



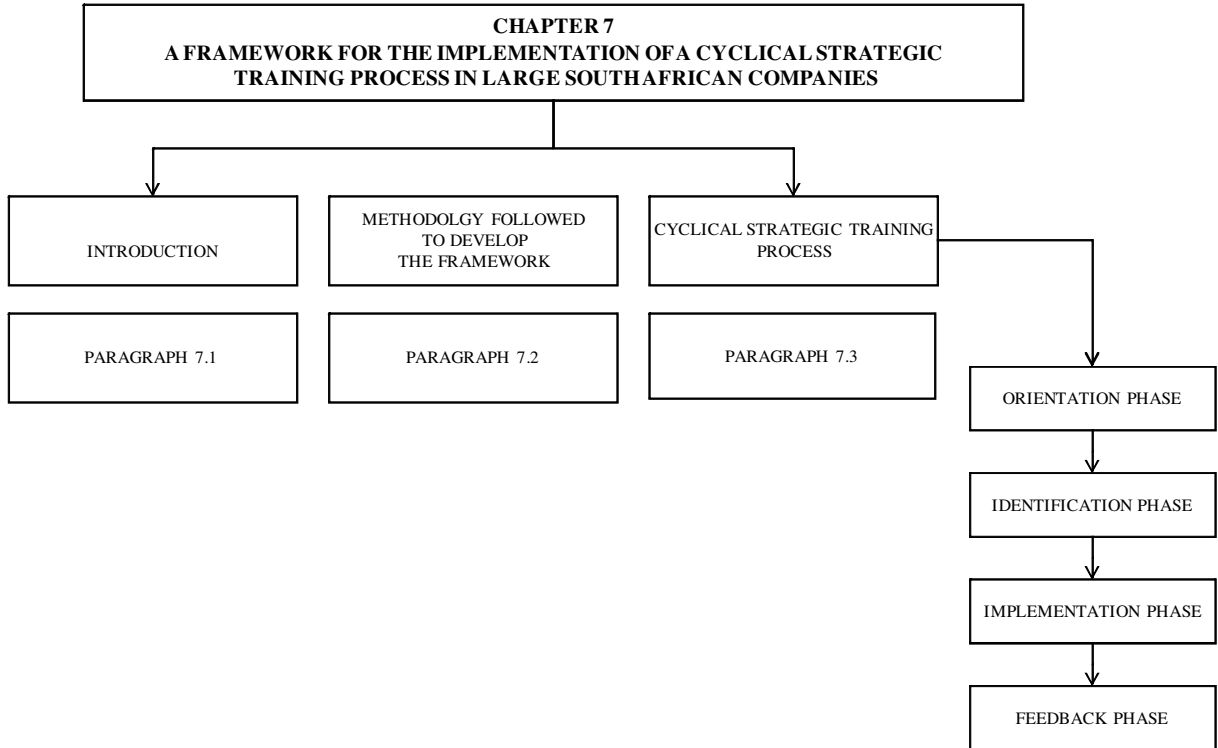
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CHAPTER 7

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CYCLICAL STRATEGIC TRAINING PROCESS IN LARGE SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES



GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF CHAPTER 7



7.1 INTRODUCTION

Having surveyed the literature on strategic training as an example of a method of strategic human resource development as well as the strategic training needs of executives and managers and having evaluated the empirical research conducted as part of this thesis, the need for a strategic training process is reaffirmed and ever more apparent. The literature and the empirical research presented in Chapter 6 indicated that only a small number (2) of the sample (24) of large South African companies have a strategic training process which enables them to identify and address the strategic training needs of executives and managers. The dearth of a strategic process in a number of large South African companies severely limited the ability of the researcher to address the primary objective of the thesis which was elucidated in Chapter 1 as follows:

What are the strategic training needs of executives and managers involved in strategic processes in large South African companies and how are they addressed?

Chapter 7 is thus an enhancement to the stages of the research process, as presented in Chapter 5 since it provides a generic framework for the implementation of a strategic training process by companies which are unable to identify and address the strategic training needs of executives and managers. Chapter 7 poses a framework of a cyclical strategic training process for use by large South African companies. This framework will address the need for a method through which executives and managers in the large South African companies that participated in the study can be made aware of the importance of strategic training and at the same time provide guidelines that can be used to implement a strategic training process. It also indicates the manner in which strategic training can be used as a knowledge management technique by large South African companies. The aim is to empower executives and managers to manage in all four (known, knowable, chaos and complex domains of the strategic environment of companies and thus to contribute to the competitiveness of these companies [See Chapter 2]. The proposed framework is also briefly compared with the Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) model of strategic training [See paragraph 4.6.1].

7.2 INDUCTIVE GENERALISATION

As indicated in Chapter 5 the primary objective of the thesis is achieved by means of an inductive generalisation, according to the principles of phenomenography (Mouton, 2001:117; Struwig & Stead 2001:15). In such an inductive approach the researcher begins with a detailed examination of the world or phenomena in the world and moves towards a more generalised explanation of the world or the phenomena (strategic training) in the world. In Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis, the researcher examines the phenomenon of strategic training and move to an explanation of the nature of strategic training and strategic training needs of executives and managers within a selection (24) of large South African companies in Chapter 6. The phenomenon of strategic training and the strategic training needs of executives and managers are examined by identifying regularities and differences in the form of patterns which emerged during the interviews with respondents (Struwig & Stead, 2001:15). The inductive approach as explained in Chapter 5 and followed in Chapters 3, 4 and 6 is also followed in Chapter 7 since a generic framework or an explanation are presented of the manner in which executives and managers can be made aware of the importance of strategic training and the manner in which a strategic strategic training process should be implemented in companies are proposed.

7.3 CYCLICAL STRATEGIC TRAINING PROCESS

The framework provides a method to make executives and managers aware of the importance of strategic training and guidelines for the implementation of a strategic training process in a cyclical manner. A strategic training process will enable companies to identify and address the strategic training needs of executives and managers. Companies should, however, adjust this generic framework according to their unique needs and circumstances. The proposed framework is explained and discussed according to Figure 7.1 Cyclical strategic training process.

The process consists of four sequential phases. These four phases are the:

- Orientation phase
- Identification phase
- Implementation phase
- Feedback phase

Although the phases sometimes overlap, the effective implementation of the process will be hampered if each of the phases is not carried out. The process is also regarded as cyclical because there is an opportunity at different stages for managers and executives to give feedback on matters that may influence the strategic orientation of the company and should therefore be taken into account in a next iteration of the training process.

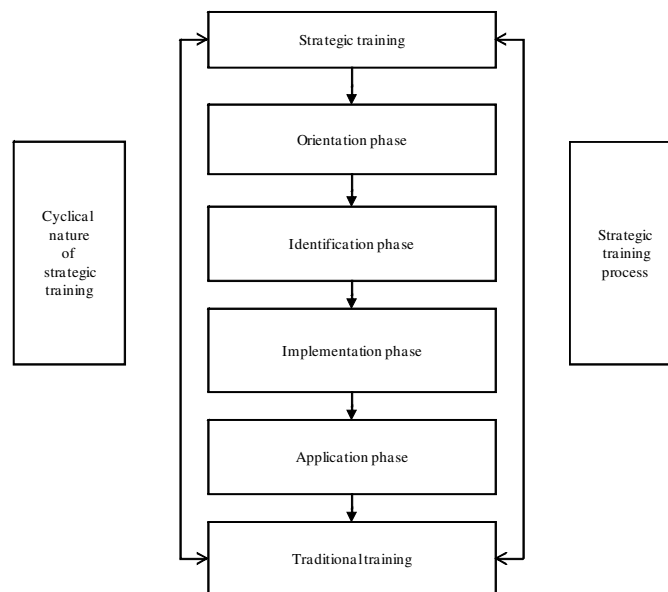


Figure 7.1 Cyclical strategic training process

The above-mentioned four phases of a strategic training process are briefly discussed below:

7.3.1 Orientation phase

The orientation phase of the strategic training process is considered to be the most significant phase of the process. The aim of this phase is to purposefully orientate executives and managers in respect of various aspects regarding the concept of “strategic training”, the nature and scope of the strategic training process and knowledge management. These aspects include:

- The relationship between the emergent strategic orientation of the company and strategic training.
- The differences between a traditional and a strategic training process.
- The nature and scope of strategic training.
- The outcome of strategic training.
- The relationship between knowledge management and strategic processes.
- The use of strategic training as a knowledge management technique.

