



# The On-Demand Training Framework: Step 5 — Measure

*How to measure success in your training program*

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## Step 5: Measure

Data is the objective pillar that drives every successful business. Its integration into every department helps teams reach success, and contributes to higher level revenue goals. For online training programs, data plays a critical role from beginning to end.

In SchoolKeep's On-Demand Training Framework, we emphasized the importance of success metrics from the very first step. Following the framework, you defined the goals of your business and training initiative in step 1. Doing so enabled you and your team to stay succinct during the outline (step 2), development (step 3)

and deployment (step 4) of your training.

Now at the final step, the framework comes full circle as you take the goals and objectives defined in the first step to measure the effectiveness of your training program, and determine ways to iterate and improve moving forward.

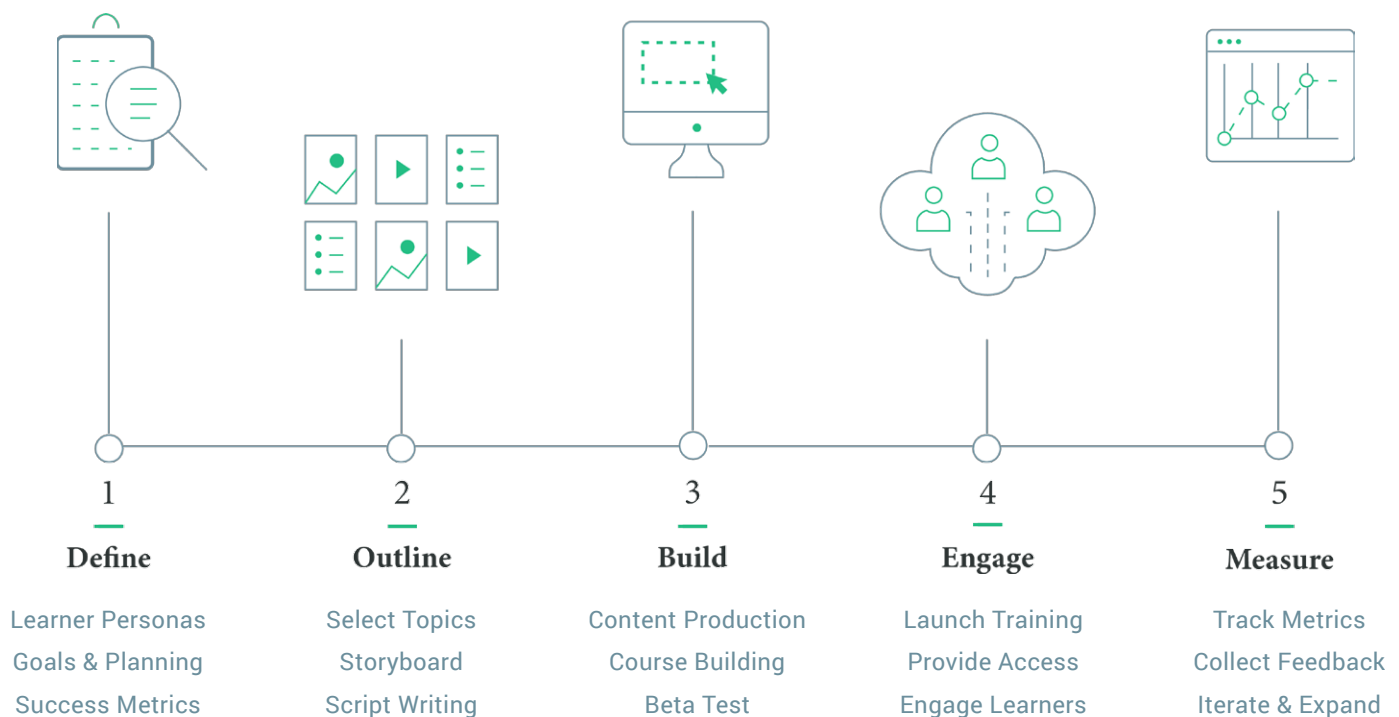
## What Makes Online Training Successful?

You may have noticed that there are no definitive answers to the question of 'What makes online training successful?' You can search far and wide without any luck finding literature that helps you answer this question for your business. The reason for this is that while data is meant to give you an objective perspective of success, pinpointing what success means for a training program varies profoundly from business to business.

Let's take for example, Salesforce's online academy [Trailhead](#), which targets their customers. Their success metrics will likely deal with support costs. In contrast, [Jiffy Lube University](#), created for employee training, might measure success based on internal productivity or employee churn rates.

