

**HPI Principles at Work** (*third in a series of three articles*):

**The Trainer as Evaluator**

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The first article in this series provided tools for the trainer as **analyst** when a training request is made – the initial phase that shapes a foundation for **evaluation**. The second article examined the trainer as **intervention selection specialist**. It categorized the six most common causes of performance gaps and charted examples of relevant interventions that can be **evaluated** for on the job learning transfer and application.

The focus of this article is the role of the trainer as **evaluator**.

*What is evaluation?* It is a process of measuring the value and impact of HPI (Human Performance Improvement) interventions for the organization.

*Why evaluate?* Never before have organizations invested so heavily in performance improvement. Yet, according to the ASTD 2005 State of The Industry Report, fewer than 25% of organizations measure on-the-job application of interventions, only about 8% measure business results, and a meager 2% measure ROI. At the same time, top management seeks evidence that the dollars invested paid off. **Evaluation** helps determine the business, organization, and performance value of HPI solutions.

This article briefly describes a **five-stage model** for evaluating HPI interventions and key questions to ask at each stage, based on the most widely accepted models of Jack Phillips, Robert Brinkerhoff, and Donald Kirkpatrick. A multi-faceted approach has value because it encourages evaluation at *every* stage of a performance improvement project, transcends training solutions, and provides a blueprint for measuring results.

**1. Evaluate the Need and Set Goals.**

- *How great is the need, problem, or opportunity? Is it worth addressing?*
- *What methods can be used to measure the significance of the need – surveys, focus groups, audits, records, observations, etc.?*
- *What would the likely payoff of HPI interventions be?*
- *What are the desired outcomes of the project – organization, business, performance results to be measured?*

**2. Evaluate Solutions and Objectives.**

- *Are selected interventions linked to needs and gaps specified in Stage 1?*
- *Are interventions likely to be accepted and implemented?*
- *Are business and performance objectives clear—do they indicate measurement standards of how and when management and participants will know they are successful?*
- *Does the project design seem cost-effective?*

### 3. Evaluate Development and Delivery.

- *Are business and performance goals and objectives clearly stated?*
- *Is content within the scope identified in Stage 2?*
- *Is sufficient time allocated to accomplish stated goals and objectives?*
- *Which learning activities are linked to desired performance outcomes?*
- *What methods are used to measure learning – observation, tests, games, simulations, case studies, skill practice/ demonstrations, peer and self assessment, confidence builder exercises, etc.?*
- *Are there any barriers to effective implementation and/or delivery?*
- *What methods are used to measure participant reaction, satisfaction, and suggestions for improving design/delivery?*
- *What methods are used to garner participant commitment to apply learning?*

### 4. Evaluate Application and Implementation.

- *Are performers using learned skills/behaviors/job aids in their work setting?*
- *Are there barriers that were not apparent in Stage 2 and need to be addressed?*
- *What methods can be used to collect application evidence – observation, follow-up surveys, interviews, assignments, performance records, etc.?*
- *Are there possible constraints to data collection?*

### 5. Evaluate Impact and ROI.

- *What are the effects of the intervention(s) – what is the impact on the organization, business, and performance goals established in Stage 1?*
- *What is a realistic estimate of the monetary value of intervention benefits – e.g. customer satisfaction, reduced turnover, profit/savings, improvements in productivity/attendance, quality and efficiency, reduced legal exposure, etc.?*
- *What are the less tangible benefits, e.g. increased confidence, teamwork, job satisfaction; improved communication; fewer complaints; etc.?*
- *What are the related project costs – research, design, development, materials, facilitation, travel/lodging/meals, salaries for meeting and training attendance, cost of data gathering/evaluation/measurement, etc.?*

<b>ROI Calculation Example</b>	
ROI =	$\frac{\text{Net Project Benefits (Project Benefits - Costs)}}{\text{Project Costs}} \times 100$
Example:	
Net Project Benefits = Project Benefits – Project Costs	
Project Costs = \$200,000	
Monetary Value of Project Benefits = <b>\$500,000</b>	
$\frac{\$300,000 (\$500,000 - \$200,000)}{\quad} = 1.5 \times 100 = 150\%$	

\$200,000

The success of an HPI project in producing results of value to the organization depends on **evaluation** at every stage. And effective **evaluation** enables the trainer who practices it to show top management with conviction how training pays off.

### **References**

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