

TRAINING EVALUATION *Toolkit*

Complete
practical guide
to measuring
the effectiveness
of training
programs in
organizations



Leslie Allan

A  **BUSINESS** Performance Pty Ltd **book**

By the Same Author:

Training Management Maturity Model
From Training to Enhanced Workplace Performance
Managing Change in the Workplace
Writing Learning Outcomes

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About the Author



Leslie Allan has been assisting organizations improve their capability for over 20 years. He has contributed in various roles as manager, consultant and trainer within the manufacturing and service industries, both for public and private sector organizations. On the people side, Mr. Allan has set up and managed training functions for leading multinationals. His achievements include reducing online learning costs by 80 percent and increasing employee course completions by 540 percent. Taking a strategic approach to investing training resources also led him to develop a best practice model for training functions.

Mr. Allan's external and internal consulting roles have seen him lead successful projects in strategic planning, workplace communications, and quality and HR information systems. He is also a seasoned instructional designer and trainer, having taught programs in both vocational colleges and industry. Training programs that Mr. Allan has designed and delivered include the full gamut, from technical skills training to management and communication skills, team leadership, financial management and career planning.

On the process side, Mr. Allan has helped companies, small and large, improve their process capability. Managing 15 teams for one multinational manufacturer, he led the continuous improvement initiative, forming, training, coaching and motivating the teams to identify, map and improve their processes. His project management and facilitation skills were utilized in another national conglomerate to lead the design and implementation of a comprehensive document management system and the mapping and reengineering of core processes.

Mr. Allan is a prolific writer on business issues, with many journal and web articles to his credit. He is also the author of five books on employee capability, training and change management. Mr. Allan currently serves as Divisional Council Member for the Australian Institute of Training and Development and is a member of the Australian Institute of Management and the American Society for Quality.

About BUSINESS Performance^{Pty Ltd}

Established in 2003, Business Performance Pty Ltd provides business and management consulting services globally. The company delivers coaching and consulting services in a range of business areas, from small business, leadership and management, strategic planning and organizational change to employee development and career coaching. All services are provided by highly experienced consultants specializing in their area of expertise.

From its website, Business Performance Pty Ltd also proudly supplies a wide selection of business and management software products designed to make managing organizations easier and more effective. Products featured include tools, templates and guides in the areas of training and employee development, project management, organizational change, career planning, and web development. All products can be purchased and downloaded easily from anywhere in the world from the Business Performance Pty Ltd website at www.businessperform.com.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Applying the Measuring Stick to Training

The last three decades have seen a radical shift in the market place. Business has become increasingly competitive as the fight for survival has intensified. Undoubtedly, globalization and the graying of the workforce have contributed to these competitive pressures. Add to this mix the lasting legacy of the major initiatives stemming from the 1980s and onwards. On the process side, the quality movement focused organizations on customer needs and reducing defects. Six Sigma is a recent and popular manifestation of the continuing interest in driving up the quality of products and services.

Supply chain management and lean manufacturing have helped organizations reduce waste and cut costs whilst delivering greater performance to the customer. These initiatives, along with the recent emphasis on creativity and innovation, are continuing to shorten new product lead times. On the output side, better strategic planning and business measurement methods, such as the Balanced Scorecard, have improved the ability of organizations to plan for and measure success.

Within this race for survival, modern organizations are placing a greater scrutiny on what they spend. Fiscal fat has mostly disappeared, with large discretionary expenditures now a thing of the past. For many organizations, each new initiative is subjected to a rigorous review before implementation. In line with this new way of working, training departments are more and more asked by the executive to justify their programs. With training budgets competing with the budget of each of the other departments within the organization, it is little wonder that training managers are becoming increasingly focused on showing bottom-line results.

Many training professionals are taking the same view from a different perspective. These practitioners want to know that the work they do in designing and delivering training programs is making a difference. They want to ensure and somehow verify that their job has a purpose in furthering the organization's aim. Knowing this gives meaning to their own role; a sense that what they do contributes something worthwhile in the bigger scheme. Did the expensive 50 hour leadership program actually lead to greater market share and reduced employee attrition? Are project overruns avoided now that project managers had completed the recent project management course? These are sensible questions that committed training professionals are asking.

