could operate strategically. It is now pertinent to synthesise what has been learned from this review, and present a model outlining the contextually bound nature of strategic HRD, drawing together the key concepts of the literature examined.

6.2 A SYNTHESIS DERIVED

The first documented work of importance relating to training and development was that of Taylor (1911) whose principles of scientific management emphasised the importance of worker selection, and presented training as a key mechanism for improving worker efficiency. New models of man in Industry, and new perspectives on the "worker-job relationship" emerged with the work of, among others Mayo, Maslow, Herzberg and McGregor, and led to the introduction of more systematic training activities.

Specifically relating to the Irish situation, the voluntarist system in operation in Ireland until the early 1950s was insufficient to meet the needs of Industry, hence major statutory reform was effected as a means of establishing a national training system, and provided for the establishment of a national training authority to coordinate and oversee Industrial and commercial training provisions. Today this body operates under the name of FAS. Considerable sums of money were
invested in operator and apprenticeship training, however, as the Galvin report indicates, the level of management training and development in Ireland is insufficient to meet the changing pressures of international competition, and studies completed by various bodies over the last number of years (MRBI, AnCO, CSO, FAS) have suggested that, while a significant amount of money is being spent on training in Ireland, this expenditure may not prove cost-effective in the long term, due to it being reactive in nature, and not tied to the future business needs of the organisation.

Returning to the extant literature, it is evident that a distinction has begun to emerge between the concepts of training and HRD in recent years. Numerous reasons have been cited for this, not least among them the fact that Industry has moved from the relatively narrow technical focus of training, to one concerned with establishing linkages between human resource planning and the organisation strategy and business planning. Similarly, the emphasis has shifted from the learning of individual job skills to one concerned with developing the full, longer term potential of employees. Another reason that has been cited is the need for the training function to establish itself at an appropriate level in the organisation.

One of the critical factors pushing the emergence of HRD has been the changing nature of the external environment, to the extent that a narrow skill base is no longer sufficient to ensure economic viability. The focus has changed to a situation where employees are now required to do more knowledge work, leading to a move beyond obvious efficiency gains to more systematic practices of achieving higher quality products and services. Strategic HRD refers to the development of a strategic corporate approach to workforce management, and is based on the premise that, in order to maximise the utilisation of human resources, organisations must incorporate human resource considerations into strategic decision making. Various characteristics of strategic HRD emerged, the more notable of which
include:

- The structuring of human resource concerns within wider business planning to achieve integration with organisational missions and goals
- The involvement of HRD in strategic planning and policy formulation to incorporate a long-term objective, define a broad organisational goal, and to influence the development of policies that facilitate development
- The support and commitment of top management to drive a long-term commitment to the relationship between organisation and employee, and to on-going development as a means of remaining competitive
- The ability to analyse the external environment in terms of the opportunities and threats it presents to the business strategy of the firm, and consequent human resource policies.
- The enthusiastic involvement of line management in the planning and coordinating of human resources development issues to ensure human resource concerns are not ignored
- The ability to foster an organisation culture where the commitment of the individual to self development, and of the company to making this possible, is seen as the norm and is accepted as the organisation's philosophy.

Several models of training and development/HRD were examined. Most of the earlier models were found to over concentrate on the operational aspects of training and development, and tended to be reactive and short-term in nature. They tended to prescribe systematic processes which would facilitate the training specialist in devising training programmes. Indeed, they promoted the notion that training was largely confined to formal events and not a natural process which occurs in the organisation on an on-going basis. Furthermore, they failed to relate human resource considerations to the strategic needs of the organisation, and, while some of the later models go some way towards examining the external
triggers for change, they fail to take full account of the context within which HRD operates, specifically, the contextual features of the organisation, ie. technology, structure and the influence of stakeholders.

Turning to the emerging HRD literature Certain limitations were cited, most notably that there is nothing truly unique about the concept, which, critics suggest, is the embodiment of the earlier Human Relations School. It is also suggested that the literature is too prescriptive and does not deal with the practical means of implementing strategic HRD, and indeed is running far ahead of what is being practised in Industry. However, one could argue that most theoretical development and concepts is ahead of organisational practices, and there is a considerable lag between a concept or theory being postulated, and put into practice.

Changes in the external environment are forcing many organisations to rethink their methods of utilising human resources. The completion of the Single European Market, the trend towards globalisation, and the demise of the Eastern Bloc Communist regime, coupled with changes in consumer tastes and the importance of quality initiatives, have critical implications for the competitiveness of a small nation on the periphery of the European landmass. Similarly, the changing nature of employment patterns towards creating temporary and part-time jobs in an effort to achieve functional flexibility and thereby a competitive edge, and increasing evidence of skills shortages being experienced due, to a large extent, to the rapid diffusion of new technologies, have forced organisations to think strategically about their workforce. The notion of human resources as a strategic tool has begun to gain credence and is due mainly to the work of, among others, Porter (1990), Lorange (1986), Fombrun, Tichy & Devanna (1984), all of whom suggest that highly developed, flexible individuals, displaying high levels of organisation commitment are one of the most important factors necessary for competitive
HRD functioning is contingent upon a number of organisational variables and, while research on a number of these variables is limited, it has been suggested that they play an important role in determining the extent to which HRD operates in a strategic capacity. The organisation structure and size may affect the HRD function, depending on the degree to which they are centralised, or allow power to circulate through the organisation. A decentralised structure, which tends to exist in medium to large organisations, will typically have a formalised training/HRD function which is allowed some discretion in decision making and policy formulation. However, where power is centralised at the top of the organisation, little delegation filters through the organisation, and limits the creativity and scope of individual departments. The degree to which the organisation relies upon technology, and its sensitivity to changes in the technological environment, will be reflected in the training/HRD policies it pursues. Where skill shortages are experienced by the organisation, and the organisations financial well-being is contingent upon the skills and abilities of its employees, then the training/HRD function is an important source of resources, and has greater power and autonomy within the organisation.

A follow on from this suggests that the ability of the training/HRD function to maintain a position of power vis a vis other departments, or politically ally itself to a power source within the organisation (particularly line management) will determine the degree to which it functions strategically. The culture of the organisation can either foster or hinder HRD initiatives, depending upon the degree to which it advocates learning and development as a cultural norm. A learning culture is therefore crucial to strategic HRD functioning. A final contingent variable encompasses the stakeholders of the organisation. Due regard must be taken of the various expectations of the employers, employees, unions, shareholders, line
managers, and so forth in order that a unifying philosophy of the strategic value of employee development emerges and is shared by all.

A critical determinant of strategic HRD must of course be the employees themselves. Strategic initiatives will not be effective unless due attention is paid to the expectations of the individual employee, the level of his involvement in his personal development, his present abilities and the rate at which he learns. Similarly, the introduction of strategic HRD may well represent a value change for the individual, and one must expect to be met with some form of resistance, and be prepared to develop methods of overcoming this resistance.

6.3 A PROPOSED MODEL

It is therefore evident that strategic HRD reflects a shift in emphasis away from the narrow structuring of jobs and the learning of discrete skills as advocated by traditional methods of training and development to one that responds to environmental pressures. More and more organisations are reviewing their training and development policies in the interests of more effective human resource utilisation. Compared to earlier approaches, it becomes evident that strategic HRD, as a discipline, is now set within a broader context, and is inextricably linked to the competitive well-being of the organisation.

It is possible to model some of the variables discussed in the literature. Figure 6.1 presents a process model of an organisation's training and development activity.
The model highlights the external triggers for new training and developmental activities within the organisation that are more broadly based, and focus on the need to become more competitive in light of these external trends. These triggers feed into the organisation and force it to rethink its human resource policies in light...
of these changes. The need to become more flexible coupled with skill shortages being experienced in certain areas, is leading to a situation where organisations attempt to build a facilitative culture to foster development at all levels. Similarly, employees are recognising their value and demand greater developmental opportunities, to the extent that human resources are being recognised as vital to organisation competitiveness.

The training/HRD function is contextually bound however, and must operate within the constraints imposed by the size, structure, technology, culture, power systems and stakeholders of the organisation. The degree to which these, and other facilitative mechanisms outlined above are supportive of training/HRD initiatives will determine whether the function operates strategically.

Having synthesised the literature, and presented a process model of strategic training and development, it now becomes necessary to outline the research methodology undertaken before the research findings can be discussed.
SECTION THREE:
THE RESEARCH STUDY
CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Theoretical Explanations of Research Methods
   7.2.1 Positivism
   7.2.2 Naturalism

7.3 Evaluation Criteria
   7.3.1 Validity
   7.3.2 Reliability

7.4 Research Design
   7.4.1 Survey Research Design
   7.4.2 The Research Population
   7.4.3 The Sample
   7.4.4 Development of the Questionnaire
   7.4.5 The Sample Revisited
   7.4.6 Coding and Scaling
   7.4.7 The Pilot Study
   7.4.8 Methods of Analysis

7.5 Summary
7.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study was to conduct exploratory research on training and development practices and practitioners in Ireland. The main concern was to obtain a picture at a specific point in time - 1992 - and elicit those activities carried out by training specialists in their daily job routine. It was also proposed to examine the degree to which human resource considerations are incorporated into the strategic business planning process of those organisations operating in Ireland today, and an examination of the extent to which particular organisational factors impinge upon the pervasiveness of strategic HRD activities.

This chapter is therefore devoted to the examination of the theoretical and conceptual considerations that affected the particular research design adopted by the author to complete this study.

7.2 THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF RESEARCH METHODS

Research may be classified according to its purpose. Its primary aim may be the solving of theoretical issues; something capable of wide generalisation but difficult to achieve, or it may focus on solving one specific practical problem in one research site which, while easier to achieve, has little application outside that particular case (Gill & Johnson 1991).

More frequently however, research is classified according to the broad approach taken to the problem (Johnson 1989). Such classifications are often placed on a continuum of increasing rigour; from laboratory experiments at one end, to what may be termed field research using ethnographic methods based on a single case, on the other. Two main perspectives exist - Positivism and Naturalism. Each occupies a position at the opposite end of the continuum to the other and have, to some extent been elevated into particular stereotypes. There is a long-standing debate in the social sciences concerning the most appropriate philosophical position from which research methods should be derived and, while this study does
not purport to add to that discussion, it is however necessary to distinguish between the two fields of thought.

7.2.1 Positivism

The key theme of positivism is that the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than be inferred subjectively through reflection or intuition (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991). A positivist approach assumes that objective knowledge exists and that this can be objectively discovered. There is a single reality that can be segmented and broken down into quantifiable units or variables that can be independently studied, and for which causal relationships can be identified. Research in the positivist sphere usually generates quantitative data. Particular examples of this type of research include survey design and experimentation.

7.2.2 Naturalism

The naturalist perspective is essentially a rejection of the positivist school of thought and, to that end, is non-scientific in nature. This approach accuses those working deductively of imposing an external logic upon phenomena that have their own internal logic (Gill & Johnson 1991). The maxim of the naturalist perspective lies in the analysis of subjective accounts, which are generated, according to Burrell & Morgan (1979) by ‘getting inside’ situations, and involving the investigator in the everyday flow of life. Emphasis is placed on theory grounded in empirical observations, which take account of subjects’ meaning and interpretational systems, in order to explain by understanding. This approach generates information of a qualitative nature, and includes methods such as in-depth case study analysis, observation and documentary analysis.

While the virtues of each method have been debated, the assertion has been made that there is no one best method, but many methods contingent on the issue being
studied, regardless of epistemological biases. (Kuhn 1970; Giddens 1978; Johnson 1989).

"Each archetype has a contribution to make, and each suffers from certain limitations and weaknesses, that sometimes assume magnified proportions, in ad-hoc circumstances."

(Gill & Johnson 1991)

The present study is positivist in nature, using a purposely designed questionnaire to collect quantitative data. However, before discussing the research process in detail, it is necessary to present some evaluation criteria which may be used to judge the ‘strength’ of the study.

7.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Having examined the major philosophies pertaining to the collection of information for research purposes, it is necessary to understand that, regardless of the method utilised, the results obtained will be of little empirical value unless they can be shown to be both valid and reliable. In order, therefore, to advance to the design stage, one must first reflect upon the concepts of validity and reliability generally, and thereby determine the particular design that best meets their requirements.

7.3.1 Validity

Alreck & Settle (1985) suggest that research is valid only to the degree that it measures what it is supposed to measure. To be valid it must not be affected by extraneous factors that ‘push’ or ‘pull’ the results in one particular direction. To the degree that things other than those being measured affect the results by introducing a systematic bias, the results are less valid. Gill & Johnson allude to particular forms of validity:

Internal Validity: Refers to whether or not what is identified as the ‘cause’ or ‘stimuli’ actually produces what has been interpreted as the
‘effect’ or ‘response’.

**External Validity:** Refers to the extent to which any research findings can be generalised or extrapolated beyond the immediate research sample or setting in which the research took place.

External validity is often sub-divided into:-

A. **Population validity** which concerns the extent to which it is possible to generalise from the sample of people involved in the research, to a wider population.

B. **Ecological validity** which is concerned with the extent to which it is possible to generalise from the actual social context in which the research has taken place, and data thereby gathered, to other contexts and settings.

### 7.3.2 Reliability

Reliability implies the freedom from random error (Alreck & Settle 1985). The most fundamental test of reliability is ‘repeatability’, the ability to get the same data values from several measurements, made in a similar fashion. Therefore, to satisfy this evaluation criterion, it should be possible for another researcher to replicate the original research, using the same subjects and the same research design, under the same conditions, and produce the same results.

Having examined the theoretical perspectives pertaining to the research process, and the evaluation criteria against which any methods used must be assessed, it is now possible to set down more specifically, the format the present study took, and the methods employed.

### 7.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Moser & Kalton (1985) suggest that the design of any research initiative is a combination of technical and organisational decisions, where the particular design chosen will depend upon the population cover to aim for, the information being
sought, the collection method to be used, and the manner in which results will be processed and interpreted. The choice of design is therefore implicitly linked to what is practically feasible, as well as what is theoretically desirable. In considering these matters, due regard must be paid to the purpose of the study, the accuracy required in the results, the costs, time and labour involved, and other practical considerations. Since funds are invariably limited, the aim throughout is to maximise their utilisation.

The initial design choice facing the author was the medium through which the requisite information was to be collected. Given the nature of the particular study - to estimate whether Irish Industry practices strategic HRD - it was determined that quantifiable data must necessarily be collected. For this reason, the author's research initiative leaned towards the positivist perspective of the theoretical continuum. As a consequence and, bearing in mind the evaluation criteria upon which all research is assessed, the author determined that a survey-type design, utilising a highly structured questionnaire, would best facilitate the collection of the necessary information. Factors implicit in choosing this form of research design included the following:

* The qualities displayed in survey research design give it much strength in population validity and reliability (Gill & Johnson 1991)

* Surveys entail the random selection of samples which enables the results to be generalised to wider populations with a high degree of confidence (Young 1966). Moser & Kalton (1985), in a similar vein, suggest that, because survey research uses sampling, information about an extremely large population can be obtained from a relatively small sample of people.

* By utilising highly structured questionnaires to gather data in a form that is quantifiably analysable, survey-based research is regarded as replicable, hence increasing its reliability (Alreck & Settle 1985)
However, as with most forms of research design, certain limitations exist:

* The high degree of structuring, although conferring strengths, can create a relative lack of naturalism (Gill & Johnson 1991). The use of closed questioning in the questionnaire gives little opportunity for the respondent to articulate the ways in which he/she personally conceptualises and understands the matter of interest. For this reason survey research design is often considered low in ecological validity.

* The use of closed questions may also introduce distortion, where the respondent, finding that no answer option accurately represents his/her opinion, chooses any answer at random, and the moves on.

* The problem of non-response, particularly to mail questionnaires, may distort the reliability of generalisations from the sample to the universal population. This poses considerable difficulty where a particular sub-section of the sample is not fully represented.

* Statements based on sample results are always probability statements. The decision to cover only a sample, rather than the total population, means leaving the field of certainty and entering that of inference and probability (Moser & Kalton 1985). While this is a weakness to be lamented, it, unfortunately, could not be overcome in the present study.

7.4.1 Survey Research Design

Research survey information is sought to enhance the body of theoretical and conceptual knowledge of a particular discipline (Gill & Johnson 1991). Rather than information being applied to practical problems and actions, theoretical research seeks information to answer research problems. In designing the particular survey, the author was faced with deciding whether the survey should be analytic or descriptive in orientation. Gill & Johnson (1991) differentiate between both approaches to survey research:
Analytic Survey: Steeped in the logic of deductive inquiry, this type of survey emphasises reliability in data collection, and the statistical control of variables in place of the physical controls in laboratory experiments. Therefore, in structuring the research, emphasis is placed on specifying the independent, dependent and extraneous variables.

Descriptive Survey: The primary concern of this type of survey is to extrapolate particular characteristics of a specific population of subjects, either at a fixed point in time, or at varying times for comparative purposes. It is not concerned to the same degree with control as is the analytic survey, but they do share a common purpose - to secure a representative sample of the relevant population and thereby ensure population validity.

The survey designed by the author, and used in this study, has elements of both types of survey - it is both analytic and descriptive. It is analytic because a thorough review of the literature was first completed, which served to elaborate the various possible relationships that exist between, and impinge upon the nature of HRD activities in Irish Industry. The survey utilised is also descriptive for it serves to indicate the nature of training and development practices in Irish Industry, and highlights particular characteristics of training specialists in Ireland.

