



[Exemplars] Activities from aPHR

Course 2 - Learning & Development

This document serves as a guide for learners in the Merit America HR track, offering sample responses (exemplars) to the various activities included in the aPHR training materials. These exemplars are designed to illustrate one possible approach to addressing the prompts and demonstrate the application of HR concepts.

Think of these exemplars as a learning tool to inspire and guide you, but remember that your own critical thinking and application of the course concepts are key to your success in the program.

Important notes:

- These exemplars are just one way to approach the activities; there are certainly others! Rely on your own unique experiences, insights, and understanding of the material to craft your responses.
- Please note that AI was used to generate these exemplars. While every effort has been made to ensure their accuracy and completeness, they may contain imperfections or require further elaboration.
- It's imperative that you use only your own words and ideas when completing your project submissions. Do not copy or plagiarize any part of these exemplars or rely on AI to generate your work.

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Week 1 Exercise: [Activity: Create a Career Plan](#)

Activity Instructions

For this activity, you will create a career plan for an employee at Connective. As a reminder, Connective is a modern communication organization that helps businesses stay connected. They specialize in helping distributed workforces collaborate with a suite of software tools like video conferencing and cloud-based phone systems.

To complete this activity, review the employee profile and create a career development plan, including (1) suggested training and development activities; (2) potential future roles for this employee.

[Supporting Material] Employee Profile

Andy is a customer service representative with the company. Imagine you are an HR professional working at Connective who is helping Andy develop a career plan.

Here are some important things to know about Andy:

- Andy has been with Connective for three years
- Andy has received consistently excellent performance reviews and has received great feedback from customers as well
- Andy has a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design
- Andy has informally taken on the role of team leader and trainer for newly-hired customer service representatives
- Andy has previously been resistant to a promotion to a management position because they like the flexibility of their current role



- Andy really enjoys working at Connective, but is interested in mixing up their day-to-day activities
- Andy is willing to and interested in learning new skills

Exemplar (Possible Answer)

What training and development activities do you suggest in Andy's career development plan?

- **Leadership Development Program:** Formalize Andy's informal leadership role by enrolling them in a leadership development program. This will equip Andy with the skills and knowledge to lead and inspire others effectively, potentially opening doors to future leadership positions without compromising the flexibility he enjoys.
- **Cross-Training in Marketing/Design:** Given Andy's background in graphic design, offer cross-training opportunities in the marketing or design department. This allows him to utilize his creative skills and diversify his experience within the company.
- **Product Training:** Provide in-depth training on Connective's products and services. This will enhance Andy's ability to troubleshoot complex customer issues and potentially transition into a more technical or customer success role.
- **Mentorship Program:** Pair Andy with a senior leader or mentor within the company. This relationship will provide guidance, support, and insights into various career paths at Connective.

What potential future role or career path do you suggest for Andy's career development plan? Why would these be a good fit?

- **Senior Customer Service Representative with Specialization:** Acknowledge Andy's expertise and leadership by creating a specialized role, such as a Senior Customer Service Representative focusing on complex issue resolution or new product onboarding. This allows him to remain hands-on with customers while taking on more challenging responsibilities.
- **Customer Success Manager:** Transition Andy into a customer success role, where he can leverage his deep product knowledge and customer service skills to ensure customer satisfaction and retention.



- **Marketing or Design Specialist:** If Andy excels in his cross-training, offer him a role in the marketing or design team, where he can combine his creative talents with his understanding of Connective's products and customers.
- **Team Lead or Supervisor (if desired):** If Andy eventually expresses interest in a management position, provide a clear path for him to transition into a team lead or supervisory role within the customer service department.

Week 2 Exercise: [Activity: Suggest Training Types](#)

Activity Instructions

For this activity, you will review the findings from a training needs analysis and determine the training type or types that would be most appropriate to those needs. You should consider the knowledge, skills, and abilities required as well as the existing competency gaps that need to be bridged.

Include your recommendations for suitable training types and the reasoning behind your decisions.

