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## Evaluating Reaction of training-The first level, its importance and the way forward

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### Abstract

The study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different training programs in a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU). This case study approach explores the effectiveness of training programs of the PSU by using Kirkpatrick model. The research method in the study was survey data collection method.

Reactionnaires' collected after different training programs were analysed to understand and analyze the level of satisfaction of the participants from different type of training programs. Effectiveness of any training program and evaluation at the next level depends on the positive reaction of trainees from the training programs. The main purpose of reaction evaluation is to enhance the quality of training programs, which in turn leads to improved performance.

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### 1. Introduction

Training is inevitable as it develops the skills and knowledge of the employee and enables them to take up challenging jobs. Training builds up self-confidence in the minds of employees. Each trained person has the responsibility to justify the results of the training program as they contribute to the organization's productivity and profits.

There have been many 'surveys' on the use of evaluation in training and development. Results initially appear heartening; many trainers/organizations responding about the extensive approaches they use. However when more specific and penetrating questions are asked, many professional trainers and training departments are found to use only 'reactionnaires' (general vague feedback forms), including the invidious 'Happy Sheet' where, for example, questions such as 'How good did you feel the trainer was?', and 'How enjoyable was the training course?' are used. Even well-produced reactionnaires do not constitute validation or evaluation.

For effective training and learning evaluation, the principal significant questions should be:

- To what extent were the identified training needs objectives achieved by the programme?
- To what extent were the learners' objectives achieved?
- What specifically did the learners learn or be usefully reminded of?
- What commitment have the learners made about the learning they are going to implement on their return to work?

And back at work,

- How successful were the trainees in implementing their action plans?
  - To what extent were they supported in this by their line managers?
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- To what extent has the action listed above achieved a Return on Investment (ROI) for the organization, either in terms of identified objectives satisfaction or, where possible, a monetary assessment.<sup>1</sup>

Donald Kirkpatrick developed the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model for evaluating training during the 1950s. The model was initially published in a trade journal and later in Kirkpatrick's 1975 book, *Evaluating Training Programs*. Today, it is the most recognized method of evaluating the effectiveness of training programs.

### ***Level 1 - Reaction***

Level 1 solicits opinions of the learning experience following a training event or course. Typical questions concern the degree to which the experience was valuable (satisfaction), whether they felt engaged, and whether they felt the training was relevant. Training organizations use that feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, participants perceptions, potential future improvements, and justification for the training expense. A variety of sources estimate that approximately 80 percent of training events include Level 1 evaluation.

### ***Level 2 - Learning***

Level 2 measures the degree to which participants acquired the intended knowledge, skills and attitudes as a result of the training. This level is used by instructors and training Officers to determine if training objectives are being met. Only by determining what trainees are learning, and what they are not, can organizations make necessary improvements. Level 2 can be completed as a pre- and post-event evaluation, or only as a post-evaluation.

### ***Level 3 - Behavior***

Level 3 measures the degree to which participants' behaviors change as a result of the training – basically whether the knowledge and skills from the training are then applied on the job. This measurement can be, but is not necessarily, a reflection of whether participants actually learned the subject material. For example, the failure of behavioral change can be due to other circumstances such as individual's reluctance to change. Level 3 evaluation involves both pre- and post-event measurement of the learner's behavior.

### ***Level 4 - Results***

Level 4 seeks to determine the tangible results of the training such as: reduced cost, improved quality and efficiency, increased productivity, employee retention, increased sales and higher morale. While such benchmarks are not always easy or inexpensive to quantify, doing so is the only way training organizations can determine the critical return on investment (ROI) of their training expenditures. One typical challenge is to identify whether specific outcomes are truly the

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<sup>1</sup> Rae WL "Training Programme evaluation" <http://istdkochi.org/pdf/training-programme-evaluation.pdf>

result of the training. Level 4 requires both pre- and post-event measurement of the training objective.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the research paper is to study and evaluate the first level of training evaluation and to formulate the way forward for further research.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation scheme that many corporate training programs use is the above mentioned Kirkpatrick's four level of evaluation, however many surveys has also showed that major percentage of evaluation is limited to the first level of evaluation and only a few has crossed to second and third level.<sup>3</sup>

The main purpose of reaction evaluation is to enhance the quality of training programs, which in turn leads to improved performance. The ultimate objective is to make training programs more efficient and effective for organizational performance improvement.