7.4.2. The Research Population
The sample providing the information was of crucial importance to the representitiveness and generalisability of the research findings. Ideally, the survey should have covered all training/HR specialists employed in Irish Industry in 1992, but this was a practical impossibility. Not alone were the costs prohibitive but, more emphatically, no such listing of all training specialists is available. One could, perhaps have resorted to utilising the IITD membership list, which provides the most comprehensive listing of Irish training specialists, but this would have
introduced an unacceptable bias, considering that all training specialists who are not IITD members would have been excluded from the sample. An alternative approach was to estimate the minimum size of a firm that is most likely to employ a training specialist, and then draw a representative sample from those companies of that size or greater. Unfortunately this was again an unacceptable route, since it implies that only those organisations employing training specialists are involved in training activities.

The author finally decided to obtain a listing of the Business and Finance/Fortune 800 “best” companies in Ireland, and from this pick a stratified sample.

7.4.3. The Sample
From the Business and Finance/Fortune 800 companies, the author first divided the listing under three headings:
- Small companies employing less than 50 employees
- Medium companies employing 50 - 500 employees
- Large companies employing more than 500 employees
(Note: the category breakdowns above are aligned along those quoted to the author from both the IDA and Shannon Development)

The reasoning behind such a breakdown was to ensure that the final sample would adequately represent the interests of each category of organisation operating in Ireland ie. that an equal number of small, medium and large companies would be included in the sample. A similar process was carried out within these particular categories whereby the author, where possible, broadly classified each organisation according to the particular industry it operated in. In this was the author was able to ensure that the final sample was proportionally representative of the companies operating in Irish Industry today. Finally, from this redefined listing, the author extracted a random sample of companies to form the basis for the study.
7.4.4. Development of the Questionnaire

A vital skill in undertaking a survey is the ability to structure, focus, phrase and ask sets of questions in a manner that is intelligible to respondents. Questions need to minimise bias and provide data that can be statistically analysed (Moser & Kalton 1985). Bearing in mind that a large body of knowledge was required for the purpose of the study - characterisation of both respondent companies and training specialists, and detailed information in the types of activities carried out by training specialists in their daily job routine - the author decided to opt in favour of a highly structured, closed-question framework. The reasoning behind this decision was that the precise information required would more easily be collected via this format, and the data itself would allow for ease of statistical analysis.

In contemplating the wording of the questionnaire, the question arose as to the use of either the term HRD or training and development. Since the objective of the study was to ascertain the nature of training and development practices in Ireland, and, in doing so, assess whether those practices fitted the strategically-oriented HRD model, the author had to decide which term to include.

In order to ascertain the opinions of training experts, the first draft of the questionnaire, which used the term HRD in favour of training and development, was presented at an IITD Chapter meeting. After much debate a consensus finally emerged. It was determined that, to elicit the information required, the best approach would be to measure that which we know to occur in Irish Industry, notable training and development, and thereby draw a comparison between what companies actually practice, and what the literature suggests strategic HRD-oriented organisations should practice.

It was noted that, to include the term HRD as against training and development in the questionnaire, would result in information that either affirms that Irish Industry practices strategic HRD, or indicates that it does not, but would provide no
worthwhile information on what activities are being carried out, were the latter the case. The final draft therefore included the term training and development, and collected information on the nature and level of training and development practices in Irish Industry, and, from this information, the author was able to measure the extent to which these practices reflect a strategic HRD focus.

7.4.5 The Sample Revisited
Having developed the questionnaire, the author faced a further design choice of whether to utilise the mail questionnaire format, or limit the study to an interview-based sample. The author considered that, although a mail questionnaire would allow for the inclusion of a greater number of respondents, thereby ensuring greater representativeness of the results, the length of the questionnaire would act as a deterrent to many potential respondents. The problems then of non-response, and sub-sample bias would create greater difficulties in the final analysis. Of course, on the other hand, it was recognised that to limit the study to interview-based responses would lead to a subsequent reduction in the representativeness and generalisability of the final results, since it was not possible to interview all those who practice training and development in Irish Industry. Similarly, such a limitation imposed on the sample would lead to problems of population validity.

Having considered the relative merits and demerits of each method, the author decided to administer a mail questionnaire to a large countrywide sample of organisations (total sample size of 110 companies), since it was imperative that information be collected from as many training specialists as possible, in order to elucidate what types of training and development initiatives were being practised by organisations operating in Ireland. In order to minimise the incidents of non-response, each company on the mailing list was contacted one week after the questionnaires were sent out, and politely urged to participate in the study. The
final number of completed questionnaires returned was 58.

7.4.6. Coding and Scaling

CODING: The coding of the questionnaire presented no great difficulty. Since the questionnaire was highly structured, most of the questions included were already pre-coded, hence the author had merely to draw in the corresponding number of coding boxes on the final draft. Additional boxes were included for questions that allowed for more than one answer.

SCALING: Scales are generally used to obtain responses that will be comparable to one another. They are arranged so that they capture answers to many questions quickly, and in very little space. Because of this efficiency and practicality, measurement scales were built into the questionnaire, particularly where the respondent’s ‘position’ on certain issues was required. In the present study, respondents were continuously asked to identify particular training activities undertaken by them, and to indicate which of these activities they considered most important. Similarly, many questions were included to elicit the respondents’ perceptions of particular aspects of training and development and factors that influence it. For these reasons five item Likert scales were used throughout to measure perceptions and particular attitudes of individual respondents. While it was recognised that open-ended questions may have elicited similar results, the author felt that the problems associated with their analysis and interpretation would render them less useful and practical that the Likert scale-type questions. In this type of questioning, responses are necessarily limited to a fixed set of varying responses which measure the individuals’ strength of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement. Since each response is pre-coded, they are easily comparable and can readily be manipulated using statistical analysis. Alreck & Settle (1985) indicate particular advantages of utilising Likert scales:
Flexible, economical and easy to compile
* Allow for a summated value to be obtained - a total score for a set of items, which reflects an index of attitudes towards a particular issue
* Present items that are sufficiently diverse and thus represent an adequate range of the global issue

Since a number of questions asked the respondents to indicate the activities that were carried out in their company, and rank these responses in order of importance to the training and development function and/or rate the performance of their organisations' activities with regard to certain criteria, ranking and rating scales were also included. In each case the scaling used was 1=Most important, 2=Next important, and so forth. The prime advantage of such scales is that the researcher can clearly identify those activities that are most carried out by training and development specialists in Ireland, and infer, from the data, what those individuals concerned feel are important practices.

7.4.7. The Pilot Study
Pilot research is a run-through to test the research design with a sub-sample of respondents who have characteristics similar to those identified in the main sample to be surveyed. Piloting is necessary, as it is very difficult to predict how respondents will interpret and react to questions. For the purpose of this study, a copy of the questionnaire was presented at a later IITD meeting at which a brainstorming session ensued, and certain ambiguities were unearthed, and subsequently re-worded. Finally the questionnaire, in it's complete form, was administered to an evening Training and Development Diploma class in the University of Limerick. No explanation was given to those who participated in the pilot testing, and the estimated time for completion, derived from the pilot, proved a useful inclusion in subsequent covering letters sent out with the questionnaire, to
the mail sample.
Having tested the questionnaire, and corrected any ambiguities or errors, the author was ready to begin collecting the data. Questionnaires were posted to those companies identified as the mail sample, the return-by date was specified, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes included for the completed questionnaires.

7.4.8 Methods of Analysis

* **Univariate Analysis:** The first analysis undertaken on the questionnaires was to count the frequency of each answer to each question, in order to calculate measures of central tendancy and of spread.

* **Factor Analysis:** Factor analysis was utilised in an exploratory manner to indicate possible groupings of items and relationships that may exist between different factors.

* **Analysis of variance:** Analysis of variance was mainly used to for discovering important inter-relationships among several variables, which would not have been apparent had other less complex techniques been used. Significant findings are reported at three levels:
  
  .001 - which indicates that there is less than 1/1000 probability that the finding is due to chance
  
  .01  - Less than 1/100 probability
  
  .05  - Less than 1/20 probability

7.5 SUMMARY

The basic strategy adopted for this study can best be described as essentially positivist and quantitative, as the key objectives of the present study were firstly, to examine the characteristics of the training specialist; secondly, investigate the
nature of current training practices in Ireland, and thirdly, to assess the impact of particular organisational characteristics on training and development functioning.

In the interests of validity and reliability of the results, it became imperative that the author obtain a response from as many training specialists as possible, and for this reason it was decided to utilise a mail questionnaire format for the survey. The population to be surveyed was therefore identified from the Business and Finance/Fortune 800 listing of companies operating in Ireland. Since a key objective of the study was to glean information from all sectors of the economy - small and large companies, public and private sector, and so forth, the final sample population, which was chosen at random, was designed to include an equal number of companies from all the designated sectors and size type. The IITD membership directory proved of invaluable assistance in providing several of the names of specialists chosen in the final sample.

The questionnaire was subsequently developed and pilot tested on an evening Training and Development Diploma class in order that any ambiguities or mistakes could be discerned and rectified. A copy of the questionnaire was then sent out to the target respondents on the mailing list.

The information received from the completed questionnaires was then coded and statistically manipulated to produce the results that are presented in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 8: PROFILE OF RESPONDENT COMPANIES

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Industrial Activity and Ownership Categories

8.3 Organisation Status

8.4 Number of People Employed

8.5 Length of Time in Operation

8.6 Organisation Technology

8.7 Structural Characteristics of Organisations

8.8 Summary
8.1 INTRODUCTION

Section one of the questionnaire was specifically designed to elicit a comprehensive characterisation of those companies that responded to the survey. It focused on such relevant areas as Industrial activity, size, technology type, and so forth, in order that particular characteristics may be discriminated, at a later date in the analysis, when cross tabulated with specific training and development activities being practised by such organisations.

8.2 INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY AND OWNERSHIP CATEGORIES

The 58 companies operated in all Industrial sectors classified in the questionnaire, Table 8.1 below indicates the representation of respondent companies for Industrial activity and Ownership categories.

Table 8.1 Relationship Between Organisation Activity and Ownership Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IRISH</th>
<th>US/JAPANESE</th>
<th>EUROPEAN</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing/Publishing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/Drink/Tobacco</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Engineering</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/Wholesale</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity/Gas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/Forestry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (N)</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest frequencies were recorded in both the Electronics sector and the Chemicals sector, which jointly account for over 30% of the total response. Of those companies operating in the Electronics sector, 8 were U.S. owned, while only one was wholly Irish owned. This would tend to substantiate the general trend
of foreign owned multinationals founding high-tech subsidiaries in Mainland Europe within the last 20 years or so, when local competition was negligible, particularly in Ireland. Ownership was found to be particularly diverse in the Chemicals sector, with no noticeable representation of one particularly ownership category.

A sizable proportion of the companies surveyed were, in fact, wholly Irish owned - 25 of the total sample were Irish (public and private sector) companies. This figure is the highest single representation attributable to one single country in the sample. 18 companies indicated European ownership, a category which comprised of such countries as France, U.K., Germany, Switzerland and Holland, while 11 were U.S. owned and 4 Japanese owned. While these latter figures would appear broadly representative of Irish Industry generally, that is, the normal ratio of US to Japanese organisations would fall at around 4 to 1, one may indeed argue that US representation is, in fact, disproportionately high. While this is a factor to be considered when drawing any substantial conclusions from the findings, it may also be perceived as a function of the types of companies that were willing to respond to the survey. As can be seen, foreign owned organisations were much more inclined to return completed questionnaires, therefore, the question to ponder is whether this reflects, in any way, the perception of training and development generally in indigenous Irish companies.

8.3 ORGANISATION STATUS

Of the companies surveyed, 42% indicated a headquarter status, while 33.3% were plant operations, 19.3% divisions and 5.3% branch offices. When this information was cross-tabulated with ownership groups, significant differences emerged between the different groups. Table 8.2 over illustrates this breakdown.
Table 8.2: Relationship Between Organisation Status and Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>US/Japanese</th>
<th>European</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It emerges that the majority of Irish companies enjoy headquarter status, while most of the foreign owned companies are plant or division operations. This can be attributed to the fact that Indigenous Irish companies are primarily single plant establishments, whereas most foreign owned organisations are subsidiaries of multinational corporations which, in the main, are headquartered abroad.

8.4 NUMBER OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED

Organisation size has been considered an important factor in shaping training provisions (Mackay & Torrington, 1986; Hyman, 1992). Categorised according to the number of people employed by the organisation, table 8.3 below presents a breakdown of the various sizes of the companies surveyed.

Table 8.3: Organisation Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number employed</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 200</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 500</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501 - 1000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 +</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that the relative size of the companies surveyed does not accurately reflect Irish Industry. A mere 7% of the overall survey employ less that 50
employees, while it is acknowledged that over 90% of all companies operating in Ireland employ substantially fewer than 50 employees. While this is to be regretted in the present study, it again begs the question of whether the small concerns contacted were either uninterested in participating in the survey, or, more disturbing, are unaware of the value of training and development in the organisational context.

Respondents were further asked to indicate the breakdown of their total workforce in terms of full-time employees, contract employees, temporary employees and sub-contractors. These results are presented in table 8.4 below.

Table 8.4: Breakdown of Total Workforce for Categories of Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% EMPLOYED</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-time employees:</strong></td>
<td>Less than 20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 - 39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 - 59</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 - 79</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80 +</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contract employees:</strong></td>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 - 19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 +</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary employees:</strong></td>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 - 19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 -29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 +</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-contractors:</strong></td>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 - 14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 +</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reveals that the traditional employment pattern is changing gradually towards the core/periphery type situation, where organisations are making greater use of non-permanent employees in order to achieve functional flexibility (see
Gunnigle & Flood, 1989). All of the organisations utilised temporary and contract employees to some degree and, while the highest frequency response tended to be less than 10% of total workforce employed, it was found that all organisations surveyed employed at least 5% of each employment category. It is evident that organisations similarly contract out work in non core areas, and while these employees constitute less than 10% of total workforce in most organisations (n=52), the results reflect the growing trend towards sub-contracting as a means of increasing effectiveness and reducing costs, and one would expect this figure to increase greatly in the coming years.

The representation of employees at different levels of the organisation's hierarchy was further sought. This was of particular importance since it would later prove a benchmark against which to measure the amount of training received by employees at differing levels in the hierarchy. Table 8.5 indicates the breakdown of the total employed workforce into their respective positions in the hierarchy.

Table 8.5: Positioning of Workforce in the Organisation Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIERARCHICAL POSITION</th>
<th>≤ 10</th>
<th>10-19</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40+</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Technical</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Clerical</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(37)</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft/Technical</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled/Semi skilled</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not surprisingly, most organisations' (n=43) senior management team constitutes less than 10% of their total workforce. However, 2 organisations reported that their senior managers account for 30-40% of their total workforce, which one cannot help questioning, the implication being that such organisations are carrying excess 'weight' at the top of the organisation which may reflect an inability to delegate control and authority, and thereby perceived as a wasteful utilisation of human resources.

The results are broadly as one would expect. Supervisory levels in most of the organisations constitute less than 20% of the total workforce, and craft/technical, professional/technical and administrative/clerical levels vary considerably, due in part, one presumes, to the Industry they operate in, and the products/services they produce. However, these categories do not account for greater that 40% of the total workforce in any organisation surveyed. Finally, the unskilled/semi-skilled sector is the only one that accounts for greater than 40% of the total workforce in any of the respondent organisations, which again must be seen as a function of the type of company and the Industry it operates in.

8.5 LENGTH OF TIME IN OPERATION

An overwhelming proportion of the companies surveyed have been in operation for 17 years or more (47.4%), with no company having been set up in the last 12 months. Table 8.6 below outlines these results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.6: Length of Time in Operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - 12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 years +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the purpose of this research, the fact that most of the companies have been in operation for a considerable length of time may be viewed in a positive light in that most of these companies have had plenty of time to settle into their relative markets, and also time to develop their training initiative into some recognisable form.

8.6 ORGANISATION TECHNOLOGY

Of the companies surveyed, the greatest number of responses were recorded from those that produced high technology products (n=14) and professional services companies (n=19). See table 8.7 below for further elucidation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product/Service Categorisation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High technology</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumerables</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, when asked to classify the type of production technology that was used in their organisation, 35 respondents indicated that they utilised either mass production, or automated process control, accounting for over 65% of the total sample. 15 companies described their production technology as small batch, while just 8 companies reported cell production technology.

8.7 STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANISATIONS

Respondent companies were asked to describe their structure from among four possible options given. 31 respondents indicated that they had a traditional structure that was divided along traditional functional lines, 9 companies had a
product structure, 9 had a market structure, and a further 9 companies had a matrix structure.

Companies were further asked to identify how many levels of hierarchy existed between senior management and shop floor operatives, or their equivalent. 26 companies reported that 4-6 levels of hierarchy existed, while 23 held that just 1-3 levels operated in their organisation. Together they represent 86% of the total sample, indicating that most organisations in the survey have less than 6 levels of hierarchy in their particular structure.

The author was interested in calculating the average span of control within each respondent organisation, in order to determine how different structures reported. The average span of control indicated in the survey was between 10 and 18 subordinates, with which 35% of respondents concurred. Indeed, overall, 84% of the total responses indicated that their usual span of control was less than 24 individuals.