There are, of course, more granular metrics that can be evaluated. Questions such as the following can be used to collect quantitative data:

- How many learners completed a course?
- How far did each learner progress in a course?
- What was the average score on assessments?
- How many posts did each learner make to discussion forums?



While the questions below can be used to gain insight into qualitative data.

- Were learners' feedback on the content positive?
- What areas in the course did learners feel can be improved?
- Were workplace behaviors impacted by the training?
- Did learners interact with the content in a meaningful way?
- Were the learning objectives achieved upon completion of the course?
- Did learners find the course to be engaging?

## SMART Business vs Training Goals

Before we begin defining business goals and training goals, let's start by discussing the **SMART** approach to goal planning. Setting SMART goals is an effective way to ensure all of your team members are aligned, and that your goals meet a specific set of criteria. Ask yourself the following questions when using the SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound) method.

### Specific

What is specific about the goal? Specify a time, date, and / or any additional unique details about the goal or how you plan to measure the success of the goal.

### Measurable

Is the goal measurable? Determine what will indicate successful achievement of the goal.

### Achievable

Is the goal achievable? Have a discussion with your team to define goals that are realistically achievable in your

organization.

### Relevant

Is the goal relevant to expectations for performance or continued learning? The goal should be tied to your training use case and your company or department's mission.

**“Setting SMART goals is an effective way to ensure all of your team members are aligned, and that your goals meet a specific set of criteria.”**

### Time-bound

Is the goal time-bound? Specify how frequently the task will be performed, or the timeline within which the task will be done.

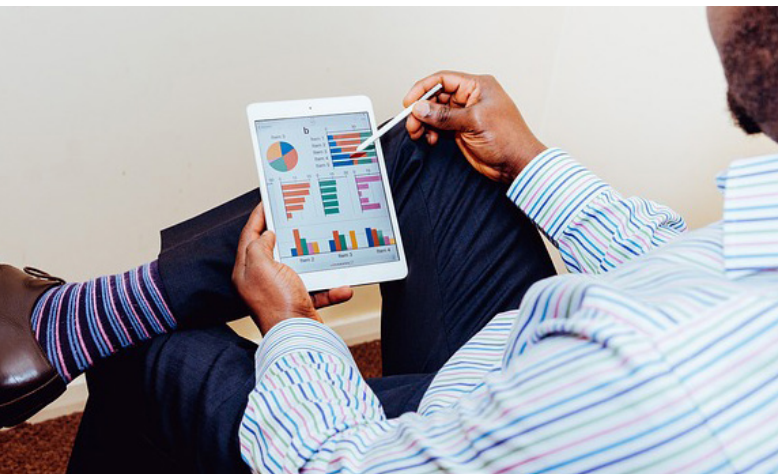
As we move forward with discussing business goals and training goals, keep the SMART approach in mind. The approach can serve as a helpful guide in outlining your team's goals with online training.

**Business goals** are benchmarks that impact the success of your company and can be measured using KPIs. As a business, your primary goal should always be to analyze an initiative's impact on your KPIs. KPIs such as net promoter score, number of support tickets, and profit can be improved by leveraging online training.

Use the goals outlined in the first step of the Framework to determine which KPIs you'll be targeting with online training. Then, determine the baseline metric so you know how the

metric is affected upon implementation of the training program. This is a very important step when taking a data-driven approach to online training. Without knowing where you started, there would be no way to tell whether you've improved.

**Training goals** are the objectives of your online initiative. At a macro level, these are the goals of your program as a whole. For example, the goal of your customer education program may be to make customers more knowledgeable about the features in your platform.



At a micro level, they are the learning objectives you want your target learners to reach upon completion of a training module. For example, by the end of this course, target learners will be able to create a landing page on your platform. Quizzes, surveys and discussions can help you evaluate whether your learners achieved the defined training goals.

Business goals and training goals should always align with one another. An example of aligned goals are provided below.

- Business goal: In Q2, the sales team will close 20%

more deals than were closed in Q1.

- Training program goal: In Q2, each member of the sales team will complete 6 courses to learn the latest trends in SaaS sales techniques.
- Learning objective (for a specific course): By the end of this one-week course, you will be able to conduct a discovery call that entices prospects to take a demo.

In the example above, the business goal is the KPI that you want to use training to impact – close 20% more deals than last quarter. The training program goal is the qualitative goal of the entire training initiative – educate salespeople on the latest trends in sales techniques. Lastly, each course must have one or more learning objectives. In this case, the course's objective is to make salespeople more effective on discovery calls.

