

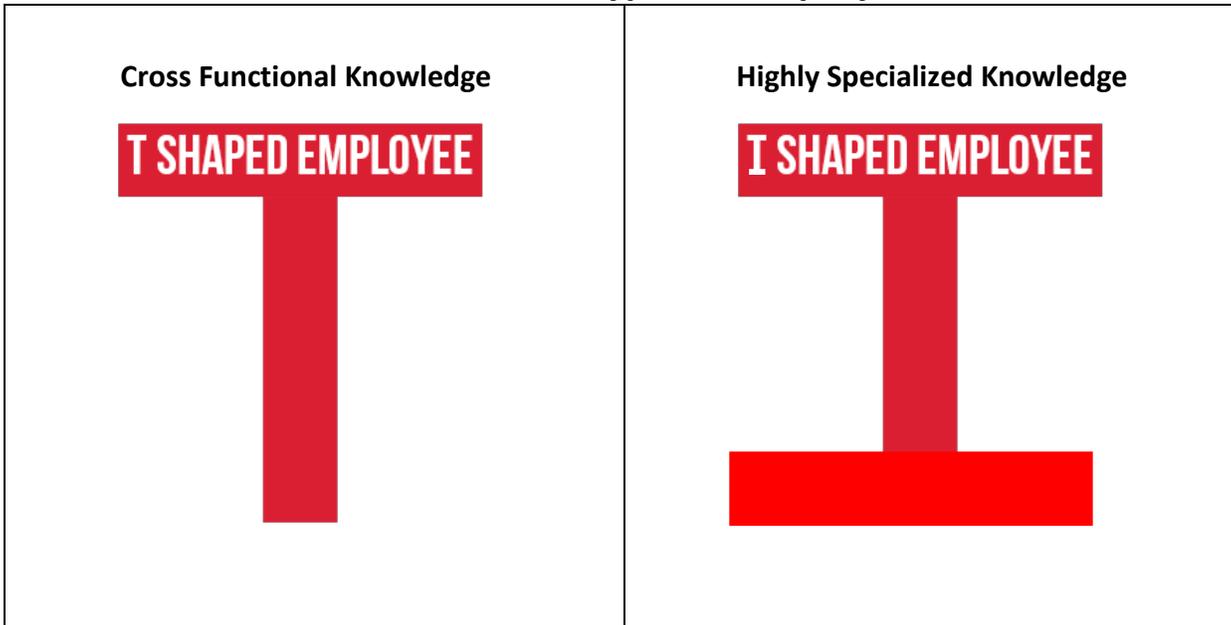
# Cross Training

## Leadership and Vision Key Performance Indicator #3

**Cross Training: Achieve 100% cross-training and assignments of all mission critical processes**

**Definition:** Cross training staff in all areas of the organization, as well as mission critical systems, includes training staff for different skill sets in the organization. It is an effective method for preparing other employees to provide coverage in key areas. It positions the team for sustainability and creates a more agile workforce. Teams that cross-train are better equipped to deliver seamless service, even in times of disruption. It also forces teams to refine their processes for greater efficiency.

### Two types of employees



Having a workforce of T-shaped individuals will give our organization:

- **Durability.** When only one person knows how to handle a key area of their team, the team isn't positioned for sustainability. Cross-training helps ensure that if an essential team member quits or takes a vacation, the team won't suffer.
- **Agility.** Cross-training creates a more agile workforce by providing on-the-job professional development. It's a win-win because we get to duplicate our employees' skill sets, and our employees get a chance to learn different things, uncover hidden talents, and prepare to advance in the organization.
- **Flexibility.** Organizations that cross-train are better equipped to recover quickly from disruptions and handle transitions gracefully. This means they can deliver seamless service to their customers, even in times of disruption.
- **Efficiency.** Cross-training forces teams to refine processes by making them take a hard look at the way they do things as they train others. Teaching is also a great opportunity for learning because it forces employees to answer questions, explain/document their processes, and see the tasks they perform daily through a fresh set of eyes.
- **Teamwork.** Cross-training gives employees a chance to build new relationships with people they might otherwise never have contact with. These relationships will help our team to work more effectively and increase employees' understanding of the big picture.

## Four Tips for Successful Cross-Training

To avoid derailing our department every time one of our key players is absent, follow these tips for implementing a cross-training initiative:

1. **Create a culture of collective success.** For some employees, being indispensable is a point of pride. Make it clear that our organization values people's ability to support each other and that single points of failure is a weakness. Show employees that their capacity to help their co-workers in times of need will benefit them when they need additional support.
2. **Set formal expectations.** Require employees to have at least one person who can step into their role at a moment's notice. Make it mandatory, give clear instructions, and provide time for people to cross-train effectively.
3. **Test your success.** Run simulations to ensure cross-training meets your expectations. See if a key employee can go away on vacation with absolutely no team contact, or commit that employee to another project and make sure he isn't pulled in to help the person performing his role. If someone is able to step in in this person's absence, you're covered.
4. **Develop a feedback mechanism.** Give employees an opportunity to give you feedback on the impact of cross-training activities, and use this information to continuously improve your efforts.

Although cross-training may result in some short-term loss in productivity, it's a small price to pay for long-term risk mitigation and increased efficiency. Think of cross-training as insurance against the inevitable.

No matter how great our organization is, there will be times when employees are sick, are on vacation, or leave to pursue other opportunities. When that happens, it's our duty to make sure your team is prepared.