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Blended Training for Human Resource Development: A Tool for  
Developing Strategic Thinking Ability in Thai Bank Personnel  
การฝึกอบรมแบบผสมผสานเพื่อการพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์:  
เครื่องมือเพื่อการพัฒนาความสามารถการคิดเชิงกลยุทธ์  
ของพนักงานธนาคารไทย

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### Abstract

The study proposed blended training approach which was a tool in human resource development for Thai bank personal. This approach concentrated to develop strategic thinking by using scenario planning techniques and action learning with collaborative groups into the blended training process. The data were from study of theories, documents, problems, and needs in scenario planning processes and action learning activities to develop blended training. The questionnaires were answered by 481 respondents who were Thai Bank Personnel in manager level. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage, and descriptive. Then the study presented the findings. The key findings showed that organizing the blended training process consisted of 12 steps. In each step of the blended

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activities, traditional training classroom and online training were used with scenario planning process and action learning activities, including using technology to enhance learning processes such as chat room, discussion board, and email.

*Keywords: Human Resource Development, Blended Training, Scenario Planning, Action Learning, Collaborative Groups, Strategic Thinking, Thai Bank Personal*

## **บทคัดย่อ**

การศึกษานี้มุ่งนำเสนอแนวทางการฝึกอบรมแบบผสมผสานเป็นเครื่องมือพัฒนาทรัพยากรมนุษย์ของธนาคารไทย โดยแนวทางนี้มุ่งเน้นการพัฒนาความสามารถการคิดเชิงกลยุทธ์ด้วยการใช้กระบวนการวางแผนอนาคตภาพและการเรียนรู้จากการปฏิบัติของกลุ่มความร่วมมือเพื่อนำไปสู่กระบวนการฝึกอบรมแบบผสมผสาน การศึกษานี้เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากการศึกษาทฤษฎี เอกสาร ปัญหา และความต้องการกระบวนการวางแผนอนาคตภาพและกิจกรรมการเรียนรู้จากการปฏิบัติเพื่อพัฒนาเป็นแนวทางการฝึกอบรมผสมผสาน โดยใช้แบบสอบถามที่เก็บข้อมูลจากพนักงานธนาคารไทย จำนวน 481 คนที่เป็นระดับผู้จัดการส่วนงาน ซึ่งวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยสถิติเชิงพรรณนา เช่น ค่าความถี่ ร้อยละ การพรรณนาที่นำมาวิเคราะห์และแบ่งประเภทข้อมูล ผลการศึกษาที่สำคัญแสดงให้เห็นถึงการจัดการกระบวนการฝึกอบรมแบบผสมผสานประกอบด้วย 12 ขั้นตอน แต่ละขั้นตอนของกิจกรรมการฝึกอบรมแบบผสมผสานเป็นการฝึกอบรมแบบดั้งเดิม และการฝึกอบรมแบบออนไลน์ที่ใช้กระบวนการวางแผนอนาคตภาพ และกิจกรรมการเรียนรู้จากการปฏิบัติ รวมถึงการใช้เทคโนโลยีส่งเสริมกระบวนการเรียนรู้เช่นห้องสนทนากระดานสนทนาและอีเมล

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## **Introduction**

Increasing competition and challenges in Thai banking business between commercial banks, credit unions, asset management firms, insurance companies, and financial technology companies, banks need to develop systems which speed up decision-making for service delivery to customers. As a result, human resource is the key focus that has to develop for supporting the potential of future growth and sustainability in banking business competition. All Thai banks emphasize on human resource development for the further progress in financial



system and for ability to innovate the emerging complexity in global economy. The main aim of the human resource development is to train and enhance employees' potential via the process of learning through motivation to involve work satisfaction. There are tools for developing bank personal performance and potential including readiness for advancing position responsibility based on career development. Banks still provide traditional classroom mainly to their trainees who diversify in learning style and need to spend time for learning outside classroom such as online training and knowledge sharing in community of practice and learning from real situation. Moreover, some tradition classrooms do not effect to employee performance significantly. Therefore, with globalization and growing competition, business organizations are using innovative technologies and learning processes to achieve competitive advantage. Organizations are organizing and designing training programs for achieving goals. They are using innovative delivery tools along with traditional learning methodology to customize learning. The fact that people have different learning styles rise to a new approach called Blended Learning. (Mahajan and Chaturvedi, 2012)