All of the goals correlate with one another and follow the SMART approach. For a single course, the learning objective is that you want to improve discovery calls. It's specific and time-bound in that it is a one-week course and the end-goal is to make account executives more effective on discovery calls. It's measurable because assessments can be integrated into the course to evaluate mastery of the content. Additionally, the number of demos scheduled during discovery calls can be measured. The learning objective is achievable and relevant to the sales department because increasing the number of demos scheduled is a goal that is in reach, and one that every SaaS sales team strives to achieve.

The learning objective contributes to the overall training program goal, which is to help salespeople advance their selling abilities. The training goal is specific and time-bound because it requires the salespeople to complete six online courses on the newest trends in sales techniques in Q2. It's measurable because you can track the number of courses completed by

account executives in your learning platform, as well as use in-course assessments to determine competency of the topics as mentioned previously. The training goal is also achievable and relevant because professional development is a key piece of any role, and in this example specifically, the training team has decided that six courses per quarter is doable for their sales staff.

Lastly, as the salespeople accomplish the training goal of advancing their sales techniques, that should enable them to reach the business goal of closing more deals, and helping your company drive more revenue. This business goal is specific as it sets the criteria at a 20% increase in closed deals in Q2, when compared to Q1. It's time-bound because the goal is to be reached by quarter end. The number of closed deals should already be measured within your company, which makes this goal measurable. As a subjective determination, the business in this example feels that the percentage increase in closed deals is a realistic, achievable goal. As for relevancy, the primary mission of the sales staff is to drive revenue, therefore the goal is highly relevant to their work.

Training goals are particularly important in helping you continually improve upon your training program. Especially if you don't see improvements in your business goals at the intended rate, dive into the training metrics to deduce where the weak areas are. These are the areas you should target in future iterations.

In any case, training metrics will be useful at some point in your training journey as there will always be room for improvement. Your learners' feedback is crucial in helping you to optimize your training program to its fullest potential.

In this ebook, we'll discuss how to measure training success in

three business use cases: workforce training, customer training, and partner training. Within each use case, we'll cover success metrics at the business and training program levels, then we'll provide you with a summary of the recommended metrics to be tracked.

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### Measuring Success in Workforce Training

Whether your workforce is made up of on-demand contractors or full-time employees, attracting and retaining great talent should be central to your operation. This can be a substantial feat when considering data trends. According to [Fusion](#), nearly 50% of on-demand workers expect to quit within two years. And this isn't limited to on-demand companies alone. In the U.S., the average turnover rate across all business industries was reported by [Compdata](#) to be at 16.4% in 2015.

These numbers have powerful implications on a company's bottom line. On average, the cost of losing an employee is equal to up to twice the employee's salary. This does not include the effects on work culture and the ultimate impact on customer satisfaction.

The standard benefits package is no longer sufficient in recruiting top talent and keeping them invested in your company. “Younger folks are motivated by growth, career



opportunity, and meaning,” says [Josh Bersin](#), Founder of Bersin by Deloitte. To keep your workforce happy and motivated, professional development opportunities must be abundant, easy to access and highly flexible. Online training is the best format for delivering this type of engaging content.

### Workforce Training: Business Goals

For teams that are implementing worker-focused training programs, the initiative must help them achieve one or more of the aforementioned business goals. First, online training can



be leveraged to attract new talent. Offering thought leadership courses targeted at people in your industry is a great way to collect leads and embed calls to action for new job openings.

Second, the training must help your company onboard new workers fast. According to [Bersin's Economic Value of an Employee chart](#), a company is still in the negative in terms of return on investment while onboarding a new employee. Consequently, it's important that your onboarding operations run as efficiently as possible in order to help your workers ramp up

quickly and effectively.

Third, employee training must help you retain employees longer. Revisiting Bersin's chart, the longer an employee stays with your organization, the greater value they offer. Post-onboarding is where they are able to “find their place” and begin showing value to your company, but only with the necessary training.

### Workforce Training: Training Goals

To streamline your employee onboarding process, your online training program must be seamless from start to finish. This means quick and easy access to the content when and where it's needed. Employees shouldn't have to perform more than a few clicks to view the content.

To motivate employees to stick around and continue making contributions to your team or business, they need to feel like there's plenty of room for growth. Companies that offer their employees plenty of professional development opportunities show that they encourage their employees to advance in their careers.