The results of these questions concerning organisation structure were further tabulated by the organisation in an effort to assess how changes in structure manifest in differing levels of hierarchy and usual spans of control. To this end organisation structure was cross tabulated with levels of hierarchy, controlling for span of control. See table 8.8 over for these results.
Table 8.8: Relationship Between Span of Control, Organisation Structure and Levels of Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Span of Control</th>
<th>Organisation Structure</th>
<th>Levels of Hierarchy</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matrix</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 25</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matrix</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 -50</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matrix</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reveals a number of interesting features. There appears to be no direct correlation between levels of hierarchy and span of control. For example, the table indicates that 22 companies have 1 - 3 levels of hierarchy within their organisation structure, yet the average span of control for those companies varies greatly from less than 10 right up to 50. Similarly, there appears to be no great correlation between the organisation structure, or either the span of control or levels of hierarchy operating therein. Hence, differing structural configurations must result from an alternative source.

Organisation ownership was next examined to determine whether it affected either the structure adopted by differing organisations, or the levels of hierarchy contained therein. Therefore, a cross-tabulation was effected between organisation structure and ownership, controlling for levels of hierarchy. See table 8.9 over.
Table 8.9: Relationship between Organisation Structure, Levels of Hierarchy and Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATION STRUCTURE</th>
<th>LEVELS OF HIERARCHY</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>ORGANISATION OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 +</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 +</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 +</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interesting points to note from the table include the following:

- None of the Irish organisations (public or private) adopt a matrix structure, and indeed tend to group themselves into the traditional type structure. Of these companies, 7 have in excess of six levels of hierarchy, all of which are public sector organisations, a result that is not altogether surprising, since these organisation types have traditionally been highly centralised, and often bureaucratic in nature. Irish Private sector organisations tend to have less than 6 levels of hierarchy.

- Of the non Irish organisations surveyed, 9 indicated a matrix structure (16% of the overall sample) and, for all structures, the most common number of hierarchial levels was less than 6.

It can therefore be surmised from the sample that Irish companies, in general, are still firmly entrenched in the traditional business structure mould, while their international counterparts have tended to decentralise somewhat and adopted the more flexible Product/Matrix type structures.
Earlier in the study, it was suggested that structure is often a product of the size of the organisation, and directly linked to the types of products/services provided (Robbins 1991). In order to examine the relative validity of this suggestion, and particularly in the context of the present study, a further cross-tabulation was completed on the results. Organisation structure was crossed with organisation size, all the while controlling for the products/services of each organisation. Table 8.10 below documents the findings of this cross-tabulation.

Table 8.10: Relationship between Organisation Structure, Products/Services and Number of People Employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE</th>
<th>PRODUCTS/ SERVICES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>≤ 100</td>
<td>101-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>High technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer products</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>High technology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer Products</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>High technology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer Products</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matrix</td>
<td>High technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table indicates that, of those 9 organisations earlier which reported a matrix structure, 3 produce high technology products, 2 engineering products and 4 professional services. One particularly interesting feature to note is that the size of the organisation, ie number of people employed, appears to have no direct effect on the type of structure utilised by the respondents, a point further elucidated when examined for each of the structures discussed. This is indeed worthy of note since...
the traditional assumption was that task oriented organisations employed a matrix type structure, particularly when operating in dynamic external environments. A further point to note from the table is that most of the traditional industries in the engineering sector tend primarily to adopt the traditional business structure, across all size categories. The same representation can be observed for consumer products.

8.8 SUMMARY

The survey covered 58 manufacturing and service companies which operate in a wide variety of industrial sectors. Three major groups of ownership were encountered - Irish, U.S./Japanese and European. Most of the sample were well established in their markets, having been in operation for at least 17 years, with size varying from less than 50 employees to greater than 1000. Products/Services produced were either high technology, professional services, consumer or engineering type products. The structure of these organisations varied considerably across all Industry types with those companies who operated in a highly competitive Industry ie. high technology/Electronic companies, more likely to adopt a matrix structure. Irish companies were found to employ the traditional functional structure, especially the Public Sector organisations, with the Private sector branching into Product/Market type structures. None of the Irish companies surveyed had a matrix structure. Finally, levels of hierarchy and spans of control were examined, and it emerged that there was no direct correlation between these, and the structural configuration adopted by the organisation.
CHAPTER 9: PROFILE OF TRAINING SPECIALISTS

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Biographical Data

9.3 Education of Respondents

9.4 Training Specialist's Position in the Organisation

9.5 Length of Service in Training and Development Function

9.6 Commitment to Training and Development

9.7 Salary of Training Specialist

9.8 Summary
9.1 INTRODUCTION
The scope of section five of the questionnaire was specifically geared towards eliciting as comprehensive a profile as possible, of specific individuals employed in Irish industry, whose primary organisational responsibility is training and development. Respondents were asked various questions concerning their age, education, position in the organisation, salary, commitment to the training and development function, and so forth.

9.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA
Of the 58 respondents surveyed, 38 were male and 20 were female - a ratio of almost 2:1. While it may appear to be primarily a male dominated area of specialism, these figures, none-the-less reflect a positive trend away from previous findings. The IDA conducted a survey of training practices and practitioners in Ireland, in 1982, and found, at that time, that 93% of respondents were male, while only 7% were female. Similarly, Shivanath (1988), in her study of personnel practitioners in Ireland, found that a substantially higher proportion of men than women were employed in the area of Personnel Management (62 as against 8 respectively) - a specialism that has traditionally been responsible for training and development. Therefore, in light of these results, the present ratio of 2:1 can be viewed most positively.

The age group of respondents varied considerably, with the greatest frequency recorded in the 25-29 age bracket, which represents just over 25% of total responses. However, almost 50% of the training specialists surveyed were aged less than 35 years. These results show a marked similarity to those found in the 1982 study, in which 47% of respondents were under the age of 35 years.

With respect to the nationality of the respondents, it was found that 94.7% (n=55)
were Irish, with just three individuals having other European nationality - two were British and one Swiss. These results tend to suggest that the vast majority of companies operating in Ireland, both indigenous and multinationals, tend to employ Irish training and development specialists.

When asked to indicate membership, or otherwise of particular associated bodies, 70% reported membership of the IITD, 50% were members of the IPM and 41% were members of the IMI.

9.3 EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS
With regard to the highest level of formal training received, it was found that only three specialists had completed no formal education after sitting their Leaving Certificate. On closer examination, it was found that these three individuals were all over the age of 50 years, and had gained considerable experience in other functional areas before joining the training and development function. With respect to the remaining 55 individuals, 34% (n=20) had undertaken a diploma, 32% (n=18) a primary degree, 10% (n=6) a post-graduate degree, while 18% (n=11) held a professional qualification. For the most part, these qualifications were of a business, or business related nature ie. BBS, B.Comm, MBA and so forth.

These findings on formal education were further cross-tabulated with respondents sex, in order to ascertain whether differences existed between the levels of education of male specialists compared with their female counterparts. If a positive difference were to emerge, then a valid explanation may accrue for the 2:1 representation ratio.

All of the female respondents had completed some form of formal education after their leaving certificate. 7 had completed a diploma (31.6% of total female responses), while 13 males had completed same (35.1%). 8 females held a
primary degree (42.1% of total female responses) - the equivalent percentage for male responses was 27%. 15.8% of females had completed a postgraduate degree (n=3), the male equivalent being just 8.1%. Finally, 10.5% of females undertook some professional qualification (n=2), while 21.6% of their male counterparts had completed same (n=9).

It must be observed that these results hold most favourably for female participants, and indeed for female training specialists generally, who, it can be observed, are more likely to have completed primary and/or postgraduate degree programmes, hence one cannot attribute the low representation of females in the training and development arena to lack of formal qualifications. Interestingly enough, more male than female specialists tend to opt for professional qualifications, which are generally completed once one is already in employment, and thus used for career advancement.

Taken together, the results indicate, most conclusively, that training specialists in Ireland are very highly educated individuals which must surely lend credibility to the status and functioning of the training and development initiative in Irish Industries.

9.4 THE TRAINING SPECIALIST'S POSITION IN THE ORGANISATION

Job titles vary across all organisations, particularly in the area of training and development/HRD, as was explained earlier in this research. One of the main difficulties confronted by the author concerned the manner in which differing job titles could be broadly equated in order to determine the relative level(s) in the organisation hierarchy at which training specialists operate. To this end job titles were classified according to widely recognised hierarchial positions such as Directorate level, management level and junior management (officer) level. The results of this classification are illustrated in table 9.1 over.
As can be seen from the table, most training specialists, of both sexes, operate at senior management level in their respective organisations. Certain differences between positions held by both sexes are worthy of interest. 15% of the surveyed female specialists operate at directorate level, or as heads of department, while the comparative figure for males is just over 5%. This may be explained by the fact that the females surveyed were more likely to have completed some degree programme, and hence have advanced to such positions as a direct result. However, bearing this reasoning in mind how does one explain that 60% of males operate at senior management level, while 45% of females hold a similar position? The author queried whether these results were a function of length of service in the training arena, but could find no discernible difference between the service length of both sexes. Little difference was observed at junior management level with 26% females and 30% males operating at this level in their respective organisations. The ‘other’ category in the table refers to line manager type positions, those individuals who are responsible for training in their organisation, but who are not directly employed in a training and development function.

Aligned to the positioning of training specialists in the organisation hierarchy, is the question of who, in the organisation, these individuals report to, in order to ascertain the relative power and authority legitimately granted to the training and development function. It was found that most respondents reported either directly to...
the general manager, or his/her equivalent, or to the head of human resources in their organisation, which equates to directorate level.

From a human resources perspective, these results auger well for the training and development movement, since they suggest that training specialists, in general, are in a position to operate at the strategic level in their organisation.

To determine the average span of control of training specialists, and thereby indicate, to some extent, the typical size of the training and development function, respondents were asked to indicate how many employees reported to them directly, or indirectly through subordinates. The results are indicated in table 9.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.2: Number of Employees Reporting to Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirectly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It emerged that most training specialists have less than 5 people reporting to them, either directly or indirectly, which suggests that the training function in most of the organisations surveyed employs few people. The typical response to the question above was that most individuals had between one and two subordinates reporting to them.

One should not be unduly surprised at these results since training was traditionally held to be the responsibility of the personnel department. Indeed, as late as 1988, Shivanath, in her study of personnel practitioners, found that all of her respondents rated training and development among their top three priorities. Placed within this context, one must view the above results, from a training and development
perspective, in a positive light, since they represent a step away existing as a subset of the personnel department, towards becoming an independent function in its own right.

9.5 LENGTH OF SERVICE IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION

Respondents were asked to indicate the length of time they had been employed in the training and development.

The responses indicate that just over 50% of respondents have been employed in the training and development area for less than three years, with 75% employed in the area for less than 10 years. These results further substantiate the point alluded to earlier, that the training and development function, in most of the organisations surveyed, is a relatively young one.

As an adjunct to the whole area of length of time employed in training and development, respondents were asked whether training and development was, in fact, their first career choice, and, if not, then what prompted them to join the function. Interestingly, only 18 respondents affirmed training as their first career choice, a mere 32% of the overall sample. Furthermore, of those 18 individuals, 13 were male, while only 5 were female, indicating that more men tend to enter the training arena as a priority choice. The remaining 40 respondents, who did not enter training as a first career choice, indicated that they joined the training and development function for one of two reasons, either because a position became vacant in the function which represented a step upwards for the individual, or for their own personal development. What is interesting to note is that only 4 individuals (all male) joined the function for it's organisation status, yet it has been established that the function appears to operate at a high level in the organisation, almost at the strategic level. Perhaps these results can be read to indicate that,
although the function is positioned favourably in the organisation hierarchy, the individual perception of the function in terms of status and power is not as positive as one would tend to expect. The extent to which this reasoning bears any validity shall be examined further in the research.

The author was also interested in finding out what attracted the training specialists to working within the area of training and development. To elicit this information, respondents were presented with a number of statements and asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with them. The results are presented in table 9.3 below, where the % figures on the right represent the number of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with the various statements.

| Table 9.3: Attraction of Training and Development Function for Training Specialists |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|
| Opportunity to utilise interpersonal skills | 97 |
| Opportunity to carry out good professional practices | 90 |
| Opportunity to work with organisational problems | 88 |
| Opportunity to act as facilitator of change | 83 |
| Opportunity to enhance personal development | 74 |
| Interesting subject matter involved | 69 |
| Opportunity to facilitate the development of others | 67 |
| Opportunity to act as a direct trainer | 66 |
| Gain experience for promotion to general management | 53 |
| Hierarchial position in the organisation | 17 |
| Job security attached to the position | 17 |

It can be seen from these results that the training specialists enjoy working within the training and development function because they are afforded an opportunity, not only to develop their own skills and abilities, but also to facilitate the development of others and act as an agent of change within the organisation. It is interesting to note that only 17% of respondents joined the function because it offered job security or because of its position in the hierarchy. This could indicate
that training specialists are concerned primarily with fulfilling their intrinsic work needs, or that the training and development function is not perceived as politically important in the organisation.

A further issue dealt with in the survey was an examination of the experience gained by training specialists in areas other than training and development, in order to determine whether the employment background of specialists varied to any great extent. Thus, respondents were asked to indicate any experience they had gained in other functional areas of at least six months duration. Only five respondents had no experience outside of the training area, while the employment backgrounds of the remaining respondents varied across all functional areas.

The greatest frequency of responses was recorded for general administration, of which almost 40% of specialists have some experience. Perhaps the most surprising result is that 13 of the 53 specialists have, at some stage in their career, held the position of general manager for a period of time. One possible explanation for this perceived downward 'progression' may be that their experience at general management level was with a small enterprise, perhaps self-owned, hence a move to managerial level in a larger organisation may, in fact, be a promotion of sorts. Aside from this result, the experience gained in other functional areas is as one might expect, where respondents appear to have worked in the general business environment for a period of time before deciding to specialise into one area of expertise. Finally, it was found that older specialists tended to have worked in more than one functional area before moving to training and development.

9.6 COMMITMENT TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Of particular interest to the author was whether those training specialists surveyed considered themselves an integral element of the training and development
function, and hence were committed to remaining within that department. To this end, respondents were asked to indicate whether, if offered a promotion within the training and development function, or in another managerial function and, all other things being equal (Salary, status and so forth) would they choose to remain within their present function. 36 specialists indicated that yes, they would remain with training and development, 20 specialists said no, while two individuals declined to respond, indicating that they did not know.

The results of this question become very interesting when compared to the responses elicited from the question posed immediately prior to it. This former question asked respondents where they viewed their career progressing to in the future. These results are tabulated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Management</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel/HRM</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed consultant</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning own business</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps the most revealing result is that only 11 specialists professed an interest in remaining within the training and development function, while 36 respondents earlier indicated a preference for remaining within the training function should they have a choice of promotion in that, or a different function. One can only surmise as to whether this professed commitment to the training and development function is merely of a short-term nature for many specialists who see themselves moving into other areas in the less immediate future.

It is also interesting to note the a large proportion of respondents aspire to general
management positions. A pertinent question to ask is whether specialists perceive the training and development function as a legitimate backdrop to progression to general management level. This question was later posed to respondents, to which 54% either agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, while just 25% said no - the remaining specialists did not know.

9.7 SALARY OF TRAINING SPECIALISTS

respondents were asked to indicate their annual basic salary, and furthermore, how they perceived this compared with that of their peers on other functional areas. Table 9.5 provides a breakdown of annual basic salary of respondents.

Table 9.5: Annual Salary of Specialists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£,000</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 14,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 19,999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29,999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000 +</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the respondents surveyed earned less than £10,000, while the highest frequency was recorded in the £30,000 plus salary bracket. When compared with their peers in other functional areas, 81% reported that their salary was higher, or as high. However, when salary was cross-tabulated with respondents’ sex, significant differences emerged. Only two female specialists earned greater than £30,000, indicating that the remaining 15 responses in that salary bracket were from male specialists. Furthermore, only seven female specialists surveyed earn in excess of £25,000 (35% of total female responses). The comparative frequency for male responses was 25 (65.8% of total responses). The average female specialist/s salary, from the survey, falls between £20 - 25,000, yet equivalent male earnings are in excess of £30,000. 30% of female respondents perceived that their
annual earnings were lower than their peers in other functional areas - only 7% of male specialists felt the same way. While it was not the intention of this discussion to focus on disparities between male and female training specialists remuneration, the author feels that the results documented above are disturbing, particularly where, in this country, employees tend to be rewarded on the basis of either seniority, or level of expertise/qualifications. Such findings are worthy of seriously consideration.

9.8 SUMMARY
A broad characterisation of the average training specialist operating in Irish Industry today, based on the findings of the present survey, would read as follows. The typical training specialist is male, in his late twenties and of Irish nationality. He holds either a diploma or degree in a business related subject, and is likely to be a member of the IITD. He operates at management level in his organisation, and reports to the general manager, or at board level. He has been employed in the training and development function for approximately four years, has two employees reporting to him, and joined the training function, not as a first career choice, but rather as a result of a promotion. He values his job not for the position he holds in the organisation, but rather for the opportunities it provides for him to get involved in various organisational activities. He has gained some experience in other functional areas before joining his present function, particularly in general administration, and he earns greater than £30,000 per year. While he views himself as committed to the training and development function, this commitment is likely to be of a short term nature, as he has ambitions to move into the broader area of HRM, or indeed general management in the future.