[Supporting Material] Scenario & Training Need Analysis

Connective is a modern communication organization that helps businesses stay connected. They specialize in helping distributed workforces collaborate with a suite of software tools like video conferencing and cloud-based phone systems. Connective has a fully remote workforce that is spread across the globe. They use their collaborative video conferencing platform to communicate with each other



You are an HR associate at Connective. You are designing an upcoming training for two new sales team members who are being onboarded currently. One of these new hires works in Dubai, UAE (GMT+4) and one works in Cleveland, Ohio, USA (GMT-4).

The new sales team members need to be trained on Connective's conferencing product, Cloudcord. You have conducted a training needs analysis to determine what the training needs to include. Here are the results:

Each team member needs to be able to:

- Use the product in order to demonstrate it to potential clients
- Understand the benefits of using the product
- Be able to answer questions about the product
- Explain how a company can switch to the product

Exemplar (Possible Answer)

Review the scenario and training needs analysis. With this information in mind, which training type or types would you suggest using with the sales team?

Instructor-led Training (ILT): This would include live, virtual sessions led by an experienced trainer or product expert. ILT would be beneficial for:

- **Product Proficiency:** The trainer can provide real-time demonstrations and guidance on using Cloudcord, allowing for immediate feedback and Q&A.
- **Product Benefits:** Interactive discussions and presentations can effectively convey the value proposition and competitive advantages of Cloudcord.
- **Answering Questions:** Live Q&A sessions can address specific queries and concerns of the new hires in a timely manner.

E-Learning: This would involve self-paced online modules, videos, or interactive simulations. E-learning is helpful for:

- **Product Proficiency:** New hires can practice using Cloudcord at their own pace and revisit modules as needed.
- **Product Benefits:** Engaging videos and interactive content can showcase Cloudcord's features and benefits in an easily digestible format.
- **Switching Process:** Step-by-step guides and tutorials can be provided in an e-learning format for easy reference.



On-the-job Training (OJT): This would involve shadowing experienced sales team members or participating in real client calls under supervision. OJT is valuable for:

- **Product Proficiency:** New hires can observe how experienced colleagues use Cloudcord in real-world scenarios.
- **Answering Questions:** They can witness how others handle client objections and answer questions.
- **Switching Process:** New hires can gain firsthand experience assisting with the transition process for existing clients.

Why would your chosen training type work for this scenario and the needs of the sales team?

- **Remote Workforce:** ILT and e-learning are well-suited for a fully remote workforce, allowing for flexibility and accessibility across different time zones.
- **Product Demonstration:** ILT and e-learning enable effective product demonstrations and interactive learning experiences.
- **Self-Paced Learning:** E-learning allows new hires to learn at their own pace and revisit content as needed.
- **Real-World Application:** OJT provides valuable hands-on experience and exposure to real client interactions.
- **Blended Approach:** A combination of these training types can create a comprehensive onboarding experience, catering to different learning styles and addressing the specific needs of the sales team.

Additional Considerations:

- **Time Zone Differences:** Carefully schedule ILT sessions to accommodate the 8-hour time difference between Dubai and Cleveland.
 - **Cultural Sensitivity:** Adapt training content and delivery to respect cultural nuances and communication styles.
 - **Ongoing Support:** Provide ongoing training and mentorship to ensure continued development and success in their roles.
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Week 3 Exercise: Activity: [Prepare to Evaluate Your Training Program](#)

Activity Instructions

For this activity, you will plan how to evaluate the upcoming new sales team member training at Connective.

Having reviewed the scenario and training needs analysis, you will now write a SMART goal for this training.

Check your SMART goal against this criteria:

- ☐ Does the SMART goal identify a **Specific** outcome
- ☐ Can you **Measure** the outcome to ensure it has been achieved?
- ☐ Is this goal **Attainable** for the new hires?
- ☐ Is this training **Relevant** to what the new hires need to do?
- ☐ Did you include the amount of **Time** it should take?

[Supporting Material] Scenario & Training Need Analysis ([above](#))

Exemplar (Possible Answer)

SMART Goal:

Within two weeks of completing the training program, the new sales team members will be able to independently conduct a 30-minute product demonstration of Cloudcord, highlighting its key benefits and addressing common client questions with 90% accuracy.