The content delivered to employees should be meaningful, practical and engaging. They need to see how what they're learning adds value to their work and career development. Employees should be able to glean knowledge that helps them do their jobs better, faster, or enables them to find greater joy in what they do. Feedback surveys integrated into your training can be highly effective in measuring both ease of use and learner satisfaction.

As workforce training should help your employees develop new skills, workplace observations may be a good indication



of training success. Though this method is highly subjective, sometimes there is simply no technology that can replace the judgement of your managers.

### Workforce Training: Training Goals

The goals summarized above can be measured using the following success metrics. Remember to start by documenting the baseline metric and measure the changes upon implementing your training program. Let's start with the business success metrics for workforce training. These are metrics directly measured by your team, department or business as a whole.

- Lead volume for new job applicants
- Time it takes to onboard a new worker
- Turnover rates / retention rates
- Changes in workforce size
- Time to productivity

Below are training success metrics. Use your training platform's analytics, assessment, and survey tools, as well as workplace observations, to collect this information from your learners.

- Ease of course access and navigation
- Satisfaction of the topics covered
- Relevancy and practicality of the content
- Skills development and behavioral changes

### Measuring Success in Customer Training

Customer training is often an overlooked method for generating revenue; however, **54%** of companies are already doing it, whether they realize it or not. Customer training enables you to equip your customers with the information they need to unlock the full potential of your product. According to a [TrainingIndustry](#) survey, 93% of companies saw greater customer satisfaction, and 88%

saw higher customer retention as a result of customer training.

This is nothing new to high-performing companies. Corporations have been doing customer training for ages. Whether it's a new recipe printed on a bag of Nestle chocolate chips, or Sephora posting makeup video tutorials on their website, customers are constantly being trained to see value in various products.

So what's in it for the companies who dedicate resources to creating training for their customer base? The answer lies in increased loyalty and decreased support costs, which ultimately result in higher profits. These are the metrics that should be measured when training customers.

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### Customer Training: Business Goals

If you're creating a customer education program, one of your business goals is likely to increase volume in a specific area of your company. In the Nestle example above, their business goal might be to increase the sales of Nestle's chocolate chips product. In contrast, SaaS companies may use customer training to increase lead volume; while a mobile app company may be looking to grow their user base.

For many companies, especially those that are tech-based, customer training can also be used to onboard customers and make them more self-sufficient with their product. Customers who can easily engage in a brief product training course, and come



out understanding the functionalities, will see greater value in the product sooner.

Additionally, those who are fully knowledgeable about the capabilities of your platform, or know how to properly use your product, will be less likely to require support. Therefore, measuring your customer training program's impact on support costs can be a great gauge of success.

### Customer Training: Training Goals

Customer training for the purpose of demand generation typically

requires that you come into online training from a marketing perspective. You want analytics that answer questions such as: How many people visited the landing page for the online course? How many people converted and signed up to access the course? Or, how long did people engage with the content? Things like traffic volume, click throughs, and conversion rates are all important in determining the success of the content you're putting out there. These metrics are telling you that people are interested in your thought leadership and are willing to engage with your company.

If your business goal is to reduce support costs, a good correlating training goal would be to assess learners' mastery of the topics covered in your courses, as well as solicit feedback on their satisfaction. Create meaningful quizzes that evaluates your learners' understanding of your product, and ask for input on the quality of the content. This information will be critical in helping you understand where the program can be improved, especially if your business' success metrics aren't showing the desired results.

### Customer Training: Success Metrics

As you move forward with implementing your customer training program, remember to measure the success of your initiative. Again, start by measuring the baseline metric, then track changes for the following business metrics directly within your company.

- Qualified lead volume
- Product sales
- Monthly recurring revenue (MRR)
- Number of users
- Deals closed
- Customer churn rate
- Customer lifetime value (CLV)

In your training platform and marketing automation system, measure the following training metrics using in-product analytics,

assessment, and survey tools.

- Landing page click throughs
- Landing page form submissions
- Number of learners who access the course
- Time spent in course
- Time spent in each activity
- Course progress for learners
- Completion rates of learners
- Buyer's Journey Behavior (Lead to Marketing Qualified Lead / Marketing Qualified Lead to Sales Qualified Lead conversion rates)
- Quiz scores
- Feedback survey submissions

### Measuring Success in Partner Training

No truly successful company earned their position by working in a silo. On the contrary, top businesses are constantly networking and seeking to form alliances to build a partner ecosystem. Depending on your business model, a “partner” may be a vendor, supplier, provider, or any person or entity that helps you produce, advertise, or distribute products and services.

