**Why Evaluate Training?**

Human Resource Departments often spend a great deal of time and money on training. To understand the benefits that training is producing, training evaluation is done. Evaluation collects information to determine if the training has been effective and has produced the outcomes that were expected. If training provides a return on investment -- money or time is saved, skills are increased, performance is improved, morale is improved -- a company is more likely to continue to invest in training. Evaluation results can be used to persuade managers, executives, and stakeholders of the importance of training. If there is inadequate return on investment, a company is more likely to reduce its training efforts or look for outside vendors to provide training at a smaller cost.

Evaluation also can show what parts of the training need to be improved or redesigned. Training can then be changed based on the information collected in an evaluation.

Training evaluation is based on the needs analysis performed at the beginning of the training design. The needs analysis shows what knowledge, skills, or behavior need to be trained and how training is expected to have an impact (for example, employees will be able to use the benefits system and HR will receive 90% fewer calls with questions about the system). Evaluation is based on the training goals and objectives. This is another reason why it is so important to design specific and measurable training goals and objectives -- they will identify the outcomes that the evaluation will be looking for.

**When to Evaluate Training?**

Evaluation isn't just done at the end of training. It can be done during its design and development. This is called **formative evaluation**. Formative evaluation usually involves asking others -- for example, peers, management, subject matter experts, and potential trainees -- their feelings and opinions about the training design, the objectives, and content. A small portion of the training may be presented to them, and they can be asked how the training's clarity, accuracy, appeal, and relevance. If the entire training is presented to them, this is called **pilot testing**.

The results of formative evaluations are used to improve the training before it is implemented. Objectives can be clarified, and content can be corrected and made more interesting.

Once training has actually been rolled out, **summative evaluation** is done to assess whether trainees have acquired the knowledge and skills or changed their behavior as noted in the training objectives. Whereas formative evaluation usually collects qualitative information (feelings and opinions), summative evaluation is often based on quantitative information. The quantitative data comes from tests, ratings, and objective measures based on numbers and percentages (for example, the number of minutes call center employees have reduced their calls by, or the percentage of employees who accurately fill out their timesheets after attending training).

Summative evaluation can also include calculating the return on investment -- figuring out if the cost on the training has been worth the benefits gained.

**What Should Be Evaluated?**

To create an evaluation, you must first decide what training outcomes or criteria you will measure. Donald Kirkpatrick created four levels of evaluation, and Jack Phillips added a fifth.

As your reading indicates, most companies focus on level 1 and level 2 evaluation because these two levels take less time and effort to measure. But remember that the levels of evaluation you use should be based on your training goals and objectives. For example, if your main training goal is to change employees' job behavior, then level 3 evaluation should be done.

**Reflection:** What levels of evaluation are related to your training project's goals and objectives? Which levels of evaluation would be most appropriate for your training project?

**Measuring Reaction**

If you want to evaluate trainees' reaction to training, questionnaires are the best way to go. Questions ask about trainees' satisfaction with the facilitator, the training materials or technology, and the usefulness of the training.

Note how the questions in this [feedback form](https://content.learntoday.info//MAN4572c_Fall_16/site/Media/feedback_form.pdf) measure trainees' reactions.

**Measuring Learning**

Tests and quizzes can measure whether the trainees learned the content and skills taught. For example, tests at the end of each self-paced training module teaching reservation agents how to use a new reservation system can tell management if the agents are ready to use the system.

**Measuring Behavior**

If the purpose of training has been to change work behavior, behavior changes are usually measured by observing and rating on-the-job behavior. For example, the effectiveness of training on adhering to prescribed work hours can be measured by managers' watching when employees start and end work and how long they are gone for lunches and breaks.

**Measuring Results**

Results are the benefits to the company -- for example, increased sales, reduced costs, improved customer service. These results are measured through observation and data gathered from company records.

**Measuring Return on Investment**

Return on Investment (ROI) is calculated as the monetary benefits of the training minus the costs divided by the costs, multiplied by 100.

For example, if a training program costs $20,000 and it brought an annual savings off $100,000, then the ROI = [(100,000 - 20,000) / 20,000] x 100 % = 400%. The ROI for this training program is 400%.

**Reflection:** What methods / tools do you think should be used to measure the training you've designed? Why?