Now that the characteristics of training specialists have been discriminated, the next chapter shall focus on an examination of the training and development activities they undertake as part of their job routine.
CHAPTER 10: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Expenditure on Training and Development

10.3 Training and Development Activities Undertaken

10.4 Categories of Training and Development Provided

10.5 Training and Development Strategies Utilised

10.6 Evaluation of Training and Development Activities

10.7 Amount of Formal Training and Development Received

10.8 Responsibility for Training and Development Activities

10.9 Power of the Training and Development Function

10.10 Respondents' Perceptions of an Effective Training and Development Function

10.11 Summary
10.1 INTRODUCTION
This particular chapter examines the amount of money invested by respondent companies in the development of their human resources, and assesses whether the size of training and development budgets vary with changing organisation characteristics. It further documents the training and development activities practised by the respondents within these budgetary constraints, and proposes to examine whether these activities are strategic in nature, and whether training and development practices in general are moving towards the model of strategic HRD proposed earlier. Particular characteristics of strategic HRD, as derived from the literature, shall prove the benchmarks against which training and development activities shall be measured. These include a high integration with corporate strategic planning, comprehensive policy formulation, top management support and commitment, a high level of line management involvement, external environmental analysis and an ability to understand and engender a facilitative organisation culture.

10.2 EXPENDITURE ON TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
Unlike their French counterparts who are compelled, through legislation, to spend 1.2% of the annual salaries and wages on training, Irish companies are not required to invest a minimum proportion of annual turnover, or its equivalent, on updating the skills and knowledge of their employees, nor are they obliged to make known the amount they spend annually on the training and development function. These factors, compounded by the difficulty of costing training accurately, has led to past surveys merely estimating ‘possible average’ expenditure on individual employees in any given year (see chapter one for clarification). Notwithstanding the difficulties listed above, the present study attempted to elicit the scope of training and development budgets in the organisations surveyed by requesting respondents to indicate, in approximate terms, the amount of money spent annually.
on training and development in their organisation. Since budget size varied across all organisations, these results were computated into broad groupings, both for ease of comparison, and to allow the wide scope of this investment to clearly emerge. The size of training and development budgets varied considerably, with 20 companies (34.5%) indicating that they spent less than £30,000 on training and development, while 16 respondents (27.6%) reported spending in excess of £180,000 on the function. The remaining 22 companies' spending varied between these two amounts. Another interesting fact revealed by the results was that two companies spend close to £1 million on training and development - one of these companies was a public sector organisation, and the other a foreign multinational.

To determine a possible source of this variance a cross tabulation of training and development budgets with the approximate annual turnover of the respondent organisations was effected. Due to the wide disparity of turnover figures, these results were grouped by the author to allow for ease of comparison. The results of this cross tabulation are presented in table 10.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TURNOVER (£m)</th>
<th>TRAINING &amp; DEVELOPMENT BUDGET (£000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≤ 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30</td>
<td>36.1 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 89</td>
<td>5.2 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90+</td>
<td>1.8 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL | 43.1 (25) | 20.7 (12) | 8.6 (5) | 27.6 (16) | 100 (58) |

One would perhaps expect that, the greater the annual turnover of the organisation, the greater the size of the training and development budget would be. This was not
however, validated in the present study. 38 organisations reported an annual turnover of less than £30m, and, while 21 of these spend less than £60,000 on training and development, the remaining 17 companies' budgets vary in spending, right the way up to £180,000 plus. A similar trend is evident across all turnover categories, except perhaps in the highest one (£90m+), where 7 out of the 11 companies spend greater than £180,000 on training and development hence in this category, the larger annual turnover manifests itself in increased spending on training and development in two thirds of the respective companies. However, no clear trend emerges from these results, suggesting that something other than the size of the organisation's annual turnover determines the level of training and development investment.

Given that it was proposed earlier that training and development is contingent upon the size of the organisation (chapter four), a cross tabulation was effected between T&D budget and organisation size, to assess whether results would indicate that, as size increases, a concomitant increase in training and development investment occurs. Table 10.2 below represents the findings of this analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T&amp;D BUDGET (£000)</th>
<th>ORGANISATION &lt; 100</th>
<th>101-200</th>
<th>201-500</th>
<th>SIZE 501+</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 60,000</td>
<td>19.3 (11)</td>
<td>8.8 (5)</td>
<td>8.8 (5)</td>
<td>7.1 (4)</td>
<td>43.1 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 119</td>
<td>3.5 (2)</td>
<td>5.3 (3)</td>
<td>5.3 (5)</td>
<td>1.8 (1)</td>
<td>21.1 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 - 179</td>
<td>0 (2)</td>
<td>3.5 (3)</td>
<td>5.3 (3)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
<td>8.8 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 +</td>
<td>0 (2)</td>
<td>3.5 (4)</td>
<td>7.0 (4)</td>
<td>17.6 (10)</td>
<td>28.1 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22.8 (13)</td>
<td>19.3 (12)</td>
<td>29.8 (17)</td>
<td>28.0 (16)</td>
<td>100% (57)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The anticipated pattern of smaller organisations spending less on training and development than larger ones, is confirmed for those employing less than 50 individuals. All of these companies spend less than £30,000 on training and development, with this spending falling to as little as £3,000 in one indigenous Irish company. Since smaller organisations tend to have fewer resources than their larger counterparts, it is felt that smaller organisations would, in all probability, rely heavily on facilities made available by state institutions, such as FAS, to provide their training needs. Incidentally, just over 50% (n=30) of respondent companies reported receiving state assistance for training purposes. The majority of these companies were small to medium concerns, with their state assistance accounting for just less than 20% of the overall training and development budget in one third of the organisations (n=10), to as high as 65% for the remaining 20 organisations.

The training and development budgets of those companies employing more than 100 employees vary considerably. However, a slight trend emerges. Of the 16 companies who employ more than 1000 people, 10 of these spend £180,000 plus on training and developing their staff. Thus training and development budget may well be a function of size for the very small and the very large companies, but does not explain variances in budgets for those organisations that employ between 100 and 500 persons.

Since neither organisation turnover or organisation size provided a sufficiently generalisable explanation for variances in training and development budgets, it was decided to assess whether different organisation categories could provide a more plausible result. Training and development budget was therefore cross tabulated with ownership groups in an effort to identify a possible cause/effect relationship. Table 10.3 over outlines the results of this analysis.
Table 10.3: Relationship Between Size of Training and Development Budget and Organisation Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T&amp;D BUDGET (£000)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP GROUPS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>US/Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 119</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 - 179</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 +</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Public sector has traditionally provided a considerable amount of training, with training expenditure reflecting this activity (see chapter one). The results above suggest that the Irish Public sector spends proportionately more on training and development, than the Private sector, but not substantially so. With regard to the spending of the non Irish organisations, it can be seen that expenditure does not differ significantly across ownership groups, except perhaps for the Japanese organisations whose budgets one may have expected to be much larger than the results indicate. European and US organisations tend to spend slightly more than the indigenous Irish private sector organisations, but one remember that the larger proportion of this ownership group are small concerns, employing less than 100 employees, and earlier results have suggested that there is a direct correlation between organisation size and training and development budget size, for small companies. However, from a overall perspective, it would appear that different ownership groupings cannot adequately explain variances in training and development budgets, so a further causal relationship must be unearthed.

10.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

Since a key objective of the research was to determine whether strategic HRD, or elements thereof, is being practised in Ireland, it became necessary to extract the
key activities undertaken by training specialists in their daily work routine. To elicit
this information, respondents were provided with a comprehensive list of HRD
activities, and asked to indicate those activities they undertake regularly. From the
completed questionnaires, a table was drawn up to report, in order of frequency
undertaken, those activities practised by Irish training specialists. This table is
presented below, where percentage figures are rounded off to the nearest decimal.

Table 10.4: Relationship between Activities Undertaken, Organisation Size
and Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>USED %</th>
<th>ORGANISATION SIZE</th>
<th></th>
<th>ORGANISATION SIZE</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of T&amp;D needs</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice and guidance to line managers on T&amp;D activities</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of T&amp;D programmes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation of T&amp;D policies</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice to individual employees on T&amp;D issues</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing physical resources for T&amp;D</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking direct training activities</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing top management of T&amp;D achievements</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation of yearly T&amp;D plans</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with Personnel function for integration purposes</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation and monitoring of budgets</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing innovative and change activities in the organisation</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking manpower planning related activities</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising top management of implications for T&amp;D of corporate strategy</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting annual T&amp;D audits</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking personnel activities</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of external environment to assess implications for T&amp;D</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It emerges that over 80% of respondents are actively involved in the identification
of training and development needs, which is evident across all organisation sizes
and ownership groups. The evaluation of training and development programmes
was undertaken by 83% of specialists, but the cross tabulation indicates that this is
only undertaken by 27% of organisations employing less than 100 people, and
indeed by just 65% of all Irish organisations. This low level of evaluation in Irish

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owned organisations vis a vis US/Japanese and European ownership groups, at 93% and 90% respectively, may be due to the fact that most of the organisations employing less than 100 employees are, in fact, Irish companies. Specialists also cited the advising of line managers on training and development activities as a primary undertaking (83%) while training and development policy formulation represents a key activity area for 74% of specialists. However, these do not appear to be priority activities among both small organisations (22% and 14% respectively for those organisations who employ less than 100 people), and Irish owned concerns (57% and 37% respectively). These compare unfavourably with medium sized organisations (79% and 68%) and large organisations (89% and 87%). The comparison is similarly unfavourable with respect to non-Irish owned concerns.

However, in determining the extent to which the training and development practices of respondent specialists reflect a strategic orientation, it becomes necessary to extract a number of key activities from the table that are, in fact, considered strategic, and examine the response frequencies to these activities. In explicating several characteristics of a strategic HRD function earlier in chapter two, it was held that environmental scanning was a critical determinant of a strategic orientation - in other words the training and development function in general, and training specialist specifically, must take cognisance of the environment within which the organisation operates, in order to accurately assess whether changes will be required, both to the present level of skills maintained, and to the overriding corporate strategy, with its inherent implications for HR functioning.

In this survey however, less than 40% of respondents monitor their external environment, only 46% advise top management of the implications of the corporate strategy for training and development, and only half of the specialists are actively involved in implementing change in the organisation. Only 5% of specialists in small organisations monitor their external environment, while just 11% of them...
advise top management on corporate strategy implications, both figures being considerably lower than those reported for larger concerns. The corresponding percentages for Irish owned organisations are similarly low at 19% and 27% respectively. Given the importance of anticipating future changes and planning accordingly, and the unique position of the training specialist to engender organisational change, it is disappointing to note that few of specialists surveyed undertake such activities.

The table further reveals that just 53% of respondents formulate and monitor training and development budgets and, while training and development programmes are evaluated, formal audits of these activities, which would provide measurable results of the effectiveness of these programmes to the organisation, are undertaken by just 46% of specialists. These results suggest that training specialists are less involved at the strategic level, than is necessary if the training and development function is to adopt a strategic focus.

While the results may be viewed in a positive light, since it is evident that training and development is a systematic, planned activity, they also suggest that the training specialists reflect a greater concern for the activities themselves, than they do for getting involved in the more strategic aspects of training and development generally. This was further borne out where respondents were asked to rank what they perceived to be the five most important activities undertaken. Identification of training and development needs was ranked the most important activity undertaken by the training specialists, and one must make the point that, while this activity constitutes a necessary part of their job, it is also an area that is increasingly being recognised as the responsibility of line managers. In light of this, it becomes necessary for specialists to concentrate their efforts in other activity areas, and approach the training and development function in a more holistic fashion.

The second most important activity, according to the specialists' ranking, was the
formulation of policies, while advice to line managers was ranked third and training and development evaluation number four. Interestingly enough, informing top management of training and development achievement was ranked number 5, and one cannot help wondering whether this is carried out in an effort to legitimised the training and development function. Similarly, one could suggest that this is not a reflection of strategic training and development, since the latter would have top management support and commitment, hence an inbuilt awareness of, and involvement in training and development achievements.

10.4 CATEGORIES OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED
Since a considerable amount of training is being carried out, it became necessary to isolate the categories of training that are most utilised. As with previous questions, respondents were asked to identify the categories of training that were used regularly in their organisation, from a list provided. Table 10.5 below presents these results in descending frequency of responses.

Table 10.5: Categories of Training and Development Undertaken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>UNDERTAKEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory training</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction training</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management training and development</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety training</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical training</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer skills training</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team training and development</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service training</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal/Personal skills training</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship training</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for JIT/TQM</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Sales training</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language training</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product training</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator training</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials/Inventory management</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiskilling at operator level</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management training</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation development activities</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality/SPC training</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development workshops</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Not surprisingly, Supervisory training, Induction training, Health and Safety training and Technical training emerge as the most frequently undertaken categories of training. One might even suggest that these categories of training are almost unavoidable, and for the following reasons.

Health and Safety training has grown dramatically in importance since the enactment of recent legislation in this area, making it impossible to meet the minimum standards of safety laid down, without providing some measure of training in this area. Technical training is becoming increasingly critical, given the rate of technological change and the dynamic environment within which many of the organisations surveyed operate. Increased emphasis is being placed on Induction training as a means of managing the socialisation processes of new employees, and indoctrinating them with the values and beliefs of the organisation culture.

The high incidents of Supervisory training, which was cited as the most frequent activity undertaken (81%), may be as a direct result of the changing nature of the supervisor's role in recent times. Traditionally this role was one that was embedded in command/obey principles, whereas more recently, the focus has shifted towards facilitation, with individuals at lower levels in the organisation now working with, as opposed to for the supervisor. Clearly, the skills required to work in the latter mode are significantly different to those he/she was traditionally supplied with, hence the focus on supervisory training to provide the requisite skills and abilities to match the changing focus of the job.

The reported level of management training and development undertaken (76%) may be considered surprising, given the less than favourable results of the Galvin report in 1988 (see chapter one for detailed explanation). One possible explanation for this upsurge in management training and development may be that,
not only did the Galvin report focus attention on the low level of management training and development, it also highlighted the necessity of well trained and developed managers for the economic viability of Irish companies. Perhaps this hard hitting argument caused organisations to take a look at their current practices, so that, four years later, we are seeing an upsurge of management training and development activities as a result.

One might have expected the practice of JIT, Quality and Customer Service training to be greater than is indicated, since it is held that quality is fast becoming the pivot upon which competitive advantage hinge, and organisation are striving to develop a quality initiative at all levels of the organisation. Similarly, one may have expected the incidents of multi-skilling (31%) and team training and development (52%) to be higher, given the increasing move towards flexibility and autonomous working units, as a means of increasing effectiveness.

A most interesting result emerged when respondents were asked to rank these training and development categories in order of their perceived importance. Team training and development was ranked number one, which is strange, given that just about half of the respondents undertake this category of training. Two possible explanations for this ranking emerge:

- Since team training and development is generally perceived as a means of inculcating a key set of values in the individual, that align with organisational goals and missions, it may be perceived as the most important activity by specialists for strategic reasons
- Alternatively the ranking may be a function of the sample itself. Many of the respondent companies were multi-nationals operating in Ireland, who, in general, place considerable emphasis on organisation culture, and techniques to reinforce that culture - team training and development is one such technique. Were this the perception of these organisations, then most specialists in these organisations,
would, more than likely, rank team training and development as number one. The other rankings (2 - 5 inclusive) followed the frequency of responses in the table, for the first five categories.

From an overall perspective, it may be suggested that the categories of training and development undertaken, reflect a greater concern for skills acquisition for the short-term, than they do for the strategic development of employees for the future. This may indicate that organisations have not fully grasped the significance of strategic training and development, and its consequent implications for the effective functioning of the organisation.

10.5 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES UTILISED

A final area of interest concerned the identification of the training and development strategies most utilised by training specialists, and furthermore, the relationship between the training strategy used, the size of the organisation and the ownership categories. The same procedure was followed as with previous questions, and table 10.6 below presents this information, in decreasing order of frequency reported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>USED %</th>
<th>SIZE ≤100</th>
<th>100-500</th>
<th>500+</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-job training and development</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External formal T&amp;D programmes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house formal T&amp;D programmes</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time professional training/education</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned T&amp;D activities in different departments</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open/Distant learning</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company and customer visits</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action learning</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special projects/task force participation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondment to other organisations</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time education</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

187
The results reveal that on-the-job training is the most frequently used training strategy for 91% of the total sample. When this was cross tabulated with both size and ownership, no significant differences emerged across categories. This training strategy was traditionally perceived as ineffective since it was usually unplanned, unsystematic, informal and difficult to evaluate. This perception has changed over the years, to the extent that OJT is now recognised as a valid training mechanism. Undue reliance on any one training strategy might warrant questioning, but it is evident from the study that most companies utilise more than one strategy in their training and development initiative. Internal and external formal training and development programmes and part-time professional training/education are all used regularly by respondent organisations (reported frequencies of over 70% for each strategy), which indicates that a careful balance is struck between formal and informal training and development strategies, in an effort to maximise returns. However, the results indicate that larger organisations are more likely to utilise these strategies than are smaller organisations, but ownership was not a deciding factor for any one.

It is worth noting, however, that the long-term developmental strategies listed in the table have very low frequencies ascribed to them i.e. Secondment (19%), Special Projects (36%) and Action learning (38%), but tend to be utilised more regularly by larger organisations, and non Irish owned organisations. This low usage of such strategies may indicates that organisations generally, and Irish organisations in particular, are consistently failing to adopt a strategic approach, both to the training initiatives undertaken, and the medium through which these activities are provided. The ranking of these activities followed frequency of utilisation, with OJT perceived as most important, external formal courses next most important, and so forth.
10.6 EVALUATION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Having earlier established that over 80% of respondents evaluate their training and development programmes, the criteria used in this evaluation shall be further examined. As with training and development activities earlier, respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of criteria included, which evaluation techniques they used to assess the contribution of training and development to the organisation. Table 10.7 presents these findings in decreasing order of frequency undertaken. The table also presents the results of a cross tabulation between the evaluation criteria used, and both the size and ownership of the organisation.