The evaluation of training can play either a formative purpose to improve the program or a summative purpose to decide whether a program should be continued or terminated.

There are broadly three types of training programs at PSUs

- In-house training
- In-country training
- Overseas training

In-house training programs are conducted at PSUs, and the participants in such programs only belong to that PSU. In case of in-country training programs, participants are nominated from the user departments on the basis of Training Need Assessment Matrix (TNA) or on the basis of specific job requirement, in country training programs are generally conducted at different places within the country but away from actual work setting. For overseas training programs which are conducted outside the country, specific nominations from Competent Authority with valid reasons are required.

Officers who attend training programs need to fill up the feedback forms, immediately after the training programs are over in case of in-house training program and on their arrival in case of in-country and overseas training.

For the purpose of evaluation of first level, feedback forms which were collected earlier after the completion of training programs were used. Data were analyzed for interpretation.

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<sup>2</sup> Kirkpatrick DL, Kirkpatrick JD, and Kirkpatrick WK "Four level of Evaluation" <https://www.trainingindustry.com/wiki/entries/four-levels-of-evaluation.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Lee SH and Pershing JA " Effective Reaction Evaluation in Evaluating Training Programs-purposes and Dimension Classification" <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/13354653/1472005380/name/effective%2Breaction.pdf>

Feedback is collected with the help of distinct forms used specifically for each type of training.

The information on following dimensions was collected from the three set of feedback forms:

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Program Objectives/Content	To evaluate the program objectives, expectation, structure, level, timeliness, program content
Program Materials	To determine the effectiveness, efficiency and usefulness of written Material and other aids
Delivery Methods/ Technologies	To judge the appropriateness and effectiveness of delivery methods, including media/technologies
Instructor/ Trainer	To rate the ability, preparation and effectiveness of the trainer or facilitator in leading the program
Instructional Activities	To evaluate the appropriateness and helpfulness of in-and/ or out of class activities
Program duration	To assess length of program/session
Training Environment	To evaluate the adequacy of the physical training environment, including classroom etc
Logistics/ Administration	To evaluate the logistical support like nominations, registration etc
Overall Evaluation	To determine overall participant's satisfaction and feelings about the training program
Recommendations for Program Improvement	To receive suggestions/ recommendations for improving similar or future training programs

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the purpose of the study, data is collected randomly for Trainees and different officer grades, between year 2010-2014 for three categories of training programs (viz. in-house, in-country and overseas)

<b>Training Category</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>
In-House	1314	1746	1159	1506
In-Country	349	606	591	726
Overseas	84	127	133	150
Total	1747	2479	1883	2382

Availability of data was a crucial factor here, a total of 65 feedback forms for in-house, 47 for in-country (including 13 for customized level based training) and 29 for overseas training were collected and used for analysis.

#### 4.1 In-house training

In house training programs are generally conducted only for Officers of the PSU by internal or external faculty members. Feedback is collected after the completion of the course using Standard feedback forms. Responses were collected on questions like whether program objective were explained, Subject knowledge of the faculty, Presentation skill of faculty, Response to queries, Program benefit to the present job, Methodology used, Information on Aids used, Information on satisfaction level of study material/handouts provided, Program duration and on propagation of competence to participants.

Responses given on a scale of 5 were plot; broadly on six parameters and weightage were assigned in percentage to these parameters. Overall responses for sample of 64 are as given below:

Sl. No	Parameters	Weigtage	Score
	Knowledge of Faculty	20 %	0.94
	Presentation skills of Faculty	15 %	0.64
	Response to Participants queries	15 %	0.65
	Study materials Supplied	5 %	0.21
	Program benefit to present job	15 %	0.64
	Propagation of competence to participants	30 %	1.14
		TOTAL	4.23

Rating Scale:

1-Poor (Below 30 %); 2-Average (Between 30 % to 50 %); 3- Satisfactory (Between 51 % to 70 %); 4- Good (Between 71 % to 90 %); 5-Excellent (Above 90 %);

Overall effectiveness of the In-house Programs based on the following rating scale:  $(4.23/5) \times 100 = 84.6\%$  (Good)

#### 4.2 In-Country training

Officers were sent for in-country training programs outside the place of work, away from actual work setting for training along with participants from other organizations so that fresh ideas are discussed away from work setting.

