




**CIPRIANI COLLEGE**  
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

A large magnifying glass is positioned over the word 'JOB', which is written in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. The magnifying glass's lens is centered on the word, and its handle extends downwards. A horizontal blue line runs across the background behind the word 'JOB'.

**JOB**

**WORK  
MATTERS**

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**COLUMN**

# Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice: An investment in human capital.

The Ministry of labour defines the On-the-Job Training Programme (OJT) as a pre-employment initiative designed to provide participants aged 16 to 35 with an introduction to the professional environment. This programme emphasizes the development of practical occupational skills and hands-on experience within both public and private sector organizations in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. This initiative was implemented on April 1st, 2002.

Many individuals face uncertainties after pursuing higher education. The job market, depending on the path of studies taken, can be very challenging for some. It's often thought that after completing further education the job search would be in one's reach due to the added knowledge and qualifications acquired. But in reality, the job market is highly saturated and leaves little to no room for employment opportunities in many cases. This can have graduates feeling very unmotivated due to the length of time spent studying then to end up doing jobs not associated with their fields of study.

One must also consider the sacrifice of foregoing entry into the labour market choosing instead to study, then we also have to consider the amount of money that goes into pursuing higher education. Graduates have lamented that when job vacancies are posted, they are accompanied with unrealistic levels of work experience, as many of the applicants would have not too long completed their studies. The on-the-job-training programme has been a blessing for many given that persons have the opportunity to gain employment in jobs relating to their field of study, while earning a stipend. It also provides a great hands-on experience which provides a realistic insight into work experience which can be more effective than theoretical learning. As Malcom Gladwell stated "We learn by example and by direct experience because there are limits to the adequacy of verbal instruction." Depending on the area of employment there is room for growth and the development of new skills that may not be related to the specific field of study but can boost the attractiveness for new hire and the enhancement of

overall competency. On-the-job trainees also have the opportunity of learning from their co-workers and managers which supports both career and personal development as leaders, helping employees gain new skills and foster professional and personal work relationships.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) offers significant benefits to both employers and job seekers. For employers, OJT reduces the cost of training new employees, as the training is conducted on-site and tailored to the specific skills required for the job. This approach ensures that the training is highly relevant and serves as a long-term investment in the company's workforce. For job seekers, OJT provides the opportunity to earn while they learn in a practical, hands-on environment. It equips them with valuable job and career advancement skills and increases their prospects for long-term employment. It also provides a wide range of on-site training options tailored to suit the specific qualifications of the trainee such as employment in healthcare, information technology, tourism, administration and customer service just to name a few. Some job seekers based on their ability to produce exceptional performance while employed are provided the opportunity of being hired to work as full-time staff at the place of hire. Employers benefit greatly from hiring job seekers through the on-the-job training (OJT) program, primarily because they bring new perspectives to the workplace.

These fresh ideas can lead to innovative approaches that improve and occasionally transform established procedures. As trainees learn new skills and knowledge relevant to workplace operations, they also bring with them an awareness of the latest technological developments and advancing communication channels. This combined benefit not only improves the existing workforce but also helps integrate modern practices that can drive efficiency and competitiveness. Their knowledge concerning current information provides great advantage in sectors where rapid technological changes are expected. Their understanding of current trends enables the business to stay ahead of the curve, ensuring that the methods

and strategies used are both innovative and effective.

There have been many success stories known and unknown of persons who would have started out as on the job trainees but later gained significant roles within the organization which are very inspiring. Their journey from trainee to full-time employee frequently entails taking on more responsibilities, leading projects, and sometimes even advancing to leadership positions. They also inspire current trainees to strive for excellence, knowing that there are ample opportunities for growth and advancement. As a fellow OJT at Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies I can attest to the value of the program as well as the opportunities given for skill advancement. Therefore, I can safely say by fostering the growth and development of employees through OJT, companies make a long-term investment in their human capital. This investment not only enhances current performance but also builds a foundation for future leadership and innovation within the organization.

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