



TRAINING AND EVALUATION: AN APPRAISAL THROUGH SCANNING LITERATURE

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Abstract

The Evaluation of any training programme has certain aims to fulfill. These are concerned with the determination of change in the organizational behavior and the change needed in the organizational structure. Hence evaluation of any training program must inform us whether the training programme has been able to deliver the goals and objectives in terms of cost incurred and benefits achieved.

Keywords: Training, evaluation

1. Introduction

The Concept

Training has been defined by a number of scholars and trainers known as Change agents. Some of the definitions are as follows:

According to Filippo: “the act of increasing the skills of an employee for doing a particular Job” can be termed as training.

Similarly Steinmetz: “Training is a term process utilizing a systematic and organized procedure by which non-personnel learns technical knowledge and skills for a definite purpose”.

William G. Torpey: Training as “the process of developing skills, habits, knowledge and attitudes in employees for the purpose of increasing effectiveness of employees in their present government positions as well as preparing employees for future government positions”.

From the definitions it can be asserted that training is a technique concerned with the development of skills and knowledge in particular discipline. Training enhances and improves person’s skills, imparts knowledge to change person’s attitudes and values towards a particular direction. Few definitions give idea about the assumption that all training is not necessary and beneficial. Training is a technique which properly focuses and direct towards the achievement of particular goals and objectives of the organization. Hence identification of training needs is first and probably the most important step towards the identification of training techniques.

The process of identifying training needs is carefully thought out programme that needs to be carried out with sensitivity because success of a training programme may be crucial for the survival of the organization. The analysis of the information is the concluding part of any evaluation programme.

The analysis of data should be summarized and then compared with the data of other training programmes similar nature. On the basis of these comparisons, problems and strength should be identified which would help the trainer in this future training programmes, to stop short of completion of the training systems design methodology, by avoiding the evaluation, our training effectiveness is renegeing on our commitment to our students.

Human capital is an important asset for organizations under intense competition. Training and Development function enables human capital to unleash their dexterity. A profound training program acts as a vehicle to enhance employee skills and enable them to perform better in their job. Training and development is very crucial to the employees, the organization and their effectiveness. Human capital is the differentiator between a good company and a great company. The organizations have long understood that their most valuable asset is their human capital and many are convinced for large investments in employee training and development. An effective training program is one that addresses training needs and delivers training according to training objectives.



Research in Training and Development function has produced many results. In the last decade, training evaluation has been the main focus for many studies.

Training evaluation is often defined as the systematic process of collecting data to determine if training is effective. The organization talk about evaluating training effectiveness for their employees however the fact is that it has not yet achieved full control over the same. The present training process itself is an opportunity, a challenge to the HR person of an Organization to look not only at the tasks which are being performed, but also the other parts of the system which are required to be improved.

The organization identifies the needs of the employees at different levels and provides effectiveness in their work through nominating them into training programs or by appraising them. It has helped in determining business needs, identifying learning requirements, assessing current knowledge levels and performing gap analysis. After training is provided evaluation becomes a key component to check effectiveness. Evaluation of training and development assists managers realize change that occurs due to training. Therefore one of the reasons for evaluating training is to determine effectiveness at individual, team and organizational levels.

Training Evaluation

We understand the evaluation of training in organizations to mean the analysis of the total value of a training system or action in both social and financial terms, in order to obtain information on the achievement of its objectives and the overall cost-benefit ratio of training, which in turn guides decision-making. Evaluation involves collecting information on the results obtained in order to analyse and evaluate them and facilitate the optimization of training in the future. This optimizing function is precisely what links evaluation to quality.

2. Review of Literature

Over the years, researchers have developed systematic procedures for training evaluation. Some of them are presented here.

1. Kirkpatrick's four level model
2. Hamblin's five level model
3. Warr's framework of evaluation
4. Virmani and Premila's model of evaluation
5. Peter Bramely's model of evaluation
6. David Reay's approach to evaluation

Among these widely accepted framework is four stage training evaluation model proposed by Kirkpatrick (1959). Kirkpatrick's framework classifies training evaluations into four categories:

1. Participants' reactions to the training program;
2. Changes in attitude, knowledge or skill levels;
3. Changes in work behaviours;

4. Changes in organizationally desired outcomes; (Leach P. Mark & Liu H. Annie, 2003) According to Hamblin training can be evaluated in four levels: Reaction, Learning, Job Behaviour and Functioning. Peter Warr had, for evaluating organization training, recommended the C.I.P.O (Context evaluation, Input evaluation, Process evaluation, Outcome evaluation) framework of evaluation. Virmani and Premila's model of evaluation embraces three stages: Pre-training evaluation, Context and Input evaluation, Post-Training evaluation. Peter Bramely's model of Evaluation includes three stages: evaluation before designing learning event, evaluation during the event, evaluation after the event. David Reay has divided evaluation into three stages: the trial phase, the ongoing phase, the final phase.