The orientation phase entails that executives and managers are made aware of the cyclical relationship between the strategic orientation of the company and training and more specifically between the emergent strategic orientation and strategic training [See paragraphs 4.4.1 and 6.5]. If the relationship between the strategic orientation of the company and strategic training is of a cyclical nature it implies that a strategic training process will have an effect on the current strategic orientation of the company and thus the traditional training of executives and managers [See paragraph 4.4.1.1]. During the orientation phase executives and managers are made aware of the manner in which a strategic training process should influence the current strategic orientation of the

company and thus also the nature and scope of traditional training which is currently offered to executives and managers.

Executives and managers are furthermore made aware that the nature and scope of strategic training is such that it manifests in a different manner than traditional training. It is also essential that executives and managers are aware of the differences between strategic training and traditional training as well as the training processes used to make the different types of training possible. The differences between traditional and strategic training is discussed in Chapter 4.

Furthermore the use of strategic training as an example of a structured initiative in terms of which knowledge processes relating to the emergent strategic orientation of the company are performed are explained to executives and managers and/or confirmed to them. They must become aware of the relationship between knowledge management and strategic training. This will cause executives and managers to understand the importance of creating an environment within which knowledge processes regarding the strategic orientation of the company are performed. Knowledge management entails that executives, managers and employees are made aware of the importance and value of knowledge processes and the establishment of an environment within which knowledge processes can be performed. The purpose of knowledge management is to transform the knowledge of the individual employee into the shared knowledge of the company. Knowledge processes entail the creation, codifying, sharing, organising and use of knowledge. Training is an example of a technique that companies can use to perform knowledge processes [See paragraph 3.2]. Strategic training implies that knowledge processes are performed regarding the strategic orientation of the company in a structured manner in order for it to contribute to the shared knowledge of executives and managers involved in strategic processes. Rothwell and Kazanas explain (1994:433) that the purpose of strategic training is twofold. It fosters the creation and sharing of tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge or information: “Training is used to come up with new ideas / information” and it enables the sharing of explicit knowledge by means of strategic training: “... training is designed and delivered in anticipation of a future need”.

If training, and strategic training in particular, does not form part of the knowledge strategy, and thus also the knowledge management strategy of a company, it will have a negative impact on the cyclical relationship that should be present between strategic processes and the training processes found within the company [See paragraphs 4.4.4.3 and 6.7]. From the above it is clear that the cyclical relationship that should be present between strategic processes and training processes can only be used optimally if it forms part of the knowledge management initiatives used by the company. These knowledge management initiatives form part of the formal knowledge management strategy of the company to give effect to the knowledge strategy of the company. The current and emergent strategic orientation of the company serves as point of departure for the knowledge strategy of companies.

During the orientation phase the executives and managers are informed of the outcome of a strategic training process. They should develop an understanding of the fact that a strategic training process will enable them to be effective in all four the domains of the strategic environment of companies. Furthermore creating an understanding of the outcomes of the process will ensure that executives and managers have a positive experience of the process and will support it through active participation during their own training as well as during the training of the employees of the company [See paragraphs 4.4.3, 6.3.3.4 and 6.4.3.4].

The orientation phase of the strategic training process requires continuous interaction between executives and managers involved in strategic processes and individuals responsible for the strategic training process. This includes external providers of training [See paragraphs 6.3.3.3 and 6.4.3.3]. Interaction is crucial for the successful manifestation of the cyclical relationship between the strategic processes and strategic training. If there is no ongoing interaction between the said three groups, the strategic training process will take place in isolation from strategic processes. During the orientation phase individuals responsible for the strategic training process need to participate actively in orientating executives and managers regarding the relationship

between the strategic orientation of the company and training, the nature and scope of the various training processes in the company, the relationship between knowledge management and strategic processes as well as the outcome of a strategic training process [See paragraph 4.4.3.]

The above discussion explains that during the orientation phase executives and managers are oriented in terms of the nature and scope of key aspects of strategic training and the strategic training process. In this discussion it is explained that a strategic training process should not simply start with identifying opportunities during which strategic training should be used as suggested by Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:427) Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:427) explain that strategic training focuses on “identifying opportune occasions to use it based on problem-finding” rather than problem-“solving”. This approach is, however, regarded as reactive since it is premised on the use of strategic training if a particular opportunity or the presence of a problem forces the need for such training. Since strategic processes take place on an ongoing basis strategic training for managers should also take place on an ongoing and “parallel” basis to strategic processes. Strategic training should therefore focus on the needs of executives and managers as it arises from both an ongoing monitoring of the industry in order to make strategic decisions and take strategic actions and for early warning signals in the industry or “problem” as stated by Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:426). The necessity of the ongoing monitoring of the industry is also evident from the findings of the empirical phase of this thesis indicated that changes in the strategic orientation of companies depend on the dynamic nature of the industry and thus do not always change on a regular basis. Executives and managers should constantly monitor the strategic environment of the company. Furthermore they should be trained to be able to manage effectively in all the domains of their strategic environments. It is therefore important that training which are offered to executives and managers should be aligned with the current and emergent strategic orientation of the company.

As soon as executives and managers are oriented with regard to the strategic training process, the following phase takes place during which the strategic training needs of managers are identified.

7.3.2 Identification phase

During the orientation phase it is necessary that there is interaction between executives and managers involved in strategic processes and individuals responsible for strategic training processes. This will result in executives and managers developing an awareness of the nature and scope of the strategic training process. However, during the identification phase individuals responsible for the strategic training process must become involved with executives and managers on a more individual basis than during the orientation phase. This is the result of the fact that the strategic training process can only take place effectively if the individuals responsible for strategic training are fully aware of the nature and scope of the training needs of executives and managers. This requires that the individuals responsible for the strategic training process to be involved in strategic processes. If they are involved in strategic processes they will have the necessary understanding of the strategic environment of companies and the dynamic nature of the industries in which companies are situated. The nature of the factors present in the strategic environment determines the skills which executives and managers need to acquire and thus also their training needs. At the same time they must also be aware of the manner in which the strategic training process gives rise to the revision and possible amendment of the current strategic orientation of the company and its effect on individual business units for which executives and managers are responsible. The above-mentioned aspects should thus all be taken into account when identifying the training needs of executives and managers and determining the manner in which the identified trainings needs are to be addressed.

If training is contextualised in this manner the results of the strategic training process can be taken up in recommendations regarding the revision of the current strategic orientation

of the company and the formulation and eventually the implementation of the emergent strategic orientation of the company.

This interaction between the above-mentioned two groups will result in the strategic training process remaining relevant to the strategic orientation and thus effectively contributing to the competitiveness of the company.