Take, for example, technology company giant Cisco. Cisco has a sales force of 17,000. However, with the addition of its over 60,000 partners (who have 280,000 employees), Cisco has strategically created a network of nearly **300,000** sellers of its products and services.

While a company's channel partner approach can help them reach exponential growth, it does not come without growing pains. As your partner community expands, so does the demand for more management efforts to oversee operations, ensure quality and efficiency, and maintain partner loyalty. In order for your partners to

show value, they require both initial and ongoing training to establish and sustain the business relationship.

### Partner Training: Business Goals

The first business goal for any partner training program should be to educate your partners on the ins and outs of your company, business model and products. Requiring potential partners to engage in content about your business is a great way to vet partner applicants and ensure there is a good fit. The result should be that those who complete the training go on to become better informed and qualified partners.

**“Requiring potential partners to engage in content about your business is a great way to vet partner applicants and ensure there is a good fit.”**

Throughout your partner relationship, it will be necessary for you to ensure alignment in regards to brand standards, policies, and procedures. Whatever the function may be that the partner is performing for your business, build training to educate them on your expectations for how specific processes should be carried out. Then measure compliance based on the area in your business that is impacted by that increased knowledge and awareness.

The final business metric to track in partner training is one that all other efforts should attribute to – sales. For example, if you're part of Etsy's training team and are tasked with educating sellers, the training should be correlated with the number of listings a seller purchases, or the number of orders placed in a seller's online store. If you're Toyota and you're teaching sales techniques to the car salesmen at partner dealerships, your training's success should be

based on the increase in sales in those respective dealerships.

Ideally, you'll be able to make a connection between the learners who access and complete your training, and how that impacts their KPIs.

### Partner Training: Training Goals

At the course level, competency and mastery of particular skills are vital when training partners. You want to make sure your partners are gleaning valuable information and gaining practical skills from the content you're providing. Doing so will enable them to perform their business duties in a manner that upholds your company's standards and expectations.



Start by measuring how many learners (and which learners) are accessing and completing the training courses. You may require that this step is done in order for them to move forward with becoming a partner, or use the data to reach out and motivate those who haven't progressed in the training. In any case, this information is important in determining how the training impacted the work of those who did complete it.

As learners navigate through the training, there should be "knowledge checks" or quizzes throughout to assess them on how well they were able to absorb the information. These scores will help you determine whether your learners are getting it, and figure out which topics can be better clarified.

You'll also want to integrate a feedback survey to ask learners whether the training courses offered the necessary information for them to do their jobs. If there's any lingering confusion or topics that weren't covered properly, providing a bridge for communication will help you fill in any gaps.

### Partner Training: Success Metrics

We established that forming strategic partnerships is a great way to grow a business. However, doing so requires ongoing training to communicate expectations and ensure the business relationship continues to be mutually beneficial. Let's recap on the business success metrics you should be tracking in your organization when implementing partner training.

- Number of qualified partners
- Business use case-specific compliancy
- Amount of sales per partner

For training goals, the focus should be content competency and skills mastery. Access the following data in your training platform.

- Course completion rates
- Course progress
- Assessment scores
- Feedback surveys

## Wrapping Up

Throughout the five steps of the On-Demand Training

Framework, we consistently emphasized the importance of launching with less, and taking an iterative approach to your training program. This logic is rooted in the idea that every training program should be highly tailored and targeted at specific learner personas.



[Request a demo](#) to learn how Northpass' modern training platform can help you leverage content to engage your audience.

At Northpass, we work with a diverse portfolio of companies, from non-profits to top SaaS platforms – each with their own unique business model and training use case. For those who are just starting with online training, the most effective way to develop great content is to look at the behavior and feedback of the learners who receive it. In order to do that, you must launch, to some extent, a training program.



Follow Northpass on Twitter [@Northpass](#)

The program may not be perfect. The design may not be fully polished. The catalog may not even comprise of more than one course. However, launching an MVP will offer you highly meaningful insight into the quantitative and qualitative data needed to make your training program great.

As you work through this process, use the success metrics outlined in this ebook to help you show ROI and identify key areas that can be improved. You will find that the Framework is meant to function more as a cycle, requiring you to continually revisit your goals, update and build new content, and listen to your learners. Moving forward, you'll be able to reap the rewards of a highly streamlined training process that consistently helps you drive business results. ■NP