Table 10.7: Relationship Between Criteria Used to Assess Training and Development Activities, Organisation Size and Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>USED %</th>
<th>Size ≤100</th>
<th>Size 100-500</th>
<th>Size 501+</th>
<th>Ownership Irish US/Japan European</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees trained</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting objectives in T&amp;D plan</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of T&amp;D needs met</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the needs of employees</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing high quality T&amp;D activities</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories of workers trained</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of days training undertaken</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;D activities provided within allocated budget</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of training programmes undertaken</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating major changes in the organisation</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance speeds after training</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to meet customer quality standards</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution towards specific cost savings</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved communications</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of training course days</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time saved by a particular method</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales performance after training</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to meet demands of line departments for trained staff</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of need to recruit or employ trained staff</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased individual promotability</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam pass rates</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved ability to recruit</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved graduate retention rates</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to earn maximum bonuses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In relation to training and development evaluation, it needs to be pointed out that a distinction can be made between what are considered "hard evaluation criteria" and "soft evaluation criteria". The hard criteria used in the present study were:

a) number of employees trained; b) categories of workers trained; c) number of days training undertaken; d) contribution towards specific cost savings; e) number of training course days; and f) exam pass rates. Clearly, while these criteria are often used, possibly because of the need for the training and development function to be seen to be making a tangible contribution at the bottom line, they are not true evaluation techniques. They indicate neither the quality of training received by employees, nor the degree to which this training was effective.

For the total sample, the technique most utilised by specialists was the number of employees trained (72%), which, it must be said, cannot conceivably be termed a strategic method of evaluation, given the problems associated with hard evaluation criteria. A significant difference emerged in the level of utilisation of this technique across all organisation sizes, where small organisations were twice as likely to utilise this evaluation technique than were large organisations (95% as against 45%). Furthermore, in relation to ownership, Irish organisations were more likely to utilise this technique than were their foreign counterparts. Meeting the objectives set out in the training and development plan was the second most utilised evaluation technique (62%). The degree to which this technique may be termed strategic depends upon the objectives set out in the plan - whether these objectives are simply procedural (short-term) or focus on developing employees today for the needs of tomorrow (proactive/strategic). In the study, large organisations were twice as likely to utilise this evaluation technique as opposed to smaller organisations, but organisation ownership was not found to influence this decision in any significant fashion.

Types of training needs met was the third most popular technique used (59%), with
meeting the needs of individual employees fourth and providing high quality training and development activities fifth. No significant differences emerged when types of training and development needs met and individual employee needs were cross tabulated with size and ownership. However, the provision of quality training and development as an evaluation technique was found to be used in 79% of large organisations (as against 32% in small companies), and in 94% of US/Japanese organisations - the corresponding percentage for European companies was 78%, and only 43% in Irish owned concerns. Reading through the table it emerges that Irish organisations tend to use hard evaluation criteria much more frequently than do the non Irish respondents. A similar propensity to use hard evaluation criteria is evident among small organisations.

A more strategic measure of effectiveness might include the ability to meet the demands of line managers for trained staff, and thereby alleviate the problem of skills shortages. A mere 25% of the sample utilise this as a evaluation tool. When crossed with organisation size, it emerged that large organisations were far more likely to use this evaluation technique than were small organisations (35% as against 8%). Ownership was also found to be significant, with 57% US/Japanese companies employing this technique, as opposed to only 11% of Irish organisations. Elimination of the need to recruit or employ trained staff may also denote elements of a strategic imperative, which only 24% of companies undertake. Similarly, increased individual promotability as an evaluation tool would suggest that the organisation plans for the future, and views human resources as a critical element of ‘successful’ practice - just 24% of companies use this as an evaluation tool.

When asked to rank these evaluation techniques according to their perceived importance, respondents cited meeting the objectives set out in the training and
development plan as the most important technique. Providing high quality training and development activities was ranked number two, while contributions towards specific cost savings was ranked number three, Training and development provided within allocated budgets number four and finally, the number of employees trained was ranked fifth.

These results suggest that the activities carried out by training specialists, and the evaluation techniques utilised, are an integral aspect of the organisations functioning, and, while they represent a move away from the unsystematic traditional model of training and development, they are, as yet, too short-term oriented to encapsulate the essence of strategic training and development/HRD. Irish owned companies, and the small companies surveyed, were found to use hard evaluation criteria which, given their inability to measure the quality or effectiveness of training and development activities, or the contribution of training and development to organisation goals, cannot be perceived as strategic evaluation techniques.

10.7 AMOUNT OF FORMAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT RECEIVED

Since it became evident from earlier results that a considerable amount of training and development was being carried out, it was important to determine how this activity was being translated into particular days training for categories of employees on a yearly basis. Table 10.8 over presents these findings.
Table 10.8: Formal Training Received by Category of Employee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Employee</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>&lt;1 day</th>
<th>1-3 days</th>
<th>4-7 days</th>
<th>8-12 days</th>
<th>12+days</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Managers</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Managers</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Specialists</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Specialists</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior managers</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin staff</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial staff</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production operatives</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reveals that most employees, across all organisational levels receive some formal training every year, with managers, functional and technical specialists receiving training of a much longer duration that those lower down in the hierarchy. Over half of the companies surveyed (n=31) indicated that their senior managers receive eight or more days of formal training per year, while 34.5% of respondents' senior management receiving 12 plus days training. A similar trend is evident through the next three categories listed in the table, with the highest frequencies recorded in the 12 days plus category.

The table further reveals that most employees, at all levels receive a minimum of 1-3 days formal training, and indeed, in many companies, this figure can be as high as 4-7 days, if not more. These findings compare most favourable with the results of
the FAS (1989) study which found that, on average, every employee received just one day of formal training per year.

It is interesting to note is that the greatest proportion of training and development, in terms of formal days training, is being given to senior management, and managerial type positions, yet these categories of employees represent a very small percentage of the total workforce employed in most organisations. Table 7.5 earlier in this chapter delineated that either of these positions usually account for less than 10% of an organisation's total workforce. The Price Waterhouse Cranfield project (1990), in its international survey of strategic HRM, found that training expenditure tended to focus on the upper echelons of the organisation, particularly management. We can witness a similar trend emerging in Ireland. The 1990 study further found that only 10% of the organisations surveyed provided training of ten days or more for management, profession and technical employees. One might be surprised to note that the results indicated in the table above suggest that Ireland provides greater training opportunities for management and management type employees (12+days), which reinforces the point made earlier that Irish companies invest considerably more in management development initiatives, than they appeared to back in 1988, when the Galvin report published its results.

A particularly disturbing point to note however, and this was iterated in the Price Waterhouse Cranfield study (1990), is that, with increased emphasis being placed on customer service and quality initiatives as a means of attaining a competitive edge, this overt reliance on the training and development of the upper section of the organisation's hierarchy might well prove a false economy.
10.8 RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

A further area of interest was concerned with determining who in the organisation was responsible for undertaking training and development within the organisation, since earlier, line management involvement was considered crucial to the adoption of a strategic orientation to the development of human resources. Respondents were presented with a list of activities, and asked to indicate whether responsibility for these activity areas rested with themselves (training specialists), with line managers, or with both. Table 10.9 presents these results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Training Specialist</th>
<th>Line Manager</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of T&amp;D needs</td>
<td>16 26</td>
<td>10 18</td>
<td>32 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation of T&amp;D policies</td>
<td>35 76</td>
<td>3 7</td>
<td>08 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation of T&amp;D policies into plans</td>
<td>28 68</td>
<td>4 10</td>
<td>09 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of T&amp;D methods to be used</td>
<td>30 52</td>
<td>7 12</td>
<td>21 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding who in the Org. is to be trained</td>
<td>10 17</td>
<td>17 29</td>
<td>31 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking direct training</td>
<td>08 16</td>
<td>12 24</td>
<td>31 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of T&amp;D activities</td>
<td>28 56</td>
<td>2 4</td>
<td>20 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession planning</td>
<td>15 43</td>
<td>6 17</td>
<td>14 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising top mngt. of implications of corporate strategy for T&amp;D</td>
<td>29 87</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>04 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reveals that line managers have an active role to play in training and development in their organisation. However, a closer examination of these results indicates that line management responsibility and participation is largely confined to the operational aspects of training and development, and less with policy and planning activities. Activities such as the identification of training and development needs, deciding who is to be trained, and undertaking direct training can be seen to be the domain of line managers, or a joint undertaking between the training specialist and the line manager. But, policy formulation, the translation of policies into plans, and advising top management of corporate strategy implications for...
training and development are almost exclusively the responsibility of training specialists. It becomes evident that these results indicate that, while line managers are more involved in training and development than was traditionally the case, they are excluded from the more strategic activities, which may well result in alienation, or disputes concerning ownership and control of the function.

10.9 POWER OF THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION

In order to assess the power position of the training and development function, the author used Pfeffer & Salancik (1977) Strategic Contingencies Model, which is useful in assessing the horizontal power position of an organisational department. Five particular power dimensions have been chosen, and several scaled measurement statements were included in the questionnaire to elicit the relative power position of training and development for each one. Each of these power dimensions shall be examined in turn.

1. Centrality: Measures the degree to which the training and development function is integrated into the key business activities of the organisation. A total of five scales were used to measure centrality and are presented in table 10.10.

Table 10.10: Centrality of the Training and Development Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENTRALITY CONTINGENCIES</th>
<th>SCALED RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of T&amp;D has regular contact with other key managers in the organisation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development is perceived as “part of the business”</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a low level of integration between the T&amp;D function and Organisation goals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training specialist is not highly involved in senior level decision making</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function operates at all levels and parts of the business</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the whole the pattern of responses is positive and is indicative of a relatively high level of centrality. In particular two of the results are worth highlighting, namely integration with organisational goals and mission, and training specialist involvement in senior level decision making. Both of these criteria may be viewed as the most tangible measures of centrality. However, the pattern of responses for these is less decisive, with 18 respondents agreeing that there is a low level of integration between training and development and organisation goals and mission, and a further 26 respondents agreeing that the training specialist is not involved in senior level decision making. Clearly both of these are necessary prerequisites for the emergence of strategic HRD, and without a strong power position in these areas, the training and development function cannot hope to operate at a strategic level in the organisation.

2. **Substitutability**: Measures the extent to which training and development responsibilities can be undertaken by individuals outside of the training and development function. Table 10.11 below presents the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBSTITUTABILITY CONTINGENCIES</th>
<th>SCALED RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line managers are mainly responsible for implementing T&amp;D policies</td>
<td>Strongly Agree 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development strategies are mainly confined to external activities</td>
<td>Strongly Agree 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation relies mainly on external training and development resources</td>
<td>Strongly Agree 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line managers rely totally on the training specialist to undertake T&amp;D activities</td>
<td>Strongly Agree 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that a relatively low level of substitutability exists for the training and development function. Over half of the respondents to each question
either disagree or strongly disagree that the activities carried out by the training and development function can be ascribed to individuals operating outside of the function, such as line managers. However, while these results auger well for the power position of the training and development function, they are not necessarily positive results for the emergence of strategic HRD, since, as the literature revealed, high line management involvement is essential for training and development to operate at a strategic level.

3. **Control of resources**: Measures the degree to which the training and development function controls resources or other functions, or has the ability to command resources within the organisation. Table 10.12 presents the response frequencies to this dimension.

Table 10.12: Level of Resource Control of the Training and Development Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTROL CONTINGENCIES</th>
<th>SCALED</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources allocated to the T&amp;D function are based on the strategic goals of the organisation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22 6 22 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function has the ability to ensure line managers carry out their T&amp;D requirements</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31 3 14 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development policies are supported by a specific training budget</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36 0 9 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An annual budget is set aside for the T&amp;D function</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26 2 10 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function is a source of important information to the organisation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37 7 7 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function controls resources that are required by others in the organisation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21 7 25 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results on control of resources are primarily positive and indicate that the training and development function commands a certain level of investment in its activities, and has the ability to ensure line managers carry out their training and
development responsibilities. However, it must be noted that 25 respondents feel that resources allocated to the training and development function are not based on the strategic goals of the organisation, while 29 respondents indicate that the resources controlled by the training and development function are not required by others in the organisation. These results are significant since the function must be seen to control resources that others are dependent upon, and must align its objectives to those of the organisation if it is to adopt a strategic orientation.

4. **Expertise**: Measures the degree to which training and development staff are perceived as experts by others in the organisation, and the degree to which they are accredited with power and influence as a result. Six statements measuring expertise, power and influence were included in the questionnaire, and the measured responses to these are presented in table 10.13 below.

**Table 10.13: Perception of Expertise of the Training and Development Function**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERTISE CONTINGENCIES</th>
<th>SCALED RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function has the ability to diagnose problems and anticipate needs</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function has the expertise to determine and implement appropriate solutions once problems are diagnosed</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training specialist has much less power than his/her peers in other departments</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the T&amp;D function are perceived as experts by their peers</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training specialist has much more influence than his/her peers in the organisation</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two distinct set of results emerge from the response pattern in the table. While the function is perceived as having expert power, individuals within the function, such as the training specialist, feel they are not accredited with the same level of
expertise, and consequently tend to score lower on both power and influence dimensions. These results are significant since the literature reviewed earlier suggests that much organisational power resides in the individual, thus to operate strategically, training specialist must take account of their function's power, and use this to strengthen and legitimise their position in the organisation.

5. **Coping with uncertainty**: Measures the ability of the training and development function to monitor the external environment, particularly in unstable conditions, and to market human resources as a critical weapon in achieving competitiveness. Table 10.14 below presents the scaled responses to statements measuring this ability to cope with uncertainty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNCERTAINTY CONTINGENCIES</th>
<th>SCALED</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function is supported by a corporate training and development mission statement</td>
<td>8  19   2  22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources are viewed by top management as a means of attaining competitive advantage</td>
<td>12  22  8  10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The T&amp;D function has the capacity to enable the organisation to manage its external environment</td>
<td>1  15  17  22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results presented above, from a strategic perspective, are not positive. While human resources were viewed by top management as a means of attaining competitive advantage in 34 of the companies surveyed, only 27 respondents indicated that their function was supported by a corporate training and development mission statement. Furthermore, 24 respondents felt that the training and development function did not have the capacity to enable the organisation to manage its external environment, while a further 17 respondents were unsure.
Literature examined earlier indicated that top management support alone is not sufficient to enable the training and development function to operate strategically - this support must translate into a tangible mission statement to enable a high level of integration between training and development and organisational goals. Similarly, a key characteristic of strategic HRD that emerged from the literature was the ability of training and development staff to monitor and analyse the external environment - this ability is not demonstrated in the results reported.

From an overall perspective, the results indicate that the training and development function possesses considerable horizontal power, particularly along the centrality and substitutability power dimensions. However, the training specialists do not consider themselves to possess a similarly high level of power.

10.10 TRAINING SPECIALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION

Since this chapter has focused on determining the degree to which training and development activities carried out in the sample are strategic, it was deemed appropriate to provide a list of those activities the training specialists perceived as necessary for effective training and development functioning. Question 50 asked respondents to describe an effective training and development function, and presented them with a number of key training and development criteria. They were required to rank these criteria from 1-12, with 1=most important, 2=next most important, and so forth, with 12=least important. They were further required to rate the effectiveness of their organisation's training and development function on each criterion, where 5=very effective, 4=effective, 3=not sure, 2=ineffective and 1=very ineffective (see appendix for questionnaire). Finally question 51 asked respondents to rate the overall effectiveness of the training and development function in their organisation, using the same rating scale as described above.
Table 10.15 below presents the results obtained for each of these questions.

### Table 10.15: Training Specialists’ Perceptions of an Effective Training and Development Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA</th>
<th>RANKED RATED</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP WITH OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS PERCEPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived and used as a critical resource</td>
<td>1 2 1 4 1 2 2 2 3 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived as internal consultant to management</td>
<td>2 2 2 4 3 2 3 2 5 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived as an asset rather than a liability</td>
<td>3 4 4 5 2 4 1 1 1 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed at appropriate level in the hierarchy</td>
<td>4 4 5 5 4 4 4 4 4 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides high quality T&amp;D services</td>
<td>5 4 3 4 5 5 5 2 8 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High levels of creativity within the function</td>
<td>6 4 11 5 9 5 9 3 12 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High levels of internal and external trust and respect</td>
<td>7 4 7 5 7 4 10 2 8 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High levels of staff teamwork, creativity and flexibility</td>
<td>8 4 8 5 8 4 11 2 11 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to meet all T&amp;D requirements within specified time scales</td>
<td>9 4 9 5 6 4 6 4 6 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving objectives within the set T&amp;D budget</td>
<td>10 2 10 2 10 3 7 2 7 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to anticipate and plan for problems which may arise</td>
<td>11 1 6 2 11 2 12 1 9 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, or few, budgetary constraints</td>
<td>12 2 12 5 12 2 8 2 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table that the training specialists surveyed are fully aware of the importance of training and development, and the need for the function to be recognised as a critical strategic tool to increase the competitive performance of organisations. The top four rankings ascribed by specialists are fundamentally concerned with profiling the training and development function as a positive contributor to organisational effectiveness. Rankings 4-8 reflect a concern both for the quality of training and development programmes provided, and the expertise of the training and development staff themselves. Rankings 9,10 and 12 suggest that training specialists are less concerned with the operating problems associated with training and development (budgets, plans, time constraints) than with the quality of the output itself (programmes and activities).
Perhaps the most disturbing ranking is number 11, which suggests that training specialists are unaware of the necessity of being able to anticipate future problems, and plan accordingly. This ranking serves to reinforce results obtained earlier which suggested that training and development activities lack a strategic, proactive focus.

