

Push Measurement Higher

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As organizations demand a more thorough assessment of their learning initiatives, training professionals are pressed to get better at measuring the results of their efforts. If your organization needs to move measurement to higher levels, there are some practical and inexpensive things that can be done. The key to measuring deeper is to talk about measurement when anyone starts talking about training.

"A hard assessment of the training process is inevitable when you begin to measure more deeply."

Ask measurement questions early

As soon as training is identified as a possible strategy or solution, ensure that measurement questions are asked early on:

- *If this training is successful, what will change on the job? What will people do differently?*
- *How will that change impact our business?*
- *What data or measures would you expect to reflect this change in our business?*

When these questions are asked consistently, managers will start to think about measuring results with every initiative they request.

Gather whatever benchmark data is possible

One of the challenges of measuring impact is a lack of pre-training data. If you know you expect to see a reduction in customer complaints, for example, ensure that you have as much data on current complaints as possible. If you don't have historical data, you can at least gather analytical data by interviewing

those involved. If you are training soft skills, you may be able to observe the current skill level and document it. The more people understand the current situation, the easier it will be to set achievable and measurable goals for training.

Challenge people to set targets

People can be hesitant to set a measurable goal for a training initiative. It may be because they have little experience in setting targets or they simply don't feel confident. Look to past training initiatives and share the results. Or look outside of your organization for case studies (associations can provide a wealth of information). Challenge people to set measurable targets for training initiatives and measure their success. The more this is done, the more confidence people will have in setting and achieving goals.

Don't be afraid to measure

There's a natural tendency to avoid hard data that measures the success of training, for it can also measure the failure of training. If your needs assessment, design and facilitation of training are sound, then the likelihood of your measurements demonstrating value from training are high. If there are problems in the process, then increased measurement will bring them to the forefront so they can be addressed. It may not be comfortable, but a hard assessment of the training process is inevitable when you begin to measure more deeply.