In human resource development, blended learning is applied in training as a tool which combined effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the traditional classroom with the technologically enhanced action learning possibilities of the online environment. Blended Training provides socialized, constructivist, and sustainable learning experiences. This approach makes learning process more efficient. It has the potential to increase learning outcomes. Each trainee is able to utilize specific multimedia activities that support their performance goals. Trainees participate both of classroom training and online training via internet. Their knowledge is transferred among face-to-face and collaborated learning via multi learning method. Moreover, They interact can fasten communications that build online learning society (Güzer and Caner, 2014). Blended learning is an integration of evolving technological advancements. The combination of online learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning are the key strategy in learning and creating better learning (Singh and Reed, 2001). The blended training pattern should consist of trainees, contents, technologies, and infrastructure. Therefore, we should consider only the benefits of designing blended training programs.

This study focus on blended training for developing strategic thinking ability in Thai bank personnel based on management competency. Strategic Thinking is the ability that important and need for bank personnel. All Thai banks determine strategic thinking to be competency and ability for Executives and staffs who have high potential. Bank needs to develop them for working regard to business directions, visions and missions. Strategic thinking will enhance them for designing working process which will be opportunities in profits and sustainable development for customers and stakeholders.

The development process of strategic thinking that is outstanding and acceptance in Business Management called Scenario Planning (Schoemaker, 1995). Planners build their situation from their data as trends and directions in present and in the past by considering related factors and uncertainly situations in the future. Trends and Uncertainly situations determined plot's assembly which plan and develop in scenario. Moreover effectiveness in strategic thinking process should develop based on action Learning. Trainees learn from day to day operations, working experiences, and knowledge sharing between colleagues by working on complex and urgent problems that have no currently acceptable solutions can be applied by individual, teams, and organizations to other situations (Revans, 1982). Working with collaborative group will enhance action learning together by knowledge sharing from their information, opinions, and experiences. Integrating of scenario planning, action learning and collaborative group are components that support strategic thinking on working contexts. There are enhancing trainees to get new ideas or solution for working strategically.

### **Research objective**

To propose blended training actives for developing strategic thinking ability in Thai bank personnel by using scenario planning techniques and action learning with collaborative groups.

### **Literature Review**

New technologies become a part of daily life working. Human resource development in organization needs to utilize technology for training such as e-learning platform, questions posted on web boards, or via email as well as learning management systems used by learners to follow up on lectures. Both of classroom and electronic learning provide different benefits to



learners which respond to adapt knowledge and transfer knowledge. Information technology can be used as communication between trainers and trainees who can learn any times and places. Blend learning is classified in 6 models (Staker and Horn, 2012). Model 1: Face to Face Driver is a typical learning with face-to-face between instructors and learners by online learning in each subject. Model 2: Rotation is a learning based on the content in schedule of classroom. There is a variety of situations and individual's learning style. Model 3: Flex is a flexible learning that flexible to implement under the context. Instructor provide to learners in various learning styles such as tutoring or small group. Model 4: Online Lab is a blended learning model that focuses on online classroom. Instructor and Experts are in charge of providing learning support to learners in laboratory. Model 5: Self Blended is a form of blended learning with the learners. There are links between academic data or between institutions. This model will have a main driver in the Model 4 to control and facilitate learning in a blended learning context. Finally, Model 6: Online Driver is a full blended learning with both online and offline learning. Learners and instructors play a relatively high role in the driving process. Computer and information technology are driver this model. Blended Training is an approach that combines multiple learning styles together. There is a feature of the combination online learning with face to face learning (Chan, Wilkinson, Graham, and Skeen, 2011) which make more effective than listening to regular lectures in classroom. By using Internet facilities as communication and tools in the context of online learning environment. The key issues of blended training are the readiness and the possibilities. Criteria for considering are kinds of adaptation to fit the situation, context and availability in all aspects to maximize results and performance.

