In order to appropriately allocate financial resources, remain in compliance with regulatory requirements, and build appropriate employee skills through the utilization of Professional Development (PD) training, organizations must broaden their understanding of the purpose, scope, and categorization of PD training. As a first step in broadening their understanding, organizations must recognize that PD training consists of three distinct categories; of which, two are absolutely critical to the physical and financial health of the organization. The third, while still important, may be considered optional.

The PD prioritization model provided below will assist organizations in managing both people and financial resources as they sift through the latest and ever competing PD training options.

In order of importance, PD training can be categorized as follows:

1. **Legal/Regulatory and/or Organizationally Mandated (i.e., policy driven) PD**
   
   a. **Compliance Training Required by OSHA, EPA, etc.** For example: EH&S compliance training such as Fall Protection, Bloodborne Pathogens, Electrical Safety, etc.

   Leaders must allocate sufficient resources to ensure that their employees adequately complete regulatory mandated training requirements.

   This is not optional. The financial health of the organization can be seriously jeopardized for failure to comply.

   b. **Compliance Training Required by Labor Law** – For example: Human Resources compliance training such as Sexual Harassment Prevention Training, Information Security, etc.

   Leaders must allocate sufficient resources to ensure that their employees adequately complete regulatory mandated training requirements.

   This is not optional. The financial health of the organization can be seriously jeopardized for failure to comply.

   c. **Compliance Training Required by Organization** – For example: *Critical Tools for Managers and Supervisors*, etc. Failure to complete this training would not be in violation of EH&S or Labor Law; however, issues of exposure liability could be reduced by providing leaders with essential tools for avoiding liability related pitfalls, and therefore, the organization may designate such training as mandatory.

2. **Certification Maintenance PD** – Some jobs require professional certifications and continued “relevant” professional education. For example: Police, health care professionals, safety professionals, accounts, auditors, nurses, doctors, attorneys, etc., must engage in approved continuing education programs to maintain their licenses or certifications.

3. **Enrichment PD** – Training which falls under this category would not be considered mandatory by law or by organizational policy, as is the case in categories 1 & 2 above. However, based on a supervisor’s or manager’s assessment of an individual’s specific needs, training may be assigned to a subordinate employee. Training included within this category might be *Communication Skills*, *How to Use the Common Management System (CMS)*, or any other training determined by the supervisor to be appropriate.

By following this priority model leaders will appropriately focus their PD training efforts on what’s important rather than on what’s popular.