I. Executive Summary

The problem being investigated by this Training Needs Assessment (TNA) is why salespersons at Central Beverage Company do not create their own signs at the company. There is only one person who knows how to operate the computer and printer in the sign shop at this company. Also, this individual is the only one with knowledge required to record information about each sign made. This becomes a problem because that individual is not always available to print a sign as this individual only works part time. Sometimes the salespeople need signs at the last minute and this dilemma causes undue stress amongst the salespeople and related ill feelings for the sign shop manager when the signs cannot be completed.

This TNA sought to discover the entry level skills of a group of salespeople on the sign making equipment (computer and printer) and related capabilities of the salespeople when it came to creating basic signs when the sign shop manager could not be present.

Results of this TNA indicate that the salespeople did have basic entry-level skills for several components of a task listing I created for this job. Information from a knowledge exam given to salespeople indicated that:

- 90% could determine vital information about a sign;
- 86% could prepare a sign for street use;
- 100% could perform basic computer operations;
- 70% knew they needed to use Microsoft Excel to record sign information.

Results indicated that the following skills were lacking when it came to knowledge of creating and printing a basic sign using the programs FlexiSign and VersaWorks and a Roland Printer.

Data from a knowledge exam indicate that:

- 40% know information about design software;
• 29% could correctly answer questions related to printer functions. These findings indicate that there is a deficit in knowledge and skill. Meetings with management and salespeople indicated that a web-based training program would be the best route of action. All the salespeople who request last minute signs (about 70% of the sales force at Central Beverage Company) will undergo the training program. It is expected that 100% of the participants will be able to create a sign using FlexiSIGN with 95% accuracy, 100% will be able to print a sign using a VersaWorks and Roland printer with 100% accuracy, and 100% will be able record information about the sign in Microsoft Excel with 95% accuracy.
II. Front-end Analysis Purpose, Benchmarks, Strategies, and Results

A. Purpose

The purpose of this front-end analysis is to help the salespeople at Central Beverage Company perform the basic functions required to design, print, and record a basic sign. Specifically, beverage salespeople only need to know this information when seeking a last minute sign and the sign shop manager is unavailable. This happens about ten times a month. The goal is for this dilemma to no longer occur.

The goal of this front-end analysis is to determine optimal levels of performance, actual performance, performance gaps, causes for these gaps, and potential solutions. The goal is to assess the skills salespeople possess with regards to 1) designing a basic sign using the program FlexiSIGN; 2) printing a sign using the program VersaWorks and a Roland Printer; and, 3) recording necessary information about the signs using Microsoft Office Excel.

B. Optimal

- 100% of the salespeople can create a sign using FlexiSIGN with 95% accuracy
- 100% of the salespeople can print a sign using a VersaWorks and Roland printer with 100% accuracy
- 100% of salespeople can record information about the sign in Microsoft Excel with 95% accuracy

C. Needs Assessment Strategy, Data Collection, and Results

To collect data on optimal performance, I had a brief interview with members of management. They agreed, upon review of collected data, that having some training would be beneficial for salespeople who needed to make their own signs. However, they did suggest that the training should be in-depth to the point that someone who had only limited computer
experience should be able to make a sign – themselves included. Therefore, it was suggested that the benchmarks are that 100% of the salespeople can create a sign using FlexiSIGN with 95% accuracy, 100% of the salespeople can print a sign using a VersaWorks and Roland printer with 100% accuracy, and 100% of the salespeople can record information about the sign in Microsoft Excel with 95% accuracy.

In order to collect actuals data, I administered a knowledge exam in which salespeople answered questions about basic sign making and answered a few questions pertaining to their self-efficacy. Pertaining to the knowledge portion of the exam, 90% of participants were able to correctly identify the different elements of a sign from a provided banner request form. In contrast, only 40% of the salespeople answered questions about sign software and design correctly. This indicated to me that there is a deficit in knowledge and skills when it comes to designing a sign. Additionally, only 29% of participants could correctly answer questions related to printer functions. However, 100% do know that they must use Microsoft Excel to save a file for management review but only 10% knew the name of that file.

As pertains to the self-efficacy portion of the knowledge exam, the benchmark for self-efficacy items was 100% of participants answering at a confidence level of 4 or better on a 1 to 5 point confidence scale. Results indicated that 100% of the participants were comfortable conducting basic computer operations. This indicated to me that the entry-level skills of the participants included such skills as opening and closing specified programs, opening and closing specified files, saving files, copying and pasting images, inserting images into a program, and browsing the Internet. 86% of participants indicated that they are comfortable determining vital information about a sign and preparing a sign for street use. 70% of participants said they are comfortable recording information about a sign for future use by management. And, finally,
none of the sales people indicated they are comfortable with the procedures involved with designing and printing a sign at Central Beverage Company.

Next, I completed a focus group during which participants expressed causes for the performance gap and potential solutions. 80% of the participants said that they did not know enough about computers to print a sign. 100% of the participants said that they would like to have training so that if the need arose they would be able to complete the signs themselves. 100% also agreed that a web-based training would be the best so that they could reference it while they were making a sign. They also agreed that camptasia videos would be a great way to show the process of making signs. They also felt that having job aids they could print would be a benefit in case they needed quick reference material. In addition, they suggested that examples would be helpful.
As a result of the data collected, the following Optimals, Actuals, and Performance Gaps were uncovered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimals</th>
<th>Actuals</th>
<th>Performance Gap</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% of the salespeople can create a sign using FlexiSIGN with 95% accuracy.</td>
<td>None of the salespeople can create a sign using FlexiSign.</td>
<td>100% of the salespeople possess a performance gap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% of the salespeople can print a sign using a VersaWorks and Roland printer with 100% accuracy.</td>
<td>None of the salespeople can print a sign using VersaWorks and Roland printer with 100% accuracy.</td>
<td>100% of the salespeople possess a performance gap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% of the salespeople can record information about the sign in Microsoft Excel with 95% accuracy.</td>
<td>70% of the salespeople can record information about the sign in Microsoft Excel with 95% accuracy.</td>
<td>30% of the salespeople possess a performance gap.</td>
</tr>
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Based on the data collected, it appears that the three performance gaps are due to a lack of knowledge and skills associated with computer programs FlexiSign, VersaWorks, Microsoft Excel, and the operations of a Roland Printer. Therefore, the solution offered is to provide a self-paced, web-based training, which is illustrated in more detail in the next section.
III. Performance Objectives and Training Draft Outline

Tentative Training Performance Objectives

1. Identify the salesperson’s route number given a DM and salesperson name with 100% accuracy;
2. Given a scenario, fill out a “Banner Request Form” with 90% accuracy;
3. Given knowledge of basic computer operations and the design software FlexiSign, design a sign with 95% accuracy.
4. Given knowledge of basic computer operations and the software VersaWorks, perform functions to prepare the sign for printing with 95% accuracy;
5. Conduct basic Roland printer operations to prepare the printer for printing with 100% accuracy;
6. Given knowledge of basic computer operations, the software VersaWorks, and a Roland printer, print the sign with 100% accuracy;
7. Prepare the sign for street use with 95% accuracy;
8. Given knowledge of basic computer operations and the software Microsoft Excel, record sign information for future use by management with 95% accuracy.

Training Draft Outline

In order to carry out the above objectives, a 120 minute self-paced website is envisioned.

The following topics will be covered:

- Necessary sign information
- Computer software functions
- Roland printer functions

Tentatively these active training techniques will be used:
• Demonstration
• Information Search
• Case Study