

Evaluating Training Effectiveness

Unlike traditional ways of training, the structuring of a training program should start from the very first step i.e.: to identify the 3-W's: Why, Who, and What to train.

Let us consider an example of a product-based Company ABC which comes up with an amazing product and teams representing them. Unfortunately, they are unable to achieve to their fullest. However, the committee found out that their sales team aren't working as expected, for requires their workforce to undergo training. Not all employees need the same kind of training. An assessment based upon the competencies aligned with the organization could suffice the need of managers and give them an idea of:

- **Why Train?**

Everyone is not perfect. Most employees have some weak points or dark areas in their work skills, for which they need to be trained. The assessments could tell clearly the need for training, for they reflect deficiencies and competencies which need to be worked upon.

- **Who to Train?**

Not all employees need to be trained. Neither do all employees need the same level of training. The assessments generate a full-fledged report of employees who need training.

- **What to Train?**

A person with great product knowledge and bad presentation skills cannot suffice the needs of an organization. The managers should have a clear idea of what should the training be all about and which competencies, in particular, are needed.

Ways to Measure Your Training Effectiveness

1. Visual Authentication of Effectiveness

Think of measurement as a camera and the photographs of the subject (here: employees) as the training's test results. A series of photos taken in different light conditions, zoom and angles is what will give you a complete picture of the employee's (learning) situation. Similarly, you can

get visual confirmation about employees completing the learned tasks, in real life. Employees may upload video, audio or images as proof of a task completed, by harnessing the learning's from the workshop. Such visual proof can help you, as a manager, gauge if the training is a success and tailor future sessions accordingly.

Take, for example, the case of the L&D teams voice recording salespersons' pitches, prior to training, and then comparing it to a clip of them on call with a prospective client after the training. The difference in the quality of the pitch can help L&D managers make improvements in future training modules. This has become so much more detailed and easy with the ML-based automation platforms for sales that can do this analysis based on the keywords/phrases/pitch/call structure.

2. Intelligent Measurement with xAPI

Learning happens anywhere and anytime, nowadays; which is great for learners but poses issues with tracking for the L&D team. It's the growing popularity of such blended, adaptive, long-term and interactive learning experiences that led to the advent of Experience API (xAPI).

xAPI (formerly known as Tin Can) content standards aids in the production of personalized training content modules. Apart from being the latest buzzword in the learning circuit, xAPI can exactly tell you exactly where learning is happening, powered by analytics & reporting features. This communications protocol tracks learning-related activity from different sources, within and without the LMS, and stores it in a Learning Record Store (LRS). This means richer insights are mined that allows L&D teams to understand, in depth, the effectiveness of training imparted.

Digital adoption platform, what fix, harnesses xAPI to understand how users engage with your training, and leverage insights to improve the learning experience. It also presents metrics on content usage, user engagement, and the relevance of help-content.

The vast and granular data gathered through xAPIs allow trainers to decide how training content can be edited in real-time (as employees work), as the system 'knows' individual learning preferences and knowledge levels. Consequently, the attention of time of learners can be directed at relevant concepts, as the rest is automatically removed from the course.

3. Measuring Software Adoption

The corporate L&D department covers a range of training needs such as soft-skills, technical, functional training and software training. For software training, measuring product adoption, before and after the training is a very useful way to learn how effective your software training was. This is indeed a completely outcome based way to measure training effectiveness. Most software tools provide information on metrics such as how much time users spent in the system, how many activities were successfully completed etc. These dashboards give a glimpse into how well users are engaging with the software and hence how well they are applying their learning.



4. Measuring While 'Doing'

New-age tools, such as micro learning platforms, can empower you to collect details on how employees are engaging with learning content, during their work. Micro learning solutions gather a host of data on how users are engaging with the training content. Since micro learning is much more trackable (not to mention is more engaging for employees), companies are increasingly converting their training programs into these byte-sized learning content, wherever it makes sense to track

This is how WIPRO, a leading global IT, consulting & business process services company, leveraged What fix augment their sales training and hence understand how their sales-reps are leveraging their sales systems (such as CRM, sales portal, knowledge management system). The SaaS based platform tracked how many times salespersons accessed the in-app contextual walkthroughs, in real time, to identify the gaps that training left. Such advanced analytics also played a critical role in delivering an optimized learning experience and improving sales productivity. You can also gather user feedback in real-time, right at the time they accessed training and applied it to work.