The strategic orientation of the company, as it emerges from the strategic environment of companies, is translated into skills executives and managers should have to be able to provide for future events. The identified skills give rise to particular strategic training needs that are to be addressed through a strategic training process. However, the revision of the current strategic orientation of the company will not necessarily always result in an amendment of the current strategic orientation of the company, and thus no new strategic trainings needs are identified. This is closely linked to the dynamic nature of the industry in which the company finds itself.

The strategic trainings needs of executives and managers are a result of the manner in which individual executives and managers interpret the emergent strategic orientation of the company in the context of the company and individual business units. Executives and managers will therefore have certain similar training needs, but naturally the training needs identified will differ as they flow from the unique circumstances of each of the respective business units.

Since the known and knowable domains are characterised by a certain measure of order, training programmes are probably already present in the company to address some of the training needs of executives and managers flowing from these domains [See Chapter 2]. In these domains executives and managers are able to make sense of the factors present in the strategic environment of the company. It should thus largely be possible to address the training needs that flow from these two domains through existing training programmes. This is, however, not the case with the complex and chaotic or unordered domains because executives and managers in these domains must first “probe” and “act”

before they can make sense of the factors present in these strategic domains. The extremely variable and unpredictable nature of these domains is such that training programmes do not always exist in companies to fully address the training needs of executives and managers.

The identification of strategic training needs are a result of the manner in which the emergent strategic orientation of the company is formulated and not – as in the case of traditional training – from the performance of executives and managers not meeting certain criteria or performance standards [See paragraph 4.3]. Each of the identified strategic training needs must be analysed in terms of aspects such as:

- The precise nature and scope of the strategic training needs of executives and managers.
- The level of criticality of each of the identified strategic training needs or the importance of addressing a particular training need.
- The strategic environment in which the need has been identified since training needs that flow from the ordered domains are probably less complex to address than training needs that flow from the complex and chaotic domains.
- The suitability of the training infrastructure of companies to accommodate the strategic training needs of executives and managers.
- The effect of training needs being addressed or the outcome to be achieved through the strategic training process.
- The effect of the training needs of executives and managers not being addressed on the continued competitiveness of the company.

- The effect of the training needs of executives and managers not being addressed on the company and the business unit for which a particular executive and manager is responsible.

The identification and analysis of the training needs of executives and managers will result in an ability to make decisions regarding the manner in which the strategic training needs of executives and managers should be addressed during Phase 3 of the strategic training process. It will also give an indication of the curriculum that is to be followed during the strategic training process and the training infrastructure which is needed to address the identified needs.

It is important that the identification phase should focus on all the various categories of strategic trainings needs experienced by executives and managers. The researcher's findings (2003/2004) indicated that there should be a focus on the conventional skills such as managerial and job content skills as well as soft skills [See paragraph 6.5]. In addition to the skills identified in paragraph 6.5 the empirical findings confirm the literature that executives and managers should also have the following skills:

- Trend and pattern management: Although the skill to manage patterns and trends can also be understood as strategic insight it requires the specific ability to identify and analyse patterns and trends in the industry which companies represent and related industries. Furthermore it requires of executives and managers to synthesise the identified and analysed patterns and trends and determine the impact thereof on the company [See paragraph 2.2.3].
- Crisis management: The ability to manage in a crisis situation necessitates that executives and managers should be able to manage in uncertain and complex situations. Executives and managers should have the ability to make decisions prior to analysing a situation and its perceived effect on the company. [See paragraph 2.2.4].

- Intellectual capital management: Executives and managers need the ability to recognise the importance of managing knowledge assets or intellectual capital of companies. This includes the human, structural, relationship and competitive capital of companies. Although knowledge management has been identified as an important skill for executives and managers it is evident that they need to be trained to value human and relationship capital. This entails managing both the tacit and explicit knowledge of employees (human capital) as well as the relationship between the company and its value chain (relationship capital) [See paragraphs 6.3.3.7 and 6.4.3.7].
- Change management: Executives and managers need the ability to manage change in companies. The nature of the products and services which companies deliver are becoming increasingly knowledge intensive in nature and requires of companies to focus on both tangible or physical resources (capital, equipment, property) as well as intangible resources (skills, relationships, processes and procedures as well as databases and networks). Executives and managers should take a leading role in establishing a culture in the organisation in which knowledge is recognised as the primary resource which will contribute to the sustainability of the company in the knowledge economy. This entails that executives and managers should be able to manage in a strategic environment which is characterised by “uncertainty” and participate and support training processes which focus on developing the skills that executives and managers need to be able to manage the company in an “uncertain” strategic environment. It also entails that executives and managers should be able to lead the change in companies regarding managing merely the information or explicit knowledge of employees to managing both the tacit as well as the explicit knowledge of employees to the benefit of the organisation.
- Strategic foresight: Executives and managers need the ability to identify and analyse early warning signals in their strategic environment. If early warning signals are identified and analysed in a timely manner companies can discover a

preferred direction to prepare them for changes in their strategic environment which will necessitate a review and amendment of their strategic orientation. The need for strategic foresight is explained by Marsh (2007:14): “The inability of businesses to deal with change quickly enough or to be pro-active in the face of change, has led to volatility in companies, sectors and shareholder value. This highlights the advantage that can be gained for the company that develops skills which will help it anticipate and respond to change in a timely way.”

The above-mentioned skills will result in training needs which should be addressed by a strategic training process. According to the Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:429) model for strategic training, training needs are established in the following manner: “The real difference between traditional and strategic needs assessment has to do with criteria. Present criteria are what managers and other employees expect by way of job performance from a job incumbent at this time. If job standards have been established, they are the criteria by which to assess present performance. Future criteria are what managers expect after job requirements and standards have been affected by changing conditions inside and outside the firm. To predict future criteria, HRD practitioners and others should determine what major changes will affect the organization, and how these changes should affect job standards or job performance requirements.”

However, Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:429) also explain that the process of establishing criteria for the manner in which the performance of executives and managers should manifest in the future is extremely tentative and subjective. It is therefore more appropriate to determine the training needs of executives and managers based on the emergent strategic orientation rather than on what the performance of executives and managers should be like in future. This is due to the nature of the complex and chaotic domains which is largely unordered and turbulent and thus it is difficult to determine the criteria for the performance of executives and managers in these domains. Furthermore, the complex domain is also an adaptable system while the chaotic domain is characterised by crisis management, for which no planning can, of course, take place in advance [See paragraphs 2.2.3 and 2.2.4].

The cyclical nature of the strategic training process requires that there should always be an alignment between the emergent strategic orientation of the company and the strategic training needs of executives and managers. This cyclical or recurring nature of the strategic training process therefore implies that the strategic training of executives and managers should enable them to be able to revise and if necessary amend the current strategic orientation of the company. When the current strategic orientation of the company has been revised and amended according to factors present in the external and internal strategic domains of companies the training needs of executives, managers and employees take place by means of a traditional training process since it enable executives, managers and employees to be able to function efficiently and effectively in terms of the current strategic orientation of the company [See Figure 7.1].

On conclusion of Phase 2 the identified strategic training needs of executives and managers are addressed by means of a strategic training process as part of the implementation phase.

7.3.3 Implementation phase

In paragraph 3.2 it is explained that an environment must be created where the strategic training of executives and managers takes place through a strategic training process. During the implementation phase, various decisions are made regarding the manner in which an environment will be created which is conducive to a strategic training process and in which the identified strategic training needs of executives and managers can be addressed.

7.3.3.1 Corporate universities and other training units

It should be possible to incorporate a strategic training process in the existing training units and corporate universities of large South African companies as indicated in paragraphs 6.3.3.2 and 6.4.3.2. Different training processes must, however, be present in these training units and corporate universities to make provision for the various types of

training companies offer to executives and managers. These different training processes should provide for the unique nature and scope of traditional and strategic training as explained in Chapter 4.