3. Kirkpatrick's Evaluation of Training:



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 "smiley sheet." 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 behaviour 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 (pre-test) 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 (pre-test) and after training (post test) to determine the amount of learning that has occurred.

A third evaluation level is that of changes in job **behaviour** or performance. This involves studying the change in job behaviour 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 behaviour, 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 (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

From a study by Bergenhenegouwen (1997), 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 behaviour 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 (Level 5 -

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 (1998), 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 models, 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 (1994).

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.

4. Suggested Training Evaluation Model

On the basis of related literature after scanning the various properties of training the following model suggested. The classical Kirkpatrick's model can be enhanced by adding one more step before the first level.

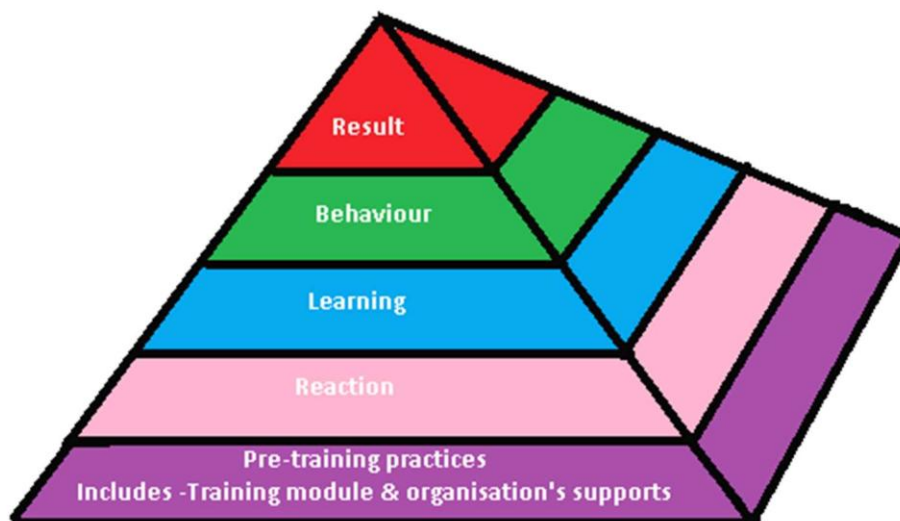


Figure: Training evaluation suggested model

The suggested model consists of five levels:

Level 1 (Pre-training practices)

- Organizational support for training.
- The training modules.
- The training needs assessment.
- The level of participation of the trainees

Level 2 (Reaction)

- How did participants react to the program?

Level 3 (Learning)

- To what extent did participants improve knowledge and skills and change attitudes as a result of the training?

Level 4 (Behavior)

- To what extent did participants change their behavior back in the workplace as a result of the training?

Level 5 (Results)

- What organizational benefits resulted from the training?

An evaluation at each level answers whether a fundamental requirement of the training program was met. It's not that conducting an evaluation at one level is more important than another. All levels of evaluation are important. In fact, the model explains the usefulness of performing training evaluations at each level. Each level provides a diagnostic checkpoint for problems at the succeeding level.

The level first was not included in the classical Kirkpatrick's model. The basis reason behind including the first level in the training model is:-

There is a positive relationship between the training effectiveness and the pre training practices.

The Pre-training practices include the need for training and the organization's support for the training, reason for including them in the training model are:-

i. Reason for training (training "needs")

If a clear need for training has been identified, an organization should be able to determine that the training is effective. The "need" for training should be documented along with the reasons behind it. Without a clearly defined need, an organization may not be able to determine its training effectiveness. There are several ways to identify and document training needs.

ii. Before training programme development

For training to be effective, it must address or preclude a deficiency such as human performance, policy, procedure, facility, or equipment. If training can be traced to a deficiency and training was instrumental in eliminating that deficiency, then that training was effective. However, it is important to understand that a performance deficiency may not exist because training has been effective.

5. Conclusion

The Evaluation of any training programme has certain aims to fulfil. These are concerned with the determination of change in the organizational behaviour and the change needed in the organizational structure. Hence evaluation of any training program must inform us whether the training programme has been able to deliver the goals and objectives in terms of cost incurred and benefits achieved. The analysis of the information is the concluding part of any evaluation programme. The analysis of data should be summarized and then compared with the data of other training programmes similar nature. On the basis of these comparisons, problems and strength should be identified which would help the trainer in his future training programmes.

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