Writing and offering this book serves these two different perspectives. From the financial point of view, this book provides effective evaluation tools that can demonstrate the return on training expenditures. From an organizational impact perspective, by using the resources provided here, training professionals will get a sense that they can be in a "people profession" whilst making a real difference to the organizations they serve. The primary purpose of this book is to provide a means for organizations to measure the impact of training programs in both financial and non-financial terms. In the end, this will help inform the decision-makers that allocate expenditures in addition to assisting training managers continuously improve their programs.

Applying the methods given here to your own organization and training programs is made easier by the plethora of templates, guides and forms included. This book is designed to be a practical resource through and through. Most of these tools are reproduced in the Appendices located at the end of this book. The full Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel forms and tools are supplied as additions with this book for you to customize to your exact require-

ments. There are over one dozen such additions, so there is a tool or template for almost every purpose in assessing the impact of your training programs.

Many training professionals experience a lot of angst when faced with the prospect of measuring and reporting on the efficacy of their program. They may be asked by their manager, requested by the executive or simply feel that if they fail to report this information they will be considered unprofessional or risk losing their status, or even their job. Such misgivings are well placed. Measuring the impact of training on organizational outcomes can be fraught with difficulty, not helped by an abundance of misinformation that surrounds this topic. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that many training practitioners working in a “people” profession are unversed in business measurement and quantitative techniques. There are also a number of training impact models in currency, further confounding trainers and managers wanting simple but reliable methods of measurement.

The methods and tools presented in this book apply the law of diminishing returns to give you the simplest methods available without sacrificing too much by way of accuracy. The most significant challenge for anyone wanting to determine the impact of a training program is isolating the impact of the program *per se* from the myriad of other influences on the outcomes. A moment’s reflection reveals that the increased sales following a sales training program may have been due to a recent advertising campaign, a competitor going into liquidation or the hiring of two new sales personnel. If the result is not wholly due to these factors, then it may be due at least partly. And if so, how much is due to the training program?

Some critics have argued that it makes no sense to try and isolate the impact of training from other factors. And in some cases, they are right. This book provides some simple rules that you can apply to help you determine when isolating the impact of training is a meaningful and worthwhile activity. In this regard, many books on training evaluation present one tool or technique for isolating the impact of training, or at best two such methods. Because no one or two methods will suit all of the different types of training programs being conducted and all of the various organizational circumstances and resources available, I have included here all of the techniques that can be applied without technical expertise or much effort.

In some circumstances, drawing a trend line is the most prudent method. In others, running a control group or matched pairs will give the best results. Where these methods prove too difficult, expensive or time consuming, using estimates is an effective method. Choosing which method is the best for your circumstance is no easy feat. This book will walk you through the benefits and disbenefits of each method and present easily understandable guidelines for selection. Most importantly, I have included here a plethora of forms, questionnaires and automated worksheets for all of these techniques.

Another question often asked is, “What impact do we want to measure?” This book uses a simple but powerful model for guiding this discussion. The model remains well received after many years and has the added advantage of allowing diagnosis of why a particular program did not deliver the benefits expected. Many trainers gauge trainees’ reactions to a program and stop short there. With the tools and techniques presented here, training professionals will be able to measure the impact of their training at these other levels; the extent and depth of learning, the extent of behavior change back on the job and the measurable benefit to the organization.

Once program benefits are isolated from other influences, these benefits can be quantified in non-financial terms, such as amount produced, defects detected and customers satisfied. More and more managers and practitioners want to convert these benefits to financial measures, such as profit, turnover and savings. Such conversion can also prove very challenging for the uninitiated. This book provides some simple techniques and tools for doing

just that. With the tools presented here, financial benefits can be calculated as benefit to cost ratio, return on investment, payback period, net present value, or a combination of these. Finally, I discuss how to plan for your evaluation exercise and how best to report the evaluation results. The data collection and reporting templates included are designed to make your life easier whilst allowing you to complete the tasks in a thoroughly professional manner.