5. Modern HR analytics Platforms

An MIT Sloan Management Review article states that 65% of organizations are effective at capturing data, but only 46% are able to effectively secure insights from it.

Enter: Modern HR analytics platforms. These tech solutions allow you to find and measure the link between training and performance. Once user data is collected from various sources and stored in a centralized repository, such tools help generate actionable insights that can improve training effectiveness. For example, Visier People: Learning is a tool that can predict the time required to get your workforce compliant so that you can optimize compliance training capacity and reduce the risk of adversely affecting workforce productivity.

It can also spot trends from a sea of training data to understand the full impact of all your learning activity. Thus, it helps answer questions, such as: How is L&D impacting employee retention or engagement? And what learning efforts are unable to drive strong business results? For a forward-looking corporate learning department that's serious about helping drive the business forward, this is a gold mine of information.

6. Feedback and Survey

While they may seem like the most basic forms of evaluation, they are also extremely critical to getting the answers that will determine if your training program has been a success or not. The innovation here is to collect feedback in real-time, so that the training is measured immediately and remedies are implemented without any delays. What fix does this by intelligently gathering feedback on each walkthrough training to determine where your content creation efforts will give

the best results. And the SaaS platform also integrates with survey tools to gather user feedback from specific locations (in-app) to assure higher response rates.

You can also decode the relationship your learners have with the course with Net Promoter Score (NPS) rating [1 to 10]. This benchmark that is commonly used in customer satisfaction analyses is also helpful in evaluating e-learning effectiveness. It is derived from your employees' answer to the question: "How likely is it that you would recommend [our training session] to a friend or colleague? The score they assign to your training course can also help you identify what environmental factors contributed to individual learner's positive and negative reactions.

7. Kirkpatrick's 4 Levels of Evaluation

No article on 'how to measure training effectiveness' is complete without mention of this model that takes into account every style of training. Though it was developed way back in the 1950s, it retains freshness and relevance even today. Here are the four levels of measurement and the key indicators to look for at each level.

Level 1 - Reaction

This level measures how learners have reacted to the training, the relevance and usefulness of the training. Use surveys, questionnaires or talk to learners before and after the course to collect their feedback on the learning experience.

Topics to cover during your discussion:

- Was the course content relevant and easy to follow?
- Ask questions about the learning's and key takeaways.
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
- Understand if the training was able to accommodate the learner's pace and learning style.

At the end of Level 1, you should have a good understanding of how well the training was received and determine any gaps in the training content.

Level 2 - Learning

Measure the knowledge and skills gained by learners as a result of the training. To measure this level, you can use a combination of metrics such as:

- Test scores during and after the training
- Evaluation of applied learning projects
- Influence on performance KPIs
- Course completion and certification
- Supervisor report and feedback

At this stage of evaluation, you will be able to determine if the training is meeting its set objectives, what are the specific skills that can be developed with this training, and the scope for improvements in content and method of delivery.

Level 3 - Behavior

Understand how the training has impacted the learner's performance and attitude at work. Evaluate how the training has influenced the learner's performance and delivery at work by using a combination of these methods:

- Self-assessment questionnaires
- Informal feedback from peers and managers
- Focus groups
- On-the-job observation
- Actual job performance key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Customer surveys, comments, or complaints

Topics to cover in your assessment include:

- How has learning been implemented at work?
- Are the learners confident to share their new skills and knowledge with their peers?

Level 4 - Results

Measure the tangible results of the training such as reduced cost, improved quality, faster project completion, increased productivity, employee retention, better marketing leads, increased sales, and higher morale. Key metrics to measure are:

- Improved business results
- Increased productivity and quality of work
- Employee retention
- Higher morale
- Customer satisfaction index

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