Companies can use any term (for example academy, centre for learning, business school, institute) to refer to their training unit and/or corporate university. Training offered from a corporate university as opposed to training offered from a training unit is customised according to the specific strategic orientation of the company [See paragraphs 6.3.3.2 and 6.4.3.2]. Any training unit or corporate university could be regarded as conducive to a strategic training process as long as the concept “strategic training” is understood correctly and the correct processes are followed to address the strategic trainings needs of executives and managers and, over time, of other employees also.

The Rothwell and Kazanas model of strategic training does not mention the type of training unit that should be used to offer strategic training to executives, managers and employees [See paragraph 4.6.1].

7.3.3.2 Target group

Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:425) explain: Strategic training requires HRD practitioners and managers to envision what future job requirements should be under future conditions and prepare people for those conditions.” This confirms that a strategic training process should start with executives and managers who are responsible for strategic processes during which the future of the company is planned. The company’s strategy contains a statement of the manner in which it wishes to position itself in a particular industry currently and in the future [See paragraphs 3.3, 6.3.1 and 6.4.1]. Obviously, executives and managers should be empowered to identify their training needs and be offered the necessary opportunities that will enable them to acquire the skills they will need in future as they result from the emergent strategic orientation of the company. As soon as this process has been completed, executives and managers and individuals responsible for human resource development will be able to equip employees for future circumstances. Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:431) describe the characteristics employees should have to

be involved in a strategic training process [See paragraph 4.6.1.3]. The strategic training process is thus not limited to executives and managers, but is first and foremost aimed at executives and managers involved in strategic processes.

7.3.3.3 External providers of training

The use of business schools and other external training providers to address the strategic trainings needs of executives and managers requires a particular interaction between the training institution and the company. This interaction is necessary since external providers of training should be well informed regarding the various aspects that could have an effect on the effectiveness of the training process. These aspects include the factors present in the internal and external strategic environment of companies, the emergent strategic orientation of the company, nature and scope of strategic training as well as the strategic training needs of executives and managers. The successful interaction between the company and external providers of training is dependent on a high level of trust between external providers of training and the executives and managers involved in strategic processes. This is due to the fact that external providers of strategic training need to be informed regarding the emergent strategic orientation of the company. If the above-mentioned trust between external providers of training and the company has not been established the training offered to executives and managers might be superficial in nature and will not be customised according to the emergent strategic orientation of the company [See paragraphs 3.5, 6.3.3.3 and 6.4.3.3].

Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:442) only mention the use of externally prepared training material for directive training as opposed to non-directive training. They explain: “If strategic training is directive, then instructional content is prepared in-house or selected from externally prepared training materials in precisely the same way that traditional instruction is prepared. On the other hand, nondirective training produces new information, stimulates new insights, motivates trainees to prepare for the future, provides a means to simulate future conditions, and gives trainees a chance to gain experience before it is needed.” Furthermore, the authors do not refer to the use of external providers to provide training of a strategic nature to executives and managers.

7.3.3.4 Involving executives and managers in training

The Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) model of strategic training does not mention the manner in which the executives and managers of companies should be involved in the strategic training process [See paragraph 4.6.1].

The contextualised nature of strategic training requires that the executives and managers of the company should not only be involved in the strategic training process as learners or participants in the process, but that they should at the same time contribute to the strategic training process. The contribution of the executives and managers of companies entails that they ensure that strategic training is contextualised or place training in the perspective of the company and its strategic environment. This necessitates the use of instructional methods and media which enable the contextualisation of strategic training by executives and managers [See paragraphs 4.4.3, 6.3.3.4 and 6.4.3.4].

7.3.3.5 The instructional methods and media that enable training

The instructional methods and media used during a strategic training process must provide for the unique nature and scope of the strategic training needs of executives and managers. The instructional media that can be used consist of classroom-based learning, technology-based or a combination of these, which is known as blended learning while the instructional methods include lectures, case studies, role play, simulations, action learning and mentoring [See paragraphs 6.3.3.5 and 6.4.3.5.]. The factors that should influence the choice of instructional media and methods that will be used during a strategic training process are:

- The instructional methods and methods should represent the strategic environment (known, knowable, chaos, complex) within which companies find themselves.

- The instructional methods and media should facilitate training offered from the perspective of the emergent strategic orientation of companies. Strategic training is tentative in nature since it is based on a prediction of the factors present in the emergent strategic environment of companies.
- The instructional methods and media should make provision for the changing nature of the strategic training needs of executives and managers as they flow from the revision and amendment of the current strategic orientation of companies.
- The instructional methods and media should enhance and support knowledge processes. The creation and sharing of both explicit and tacit knowledge requires the use of instructional media and methods which are interactive in nature in order to “foster the sharing of insights, ideas, and innovative techniques among learners.” (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994:433).

From the above-mentioned factors it would appear that the strategic training of executives and managers can only take place effectively if their strategic training needs are addressed through training that reflects the company and its strategic environment. Companies will therefore prefer to use classroom-based or blended learning to technology-based learning to offer strategic training to executives and managers. This is due to the ability of classroom-based and blended learning to enable conversation and dialogue regarding the company and its strategic environment.

The instructional methods that are used should provide for interaction between the trainer and/or facilitator and learners. Various instructional methods can be used for the purpose of strategic training including lectures, case studies, role-play, simulations, mentorship and the use of narrative techniques. These instructional methods should be evaluated in order to determine whether they are suitable to address the specific strategic training needs of executives and managers.

Kurtz and Snowden (2003:496) give the following explanation of the value of the use of narrative techniques, in particular in the unordered domain of the strategic environments of companies: “Understanding this space requires us to gain *multiple perspectives* on the nature of the system. This is the time to “stand still” (but pay attention) and gain new perspective on the situation rather than “run for your life”, relying on the entrained patterns of past experience to determine our response. The methods, tools and techniques of the known and knowable domains do not work here. Narrative techniques are particularly powerful in this space.”

Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:434) confirm that: “The selection and use of appropriate delivery methods depends on the purpose of strategic training. If the purpose is purely nondirective, specific outcomes are not necessarily fixed. The learning event is a discovery session where new ideas are created and new learning needs are identified.”

The extremely interactive and contextualised nature of strategic training explains why the trainer and/or facilitator need to be involved in the training process from the beginning of a strategic training process. This is confirmed by Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:443): “Nondirective training is dependent on the skills of the group facilitator, who stimulates group thinking. Content stems from the “training” session and is a function of group interaction and methods used to elicit new ideas.”

7.3.3.6 The effectiveness and relevance of training

As indicated in the above paragraphs effective and relevant strategic training is enabled and supported by the continuous interaction between individuals responsible for the strategic training process and executives and managers responsible for strategic processes. This interaction entails that training is continuously aligned with the emergent strategic orientation of the company and the emergent strategic orientation of the company is translated in the strategic training needs of executives and managers.

It is more complicated to determine the effectiveness and relevance of strategic training than is the case with traditional training. This is because strategic training is based on the

identification of the training needs of executives and managers as they flow from of the domains (chaos, complex) in the strategic environment of companies which are emergent in nature [See Chapter 2]. These domains are largely unordered and thus it is difficult to determine the nature and scope of the work performance of executives and managers and to establish a standard or criteria for effective and relevant work performance. Measuring the effectiveness of strategic training is further complicated by the fact that the training focuses on future performance and thus not on the current manifestation of performance in the company. Assessment methods that measure the use or application of newly acquired skills and knowledge cannot be used. The above explains why, during a strategic training process, the only assessment methods that can be used are those that determine whether new knowledge was created and shared, in other words whether learning took place during training, and not whether executives and managers were able to use or apply newly acquired knowledge in order to contribute to the competitiveness of the company.