Turning to levels of perceived effectiveness, it can be seen that rating for each of the criteria outlined varied considerably. No criterion was rated very effective, while seven were considered to be effective. These were as follows: the function being placed at an appropriate level; high levels of internal and external trust and respect; perceived by the organisation as an asset rather than a liability; high levels of staff teamwork, creativity and flexibility; high levels of creativity within the function itself; ability to meet training and development requirements within specified time scales; and the provision of high quality training and development services. These results are all indicative of the existence of a high level of expertise occurring in the function itself, which reinforces the earlier findings on the perceived expert power of the training and development function.

Four criteria were rated ineffective and were: top management perceives and uses the function as a critical resource; function perceived as internal consultant to management; achieving objectives within the set training and development budget; and no, or few, budgetary constraints. Just one was rated as very ineffective by respondents and that was the ability to anticipate and plan for problems which may arise. Two key points can be made about these results. Firstly training specialists are not satisfied with the budget allocated to developing human resources, and secondly, these are key areas in which effectiveness will need to be achieved if training and development is to operate strategically.

Finally, in relation to the perceived overall effectiveness of each respondent's
training and development function, 5 rated their function as very effective, 34 rated their function as effective, 5 were unsure, 8 rated their function as ineffective, and 6 rated their function as very ineffective. Returning to the table, it emerges that those who rated their function as very effective overall, tended also to rate their function as very effective or effective against key strategic criteria, while those who gave a very ineffective rating to their overall training and development function tended to rate their function’s performance as ineffective against most criteria.

10.11 SUMMARY
This chapter examined the activities undertaken by training specialists in their daily job routine, and sought to determine whether these activities reflected elements of strategic HRD. Results suggested that the activities undertaken, while indicative of systematic training and development, were too results oriented to be truly strategic. These activities reflected a strong preoccupation with the operational aspects of training and development, to the extent that the more strategic activities were largely neglected. Activities undertaken were cross tabulated with various organisational characteristics, and some significant trends emerged.

A similar operational focus was observed for the evaluation techniques used. Many were not true evaluation techniques at all, in that they merely measured the amount of employees who had received training, and gave no thought to the quality or effectiveness of that training. The more valid techniques used reflected a concern with the immediate value accruing to the organisation, and did not appear to consider the long-term effectiveness of this training and development.

The categories of training undertaken tended to reflect the changing needs of Industry where emphasis was placed on supervisory training, health and safety training and management development. However, while most specialists indicated that team training and development was, in their opinion, the most important category, just slightly more than half of them were found to undertake it. Long term
developmental categories of training and development tended to be neglected in favour of categories that would result in immediate gains.

Most specialists used a variety of training and development strategies, the most popular of which were OJT, external and internal formal programmes.

Senior managers, and those at the upper end of the organisation hierarchy, tended to receive the most formal training - at least 8 days formal training per year. These results are significant since these same categories account for a very small number of the total employed workforce. One must query whether this reliance on the upper echelons of the hierarchy reflects the effective optimisation of human resources.

Lime management was found to have significant responsibility for training and development activities. However, a closer examination revealed that line managers are typically involved with the operational aspects of training and development, and are less involved with the strategic activities of policy and planning formulation, or advising top management of corporate strategy implications for training and development.

On the issue of power, the training and development function was found to possess a relatively high degree of functional power, while training specialists themselves felt that they possessed less power than may be needed to operate strategically.

Finally, it emerged that training specialists perceive an effective training and development function as one which has a strong profile in the organisation and is placed in the hierarchy where it is recognised as a strategic contributor to organisation effectiveness, with a large proportion of respondents suggesting that on the whole, the training and development function in their organisation was effective.

The following chapter examines some of the possible determinants of this effectiveness.
CHAPTER 11: DETERMINANTS OF AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION: SOME TENTATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

11.1 Introduction

11.2 The External Environment

11.3 The Internal Labour Market

11.4 The Organisation Culture

11.5 Line Managers' perceptions of Training and Development

11.6 Employees' Perceptions of Training and Development

11.8 Summary
11.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter examines a number of relationships between selected dimensions of the organisation and the training and development function, and vice versa. A large number of measurement scales were included in the questionnaire to assess the external environment, the internal labour market, the organisation culture, and line managers' and employees' perceptions of training and development. Each of these dimensions were factorally analysed to identify potential relationships between these and selected training and development characteristics. Appendix two details the factor breakdown for each area to be discussed.

11.2 THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
The factor analysis identified three dimensions of the external environment, namely
1. High level of uncertainty
2. A requirement for considerable strategic development
3. Low levels of competition

It emerged that a high level of uncertainty exists where the technological environment is subject to a very high rate of change; organisations are very sensitive to these changes, and a high level of competition is experienced within the industry. Strategic development was identified where, in a growing industry, organisations adopt aggressive strategies in relation to competitors, have diversified into related product/service markets, and employees are encouraged to participate in decision making. Low levels of competition is experienced where information is readily available; the organisation does not invest heavily in research and development; the organisation is usually a singly product entity; employees are not consulted on training and development activities that concern them, and the organisation may be doing much worse than its competitors.

Table 11.1 over presents the relationships between these dimensions and selected training and development function characteristics.
Table 11.1: Relationship Between Environmental Dimensions and Selected Training and Development Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>SELECTED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of days training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High levels of uncertainty</td>
<td>.39**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires considerable strategic development</td>
<td>.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable environmental conditions</td>
<td>.19*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The external environment is an independent variable

* = Significant at .05 level
** = Significant at .01 level
*** = Significant at .001 level

The analysis demonstrates that there is a strong positive relationship between the level of uncertainty in the external environment and the amount of days formal training received by employees (.39, p ≤ .01), the perceived effectiveness of the training and development function (.64, p ≤ .001), and the size of the training budget (.46, p ≤ .01). Similarly there is a positive correlation between the level of uncertainty and the actual size of the training and development function (.18, p ≤ .05). Therefore, the results suggest that the training and development function, in organisations that experience high levels of uncertainty in their external environment, will be allocated a higher budget, will show an increased propensity to train (in terms of number of formal days training undertaken), will be perceived as effective by the organisation and may increase in size as a result.

Similarly, the analysis demonstrates that a very strong positive relationship exists between the need for strategic development in order to manage the external environment and the training and development variables specified. Correlations ranged from .14 (p ≤ .05) for size of the function, .45 (p ≤ .01) for number of days...
training, .88 ($p \leq .001$) for perceived effectiveness of the function, to .92 ($p \leq .001$) for the size of the training budget. These relationships are broadly in line with what one would expect, since, as the literature revealed, those organisations which utilised human resources as a competitive weapon, typically operated in highly competitive circumstances, and saw strategic development as a means of managing their external environment.

Finally, on the relationships between stability in the external environment and the training and development function variables measured, both positive and negative correlations were recorded. In relation to number of days training, a positive correlation of .19 ($p \leq .05$) emerged, which is not overly surprising, given that organisations will always be required to provide some training and development opportunities for their employees (retraining, updating present skills levels, and so forth) regardless of the nature of external environmental conditions. Negative correlations of -.32 ($p \leq .01$) and -.49 ($p \leq .01$) were recorded for perceived effectiveness of the training and development function, and the size of the training budget respectively. This suggests that the higher the stability in the external environment, the smaller will be the size of the training budget, and the training and development function will be less likely to be perceived as being effective. Finally no significant relationship emerged between environmental stability and the size of the training and development function. This augments earlier data reported in the present study, where a large number of varying organisations, operating in diverse environmental conditions, were all found to employ less than five individuals in their training and development function.

11.3 THE INTERNAL LABOUR MARKET
Perceptions of the skills profile of the workforce may be grouped along the following dimensions:
1. A high degree of flexibility
2. Specialised skill requirements
3. Limited skill requirements
4. Structured internal labour market

A highly flexible labour force was identified where a high level of technical training exists and the organisation recruits a large number of graduates with technical/engineering qualifications; employees with a potential for multiskilling are required, and the organisation makes extensive use of sub-contracting for non-core areas. Skill shortages are experienced in some areas. Specialised skill requirements was identified in situations where skills of the type required by the organisation are not available in the labour market and organisations must train internally to meet these requirements. In such situations, graduates tend to undertake long periods of training before deciding on career choices. Limited skill requirements are said to exist where the workforce is mainly unskilled/semi-skilled, hence there is a considerable supply of the required available in the local labour market. Demand for labour may vary considerable and the organisation will usually have a large pool of temporary employees. A structured internal labour market is characteristic of an organisation with a stable workforce where succession plans are drawn up and promotion is actively encouraged from within.

Table 11.2 over presents the relationships between these internal labour market dimensions and selected training and development function characteristics.
In relation to the need for a high degree of flexibility and those training and development variables measured, a very positive significant relationship emerged across all variables. Correlations recorded were .85 (p ≤ .001) for number of days training undertaken, .42 (p ≤ .01) for training strategy utilised, .92 (p ≤ .001) for size of training budget, and .46 (p ≤ .01) for power of the training and development function. Therefore the results suggest that the greater the flexibility required of employees, the greater is the number of days training provided, the existence of a planned training strategy, a larger training budget, and generally a more powerful training and development function.

Similarly, strong positive relationships (p ≤ .01) were reported between the necessity for specialised skill requirements and the selected training and development variables measured, and the existence of a highly structured internal labour market with the said training and development variables.

Finally, in relation to the need for limited skill requirements, positive relationships were recorded for both number of days training (.09, p ≤ .05) and training strategy utilised (.38, p ≤ .01), while a strong negative relationship (p ≤ .001, p ≤ .01) emerged
for size of training and development budget and for the power of the function. These negative correlations suggest that the size of the training budget and the power of the function are inversely related to the need for limited skill requirements.

11.4 ORGANISATION CULTURE

Respondents’ perceptions of their organisation culture can be discussed under the following dimensions:

1. Commitment to organisation effectiveness

2. A belief in open communications

Commitment to organisation effectiveness emerges where people feel that good is not enough, only the best will do, and therefore believe in working towards an ideal of perfection; they believe in superior quality and service and feel personally responsible for quality; they believe in the importance of economic growth and profit, and strive to do better each year. A belief in open communications exists where people enjoy a good laugh now and again, and don’t feel that their work is too important to take lightly; they believe in the importance of people as individuals and are really concerned about each other; they believe that people should be innovators, and should be able to take risks without the fear of punishment; They feel that informality improves communications and so feel free to contact other whenever it is necessary to get the job done; managers are expected to be technical experts, and should get involved in specific task problems that may arise. Table 11.3 over presents the relationships between these cultural dimensions and selected training and development function variables.
Table 11.3: Relationship between Organisation Culture and Selected Training and Development Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURAL DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>SELECTED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of days training</td>
<td>Training activities</td>
<td>Size of training budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to organisation effectiveness</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A belief in open communications</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Culture is an independent variable

* = Significant at .05 level
** = Significant at .01 level
*** = Significant at .001 level

There is a high correlation ($p \leq .01$) between the two dimensions of culture emerging from the factor analysis and the training and development variables measured. This suggests that the prevailing organisation culture may influence the nature and scope of training and development activities undertaken by the organisation, highlighting organisation culture as a major contextual influence on training and development. While further investigation of this relationship is beyond the scope of the present study, it clearly merits further, more indepth investigation.

11.5 EMPLOYEES PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Perceptions of employees of training and development activities may be categorised as follows:

1. Positive belief in the value of training and development
2. A negative perception of training and development
3. Future development aspirations

Employees who believe in the value of training and development make regular requests for training and development activities and wish to be involved in decisions about their own development; they tend to invest time and financial
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resources in their own development, give regular feedback on programmes and believe that training and development increases their commitment to the organisation. A negative perception of training and development indicates a lack of understanding of its role in the scheme of things, and employees tend to feel that the organisation should be solely responsible for training and development activities. Future development aspirations indicate that employees place greater emphasis on career development opportunities than they do on job related training, and regularly undertake qualification type programmes.

Table 11.4 below presents the relationships between these employee perception dimensions and selected training and development function characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYEE DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>SELECTED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of days training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive belief in the value of training and development</td>
<td>.44**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative perception of training and development</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future development aspirations</td>
<td>.46**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Employee perceptions is an independent variable

* = Significant at .05 level
** = Significant at .01 level
*** = Significant at .001 level

The analysis indicates that where a positive belief in the value of training and development exists, it will positively influence the number of days training provided, the particular training strategies utilised, and the size of the training budget. However, where a negative perception of training and development prevails, the results would appear to suggest that it may still positively affect the training and development variables measured, but not to the same extent that positive
perceptions appear to. Finally, future development aspirations were seen to strongly influence the number of days training provided, and the training strategies utilised ($p \leq .01$), and to a lesser extent the size of the training budget ($p \leq .05$).

11.6 LINE MANAGERS ROLE IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Perceptions of line managers role/involvement in training and development may be discussed under the following factors:

1. Involvement in strategic aspects of training and development
2. Involvement in operational aspects of training and development
3. Negative perceptions of training and development

A high level of involvement in the strategic aspects of training and development is indicated where line managers are actively involved in policy and planning issues; include training and development as part of departmental plans; are consulted regularly on training and development responsibilities and firmly believe in the value to the organisation of well trained staff.

A high involvement in operational training and development is denoted where line managers are responsible for the identification of training and development needs, which are identified using either the performance appraisal process, or during the course of coaching/counselling interviews. Line managers also conduct training sessions, support the career development of subordinates, and take account of this personal development when making promotion decisions.

Negative perceptions of training and development are indicated where line managers believe that training and development should be conducted outside of working hours; rely heavily on training specialist to undertake training and development activities, and may often have disagreement with training specialists on areas of ownership/authority concerning training and development.

Table 11.5 presents the relationships between line management perceptions of
training and development and key characteristics of the function.

Table 11.5: Relationship Between Line Managers Perceptions of the Training and Development Function and Selected Function Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINE MANAGER DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>SELECTED TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of days training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in strategic aspects of training and development</td>
<td>.46**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in operational aspects of training and development</td>
<td>.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative perceptions of training and development</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Line management perceptions is an independent variable

- = Significant at .05 level
-• = Significant at .01 level
-•• = Significant at .001 level

The results illustrate that there is a high positive correlation (p < .001) between line management involvement in strategic aspects of training and development and those dimensions of training and development measured, ie. the number of days training undertaken, power of the training and development function, and the size of the training and development budget. A similar positive relationship was also found to exist where there is high line management involvement in operational aspects of training and development. No relationship was found to exist between negative perceptions of training and development among line managers and the size of the training and development budget. However the existence of such negative perceptions was found to be inversely related to both the number of days training provided, and the actual power of the training function.

11.6 SUMMARY

This chapter examined the relationship between a number of organisational characteristics and selected training and development variables. A number of
correlations, both positive and negative, were found to exist between particular organisation characteristic (external environment, internal labour market, organisation culture, employees perceptions of training and development, and line managers perceptions of training and development), and key training and development variables, which influenced, in some way, the nature and scope of training and development practices undertaken.
CHAPTER 12: A SUMMARY OF SALIENT ISSUES, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Issues Emerging From the Extant Literature

12.3 Selected Research Findings

12.3.1 The Training Specialists
12.3.2 Investment In Training and Development
12.3.3 Training and Development Activities
12.3.4 Power of the Training and Development Function
12.3.5 Emerging Dependency Relationships

12.4 The Model Revisited

12.5 Directions for Future Research
12.1 INTRODUCTION
This thesis sought to examine the nature and scope of training and development practices in Ireland, in an attempt to gauge the degree to which they reflect a strategic focus. Five key objectives were identified for the research:

1. To comprehensively review the extant literature in order to determine the factors promoting the emergence of Human Resource Development (HRD) as a key mechanism of employee development, and to highlight critical characteristics of strategic HRD;

2. To examine the contingent nature of the HRD concept, and thereby identify key contextual organisational characteristics that impact upon the functioning of HRD.

3. To examine current employee development practices in Ireland in order to assess whether training and development activities reflect a strategic orientation, or are moving towards a strategic model of employee development.

4. To identify whether the contextual factors identified in the literature affect training and development practices in Ireland.

5. To examine the role of the training specialist in Ireland and the relative status of the training and development function.

12.2 ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE EXTANT LITERATURE
The literature revealed that traditional training and development activities, which were generally associated with short term, reactive interventions, may no longer be sufficient to meet the needs of modern industries, and are increasingly being replaced with human resource development practices. Factors implicit in promoting this emergence and increased utilisation of HRD include demographic shifts, heightened competition, changing work patterns, the pervasive spread of new
technologies and changing consumer demands.

Employees are increasingly viewed as a valuable resource which, if effectively managed, from a strategic point of view, will contribute significantly to organisational effectiveness, and represent a source of competitive advantage to the organisation. In order therefore to strategically manage their employees, organisations must necessarily incorporate human resource considerations into the wider strategic planning and corporate functioning activities.

In order to operate at this corporate level, the HRD function must be seen to be strategic. Key characteristics of strategic HRD to emerge from the literature included a high level of integration with organisational goals and missions, the formulation of human resource policies, the commitment of top management, a high level of line management involvement, the capacity to monitor the external environment, and the operation of a facilitative organisation culture that promotes continuous development at all levels. Where HRD is supported in these areas, it enjoys greater legitimacy and is afforded greater opportunities for strategic development.