Feedback is collected after the completion of the course on arrival of the Officer and feedback form for customized level based training in case of customized training programs.

Questions like “Did you personally derive benefit from the programme? If yes, in what way?; “Will this programme be beneficial to the PSU also? If yes, how?” were collected. Participants were also asked to rate how much they think the program objective is achieved. The Officer also needs to present/ discuss with the concerned Head of the department who in turn also rates the effectiveness of the programme.

Participant’s average score on how much they think programme objective is achieved is calculated:  $(5 \times 15) + (4 \times 12) + (3 \times 7) / 34 = 4.23$  (84.6%)

Head of the Departments average score on how much they think the programme was effective based on presentation/ discussion with Officer:  $(5 \times 8) + (4 \times 27) / 34 = 4.35$  (87%)

### Evaluation of feedback for customized level-based training

Customized Level Based Training programme in consideration here is meant for middle management. Middle management Officers were sent for 15 days training programme on “Customized general management cum leadership programme for middle management Officer” conducted at premier institutes which was also attended by Officers from other organizations. 13 feedback forms randomly were evaluated to gain more insight.

Responses were collected on questions like Quality of course material, Level of course content, relevance and level of case studies, response to queries, subject knowledge of the faculty, capability of faculty to engage the participants, presentation skills and delivery style of faculty, methodology used for the teaching, effectiveness of the teaching methodology, overall effectiveness of the programme, facility arrangements, etc.

SL. No.	Questions on	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Response
	Quality of course material	0	10	1	0	0	2

	Level of course content	Very high	High	Appropriate	Average	Poor	No Response
		0	4	8	0	0	1

	Relevance and level of case studies used	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Response
		2	4	7	0	0	0

	Response to queries	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Response
		1	12	0	0	0	0

	Subject knowledge of faculty member	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Response
		3	10	0	0	0	0

	Capability of Faculty to engage participants	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Response
		2	10	1	0	0	0

	Presentation skills and delivery style of faculty	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Response
		3	10	0	0	0	0

	Effectiveness of the teaching methodology	Very Effective	Effective	Moderate	Somewhat effective	Ineffective	No Response
		3	9	0	0	0	1

	Overall effectiveness of the programme	Very Effective	Effective	Moderate	Somewhat effective	Ineffective	No Response
		3	10	0	0	0	0

Participants have also given their views on few open ended questions asked, such as extent to which course has help overcome skill & personal deficiency, how the course will help in current job as well as future assignments, any other improvement they like to see etc.

#### 4.2 Overseas training

Officers are also nominated for overseas training for specific training programs. Once the training program is completed the concerned Officer needs to submit the Report in standard formats, wherein the Officer needs to share the knowledge in form of a presentation to the Head of the Department (HoD) and other Officers of the department. The HoD in turn provides feedback on concerned Officers learning's along with other Officers of the department.

HoD/ General Manager (GM) of the concerned department submits a report/feedback after 3 months on resuming duty by the concerned Officer after completion of the overseas training/workshop/conference/seminar etc. Dimensions like increase in output, motivation, cost reduction, attitudinal change etc are covered in the feedback form. It is also ascertain whether the placement and responsibility assigned to the Officer is proper with respect to the training undergone.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Each participant's reactions, attitude or feelings about a specific training program are complex. They are the results of many factors, such as training content and methods, other trainee's perceived success at achieving some of the goals of training, grade and experience in the company etc. It is found during the course of study that it is a sort shortcoming in having one standard one reaction evaluation for all its training programs. At least one portion of each evaluation should be specific to the program it is designed to evaluate. It is also found that in case of this PSU only in-house training reaction evaluation is done properly and a lot needs to be evaluated in terms of in-country and overseas training reaction evaluation.

Measuring reaction is important and easy to do. It is important because the decision of top management may be based on what they have heard about the training program. It is important to have tangible data that reactions are favorable. It is important also because the interest, attention and motivation of participation has much to do with the next level of evaluation i.e. learning that occurs.

## REFERENCES

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