What are some ways you can evaluate that this goal has been achieved after by the new hires?



1. Product Demonstration Assessment:

- **Observation:** Have the new hires conduct mock product demonstrations in front of a panel of experienced sales team members or managers. Assess their ability to clearly articulate the product's features, benefits, and value proposition.
- **Scoring Rubric:** Develop a standardized rubric to evaluate the demonstration based on criteria like clarity of communication, product knowledge, handling of questions, and overall presentation skills.
- **Self-Assessment:** Ask the new hires to self-evaluate their performance and identify areas for improvement.

2. Knowledge Assessment:

- **Quiz or Test:** Administer a quiz or test to assess their understanding of Cloudcord's features, benefits, competitive advantages, and the switching process.
- **Scenario-based Questions:** Present real-world scenarios and ask the new hires to explain how they would handle them using their knowledge of Cloudcord.

3. Client Feedback (Post-Training):

- **Surveys:** After the new hires have had a few client interactions, collect feedback from clients on their knowledge, professionalism, and ability to answer questions about Cloudcord.
- **Sales Performance:** Monitor the new hires' initial sales performance to gauge their ability to apply the training in real-world situations.

Additional Considerations:

- **360-Degree Feedback:** Gather feedback from colleagues and mentors who have interacted with the new hires during their onboarding and training.
 - **Ongoing Evaluation:** Continue to monitor and assess the new hires' performance and provide additional support and training as needed.
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Week 4 Exercise: [Designing a Training Experience](#)

Activity Instructions

Reflect on the [Scenario & Training Needs Analysis](#) as well as your answers to the [Week 2: Activity - Suggest Training Types](#) & [Week 3: Activity - Prepare to Evaluate Your Training Program](#). Then complete the following steps:

1. **Training Delivery Method:** Review the scenario and training needs analysis. Choose a training delivery method that will work best for the two new members of the sales team. Remember that Connective has a fully remote workforce that is spread across the globe and the two new hires are working in different time zones. Make sure to include why your chosen delivery method would work.
2. **Post Training Evaluation:** Connective always sends out a survey after conducting a training to ensure that the training method and delivery were accessible and effective for the trainees. Using the template, write two potential questions for a survey that will evaluate the training's success and be sent to the hires after they have finished their training.

Exemplar (Possible Answer)

Training Delivery Method

What is your chosen training delivery method?

Chosen Method: Blended Learning (Combination of Asynchronous E-Learning and Synchronous Virtual Instructor-Led Training)

Why will your chosen delivery method be successful in this scenario?



- **Accommodates Time Zone Differences:** Asynchronous e-learning allows both new hires to access training materials and complete modules at their own pace and convenience, regardless of their location. Synchronous virtual instructor-led training (VILT) sessions can be scheduled at a time that works best for both individuals, or recordings can be made available for those who cannot attend live.
- **Maximizes Engagement:** E-learning can incorporate interactive elements, such as quizzes, simulations, and videos, to keep learners engaged and facilitate knowledge retention. VILT sessions offer opportunities for real-time interaction, Q&A, and discussions, fostering a collaborative learning environment.
- **Addresses Diverse Learning Styles:** The blended approach caters to different learning preferences. Some learners may prefer the self-paced nature of e-learning, while others may thrive in the interactive setting of VILT sessions.
- **Cost-Effective:** E-learning modules can be reused for future onboarding, reducing the need for repeated live training sessions and associated costs.
- **Scalable:** The blended approach can be easily adapted and scaled as Connective's remote workforce grows and expands into new regions.

Design Post-Training Evaluation

Survey Question 1

On a scale of 1 to 5, how effective was the blended learning approach (combination of e-learning and virtual instructor-led training) in helping you understand and learn about Cloudcord? (1 = Not effective at all, 5 = Extremely effective)

Survey Question 2

Did the training adequately prepare you to demonstrate Cloudcord to potential clients, answer their questions, and explain the switching process? Please provide specific examples or areas where you feel more support or information would be beneficial.