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Measuring the Effectiveness of Training

by J. (Jay) Bahlis, Ph.D., Eng.

*"Even if you are on the right track, you'll
get run over if you just sit there."*

-Will Rogers

A variety of tools are used for measuring the effectiveness of training. Most rely on participants' feedback "happy sheets" - also known as Kirpatrick's Level 1 Evaluation - to determine whether the course met the objectives and the ability of trainees to implement presented concepts. At Level 2, instructors use tests to evaluate what participants learned and at Level 3 we attempt to measure whether employees are applying what they have learned on the job. Level 4 - which is seldom used - focuses on the impact of the training program on the organization's bottom line.

Before we proceed, let us examine why employees are being trained in the first place. If we have done our homework, a training course "which is a solution" should have been designed to address a specific performance deficiency "the problem", and the performance objectives "outcome of the training program" should be well defined. Consequently, we should be able to measure the impact of the training program. If for any reason we cannot identify potential gains, then the need for training should be questioned.

Since the main objective of any training program is to resolve performance deficiency and attain preset goals, then the only meaningful measure is "did we achieve our goals (Level 4), and at what cost?" Surprisingly, very few training programs are evaluated at this level, and it is often blamed on the cost of conducting an evaluation, complexity of the process and credibility of the results. Although a thorough analysis may not be required for each course, a first order (rough) estimate of the benefits of the training program will keep us focused on what we are trying to achieve and maintain our objectivity when assessing the continued need for a training program.

Quantifying the benefits of training will be discussed in greater detail in our upcoming issue. Meanwhile, why not gain more insight in this area by reviewing ADVISOR Enterprise "Improve Human Performance" module. It analyzes a performance deficiency, detects the source of the problem, identifies solutions - including training - that could produce the desired level of productivity, and recommends interventions to maximize the return on investment • <http://www.bnhexpertsoft.com/english/products/advent/overview.htm>.

Please forward comments and questions to  bahlis@bnhexpertsoft.com.

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