Rothwell and Kazanas (1994:478-486) explain the manner in which formative, summative, concurrent and post-instructional evaluation should be conducted to make provision for assessing the effectiveness and relevance of strategic training programmes. However, the researcher is of the opinion that a strategic training process should be regarded as an integral part of the strategic processes of the company. This implies that a strategic training process should not be assessed in terms of the conventional methods used to measure the effectiveness and relevance of training. The effectiveness and relevance of strategic training should probably be determined in the same manner as that which is used to determine the effectiveness of strategic processes [See paragraphs 3.7, 6.3.3.6 and 6.4.3.6]. The reasons why a strategic training process should not be assessed in terms of the conventional methods used to measure the effectiveness and relevance of training are:

- The unique nature and scope of strategic training.
- The extremely customised content of strategic training programmes.

- The lack of standards or criteria for work performance.
- Newly acquired knowledge and skills cannot be used or applied immediately and can only be measured if and when used or applied.

Furthermore, there should rather be a focus on the outcomes to be achieved through strategic training, namely to prepare executives and managers to manage effectively in terms of the emergent strategic orientation of the company, than on finding suitable methods to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the strategic training process.

7.3.3.7 Training the value chain

Companies should develop an awareness of the contribution their value chain can make to the strategic training process. The value chain of companies consists of suppliers, clients, distributors and manufacturers of the company's services and/or products. Companies that are involved in related industries should, of course, also form part of the value chain of companies. Although the Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) model of strategic training does not mention the manner in which the value chain of companies should be involved in the strategic training process the value chain of companies can make a significant contribution to the strategic training process [See paragraph 4.6.1]. This is due to the value chain having a perspective of the industry and/or related industries which companies represent. The value chain can indicate trends and patterns in the industry which should be taken into consideration when the emergent strategic orientation of companies is formulated. This emergent strategic orientation should be translated into the strategic training needs of executives and managers. The input of the value chain of companies should be taken into consideration during the orientation and identification phases of the strategic training process [See paragraphs 6.3.3.7 and 6.4.3.7].

As soon as the training of executives and managers has been completed, the following and final phase of the strategic training process starts. During this phase provision must be made for feedback on the possible application of skills in the future.

7.3.4 Feedback phase

The final phase of the strategic training process is known as the feedback phase. This phase entails that executives and managers must provide feedback on the manner in which they foresee that they will in future use or apply the skills in terms of which they have been trained. The nature and scope of this feedback should at the same time also give an early indication of the effectiveness and relevance of the strategic training process. Executives and managers are thus given an opportunity to indicate which knowledge was created and shared during the strategic training process, since it is not possible at this stage for them to give feedback on the manner in which this knowledge was used or applied in the context of their job.

The feedback of executives and managers should focus on two levels, namely a strategic and operational level.

- Strategic level: Executives and managers must give feedback on the manner in which newly acquired skills will enable them to manage effectively in the two domains which are emergent in nature. Similarly, executives and managers should, through a strategic training process, be empowered to apply new skills or new knowledge to the advantage of the strategic processes that take place in the company. Executives and managers should thus use strategic training in order to contribute to the process during which the revision and if necessary also the amendment of the current strategic orientation of the company takes place. The revision and amendment of the current strategic orientation of the company must be addressed through a next iteration of the strategic training process and result in the strategic training process being of a cyclical nature [see Figure 7.1].
- Operational level: Executives and managers and individuals responsible for strategic training should be involved in translating the emergent strategic orientation of the company in terms of the future performance of employees.

Since these employees are not directly involved in strategic processes it often requires the active involvement of executives and managers in the training of employees. This means that executives and managers are responsible for communicating the emergent strategic orientation of the company to employees and to indicate the manner in which it will manifest in future performance [See paragraphs 6.3.2. and 6.4.2]. They must therefore contextualise the strategic training of employees according to emergent strategic orientation of the company and individual business units.

The Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) model of strategic training ends with the provision of strategic training. The model thus does not mention the effect of the strategic training process on the current strategic orientation of the company and the manner in which traditional training manifests in the company. The Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) model of strategic training is therefore not regarded as cyclical in nature [See paragraph 4.6.1].

7.4 CONCLUSION

Against the backdrop of the Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) model of strategic training, the literature on strategic training presented in Chapters 3 and 4 as well as the empirical research conducted and reported on in Chapter 6 as part of this thesis, the aim of Chapter 7 was to develop a framework of a cyclical strategic training process for use by large South African companies.

This framework addresses the need for a method through which executives and managers in the large South African companies that participated in the study can be made aware of the importance of strategic training and at the same time provides guidelines that can be used to implement a strategic training process.

Only if companies are aware of the meaning of the concept “strategic training”, and have guidelines for the implementation of a strategic training process, will they succeed in the identification and addressing the strategic training needs of executives, managers and

employees in a structured and visible manner. This will ensure that strategic training truly contributes to the competitiveness of companies.



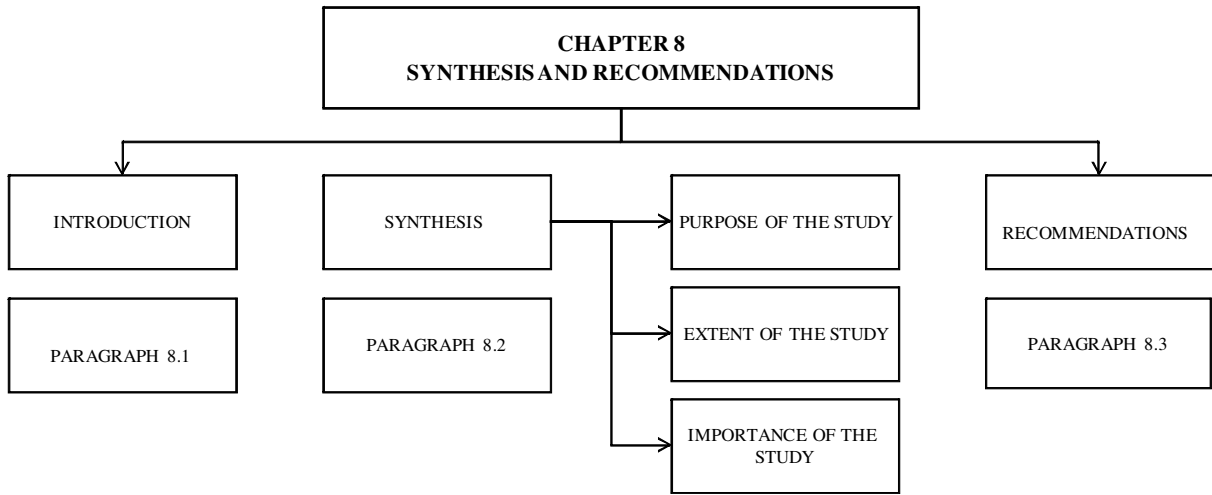
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CHAPTER 8

SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF CHAPTER 8



8.1 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the most important resource of the 21st century or knowledge-centered companies. Stewart (2001:12) describes the increasing importance of knowledge as a resource for companies as follows: “Conventional assets – financial and physical capital – have not disappeared and will not; but given how important knowledge has become, as a product and in processes that add value to work, it is inevitable that knowledge would come to be a more and more important asset for organisations – their most important asset.”

The importance and value of knowledge as a resource is such that companies can no longer take for granted that knowledge processes will be performed by executives, managers and employees. Companies should therefore continually attempt, through a structured approach, to create an environment in which knowledge processes will be performed. In this environment the knowledge of individual executives and managers and employees is transformed and used for the benefit of the company as a whole.