This book is the daughter volume of a larger piece of work in which I also present methods and tools for improving the organizational impact of training. In it, I introduce the **PRACTICE Approach**; a cohesive set of practical methods designed to assist organizations leverage the power of training for maximum benefit. This more comprehensive book is titled *From Training to Enhanced Workplace Performance* and is available from Business Performance Pty Ltd. The twin subjects of improvement and measurement are inextricably intertwined, as lessons learned from determining the organizational outcomes resulting from the training are fed back into the training system to bring about improvements in the effectiveness of future programs. In fact, as this book will demonstrate, the act of measurement itself can serve to improve a program's impact.

1.2 Who Will Benefit from This Book

This book will prove useful for instructional designers, trainers, supervisors, people managers, human resources managers, program managers, project managers and anyone else with an interest in measuring the effectiveness of a training program. This book is written with a minimum of technical language so that all of the key players can pick it up and start using the ideas and tools presented.

You may be a seasoned instructional designer, teacher, instructor, trainer or facilitator. Your programs may be well received by trainees and their managers alike. However, other key stakeholders are questioning or wanting more impact on the ground from your programs. People are satisfied with the program, but are sceptical about the benefits and about whether the money invested could be better spent on other initiatives. This book will help you connect your programs into the wider organizational context. It will assist you in getting the other stakeholders to take ownership of the results so that they work with you instead of sitting on the sidelines.

You may be new to training, having just received your qualifications, or, like many, have been thrown into the training role after serving in another position within your company. As well as presenting you with many of the measurement tools you will need, this book will help to illuminate why evaluation is important and how it serves to improve the effectiveness of training.

The principles and techniques explored in this book apply to every kind of training program. Your organization may buy some or all of its training from external suppliers. The programs may be purchased off-the-shelf or customized. Alternatively, you may design your programs in-house. In all of these situations, this book will assist you in determining the mileage you get from your training dollar. If you buy in your training programs or engage an external consultant, you will be better prepared by knowing what questions to ask up front.

This book is also not specific to any particular training delivery method or medium. Whether you conduct physical classroom sessions or virtual classrooms, adventure training, problem-based learning, computer-based training or e-learning, the basic principles and methods for effective evaluation apply. Programs are also of varying size and scope. You may be involved with the design and rollout of enterprise-wide training programs, such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) or Customer Relationship Management (CRM) training. Or you may be involved with more local training initiatives at the department or workgroup level. Examples here are implementing and training autonomous work teams or rolling out a new time tracking system. This guide is relevant to both large and small programs. On the other hand, you may simply be concerned with ensuring that the employee that enrolls in a time management course will actually manage their working hours more effectively back on the job. The principles, guidelines, checklists and templates presented here will prove to be a valuable resource in all of these situations.

Who will this book not help? This book will not help you if you design, plan or conduct employee development programs for which you are not concerned about demonstrable outcomes. You may conduct leadership development, teambuilding or emotional intelligence programs, or similar, and believe that either measurable outcomes are not needed or cannot be determined. Or the program sponsors and other key stakeholders may not be asking for tangible evidence of such benefits. In these cases, the many good books available on program design will be a better choice for you. Similarly, if you believe that trainers train and managers manage workplace performance, then this book is also not for you – unless you are willing to have your existing ideas challenged. This book is unapologetically for people

who want to make a difference to their organization's capability and wish to demonstrate to themselves or others that they have made such a difference.

I will finish this introduction on a note about the terminology used in this book. Where I use the term "organization" or "organizational", I refer to an organization or an organizational unit, unless the context makes it clear that I am referring specifically to the whole organization. An organizational unit can be a business unit, region, division, department, team or workgroup. Training programs are designed and delivered for groups of all sizes and compositions. This book is relevant to all of these groups, and so not limited to organization-wide programs.

Where I use the terms "he", "she", "his", "hers", "him" and "her", I refer to people of either gender, unless the context makes it clear that I am referring to one gender exclusively. Similarly, for the sake of convenience, I will often use the terms "they", "their" and "them" to refer to a person of either gender.

It is now up to you to use the ideas and extensive resources contained within this book to plan for and measure the success of your next training program.

