The Challenge of Creating Learning Metrics

Organizations that focus on creating learning metrics are finding that this can be a challenging task. Especially if the metrics they want to use are those used by the executive team in the boardroom. It's one thing to measure the results of training, it's another thing altogether to measure how those results impact the corporation's goals and objectives. As learning professionals are discovering, there are a few ways to tackle this challenge.

> *"The creation of learning metrics has become an invaluable tool for aligning learning and measuring results."*

From learning up

One of the ways organizations overcome this challenge is by approaching metrics from the learning up. This is done through experimentation at the learning level. Rather than coming out of the gate with totally redesigned learning metrics, companies start by creating learning metrics for learning initiatives that are already in place. They select initiatives that are easier to track and measure, such as those based on technical skills and testable knowledge. In this way, everyone from the learner to the director starts to understand the language, the process and the challenges of creating learning metrics that align with business objectives.

One company administered behaviour styles assessments prior to conducting management training. They asked each participant to set three goals for areas of improvement to be worked on during the training. It was determined how those goals would impact the organization's objectives. Upon completion, directors and managers rated the completion of goals and used that data to measure the impact on business objectives.

From objectives down

Another way to overcome this challenge is by approaching metrics from the corporate objectives down. Starting with the organization's objectives, all levels of the learning process participate in creating learning metrics based on the long-term objectives of the organization. Once it is determined what overall metrics will be used to measure the effectiveness of learning, then the organization can start the difficult task of drilling down these big-picture metrics into performance metrics for each learning initiative.

One company conducted strategic mapping sessions to map out objectives, measures, targets and initiatives with respect to learning and growth. These maps formed the basis for creating learning metrics for each learning initiative.

Whether working from the learning up or from the business objectives down, the creation of learning metrics has become an invaluable tool for aligning learning and measuring results.

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