Knowledge processes should, however, not only focus on factors that are currently present in the strategic environment of companies or the manner in which strategic and operational processes currently manifest in companies. If the scope of knowledge processes is limited to factors that are currently present in the strategic environment of companies, these processes will only contribute to the immediate and short-term competitiveness of companies. It is important for companies to also conduct knowledge processes that will result in the future competitiveness of the company.

Strategic training is a type of process that can be used to enable knowledge processes relating to the future of companies. This type of training process is closely linked to the strategic processes that are conducted to bring about the future competitiveness of companies. The point of departure for strategic training is thus the future strategic orientation of the company and thus the way in which future knowledge is managed. As a result a strategic training process initially only focuses on enabling executives and

executives and managers involved in strategic processes to manage effectively in the future. Over time strategic training will, however, also be offered to employees to be capable of effective performance in the future.

During a strategic training process training is thus used to perform knowledge processes relating to skills executives and managers will need in the future and in terms of which they experience certain training needs. These training needs are a result of the emergent strategic orientation of the company.

The effective use of a strategic training process is largely determined by the correct alignment of the strategic training process with the emergent strategic orientation of the company and the manner in which the emergent strategic orientation of the company is translated into the strategic training needs of executives and managers in particular.

The impetus for this study arose from preliminary research of the literature on strategic training as a specific type of strategic human resource development that enables executives, managers and employees involved in strategic processes to be able to give effect to the “articulated” emergent strategic orientation of the company (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1998:425). Strategic human resource development is a method according to which the human capital or knowledge assets of a company are developed and managed. During strategic human resource development and the development of the human capital of the company knowledge processes in terms of the emergent strategic orientation of the company are conducted. This preliminary research revealed that a need exists for a more pragmatic discussion of the concept strategic human resource development and also strategic training as a form of human capital development. Furthermore the preliminary research also indicated a gap in terms of the South African literature regarding strategic human resource development and also strategic training. This gives rise to a further gap in terms of the South African literature namely: The connection between the emergent strategic orientation of companies more specifically the strategic training needs of executives and managers in large South African companies. Based on the preliminary research the primary objective of the study was formulated as follows:

- To determine what the strategic training needs of executives and managers involved in strategic processes in large South African companies are and how they are they addressed.

The secondary objectives of the study were:

- To determine the relationship between the current and emergent strategic orientation of the company and training.
- To develop an insight into the nature and scope of training that is prevalent in companies.
- To determine the manner in which strategic training is addressed in large South African companies.
- To determine the type of training unit that is required to offer strategic training to executives and managers.
- To develop an understanding of the relationship that exists between knowledge management and strategic training in companies.

In accordance with the aforementioned objectives, a literature study was conducted of the nature and scope of the strategic environment of companies, the extent and scope of learning that takes place as a result of strategic training and the concept strategic training as a specific example of a future-oriented method of strategic human resource development. The findings of the literature study was empirically tested within a selection of large South African companies in order to determine the nature and scope of strategic training and the strategic training needs of executives and managers in particular as they come to light from the emergent strategic orientation of these companies.

8.2 SYNTHESIS

The nature and scope of the research are synthesised in terms of the purpose, the extent and the importance of the study.

8.2.1 The purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine the nature and scope of strategic training, as well as the strategic training needs of executives and managers in a selection of large South African companies. An attempt was also made to give an indication of the connection between knowledge management and strategic training and, as a result, the manner in which strategic training as a knowledge management technique contributes to the competitiveness of companies.

The researcher has through both the literature that was consulted and the empirical research undertaken established that most large South African companies that participated in the study are essentially inexperienced regarding the concept of “strategic training”, and thus do not make use of a strategic training process to identify and address the strategic training needs of executives and managers. It was also found that companies are unaware of the use of training as a formal knowledge management initiative which supports the management of both the tacit and explicit knowledge of executives and managers.

The above had a negative effect on the execution of the study and the researcher had to address the above-mentioned obstacles by, during the course of the study, focusing on possible ways in which companies could be made aware of the concept “strategic training” and the establishment of guidelines for the use of a strategic training process. A generic framework was therefore proposed to provide a possible method to make companies aware of the importance of strategic training and to present guidelines on the implementation of a cyclical strategic training process [See Chapter 7]. This process specifically indicates the manner in which the strategic training needs of executives and

managers should be identified and addressed. The guidelines were also used in an attempt to indicate the manner in which knowledge management and strategic training could manifest in an integrated manner.

8.2.2 Extent of the study

According to the Cynefin framework for organisational sense making (Cynefin Centre for Organisational Complexity, 2004:4) the internal and external strategic environment of companies consist of four domains that are delimited by a central domain. These domains are branded as the known, knowable, complex and chaos domains. The central domain is characterised by disorder and is therefore known as the domain of disorder. The known and knowable domains are regarded as ordered and the complex and chaos domains are characteristically unordered. Each of these domains is distinguished by unique characteristics, meaning that sense has to be made in different ways of the factors present in the various domains. The manner in which companies make sense of the factors present in the known and knowable domains determines the manner in which companies formulate their current strategic orientation. Companies must, however, be able to identify and make sense of the manner in which the factors in the domains which are more emergent in nature will influence them in the future. The manner in which companies make sense of factors that will influence them in future gives rise to the formulation of the emergent strategic orientation of companies. The presence of these factors requires that the current strategic orientation of companies should be revised and amended in order to ensure the future competitiveness of companies. Companies should, however, make use of the correct training processes to empower executives and managers and employees to manage and/or work effectively in the present as well as in the future resulting from both the current and the emergent strategic orientation.

Learning occurs when knowledge processes are performed during training. Effective learning and thus knowledge processes are dependent on a suitable training environment and the right type of training process to identify and address the training needs of

executives, managers and employees. The environment that is created to allow training to occur usually has the following typical characteristics:

- A training philosophy, policy and strategy that indicate the manner in which learning will take place in the company and/or the views of the company regarding learning.
- A corporate university or other training unit that is used to present training to executives, managers and employees.
- A curriculum that sets out the nature and scope of the training offered to executives, managers and employees.
- The instructional methods and media that enable training offered to executives, managers and employees.
- A method in terms of which the effectiveness and relevance of training can be measured.
- Cooperation with a variety of external training providers to support and enhance the training provided by the company to its executives, managers and employees.
- The provision of training to the value chain of the company.

The manner in which the above-mentioned characteristics manifest in companies is determined by the type of training processes that will be used.

Two types of training processes that are found in companies are traditional and strategic training. Traditional training is used to address the training needs of executives, managers and employees in terms of the current strategic orientation of companies. Strategic training is used in the first instance to identify and address the training needs of

executives and managers involved in strategic processes as a result of the emergent strategic orientation of companies. As soon as the strategic training needs of executives and managers have been addressed, the rest of the employees' strategic training needs should be identified and addressed through a strategic training process. Strategic training enhances the ability of individual executives and managers to manage effectively and individual employees to be capable of effective performance in the future. Strategic training is one of the three methods used to equip executives, managers and employees for working in companies in the future. Methods that are used to equip executives, executives, managers and employees for the future circumstances in companies are known as strategic human resource development. Strategic human resource development thus differs from traditional human resource development, in that the latter focuses on equipping executives, managers and employees for managing and working effectively in companies as they manifest at present. The point of departure for strategic human resource development is the emergent strategic orientation of the company since it is difficult to determine the exact nature and scope of future performance. The point of departure for traditional human resource development is the current performance of executives, managers and employees.