The HRD function is, however, contextually bound, and is therefore affected by a number of organisational variables such as size, technology, structure, culture, power and stakeholders. The literature suggests that the degree to which the HRD function reflects a strategic orientation is inherently contingent upon the nature of these organisational variables - or the degree to which they facilitate strategic functioning. Also the type of individuals to be developed in terms of their propensity to learn and their commitment to training and development, will also determine the types of strategies used by the HRD function.

A Process model, setting down the contextually bound nature of HRD, was derived by the author, and detailed the external factors pushing new methods of employee development, the internal reactions to these factors/triggers, and the constraining influences on strategic training and development outcomes.
The summated message emerging from the literature seems to be that while there is a definite need for employee development initiatives to become more strategic, in order to achieve a better fit between the needs of the individual and the organisation, the degree to which this occurs is largely dependent upon the context in which it takes place.

12.3 SELECTED RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research undertaken by the author sought to explore training and development practices in Ireland. A quantitative research strategy in the form of a questionnaire survey was utilised to collect information, from as many organisations as possible, to ensure that a representative sample of Irish industry was forthcoming. Responses to the survey (N=58) were then coded and a number of statistical techniques were then used to analyse the results. The respondent organisations operated in a wide number of industries, and varied considerably across size, ownership, structure and technology dimensions. Patterns of employment were identified, which suggested that respondent organisations were moving towards the adoption of a core-periphery type workforce, with almost all organisations employing a mix of full-time, contract, temporary and part-time employees. While categories of non-permanent, full-time employees were found to constitute less than 10% of total employed workforce for most organisations, the fact that a number of organisations, across all industries, employed significantly more than 10% (in some cases as high as 40%) would suggest that this trend may increase in the future.

Overall the large variety in the sample was found to be particularly useful, since it allowed the author, at a later stage, to examine whether the context in which training and development was being performed affected key activities undertaken by the function.
12.3.1 The Training Specialists

Of the total number of specialists surveyed, 35 were male and 20 were female. All tended to be highly educated, with many possessing post graduate qualifications. Female specialists, on the whole, were found to have a higher level of formal education than their male counterparts. All specialists were found to operate at a high level in the organisational hierarchy, with 31 individuals holding positions at the senior management level, and most reporting to either the general manager, or to the head of the department. Most have been employed in the training and development function for approximately four years, have 2-3 subordinates reporting to them, and tended to have joined the function as a result of a promotion. Most have worked on other functional areas before getting involved in training and development, and earn, on average at least £30,000 per year. While the specialists indicated that they were committed to the training and development function, this commitment is likely to be of a short term nature, since most of them report ambitions to move into the broader area of HR, or general management, in the future.

12.3.2 Investment in Training and Development

Levels of investment in training and development varied considerably, with 20 companies spending less than £30,000, 16 spending greater than £180,000, and the remaining 22 companies spending differing amounts within these two extremes. When compared with the annual turnover of the organisations surveyed, no significant pattern of investment in training and development emerged, suggesting that the size of the training and development budget is not typically dependent upon annual turnover.

The level of investment in training and development was found to depend quite significantly on the number of people employed. Small organisations, employing
less than 100 people, tended to spend the least on training and development, while a large number of those that employed 500+ spent in excess of £180,000. It would appear, therefore, that organisation size is a determinant of budget size, for very small and very large organisations, but does not explain variances in investment for those that employ 101-500 employees.

Irish organisations’ investment in training and development compared favourably with the investment levels of non Irish companies, with the Irish Public Sector spending slightly more than the Private Sector. Non Irish ownership groups tended to spend more than indigenous Irish companies, but given that most of the small companies surveyed are, in fact Irish, this lower level of investment may be simply a function of size.

12.3.3 Training and Development Activities
The activities undertaken by respondents reflected a particular concern with the operational aspects of training and development, and tended to neglect the more strategically oriented activities. Irish organisations were far less likely to evaluate training and development activities than were their foreign counterparts, and did not generally formulate training and development plans, policies or budgets. Smaller organisations were similarly less likely to undertake strategic training and development activities than were larger organisations.

The categories of training undertaken by training specialists focused on supervisory, health and safety, and induction training, all of which are almost necessary prerequisite to compete today. Longer term, more developmental type strategies were undertaken by very few respondents. Very high incidents of management training and development were reported (undertaken by 78% of respondents), which may, in fact, be as a result of the high level of interest generated

On-the-job training was the most frequent training and development strategy utilised (91%), and was used by all Irish organisations, and by most small companies particularly. Again, more strategically oriented strategies were utilised much less frequently, and, even then, tended to be used by the larger organisations, and by the non Irish ownership groups.

In relation to the evaluation of training and development activities, only 65% of Irish organisations evaluated training and development programmes, and those that did were found to heavily rely on hard evaluation criteria such as numbers trained, number of course days, and so forth. One must question the validity of such evaluation techniques, since they indicate neither the effectiveness nor the quality of training and development initiatives. Larger, and non Irish organisations, particularly the US/Japanese ownership groups, tended to utilise the quality of the training provided, types of needs met, improved communications and the facilitating of organisation change, as key evaluation criteria.

Most employees, across all organisations, received some formal training every year. Employees at management levels in the organisations were found to receive the greatest amount of formal training, far more than all other categories of employees - a minimum of eight days per year in many organisations. This substantiates earlier results of evidence of considerable management training and development being undertaken, and corresponds with trends emerging from other European Countries.

Line managers were found to be highly involved in, and responsible for, a large number of training and development activities. A closer examination, however,
revealed that the involvement and responsibility was largely confined to the operational aspects of training such as, the identification of training needs, the undertaking of direct training and the evaluation of results. Where more strategic activities were undertaken, such as planning and policy formulation, they were typically ascribed to training specialists.

12.3.4 The Power of the Training and Development Function
The training and development function was found to be highly centralised-integrated into the business- suggesting a strong degree of power. A low level of substitutability emerged from the results, indicating, once again a strong power position. The function was also found to be a strong source of information in the organisation, and had the ability to command resources, hence the existence of a specific annual training budget.

However, the function did not appear to have the capacity to manage the external environment, nor was it supported by a corporate training and development mission statement, indicating, perhaps, a low level of strategic power. Finally, training specialists tended to perceive that, they themselves held much less power than did the training function.

Training specialist perceived an effective training and development function as one which was used as a critical resource and as an internal consultant to management- as an asset rather than a liability. On the issue of overall effectiveness, 39 respondents rated their function as either effective or very effective, while those who rated their function as ineffective overall, tended to feel that the function was not perceived in strategic terms by the organisation.

12.3.5 Emerging Dependency Relationships
The factor analysis suggested the existence of a number of possible relationships between a number of independant organisational dimensions and selected
A strong positive relationship was found to exist between external environments that either experienced high levels of uncertainty, or required considerable strategic development, and the number of days training provided, perceptions of effectiveness of training and development, size of the training budget and size of the training and development function. A strong inverse relationship was also found to exist between the level of stability in the external environment and perceptions of effectiveness and size of the training and development budgets. A further positive relationship emerged between both the degree of flexibility, and level of specialised skills required, and the number of days training, the training strategy utilised, the size of the training budget and the power of the training and development function. An inverse relationship was found to exist between a low skill requirement level, and both the size of the budget and the power of the function.

Organisation culture was identified as a strong contextual influence on training and development with positive relationships being found to exist between selected cultural dimensions and the number of days training, the training activities undertaken and the size of the training budget.

Employee perceptions were found to influence the number of days training, strategies used and the size of the budget, particularly where training was perceived in a positive light.

A similar strong correlation emerged between positive line management perceptions of training and development, and the number of days training, the power of the function and the size of the budget, particularly where line managers were actively involved in such activities as the planning and formulating of training and development policies and practices.

Overall, the results provide a picture of the nature and scope of training and
development in Ireland in 1992. The study pointed to the necessity for a greater emphasis on strategically oriented employee development practices, but the data has revealed that in the Irish context, the evidence of such practices remains limited. Clearly, aspects of strategic practice do exist, but not to the extent that the literature suggests is necessary.

Furthermore, the study has identified training and development as a highly contextually bound process, embedded in a web of individual and organisational characteristics which influence the nature and scope of activities undertaken, and the outcomes achieved.

12.4 THE MODEL REVISITED

Having presented a summary of the research findings, it is pertinent to return to the model outlined in chapter six of the literature review, in order to assess its explanatory power as a process model of strategic training and development. It must be said, however, that it was beyond the scope of the present study to measure the impact of every variable outlined, and, while this is a limitation to be lamented, it does not detract from the overall findings.

The external triggers outlined referred to external environmental factors that were pushing, as it were, the need for change. These included globalisation, new technology, competitive arrangements, demographic trends, new concepts such as TQM, and information and knowledge. The implications for training and development of two particular variables were measured. Firstly, the research indicated that organisations that operated in highly competitive external environments tended to adopt more strategically oriented training and development activities, and were more concerned with long term effectiveness, that short term gains. This was reflected in the increased number of days training provided, the utilisation of proactive developmental strategies, and an increased
propensity to invest heavily in training and development. Secondly, organisations who operated in environments that were subject to a high rate of technological change, and who were highly sensitive to these changes, were more likely to invest more in training and development, were likely to provide more training, utilised more developmental strategies, and evaluated training and development to a greater extent.

In relation to the organisation initiatives outlined in the model (human resource utilisation programme, workforce flexibility, skills shortages responses, TQM and so forth), the study revealed that where employees were viewed as a critical resource, and as a means of attaining competitive advantage, there was greater opportunity for the training specialist to become involved in senior level decision making and strategic planning. Organisations who experienced skills shortages, particularly as a result of changing technologies, tended to spend more on training and development, provided the greatest number of formal days training, and reported high levels of horizontal power residing with the training and development function. Companies that required employees with a potential for multiskilling, and those whose employees wanted further developmental opportunities, consistently trained and developed to a greater degree than those whose workforces were mainly unskilled or held negative perceptions of training and development.

The model outlines a number of contextual factors that determine the extent to which training and development activities reflect a strategic orientation (organisation size, structure, stakeholders, power relationships and so forth). The present study revealed that the training and development function is indeed contextually bound. The size of respondent organisations greatly determined the scope and range of training and development activities carried out. Smaller organisations reflected a strong orientation towards operational, almost reactive
training and development. They spent considerably less on the training budget than did their larger counterparts, undertook fewer activities, utilised on-the-job training and development as their key strategy, and generally did not perceive the value of investing in human resources. While larger organisations were not overtly strategic in their activities, they spent considerably more on training and development, and the function was perceived as an integral aspect of the business. The prevailing organisation culture was also found to influence the scope of training and development, and while the study measured only two dimensions of culture, the results suggest that culture is a key contextual factor influencing training and development. The perceptions of stakeholders, particularly top management, line managers, and employees, the power of the training function and the characteristics of the workforce all affected, in some way, the level at which training and development operated, the amount of money invested in the function, the types of activities undertaken, methods of evaluation utilised, and the degree to which it reflected some aspects of strategic functioning.

Finally, the model outlined a number of facilitating mechanisms that affect the functioning of training and development. Factors such as the status of the training function and the expertise of the trainer are identified as facilitators of strategic outcomes. In the present study, results indicated that while the training and development function enjoyed considerable power and status, the training specialists felt that they themselves were not accredited with the same level of power. The nature of organisation ownership was found to have a considerable impact upon the types of training and development activities undertaken. While no significant differences emerged between investment in training and development for each ownership group, Irish organisations were found to undertake few long term, proactive developmental activities, evaluated programmes much less than did foreign owned organisations and, where they did evaluate, tended to use hard
criteria that measured neither the effectiveness, nor the quality of activities provided. Support of top management and positive perceptions of training and development were further found to positively influence the scope of training and development activities, and allowed for greater input, from the training specialist, at senior management level.

In summary, therefore, and in light of the findings, the model proposed has some explanatory powers, and is worthy of further examination, particularly in the Irish context. While it was beyond the scope of the present study to adequately investigate the influence of all variables on training and development functioning, it is suggested that further examination is pertinent in order to assess the effect, if any, such variables have upon the nature and scope of training and development practices.

12.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The author recommends that future, more in-depth research of this nature should be undertaken. This is necessary in order to provide a greater understanding of:
1) The nature, role, power and status of training and development specialists operating in Ireland;
2) the kinds of activities being undertaken, and where exactly responsibility for training and development practices lies;
3) The important of organisational/individual characteristics that may help or hinder the emergence of strategic HRD.

This research could then be fed back to organisations and individuals with responsibilities in the area, in order to guide future policy and practice.
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APPENDIX 1
INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire is concerned with identifying the nature of training and development activities in your organisation, and particular characteristics of the training and development function itself.

Many of the questions require you to answer in a particular way:

* Where questions present a number of different answers, tick one answer only, unless otherwise instructed.

* Where questions ask for your opinions on certain topics, circle the answer that most represents your opinion. Note that there is no right or wrong answer, we are merely interested in what you think. In such cases, the scale used is as follows:

  SA = Strongly Agree
  A = Agree
  NS = Not sure
  D = Disagree
  SD = Strongly Disagree

* Where questions ask you to highlight the activities your training and development function is involved in, you are required to tick the appropriate activities from the large number of options provided, and then rank your choices (those options ticked) in order of importance, with 1=most important, 2=next important and so forth.

The questionnaire may appear quite lengthy and time-consuming, but pre-tests have shown that it takes about 30 minutes to complete. Any additional comments you may wish to include are most welcome.

Your co-operation in completing this questionnaire is much appreciated.
SECTION 1

ORGANISATION CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is the main activity in this organisation?

- Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing
- Food/Drink/Tobacco
- Heavy engineering
- Printing/Publishing/Paper products
- Retail/Wholesale
- Electronics
- Chemicals
- Education
- Other, please specify

2. Which of the following indicates the ownership of your organisation?

- State body
- Semi state body
- Mainly Irish owned
- Mainly UK owned
- Mainly US owned
- Mainly Japanese owned
- Other, please specify
3. What is the status of your organisation?

- Headquarter
- Plant
- Division
- Branch office

Other, please specify

4. How many people does your organisation employ?

- Less than 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 200
- 201 - 500
- 501 - 1000
- 1000 +

5. What is the breakdown, in % terms, of your total workforce?

- Full time employees
- Contract employees
- Temporary employees
- Sub-contractors
6. What is the breakdown of your employees in terms of the following categories? Please state in % terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Technical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Clerical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft/Technical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled/Semi-skilled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. How long has your organisation been in operation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 8 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 - 12 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 16 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 years +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Where are the main markets for your products/services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home market only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export market only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and export market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. There is a low level of integration between the training and development function and organisation goals and objectives

9. The training and development function has the expertise to determine and implement appropriate solutions once problems are diagnosed

10. The training and development function is not committed to developing its own staff

11. The training and development function has the expertise to diagnose organisation problems

12. In this organisation, the roles, responsibilities and priorities of the training and development function are clearly defined

13. Top management are fully committed to training and development in this organisation

14. Human resources are viewed by top management as a means of attaining competitive advantage

15. Resources allocated to the training and development function are not based on the strategic goals of the organisation

16. The training and development function has the ability to ensure line managers carry out their training and development responsibilities

17. The training specialist is not highly involved in senior level decision making

18. The training and development function has the capacity to enable the organisation to manage its external environment

19. The training and development function has a written policy supporting its activities

20. Training and development policies are not formulated as part of other business policies
9. How would you describe the products/services of your company?

- High technology
- Heavy engineering
- Light engineering
- Consumer durables
- Professional services
- Other, please specify

10. How would you classify your production technology?

- Small batch
- Large batch/mass
- Automated process production
- Cell production
- Other, please specify

11. Which of the following best describes the structure of your organisation?

- Functional structure divided along traditional business function lines
- Functional structure divided along product lines
- Functional structure divided along market lines
- Matrix structure with product divisions on a functional structure

12. How many levels of hierarchy exist between top management and front-line operators?

- 1 - 3
- 4 - 6
- 6 +
13. In approximate terms, indicate the usual span of control of managers/supervisors

- Less than 5
- 5 - 9
- 10 - 18
- 19 - 25
- 26 - 34
- 35 - 50
- 50+

14. What was the approximate turnover of your organisation as per last financial year?

................................................................................ IRE/M

15. How much does your organisation invest each year in the following areas? (Please state in IRE,000)

A. New product/service development........... IRE,000

B. New people............................................. IRE,000

C. New skills............................................... IRE,000

D. New resources........................................ IRE,000

16. Approximately how much does your organisation spend annually on the Training and Development function?

................................................................................ IRE,000

17. Does your organisation receive any state assistance for training and development purposes?

Yes ☐ No ☐

18. If 'yes' to Q.18 then what % is this state assistance of the overall training and development budget?

................................................................................ %
SECTION 2

ORGANISATION CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY
AND LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

Please indicate your strength of agreement/disagreement with each of the following questions by circling the number that most represents your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>19. People in this organisation ...</strong></th>
<th><strong>SA</strong></th>
<th><strong>A</strong></th>
<th><strong>NS</strong></th>
<th><strong>D</strong></th>
<th><strong>SD</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>believe in having a good laugh now and then</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe that their work is too important to take lightly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe that &quot;good&quot; is not enough, only the best will do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't expect extraordinary work efforts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expect constant improvements in how we do things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generally feel that the risks associated with trying out new ideas are not worth taking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe it is a waste of energy to try to achieve perfection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe in working towards an idea of perfection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are really concerned about each other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know that the organisation is more important than any of the people that work here</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe that quality is the responsibility of the QC inspectors or representatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel personally responsible for top quality in products</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel free to contact others in the organisation whenever it is necessary to get the job done</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe in keeping their problems to themselves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are not pressurised for more and more output or constant increases in effectiveness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
... expect to do better every year  
1 2 3 4 5

... expect managers to have the technical expertise needed to help deal with problems  
1 2 3 4 5

... don't expect managers to get involved in specific task problems that may arise  
1 2 3 4 5

... Understand what the organisation is all about  
1 2 3 4 5

... Don't have any generally-accepted beliefs about the organisation's mission  
1 2 3 4 5

Q. The following statements relate to particular characteristics of your organisation. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement.

