

Evaluation of Training

I believe evaluation of training is one of the main components of a training program. And training is an investment to the organization and training programs must be evaluated in order to show their value. Moreover, training evaluation gives trainers an opportunity to validate their observations, and gives the participants an opportunity to express their opinions and feel satisfaction from the fact that they have been heard. According to Noe (2010), training evaluation refers to the process of collecting the quantitative and qualitative outcomes needed to determine whether training is effective. And training evaluation involves both formative and summative evaluation. From my understanding, effective training evaluation can provide benefits and supports to organizations on four aspects. First, formative evaluation can provide evidences to ensure the training program is well organized and meets the trainees' needs and objectives. Second, formative evaluation helps to provide information about what knowledge and skills the training has imparted to its trainees, and the trainees' levels of satisfaction with the training. Third, summative evaluation can provide a way to find out whether the trainees have mastered the desired knowledge and skills. Lastly, training evaluations can provide evidences about what organizational benefits the training has yielded, and provide information needed to improve the training program.

In my opinion, an effective training evaluation should include both formative and summative evaluation, and be fully supported and well planned by the entire organization. If an organization is unwilling to spend its resources for a

comprehensive training evaluation, the organization will not effectively identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and get accurate data about the costs and benefits. Moreover, a good evaluation of training should be carried out throughout the whole time of the training activity, and based on the specific goals and objectives of the training. In addition, a good evaluation should include all the factors and individuals related to the training programs. In other word, an effective evaluation should ensure that diverse viewpoints could be heard and are taken into account, and all the collected data are as complete and unbiased as possible. Last but not least, I believe a good evaluation should be systematical and relatively low cost.

I think evaluation gathers information about what skills and knowledge that trainees have learned during the training, and provides information used to determine whether the trainees have mastered the desired performance and achieved the goals of the training. On the other hand, performance diagnosis emphasizes on what trainees have achieved, and identifies learning gaps and performance deficiencies based on the information gathered by evaluations.

Evaluation Designs

In the past decades, many human resource training evaluation models have been developed as tools to help organizations find the evidences and factors to prove the effectiveness of HR interventions (Tzeng, Chiang, & Li, 2007).

From my personal perspective, Brinkerhoff's (1989) Six Stage Model is an effective and all-sited model that can be used to evaluate organizations' interventions on training. There are six stages in Brinkerhoff's model, which include goal setting,

program design, program implementation, immediate outcomes, intermediate or usage outcomes, and impacts and worth (Kumpikaite, 2007). From my understanding, this model divided training evaluations into three parts, immediate outcomes, intermediate or usage outcomes, and impacts and worth. It makes sense that organizations should consider about the time validity of the return on investment (ROI), when assessing what added value trainings deliver to the business.

The immediate outcomes can be defined as short-term results, such as trainees' results of test, reactions, self-evaluations, and so on. The intermediate or usage outcomes refer to long-term results and focus on business results, such as annual revenue, employee performance, and productivity. The last stage, impacts and worth, to my understanding, are summaries and feedbacks of the overall training programs, in order to improve the training programs.

ROI

According to Noe (2010), return on investment (ROI) is, and always has been, a crucial outcome of training program, and it provides evidence about the economic value of training programs. From my understanding, ROI is a visible ratio commonly used in organizations and financial circles to compare competing investments on training and other organizational activities. According to my experience, many organizations in China are now more demanding in having a financial proof for what trainings bring to the business before approving expenditures. Moreover, organizations also want to see measurable and actual benefits after training implementations. In this case, demonstrating ROI has become a key point of training

evaluation.

I think calculating ROI needs to collect two types of data, which include the total benefits and the total cost of a training program. When evaluating a training program, it is normally easier to get precise data on the total cost. However, calculating the total benefits of a training program and translating qualitative data into numeral data is more challenging. Moreover, people from different levels of an organization are looking for different things and achievements from the training programs. For organizational level, people use ROI to make sure their investments have won back financial values to their organizations. Management level views ROI as a tool to measure the effectiveness of a training program. And for individual level, employees use ROI to build confidences and beliefs that the training is achievable and beneficial. In this case, I believe if an organization wants to get valid and tangible evidences of ROI of trainings, it should first ensure all related employees are involved, and collect data at various levels. Second, the organization should build a formative and summative training evaluation system. Third, the top management and the training organizers should have a close relationship. Lastly, HR professionals of the organization should also carefully analyze the factors that may influence the training measures. In this case, it is necessary for organizations to ensure all related employees are involved, and collect data at various levels