A study was conducted in a selection of large South African companies to determine the use of strategic training in these companies. The following aspects were the focus of the study conducted in the selection of large South African companies:

- The awareness of companies as regards the alignment of their current and emergent strategic orientation with their training processes.
- The manner in which training processes are supported by the training infrastructure in companies.
- The knowledge of companies regarding the meaning of the concept “strategic training” and the use of strategic training to equip executives and managers to manage and work effectively in the future.

- The strategic training needs of executives and managers flowing from the emergent strategic orientation of companies.
- The use of training as a technique by means of which knowledge management can be conducted in a structured manner.

The results of the study indicated that the large South African companies (24) that participated in the study are not aware of the correct or precise meaning of the concept “strategic training” and consequently do not make use of this type of training process to prepare executives and managers for the future.

Certain recommendations are therefore made at a macro or national level and at a micro or organisational level to address the above-mentioned situation in the large South African companies that participated in the study. These recommendations entail making companies aware of the importance of strategic training and establishing guidelines that will assist companies in using a strategic training process. The use of a strategic training process is proposed and explained using four consecutive phases known as the orientation phase, identification phase, implementation phase and the feedback phase. If the strategic training process consists of these four phases it will be cyclical in nature. This entails that the results of the strategic training process are used to contribute to the execution of strategic processes during which the current strategic orientation is revised and amended and the emergent strategic orientation of the company is formulated.

8.2.3 Importance of the study

The study makes a contribution in terms of both the use of knowledge management as well as human resource management. These contributions are:

8.2.3.1 The use of knowledge management at a strategic level

The study indicates the manner in which knowledge management should be used at a strategic level in companies rather than merely at an operational level. The strategic training of executives and managers in particular has the outcome that knowledge processes regarding strategic processes take place in a structured manner. Strategic training thus allows executives and managers to appreciate the importance of knowledge management or the establishment of a structured environment in which knowledge processes can be performed in order to make a contribution to both management processes and work performance in the company. If executives and managers experience the value of knowledge management at a strategic level through the use of strategic training, it should naturally also result in further support for the use of knowledge management initiatives at an operational level. Knowledge management should thus be applied at both a strategic and operational level, and particularly from the framework of a knowledge management strategy that supports the knowledge strategy of the company as determined by the grand strategy of the company in order to contribute to the competitiveness of the company.

8.2.3.2 Training in strategic domains

Various aspects regarding the different domains of the Cynefin framework for organisational sense making are already known and have been described in the literature (Cynefin Centre for Organisational Complexity, 2003:1) [See Chapter 2]. However, the researcher attempts to indicate the manner in which this model should be interpreted in terms of training. Since the ordered domains focus on factors that are regarded as known and knowable, immediate sense can be made of the factors present in these domains. Thus training needs in these domains should largely be addressed through traditional training. In the unordered domains sense is made by stimulating or suppressing patterns (complex domain) or through immediate action (chaos domain). The uncertain nature of these domains means that training needs should be determined based on predictions and projections and will thus typically be addressed by way of strategic training.

8.2.3.3 *The use of strategic training*

The study indicates the manner in which the use of strategic training should be promoted at a macro or national level through various mechanisms such as legislation. Certain guidelines are, however, also laid down to empower companies to make use of the strategic training process at a micro or organisational level in order to identify and address the strategic training needs of executives and managers in particular.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary objective of the study was to ascertain the strategic training needs of executives and managers involved in strategic processes in large South African companies and the manner in which these training needs are addressed. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the literature study and the empirical research conducted to achieve the primary objective of the study the following recommendations are made.

8.3.1 Recommendation 1

On a macro- or national level it is recommended that the South African government encourage and support the use of both traditional and strategic training.

It was apparent from the empirical component of the study that large South African companies have a well-developed training infrastructure for traditional training [See paragraph 6.3.3]. This is attributed to a variety of legislation and mechanisms through which especially traditional in companies are encouraged and supported by the South African government.

The use of a strategic training process to ensure the effectiveness of executives and managers and also the competitiveness of companies is dependent on companies being aware of the meaning of the concept “strategic training”. An awareness of the meaning “strategic training” entails that companies understand the nature and scope of strategic training as well as the importance and value of this type of training process. The South

African government should thus encourage and support the use of strategic training through similar legislation and mechanisms as is the case with traditional training. Companies should also be empowered, through the said legislation and mechanisms to establish an infrastructure and environment within which the strategic training needs of executives and managers can be identified and addressed through a strategic training process. Legislation and the establishment of mechanisms will also have an influence on the nature and scope of management training that is offered to companies by external providers of training since they will have to make provision for addressing the strategic training needs of executives and managers.

Only if the South African government encourages and support the use of strategic training in a visible manner will companies realise the importance of offering training opportunities to executives and managers to enable them to manage effectively in all four the strategic domains of companies. The researcher suggests that legislation such as the *Skills Development Act, no. 97 of 1998* and the *Skills Development Levies Act, no. 24 of 1999* and mechanisms such as the National Qualifications Framework, South African Qualifications Authority, Sector Education and Training Authorities should make provision for both traditional and strategic training.

8.3.2 Recommendation 2

On a micro- or organisational level it is recommended that executives and managers involved in strategic processes constantly monitor the factors present in the complex and chaos domains which are emergent in nature in order to determine the effect of these factors on the current strategic orientation of the company.

The establishment of measures by government that will encourage companies to use strategic training and that will support such training does not necessarily imply that companies will make use of strategic training. It is also not ensured by the availability of training programmes provided by external providers of training. Companies will only

make use of strategic training if they are aware of the effect of strategic training on the long-term competitiveness of the company.

It was evident from the literature that the strategic orientation of companies must be formulated in terms of factors present in both the external and the internal environment of companies and the manner in which the external and internal factors influence one another. The internal and external environments of companies are divided into four domains, namely the known, knowable, chaos and chaotic domains [See Chapter 2]. Executives and managers involved in strategic process should develop the skills to monitor the strategic environment of the company on an ongoing basis and to formulate the current as well as the emergent strategic orientation of the company according to the factors present in the domains in the strategic environment of companies.

The skills that executives and managers need to be able to formulate the current strategic orientation are acquired by means of traditional training while strategic training will enable executives and managers to acquire the skills they will need to formulate the emergent strategic orientation. However, strategic training should have an effect on the manner in which the current strategic orientation of the company is formulated. Executives, managers and employees should thus be prepared for possible revisions and amendments in the current strategic orientation of the company through a strategic training process [See paragraphs 6.3.1.4 and 6.4.1].

8.3.3 Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the alignment between the company's strategic orientation and training is established by means of a cyclical relationship which exists between strategic processes and strategic training.

The literature study demonstrated that the current and emergent strategic orientation of the company should be aligned with the traditional and strategic training processes in the company. However, the empirical research indicated that this is not necessarily the

situation in large South African companies. A cyclical relationship between strategic processes and strategic training implies that the emergent strategic orientation of the company should be aligned with strategic processes. Likewise it means that the results of the strategic training process must be used to revise the current strategic orientation and to amend or revise it if necessary. The presence of a cyclical relationship between strategic processes and strategic training requires that the strategic training process provides for amendments in the strategic orientation of the company being reflected in the strategic training offered to executives and managers.

If a cyclical relationship exists between strategic training and strategic processes it will ensure that strategic training is effective and relevant to the emergent strategic orientation of the company and thus contributes to the competitiveness of the company [See Chapter 7].

8.3.4 Recommendation 4

It is recommended that a cyclical strategic training process that is aligned with the emergent strategic orientation of the company should be used to enable strategic training..

