

Evaluating and Measuring the Effectiveness of Training

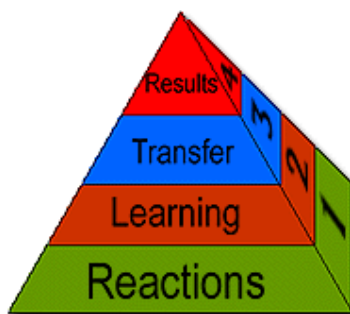
Smile Sheets to Business Results

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Global Partners Inc. training programs are customized to the unique requirements of each client's industry and business. We have devised an approach for developing high impact programs which we call **Guaranteed First Time Success**. This approach ensures that programs are highly relevant and immediately applicable to the client's current business challenges. In building client programs, we leverage our extensive library of Case Study Materials, worldwide database of best practices, and industry research. So, how do we measure success?

We measure the success of training programs using Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation. This approach was developed by Donald Kirkpatrick and published in 1994. This approach to measuring the success and business impact of training is used by world-class businesses and training organizations on every continent.

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation



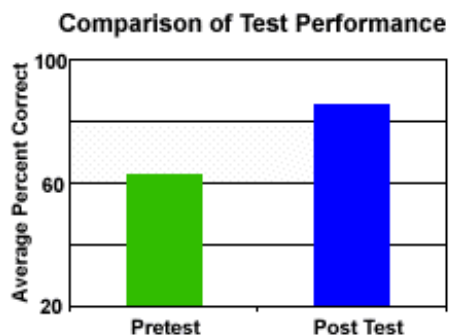
Using this model, each successive evaluation level is built on information provided by the lower level. Every evaluation should include level one. Most training will benefit from using levels 2, 3, and 4 as well. There isn't a "one-size-fits-all" solution to training. The same is true for evaluating training. Evaluation levels used should be based on content, desired transfer of skills and knowledge, time, and budgets. Each successive level represents a more precise measure of the effectiveness of the training program, but at the same time requires a more rigorous and time-consuming analysis.

Level 1 Evaluation - Reactions

Just as the word implies, evaluation at this level measures how participants in a training program react to it. It attempts to answer questions regarding the participants' perceptions - did they like it? Was the material relevant to their work? This type of evaluation is often called a "smile sheet." In other words, did participants enjoy the delivery format (instructor, classroom, online, etc.)? Every program should at least be evaluated at this level to provide for the improvement of a training program's delivery and

reaction from participants. Although a positive reaction does not guarantee “learning” (as measured in Level 2), a negative reaction almost certainly indicates ineffective learning potential.

Level 2 Evaluation - Learning



Assessing at this level moves the evaluation beyond learner satisfaction and attempts to assess the extent participants have advanced in skills, knowledge, or attitude. Measurement at this level is also more detailed for the delivery team and time consuming by participants. Methods range from formal to informal testing to team assessment and self-assessment. If possible, participants take a test or assessment before the training (pretest) and after training (post-test) to determine the amount of learning that has occurred. Post-tests should be completed immediately following the program for the most accurate evaluations.

To assess the amount of learning that has occurred due to a training program, level two evaluations often use pretests conducted before training and post-tests conducted after training. Level 2 evaluations are valuable when used in certification programs, creating minimum job requirements, safety training, and new-hire on-boarding. Training programs with tiers or prerequisites often use this method too.

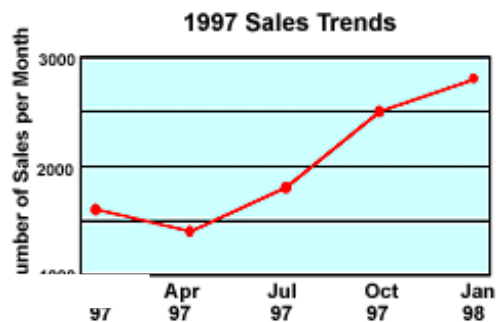
Research has shown that pre-work doubles the learning effectiveness for participants. Research has also shown that follow-up training (post-work) doubles a training program’s effectiveness again.

Level 3 Evaluation - Transfer

This level measures the transfer that has occurred in a participant’s behavior due to the training program. Evaluating at this level attempts to answer the question - Are the newly acquired skills, knowledge, or attitude being used in the everyday environment of the participant? For many trainers this level represents the truest assessment of a program’s effectiveness. However, measuring at this level is difficult as it is often impossible to predict when the change in behavior will occur, and thus requires important decisions in terms of when to evaluate, how often to evaluate, and how to evaluate.

On-the-job evaluations are one method of assessment. Level 3 evaluations are especially significant for programs that intend to transfer critical job performance and customer interaction skills. Product knowledge, selling skills, customer service flow trees, and so forth, will benefit from this level of evaluation.

Level 4 Evaluation- Business Results



Level four evaluation attempts to assess training in terms of business results – often thought of as the “bottom line.” In this case, sales transactions improved steadily after training for sales staff occurred in April and continued through January. Some organizations have a difficult time determining what percentage can be attributed to “training” and how much “noise” is included in the results. Global Partners Inc. provides clear and proven measurement methodology to reduce the noise from sales promotions, seasonality, and other factors so that the impact from training can be evaluated.

This level measures the success of the program in terms that managers and executives can understand – increased sales, increased production, improved quality, decreased costs, reduced frequency of accidents, and even higher profits or return on investment. From a business and organizational perspective, this is the overall reason for a training program, yet level four results are not typically addressed by most training departments and consultants.

Summary

Using Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Evaluation will provide the feedback needed to continuously improve every training program offered. Those levels are: reactions (did they like it), learning (did they learn it), transfer (did they use it), and results (did it make an impact). Training professionals should always use Level 1 evaluations, and may use levels 2, 3, and 4 based on the desired outcome of the training program.

Cary Campen is a Principal at Global Partners who focuses on Learning and Performance Improvement. Cary is a Certified Professional in Learning and Performance (CPLP) through the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), he has been awarded the highest credential for anyone in the field of workplace performance. For more information, readers can contact Cary at CCampen@globalpartnersinc.com.