A. This organisation is very sensitive to changes in its external environment  
1 2 3 4 5

B. Information on the external environment is readily available  
1 2 3 4 5

C. There is a high level of competition within the industry  
1 2 3 4 5

D. The technological environment this organisation operates in is subject to a very high rate of change  
1 2 3 4 5

E. Within the industry we operate in, this organisation is doing much worse than other companies  
1 2 3 4 5

F. This organisation adopts aggressive strategies in relation to its competitors  
1 2 3 4 5

G. This organisation operates in a growing industry  
1 2 3 4 5

H. This organisation does not invest heavily in research and development activities  
1 2 3 4 5

I. This organisation has diversified into related technology/product/ market areas  
1 2 3 4 5

J. This organisation is a single product company  
1 2 3 4 5

K. Power and authority are located at the top of this organisation  
1 2 3 4 5
L. Rules and procedures are not rigidly adhered to in this organisation 1 2 3 4 5

M. Employees in this organisation are given an opportunity to get involved in decision making 1 2 3 4 5

N. Individual employees are not consulted on training and development activities that affect them 1 2 3 4 5

O. Employees are perceived as being jointly responsible for their own development 1 2 3 4 5

21. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each of the following statements as they relate to your workforce.

SA A NS D SD

A. This organisation requires a workforce which has a high level of technical training 1 2 3 4 5

B. The organisation's workforce requirements are mainly for graduates with technical/engineering qualifications 1 2 3 4 5

C. There is a considerable supply of the required labour available locally 1 2 3 4 5

D. The organisation's demand for labour varies greatly from month to month 1 2 3 4 5

E. Skill shortages are experienced in specific areas 1 2 3 4 5

F. Most of the organisations workforce are in the unskilled/semi-skilled areas 1 2 3 4 5

G. Skills of the type required by the organisation are not available in the labour market 1 2 3 4 5

H. The organisation has a very stable workforce 1 2 3 4 5

I. The organisation requires employees who have potential for multiskilling 1 2 3 4 5

J. The organisation encourages promotion from within 1 2 3 4 5

K. The organisation makes extensive use of sub-contracting for non-core areas 1 2 3 4 5

L. The organisation must train internally to meet its skill requirements 1 2 3 4 5
M. The organisation has a large pool of temporary employees

N. Succession plans are drawn up by the organisation

O. The organisation is an equal opportunities employer

P. Graduate entrants undertake a long period of training before deciding on their career within the organisation

Q. There is a highly structured internal labour market operating within the organisation

SECTION 3

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION

22. Please indicate your strength of agreement/disagreement with each of the following statements by circling the answer that best represents your opinion.

1. The head of the training and development function had regular contact with other key managers in this organisation
2. The training and development staff in this organisation meet regularly to discuss problems, and review progress of reports
3. The training and development function in this organisation does not have the ability to diagnose problems and anticipate needs
4. The training and development function is supported by a corporate training and development mission statement
5. The training and development function is not supportive of organisation change
6. The training and development function is not committed to strategic planning
7. The training and development function is perceived as "part of the business"
8. There is a low level of integration between the training and development function and organisation goals and objectives

9. The training and development function has the expertise to determine and implement appropriate solutions once problems are diagnosed

10. The training and development function is not committed to developing its own staff

11. The training and development function has the expertise to diagnose organisation problems

12. In this organisation, the roles, responsibilities and priorities of the training and development function are clearly defined

13. Top management are fully committed to training and development in this organisation

14. Human resources are viewed by top management as a means of attaining competitive advantage

15. Resources allocated to the training and development function are not based on the strategic goals of the organisation

16. The training and development function has the ability to ensure line managers carry out their training and development responsibilities

17. The training specialist is not highly involved in senior level decision making

18. The training and development function has the capacity to enable the organisation to manage its external environment

19. The training and development function has a written policy supporting its activities

20. Training and development policies are not formulated as part of other business policies
21. All levels of the organisation are consulted before training and development policies are formulated

22. Training and development policies are based on specific identified needs

23. Training and development policies are not supported by a specific training budget

24. An annual budget is set aside for the training and development function

25. Line managers are mainly responsible for implementing training and development policies in the organisation

26. Training and development strategies are mainly confined to external activities

27. The organisation relies mainly on external training and development resources

28. Yearly training and development plans are drawn up by the organisation

29. Yearly training and development plans are supported by a specific set of organisational resources

30. Yearly training and development plans are reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year

31. Training and development problems are dealt with as they arise

32. When a work performance problem arises, the organisation assumes it has a training-related solution

33. Other managers in this organisation do not appreciate the importance of the training and development function

34. The training specialist has much less power than his/her peers in other departments

35. The training and development function operates at all levels and parts of the organisation
36. Members of the training and development function are not perceived as experts by their peers in the organisation 1 2 3 4 5

37. The training specialist has more influence than his/her peers in the organisation 1 2 3 4 5

38. The training and development function is not a source of important information to the organisation 1 2 3 4 5

39. The training specialist is well placed in the organisation's hierarchy 1 2 3 4 5

40. The training and development function does not control resources which are required by others in the organisation 1 2 3 4 5

41. The training and development function has a good relationship with the Personnel function 1 2 3 4 5

42. The main role of the training and development function is to provide advice to line managers 1 2 3 4 5

43. There is no distinction between the training and development function, and the Personnel function in this organisation 1 2 3 4 5

23. Line managers in this organisation...

... are actively involved in training and development policy and planning processes 1 2 3 4 5

... conduct training sessions 1 2 3 4 5

... are involved in the coaching and counselling of employees 1 2 3 4 5

... are responsible for the identification of training needs within their departments 1 2 3 4 5

... are consulted regularly on training and development responsibilities 1 2 3 4 5

... are fully aware of their training and development policy issues 1 2 3 4 5

... often have disagreements with the training specialist on areas of authority and ownership 1 2 3 4 5

... rely totally on the training specialist to undertake training and development activities 1 2 3 4 5
believe that training and development activities should be conducted outside of work hours

regularly utilise the performance appraisal process to identify training and development needs

include training and development activities as part of their department/section plans

support career development activities of subordinates

believe in the organisational value of well trained and developed staff

take account of the personal development activities of subordinates when making promotion decisions

24. Employees in this organisation...

make regular requests for training and development activities

wish to be involved in decisions about their training and development

invest time and financial resources in their own personal development

believe that the organisation should be solely responsible for training and developing

believe that training and development increases their commitment to the organisation

put more emphasis on career development activities than job related training

regularly undertake qualification type programmes

regularly give feedback on the operation of training and development policies

do not understand the role of training and development in the organisation

have negative attitudes towards training and development
### SECTION 4
**TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES**

25. Training specialists undertake a wide range of activities. With respect to your position, please tick the activities which you undertake, and rank in order of importance to you. (1 = most important, 2 - next important and so forth).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undertaken</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Formulation of training and development policies</td>
<td>49 50 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B.</strong> Identification of training and development needs</td>
<td>52 53 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C.</strong> Formulation of yearly training and development plans</td>
<td>55 56 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D.</strong> Advice and guidance to line managers on training and development activities</td>
<td>58 59 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E.</strong> Evaluation of training and development programmes</td>
<td>61 62 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F.</strong> Undertaking direct training activities</td>
<td>64 65 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G.</strong> Advising top management on training and development implications of corporate strategy</td>
<td>67 68 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H.</strong> Informing top management of training and development achievements and activities</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I.</strong> Formulation and monitoring of training and development budgets</td>
<td>8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J.</strong> Monitoring of external environment to assess training and development implications</td>
<td>11 12 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K.</strong> Implementing innovative and change activities within the organisation</td>
<td>14 15 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L.</strong> Liaison with Personnel function to ensure overall integration of human resource related activities</td>
<td>17 18 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M.</strong> Securing physical resources for training and development</td>
<td>20 21 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N.</strong> Undertaking manpower planning related activities</td>
<td>23 24 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O.</strong> Undertaking personnel activities, such as recruitment, selection etc.</td>
<td>26 27 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P.</strong> Conducting annual training and development audits</td>
<td>29 30 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> Advice to individual employees on training and development issues</td>
<td>32 33 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R.</strong> Other, please specify</td>
<td>35 36 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O.</strong> Advice to Individual employees on training and development issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R.</strong> Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"..."
26. Which of the following categories of training and development does your organisation undertake? Please tick the activities that are carried out by the organisation, and rank in order of importance to the achievement of training and development goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undertaken</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Operator training</td>
<td>38 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Apprenticeship training</td>
<td>40 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Training for JIT/Total Quality Management</td>
<td>42 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Supervisory training</td>
<td>44 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Management training and development</td>
<td>46 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Team training and development</td>
<td>48 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Customer service training</td>
<td>50 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Multiskilled at operator level</td>
<td>52 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Technical training</td>
<td>54 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Induction training</td>
<td>56 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Health and safety training</td>
<td>58 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Product training</td>
<td>60 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Computer skills training</td>
<td>62 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Project management training</td>
<td>64 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Quality/SPC training</td>
<td>66 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Interpersonal skills/personal skills training</td>
<td>68 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Marketing/sales training</td>
<td>70 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Language training</td>
<td>72 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Materials management/Inventory management training</td>
<td>74 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Career development workshops</td>
<td>76 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Organisation development activities</td>
<td>78 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Other, please specify</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27. Please tick the training and development strategies most utilised, and rank them in order of importance to achieving your training and development goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilised</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. On-the-job training and development</td>
<td>38 39 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. In-house formal training and development programmes</td>
<td>41 42 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. External formal training and development programmes</td>
<td>44 45 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Planned training and development activities in different departments of the organisation</td>
<td>47 48 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Open/Distant learning</td>
<td>50 51 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Part-time professional training/education</td>
<td>53 54 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Full time education</td>
<td>56 57 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Special projects/Task force participation</td>
<td>59 60 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Secondment to other organisations</td>
<td>62 63 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Company and customer visits</td>
<td>65 66 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Action learning</td>
<td>68 69 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Other, please specify</td>
<td>71 72 73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
28. Which of the following criteria does your organisation use when assessing the contribution of the training and development function? Please tick and rank in order of importance to your organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Number of days training undertaken</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Number of training programmes undertaken</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Number of employees trained</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Number of training course days</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Categories of workers trained</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Types of training and development needs met</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Training and development activities provided within allocated budgets</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Meeting the objectives set out in the training and development plan</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Contribution towards specific cost savings in the organisation</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Providing high quality training and development activities</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Facilitating major changes in the organisation</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Meeting the needs of individual employees</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Exam pass rates</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Ability to meet customer quality standards</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Time saved by a particular training method</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Ability to earn maximum bonus</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Ability to meet demand of line departments for trained staff</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Improved communications between departments</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. How many days of formal training do the following categories of employees receive? Please circle the appropriate answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Less than one day</th>
<th>1-3 days</th>
<th>4-7 days</th>
<th>8-12 days</th>
<th>12 days +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production operatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle managers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional specialists</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical specialists</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. With regard to the following training and development activities, please indicate who, in your organisation is responsible for undertaking each one. (Tick the appropriate box per activity).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Training Specialist</th>
<th>Line Specialist</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of training and development needs</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulation of training and development policies</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation of training and development policies into plans</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of training and development methods to be used</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding on who in the organisation should be trained</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertaking direct training</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of training and development activities</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession planning</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising management of the implications of corporate strategy for training and development</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 5
TRAINING SPECIALIST CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTIVATIONS

31. Sex:
   - Male [ ]
   - Female [ ]

32. Age:
   [ ] years

33. Nationality .............................................

34. Education: Please indicate the highest level of formal education completed.
   - Primary [ ]
   - Secondary [ ]
   - Intermediate Certificate [ ]
   - Leaving Certificate [ ]
   - O level [ ]
   - A level [ ]
   - Diploma [ ]
   - Primary degree [ ]
   - Postgraduate degree [ ]
   - Professional qualification [ ]

35. If you hold a diploma or degree, please indicate the area of qualification/expertise

____________________________________________________________________________________

36. Are you a member of any of the following Bodies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Yes [ ]</th>
<th>No [ ]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish Institute of Training and Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Personnel Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Management Institute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify ..........................</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 23 24
25 26
27 28
29 30
31 32
33 34
35
37. What is your job title?
- Training administrator
- Training specialist
- Training officer
- Training manager
- Training director
- Technical training specialist
- European Training manager
- Corporate training manager
- Other, please specify ..................................................

38. How many people report to you directly, or indirectly through subordinates?
- Directly
- Indirectly
- Nobody

39. What is the title of the person you report to in the organisation? .................................................................

40. How long have you been employed in the training and development function?
- Less than one year
- 1 - 3 years
- 4 - 9 years
- 10 years +

41. Was training your first career choice?
- Yes  
- No 

42. If no to above, why did you join the training and development function? Please tick one box only.
- Dissatisfaction with previous job
- Promotion or secondment
- Status or hierarchial progression
- Personal development
- Other, please specify ..................................................

43. 

44. 

43. Please indicate any experience you have had in either of the following areas (of at least six months, full-time duration).

- General management
- Accounting/Finance
- Marketing/Sales
- Engineering/Science
- Production/Operations
- General administration
- Not applicable
- Other, please specify

44. Where do you see your career progressing to in future years (i.e. in 10 years time)?

- General Management
- Personnel/Human Resource Management
- Training and Development
- Self-employed consultant
- Owning own business
- Other, please specify

45. Are you involved in a professional capacity outside of the organisation?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify

46. If offered a promotion within the training and development function, or into another managerial function, and, all other things being equal (salary, status ...) would you choose to remain within the training and development function?

- Yes
- No
47. Please indicate, in approximate terms, your annual basic salary (IRE gross p.a.)

- Below 10,000
- 10,000 - 14,999
- 15,000 - 19,999
- 20,000 - 24,999
- 25,000 - 29,999
- Above 30,000

48. How do you think your salary compares with that of your peers in other functional areas?

- Higher than most others
- About the same as most others
- Lower than most others
- Not sure

49. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A. I work in the training and development function because it offers job security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Working in training provides me with an opportunity to utilise my interpersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Working in the training and development function limits my creativity and innovativeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. I work in the training and development function because of its hierarchial position in the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. I joined the training and development function because of its intrinsically interesting subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Working within the training and development function allows me to be a direct trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. My position in the training and development function does not allow me to act as an agent of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H. I see my role in terms of setting up a training and development function, and then moving on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- SA = Strongly Agree
- A = Agree
- NS = Neutral
- D = Disagree
- SD = Strongly Disagree
I. I joined the training and development function to enhance my personal development

J. My primary purpose in joining the training and development function was to enable others to develop to their full potential in the organisation

K. I see my role in terms of carrying out good professional practices within the training and development function

L. I see my role in terms of facilitating change in the organisation

M. The training and development function provides good experience for promotion to general management

N. An individual from an educational background would not suit the training and development function in this organisation

O. Working in the training and development function allows me to work with organisational problems
50. In the following question you are asked to describe an effective training and development function. Check all items and, in the first column rank in order of importance with 1 = most important, 2 = next important, and so forth with 12 = least important. In the second column rate the effectiveness of your organisation’s training and development function on each item where 5 = very effective, 4 = effective, 3 = not sure, 2 = ineffective and 1 = very ineffective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* No, or few budgetary constraints
* Function placed at appropriate level in organisation (where it can have the most impact)
* High levels of internal and external trust and respect
* Function perceived by the organisation as an asset rather than a liability
* Top management perceives and uses the function as a critical resource
* High levels of creativity within the function itself
* Function perceived as an internal consultant to management
* High level of staff teamwork, creativity and flexibility
* The ability to meet all training and development requirements within specified time scales
* The provision of high quality training and development services
* The ability to anticipate and plan for problems which may arise
* Achieving objectives within the set training and development budget
* Other, please specify

51. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the training and development function in your organisation? (Please circle appropriate number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Very Ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**** THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY ****
APPENDIX 2
FACTOR ANALYSIS WEIGHTINGS

Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to identify a relatively small number of factors that can be used to represent relationships among sets of many interrelated variables. The basic assumption of factor analysis is that underlying dimensions, or factors, can be used to explain complex phenomena. Observed correlations between variables result from their sharing these factors. The goal of factor analysis is to identify the not-directly-observable factors based on a set of observable variables. The tables below present the factor analysis breakdown of key organisational variables that affect the functioning of training and development.

FACTOR 1: THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>WEIGHTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High levels of uncertainty</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires considerable strategic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable environmental conditions</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FACTOR 2: THE INTERNAL LABOUR MARKET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>WEIGHTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High degree of flexibility</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised skill requirements</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited skill requirements</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly structured internal labour</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Factor 3: The Organisation Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to organisation effectiveness</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A belief in open communications</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Factor 4: Employee Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive belief in the value of training and development</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative perception of training and development</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future development aspirations</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Factor 5: Line Management Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involved in strategic aspects of training and development</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in operational aspects of training and development</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative perceptions of training and development</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>