

# Kirkpatrick's evaluation of training management essay



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Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation is being applied. This model consists of four levels of evaluation. The first level is the reaction level in which the reactions of the trainees are understood to mean the way in which they perceive and subjectively evaluate the relevance and quality of the training. 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 “smileysheet.” According to Kirkpatrick, every program should at least be evaluated at this level to provide for the improvement of a training program. At this level, evaluation measures the satisfaction of the people who followed the training. In conjunction with that, positive reactions are of critical importance in creating sufficient learning motivation. In this sense, the participants' reactions have important consequences for learning (level two). Although a positive reaction does not guarantee learning, a negative reaction almost certainly reduces its possibility.

Learning can be described as the extent to which the attitudes of the participants change, their knowledge increases or their skills are broadened as a consequence of the training. This is a second level of evaluation of learning behavior whereby evaluation is intended to measure the progress made in terms of knowledge, skills or attitudes. In other words, evaluation tests the participants to see whether new skills have been acquired. At this point, evaluation can relate to the method used to transfer the knowledge, skills and attitudes. To assess the amount of learning that has occurred due to a training program, level two evaluations often use tests conducted before training (pretest) and after training (post test). Assessing at this level moves the evaluation beyond learner satisfaction and attempts to assess the extent

students have advanced in skills, knowledge, or attitude. Measurement at this level is more difficult and laborious than level one. Methods range from formal to informal testing to team assessment and self-assessment. If possible, participants take the test or assessment before the training (pretest) and after training (post test) to determine the amount of learning that has occurred.

A third evaluation level is that of changes in job behavior or performance. This involves studying the change in job behavior which takes place as a result of the training. 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 learner? At this point, evaluation sees whether tasks are performed differently before and after the training. In order for positive reactions and learning effects actually to lead to changed job behavior, the transfer of acquired skills to the work situation must especially be ensured. The quality of this transfer is strongly dependent on the support the participant receives after the training, especially from his immediate supervisor or coach. From a study by Bergenhenegouwen, which explain the low effectiveness of training courses, are found in this area in which immediate bosses who have more of a discouraging effect, who themselves do not set a satisfactory example or provide insufficient supervision. 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.

Level four evaluation attempts to assess training in terms of organizational results. At this point, evaluation checks how the results are evaluated at the end of the training initiatives. An evaluation of the results therefore measures the progress made at organizational level. Frequently thought of as the bottom line, this level measures the success of the program in terms that managers and executives can understand - increased production, improved quality, decreased costs, reduced frequency of accidents, increased sales, and even higher profits or return on investment (ROI). From a business and organizational perspective, this is the overall reason for a training program, yet level four results are not typically addressed. Determining results in financial terms is difficult to measure, and is hard to link directly with training.

According to Kirkpatrick, the subject of evaluation or the level at which evaluation takes place is dependent on the phase during which the evaluation takes place. In Kirkpatrick's four-level model, each successive evaluation level is built on information provided by the lower level. Assessing Training Needs often entails using the four-level model developed by Donald Kirkpatrick. According to this model, evaluation should always begin with level one, and then, as time and budget allows, should move sequentially through levels two, three, and four. Information from each prior level serves as a base for the next level's evaluation. Thus, 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.

### 3. 2. Transfer of Training

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Training transfer generally refers to the use of trained knowledge and skills back on the job. Baldwin & Magjuka mentioned that for transfer to occur, “learned behavior must be generalized to the job context and maintained over a period of time on the job”. Meanwhile, Saks & Haccoun views training transfer is the generalization of knowledge and skills learned in training on the job and the maintenance of acquired knowledge and skills over time.

According to the transfer of training framework by Saks & Haccoun, the transfer of training activities could be segregated into three phases which is before, during, and after training to facilitate and improve the transfer of training. However, for the purpose of this study, only transfer of training after training is being applied. In this case, the management must ensure that trainees have immediate and frequent opportunities to practice and apply what they learn in training on the job. The management should also encourage and reinforce trainees' application of new skills on the job. There are many other things that managers do to facilitate transfer such as develop an action plan with trainees for transfer and show support by reducing job pressures and workload, arrange practice sessions, publicize transfer successes, give promotional preference to employees who have received training and transfer, and evaluate employees' use of trained skills on the job.

The trainer should conduct follow-up or booster sessions following a training program. Trainers should maintain their involvement in the training and transfer process by conducting field visits to observe trainees' use of trained skills, provide and solicit feedback and provide continued support and assistance to trainees.

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Trainees should be able to use new knowledge and skills on the job as soon and as often as possible. At the same time, trainees should meet with their supervisor to discuss opportunities for transfer. Trainees might also establish a network of peers who also attended a training program that can provide assistance and support each other for using their trained skills on the job. Trainees should also set goals for practicing their newly acquired skills on the job.

### 3. 3. Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Training and Development

In the real world, there are some other factors that influence the effectiveness of training and development in an organization. One of them that have been identified by Haywood is the human resource policy of training and development. He mentioned that too many training program place emphasis on ease and the very purpose behind the design of programs namely, learning, skill development and behavioral change, has defeat the original purpose and goals of training are lost and the means all too readily becomes the end. Furthermore, the human resource policy would determine a clear link between training and an organization's career development and reward system in which training might leads to recognition and advancement.

Indeed, the trainers' capabilities as a subject matter expert would determine the effectiveness of training and development. Training programs can be trivialize if the organization hiring unqualified trainers that could defect the transfer of learning to the employees. In addition, employees' attitude and motivation are one of the factors that might influence the effectiveness of

training and development. Therefore, the positive attitude should be fostered through the constant emphasis on team building program to enhance the employees' motivational effort. In relation to this, the employees' motivation in transfer and transfer climate are crucial to ensure the effectiveness of training and development.

Finally, the commitment of top management to the training and development is critical to its success. Organizations whose top management view training as a way to meet organizational goals by making sure that employees take an active part in the delivery of training and in the planning of training objectives; and by maintaining a financial commitment to training.