The empirical research conducted in a selection of large South African companies demonstrated an absence of strategic training processes in these companies. This absence should be addressed through the implementation of a cyclical strategic training process. A strategic training process of this nature would ensure that the strategic training needs of executives and managers are identified and addressed [See Chapter 7].

8.3.5 Recommendation 5

It is recommended that the executives and managers of companies are purposefully sensitised or orientated regarding the concept “strategic training” as well as the nature and scope of a strategic training process.

It was evident from the findings of the literature study and the empirical research that large South African companies are for the most part unaware of the correct or precise meaning of strategic training. Furthermore, the literature study as well as the empirical research indicated that although some companies might be knowledgeable or aware of the concept “strategic training” they do not necessarily know how to implement a training process of this nature and therefore do not succeed in identifying and addressing the strategic training needs of executives and managers.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 1 Orientation phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.6 Recommendation 6

It is recommended that the cyclical strategic training process makes specific provision for the involvement and participation of individuals who are responsible for strategic processes such as executives and managers and individuals who are responsible for training in the strategic training process.

It was apparent from the literature study that a relationship should exist between the strategic processes of the company and strategic training. This explains why effective strategic training is dependent on the intense involvement of both the executives and managers involved in strategic processes and individuals responsible for the development of human resources of the company.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 1 Orientation phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.7 Recommendation 7

It is recommended that the use of strategic training as a structured initiative in terms of which knowledge processes regarding the emergent strategic orientation of the company are performed must be explained to executives and managers by individuals responsible for the strategic training process and/or individuals responsible for knowledge management such as a Chief Knowledge Officer.

It was evident from the findings of the research that strategic training is not regarded as a structured initiative that can be used to create an environment in which knowledge processes (creation, codification, sharing, organise, use) regarding the emergent strategic orientation of the company can be performed. Furthermore, companies place emphasis on managing explicit knowledge or information rather than managing both explicit and tacit knowledge regarding the emergent strategic orientation of the company.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 1 Orientation phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.8 Recommendation 8

It is recommended that the emergent strategic orientation of the company must be translated into the strategic training needs of executives and managers.

The empirical research revealed that only a two of the 24 large South African companies makes use of a strategic training process. This finding implies that large South African companies are for the most part uninformed regarding the strategic training needs of executives and managers and are in need of guidelines to assist them in translating the emergent strategic orientation of the company into the strategic training needs of executives and managers.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 2 Identification phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.9 Recommendation 9

It is recommended that the cyclical strategic training process should provide for the entire spectrum of training needs of executives and managers as they flow from the emergent strategic orientation of the company.

The literature study and empirical research revealed that strategic training needs vary according to the nature of the strategic domain (known, knowable, complex and chaos) in which the company is situated. However, a strategic training process should enable and support the identification of the training needs of executives and managers in terms of both conventional and soft skills including strategic insight, managerial skills, leadership, interpersonal skills, job content skills and generic skills as it flow from the emergent strategic orientation of the company.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 2 Identification phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.10 Recommendation 10

It is recommended that the manner in which training is addressed within the company should make provision for the unique nature and scope of strategic training.

The literature study and the empirical component clearly demonstrated that companies are largely uninformed regarding the nature and scope of strategic training [See Chapter 4]. The nature and scope of strategic training entails the following:

- Strategic training focuses primarily on executives and managers involved in strategic processes.
- Strategic training necessitates the involvement and participation of executives involved in strategic processes as well as individuals responsible for training

processes in both the formulation of the emergent strategic orientation of the company and the strategic training process.

- Strategic training is dependent on instructional methods and media that are interactive in nature.
- Strategic training can be provided by external providers of training on the condition that the training which is offered should be highly customised according to the emergent strategic orientation of the company and the specific training needs of executive management as it flow from the emergent strategic orientation of the company.
- A different set of standards or criteria should be developed to measure the effectiveness and relevance of strategic training as opposed to traditional training. Furthermore, companies should consider the necessity of measuring the effectiveness and relevancy of strategic training as it should be regarded as part of the strategic processes of the company.
- Strategic training requires the inclusion of the value chain of the company in the training process.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 3 Implementation phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.11 Recommendation 11

It is recommended that companies make use of their existing training units to provide strategic training to companies. However, the processes which are followed by existing training units to provide strategic and traditional training to executives, managers and employees should be different. The provision of strategic training is not dependent on the use of a corporate university although the customised nature of training which is

characteristic of corporate universities seems to be conducive to a strategic training process.

Companies can use any type of relevant training unit including a corporate university to provide training of a strategic nature as long as the nature and scope of the training programmes are dictated by the emergent strategic orientation of the company.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 3 Implementation phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.12 Recommendation 12

It is recommended that the executives and managers involved in a strategic training process provide feedback regarding the outcome or effect of training programmes at a strategic and operational level.

The research indicated that companies are unaware of the effect of strategic training on the competitiveness of the company. Executives and managers should therefore provide feedback on the effect of strategic training at a strategic and operational level. Executives and managers will indicate the manner in which they can use or apply their newly acquired skills to the advantage of the strategic processes that take place in the company. Furthermore, executives and managers will indicate the manner in which they can use or apply their newly acquired skills to contextualise the strategic training of employees. Executives and managers can then indicate to employees which skills will be required of them in future.

This recommendation is fully motivated in Phase 4 Feedback phase of the cyclical strategic training process presented in Chapter 7.

8.3.13 Recommendation 13

It is recommended that strategic training is included in the knowledge management strategy of companies and recognised as a knowledge management technique.

The use of strategic training as a formal knowledge management technique should be recognised by companies. During a strategic training process knowledge regarding the emergent strategic orientation of the company is created and shared and eventually used or applied. This would ensure that knowledge processes which were performed during strategic training enhance and support the revision and amendment of the current strategic orientation of the company. Furthermore, the knowledge processes which were performed during the strategic training process would enable executives and managers to be effective in terms of future work performance.

8.4 FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

The researcher could, of course, not address all aspects of strategic training, and the strategic training needs of executives and managers in particular, within the scope of this study. Related aspects regarding the topic of the study that could require further research are:

- The development of a model to establish the necessary mechanisms at a macro or national level to support the use of a strategic training process in companies;
- The critical success factors of strategic training as a knowledge management technique. Specific examples of critical success factors which need to be addressed are organisational culture and structure as well as management style.
- The development of a model according to which the “return on investment” of strategic training can be measured and that could serve as a motivation for the use of a strategic training process by companies;

- A comprehensive benchmark study of large South African companies that make use of strategic training that could guide companies in the implementation and maintenance of a strategic training process; and
- The effectiveness of the use of conventional knowledge management techniques such as communities of practice, expert forums and knowledge fairs that focus on both the tacit as well as the explicit knowledge of executives and managers during strategic training.
- The specific role and responsibility of Chief Knowledge Officers in the process of identifying and addressing the strategic training needs of executives, managers and employees.

In conclusion, the researcher is of the opinion that the framework for the implementation of a cyclical strategic training process in large South African companies as set out in Chapter 7 should merely be regarded as a proposal regarding the manner in which companies should be made aware of strategic training and the manner in which a strategic training process should manifest in companies. These guidelines are still untested and should be adapted and refined further according to the unique needs, environments and circumstances of companies.

8.5 CONCLUSIONARY REMARKS

The presence of a training infrastructure with various training processes that will provide for the different types of training needs of executives, managers and employees does not guarantee effective strategic training. The success of a strategic training process is also dependent on the support and involvement of the executives and managers of the company in a training process of this nature and a culture which is conducive to learning. A suitable training infrastructure, the support and involvement of executives and managers and a culture which is conducive to learning will ensure that a strategic training

process can contribute to the long-term competitiveness of companies including large South African companies.