

APPENDIX X

Tip Sheets for Evaluation

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Tip – X.1: Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Evaluation

Source: <http://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/OurPhilosophy/tabid/66/Default.aspx>

The Kirkpatrick Four Levels™ Evaluation Model

Level 1: Reaction

To what degree participants react favorably to the training

Level 2: Learning

To what degree participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in a training event

Level 3: Behavior

To what degree participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job

Level 4: Results

To what degree targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training event and subsequent reinforcement

Kirkpatrick Foundational Principles

1. The end is the beginning

Effective training evaluation begins before the program even starts. Don Kirkpatrick says it best on page 26 of [Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels](#) (1st Edition, Berrett-Koehler, 1993):

“Trainers must begin with desired results and then determine what behavior is needed to accomplish them. Then trainers must determine the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are necessary to bring about the desired behavior(s). The final challenge is to present the training program in a way that enables the participants not only to learn what they need to know but also to react favorably to the program.”

It is important that the results are defined in measurable terms, so that all involved can see the ultimate destination of the initiative. Clearly defined results will increase the likelihood that resources will be most effectively and efficiently used to accomplish the mission.

Attempting to apply the four levels after a program has been developed and delivered makes it difficult, if not impossible, to create significant training value. All four levels need to be considered at every step in the program design, execution, and measurement.

Tip – X.1: Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Evaluation, Continued

2. Return on Expectations (ROE) is the ultimate indicator of value

When executives ask for new training, many learning professionals retreat to their departments and start designing and developing suitable programs. While a cursory needs assessment may be conducted, it is rarely taken to the point that expectations of the training contribution to an overall business initiative are completely clear.

Stakeholder expectations define the value that training professionals are responsible for delivering. Learning professionals must ask the stakeholders questions to clarify and refine their expectations on all four Kirkpatrick levels, starting with Level 4 Results. This is a negotiation process in which the training professional makes sure that the expectations are satisfying to the stakeholder, and realistic to achieve with the resources available.

Once stakeholder expectations are clear, learning professionals then need to convert those typically general wants into observable, measurable success outcomes by asking the question, “What will success look like to you?” Those outcomes then become the Level 4 Results; the targets to which you can sharply focus your collective efforts to accomplish return on expectations.

3. Business partnership is necessary to bring about positive ROE

Research has validated that training events in and of themselves typically produce about 15% on-the-job application. To increase application and therefore program results, additional actions need to happen before and after formal training. Historically, the role of learning professionals has been Levels 1 and 2, or just the training event. Not surprisingly, this is why many learning professionals spend almost all of their time there.



The production of ROE, however, requires a strong Level 3 execution plan. Therefore, not only is it critical to call up on business partners to help identify what success will look like, but also to design a cooperative effort throughout the learning and performance processes in order to maximize results.

Before training, learning professionals need to partner with supervisors and managers to prepare participants for training. Even more critical is the role of the supervisor or manager after the training. They are the key people to reinforce newly learned knowledge and skills through support and accountability. The degree to which this reinforcement and coaching happens directly correlates to improved performance and positive outcomes

4. Value must be created before it can be demonstrated

Research suggests that as much as 90% of training resources are spent on the design, development, and delivery of training events that yield 15% on-the-job application (Brinkerhoff, 2006). Reinforcement that occurs after the training event produces the highest level of learning effectiveness, followed by activities that occur before the learning event.

Tip – X.1: Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels of Evaluation, Continued

Currently learning professionals are putting most of their resources into the part of the training process that produces the lowest level of business results. They are spending relatively little time in the pre-training and follow-up activities that translate into the positive behavior change and subsequent results (Levels 3 and 4) that organizations seek.

Formal training is the foundation of performance and results. To create ultimate value and ROE, however, strong attention must be given to Level 3 activities. To create maximum value within their organizations, it is therefore essential that learning professionals redefine their roles and extend their expertise, involvement, and influence into Levels 3 and 4.

5. A compelling chain of evidence demonstrates your bottom line value

The training industry is on trial, accused by business leaders of consuming resources in excess of the value delivered to the organization.



Following the Kirkpatrick Foundational Principles and using the four levels will create a chain of evidence showing the business value of the entire business partnership effort. It consists of quantitative and qualitative data that sequentially connect the four levels and show the ultimate contribution of learning and reinforcement to the business. When workplace learning professionals work in concert with their key business partners, this chain of evidence supports the partnership effort and shows the business value of working as a team to accomplish the overall mission.

The chain of evidence serves to unify the learning and business functions, not isolate training or set it apart. This unity is critical for Level 3 execution, where business value is produced.

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