Leslie Allan

10 Appendices

10.1 Guide to Appendices

The forms listed and reproduced here are also included as separate customizable Microsoft Word documents packaged with this book. Some packaged resources are not included in the Appendices, and these are detailed in *Section 10.2*. These additional resources include Microsoft Excel worksheets and Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files.

Appendix A	Certificate of Completion	Certificate awarded to training program participants who complete successfully the requirements of the program. Certificate.doc A mail merge version of the certificate (CertificateMailMerge.doc) and the associated data source file (CertificateData.doc) are included as additional resources.
Appendix B	Training Evaluation Data Collection Plan	Proforma plan for collecting the necessary data required for each level of a comprehensive training program evaluation. DataCollectionPlan.doc
Appendix C	Evaluation Report Communication Plan	Proforma plan for communicating training program evaluation results to the various program stakeholders during all phases of the evaluation. EvaluationReportCommunicationPlan.doc
Appendix D	Training Participant Feedback Form	Survey form for use by trainers to collect and document training program participant reactions to a training program. TrainingParticipantFeedbackForm.doc A spreadsheet for entering and analyzing survey results is included as an additional resource. (TrainingParticipantFeedbackSpreadsheet.xls)
Appendix E	Skill Assessment Form – Individual	Form for use by trainers and assessors to assess whether a training program participant met the program exit requirements. SkillAssessmentForm-Individual.doc A spreadsheet for recording assessment results for a group of training program participants is included as an additional resource. (SkillAssessmentForm-Group.xls)

Appendix F	Training Transfer Survey Form	<p>Survey form for use by training professionals with training program participants to evaluate the extent to which participants are using the skills learned during the program back in their workplaces.</p> <p>TrainingTransferSurveyForm.doc</p>
Appendix G	Training Transfer Interview Form	<p>Interview form for use by training professionals with participants' supervisors and managers to evaluate the extent to which training program participants are using the skills learned during the program back in their workplaces.</p> <p>TrainingTransferInterviewForm.doc</p>
Appendix H	Organizational Results Survey Form	<p>Survey form for use by training professionals with selected stakeholders to gather estimates of the relative non-monetary contribution of the training program to organizational results.</p> <p>OrganizationalResultsSurveyForm.doc</p> <p>A spreadsheet for entering and analyzing survey results is included as an additional resource. (Level4-EvaluationWorksheet.xls)</p>
Appendix I	Training ROI Survey Form	<p>Survey form for use by training professionals with select stakeholders to gather estimates of the relative monetary contribution of the training program to organizational results.</p> <p>TrainingROISurveyForm.doc</p> <p>A spreadsheet for entering and analyzing survey results is included as an additional resource. (TrainingROIWorksheet.xls)</p>
Appendix J	Training Program Evaluation Report	<p>Guidance notes and proforma formal report documenting training program evaluation methods and results.</p> <p>TrainingProgramEvalReportTemplate.doc</p>

10.2 Additional Resources

The following resources are included with this book as separately packaged files. They are not reproduced in the Appendices. To use these resources, you will need the following software installed on your computer system:

Resources 1 and 2 require Microsoft Word.

Resources 3 to 6 require Microsoft Excel.

Resource 1	Certificate of Completion (Mail Merge)	Mail merge version of the <i>Certificate of Completion</i> . CertificateMailMerge.doc
Resource 2	Certificate of Completion Data Source	Data source file for use with the mail merge version of the <i>Certificate of Completion</i> . CertificateData.doc
Resource 3	Training Participant Feedback Spreadsheet	Spreadsheet for entering, storing, analyzing and reporting the results from a survey using the <i>Training Participant Feedback Form</i> . TrainingParticipantFeedbackSpreadsheet.xls
Resource 4	Skill Assessment Form – Group	Spreadsheet for entering, storing and reporting aggregate assessment results for a group of training program participants. SkillAssessmentForm-Group.xls
Resource 5	Level 4 Evaluation Worksheet	Spreadsheet for entering and analyzing the results from a survey using the <i>Organizational Results Survey Form</i> . Level4-EvaluationWorksheet.xls
Resource 6	Training ROI Worksheet	Spreadsheet for entering and analyzing the results from a survey using the <i>Training ROI Survey Form</i> . TrainingROIWorksheet.xls

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