Utilizing blended training for enhancing strategic thinking is one of human thinking abilities for selecting the best solution in varied environments for achieving their goals. Strategic Thinking is the thinking process built from designing achievement and determining the best solution of succession (Morrisey, 1996). The personal who able strategic thinking to decision making from experience and describe the future trend (Moonkhum, 2008). Strategic thinking has elements 4 thinking forms such as Thinking about sustainable competitive advantage, thinking holistically, thinking analytically and creatively, and thinking long-term about the future (Malan, 2010). The components and behaviors of strategic thinking are as follows:

Thinking Forms (Malan, 2010)	Components	Strategic Thinking Behaviors For Thai Bank Personnel
<p>1. Thinking about sustain competitive advantage is the realization for special ability for business acumen that competitors cannot copy or take much time to be apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer expectation.</li> <li>- Effectively situation assessment.</li> <li>- Fasten change adaptation by create working process.</li> <li>- Finding new sustain opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify customer needs.</li> <li>2) Expect situations continuously by analyzing strength, weakness, opportunities, threats, and customer target.</li> <li>3) Convert planning suitable for changing situations or sustain opportunities.</li> </ol>
<p>2. Thinking holistically is the thinking systematically by linking varied data and issues for setting the new way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Components changes relate other components.</li> <li>- Understanding in working process for working value added.</li> <li>- Built from collaborative in many sections.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Complicate situations consideration by considering holistic view.</li> <li>2) Synthetic data, knowledge and framework to describe in easy and advance for working.</li> <li>3) Set the working goals related Bank missions.</li> <li>4) Finding the suitable way for adding value by using collaborative.</li> <li>5) Present working improvement effectiveness.</li> </ol>



Thinking Forms (Malan, 2010)	Components	Strategic Thinking Behaviors For Thai Bank Personnel
<p><b>3. Thinking analytically and creatively</b> is the situation digest by systematic specific problem cause for modify the better situations or building the creative result.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Priority for problem solving and problem analysis and creative result.</li> <li>– New Strategic development.</li> <li>– Alternated development for long term competition.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Analyze and defy problem components for developing new way of work.</li> <li>2) Design the alternative plan for long term competition.</li> <li>3) Priority by important or rapid issues and problem solving.</li> </ol>
<p><b>4. Thinking long-term about the future</b> is the thinking in the future from experience or study by determining the value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Related among past, present, and future.</li> <li>– Organization vision development.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Linkage experience and Learning lesson from the past and can apply for long term achievement working plan.</li> <li>2) Set the working section vision that can be used effectively in the future.</li> </ol>

Schoemaker (1995) identify scenario planning is a tool of management that support and outstand for strategic thinking. Scenario Planning is the intense method for forecasting the problem in the future that many companies apply for their works widely. Advantages of scenario planning has many especially for supporting strategic thinking as uncertain results for manager, many issues that cause from the past, for under development companies, low quality strategic thinking, changing Experience, unvaried framework, Strong conflict opinions, and Competitors used scenario planning. Moreover, it is a situation description in the future and effect to organization profit. Scenario Planning widely uses for organization strategic planning process

because the best method is planning for the future that planner have to plan related for possible situations (Decharin, 2011).

Therefore, Integration of scenario planning and action learning with collaborative groups will enhance strategic thinking by make blended training activity from action learning that Marquardt and Revans (1999) said program components are empowered and used from 1) learning from problem solving is the most important for individual, team, and organization. Problem should be outstanding in teams responsible and give the knowledge opportunities. Problem selection is the base for action learning because employees can learn from their responsible that reflect their thinking. 2) Collaborative groups that set up from 4 to 8 employees to identify problem together for finding organization's difficult problem. Collaborative is set up from other section employees. 3) Question creation process is mainly good question than good answer. Action Learning is emphasized on participants, i.e., learning process from question problem solving that reflects ideas and identifies problem solving. 4) Action from problem base that collaborative group practice need to have power for action. 5) Learning Intension from Action Learning. 6) Facilitator is very important for setting Collaborative groups activities. Facilitator may be a group member or other organization employee. And 7) Employees who want to achieve high performance have to be prepared for promoted and developed continually. Working Experience used for working process in present and submitting to other employees. Action Learning is the engine to make outside environment turn to inside environment such as employee and organization.

Designing for blended training process as a tool for human resource development needs to integrate contents and training process to be flexible by merging scenario planning and action learning with collaborative groups. The trainees will involve actives in classroom and online training based on practice transferring knowledge from sharing with others and experts. Then they apply to working process which will be opportunities in profits and sustainable development for high performance effectiveness.



