

Evaluating Training: A Primer

INTRODUCTION

Training evaluation is an objective summary of data gathered about the effectiveness of the training. The primary purpose of evaluation data is to make decisions. Training evaluation data helps the organization determine whether the training is accomplishing its goals. They also help decide how to adjust the training approaches for greater effectiveness.

Evaluation data serve several purposes. The data enable judgments about:

- How well the training met the training needs identified
- How well learners mastered the training content
- Whether the training methods and media helped learners achieve the instructional objectives
- How much of the training transferred to the work setting
- Whether the training contributed to the achievement of the organization's goals
- Whether the benefits derived from the training justified the cost of the training.

LEVELS OF EVALUATION

There are four levels of training evaluations, each measuring a different outcome of training. The level selected depends on the question/s to be answered and the data to be collected. There are four levels of training evaluations:

The level you choose depends upon the data you wish to develop, as shown below.

- **Reaction:** Training evaluations can provide data on how the learners reacted to the training content, training activities, instructor, and any other important aspect of the training.
- **Learning:** Training evaluations can provide data on the knowledge learners gained during the training course.
- **Behaviors:** Training evaluations can provide data on the new behaviors used by learners when they return to their work settings.
- **Results:** Training evaluations can provide data on how the training impacted organizational goals.

Evaluating Training: A Primer (continued)

**LEVELS OF
EVALUATION**
(CONTINUED)

The general evaluation questions answered by each of the four levels and the types of information typically collected during each level are shown below.

Levels	Evaluation Questions	Types of Information Collected
Reaction	Were the learners pleased with the course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner impressions of ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Instructors – Course materials – Training activities – Training content – Training facilities • Observer assessments of how the learners reacted to the training
Learning	What did the learners learn during the course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurements of what the learners know or can do at the beginning and end of training
Behaviors	Did the learners change their on-the-job behaviors, based on what they learned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner, coworker, and supervisor impressions of ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Changes in the on-the-job behaviors used by the learners following training • Measurements of actual on-the-job behaviors • Observer assessments of changes in on-the-job performance
Results	Did the change in learner behaviors have a positive impact on the organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner, supervisor, and/or management impressions of the benefits derived from the training • Measurements of return-on-investment resulting from the training