



The Context Group

For Clients Who Value Results... More Than Advice

3/23/04

Volume 1, Number 12

"The important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts as to discover new ways of thinking about them."

William Bragg

The Context Group

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How To Evaluate Training Programs

Determining whether a training program will deliver the results you are looking for can be an arduous task. Depending on the vendor, the information provided to you can range from "Trust Me" to enough statistics that only a Ph.D. can understand.

The most critical thing you want to know is how much performance has changed **due to** the training. You should ask the vendor for evidence of this. If the vendor gives you some story about how their results can't really be measured, but they exist, you should choose another one. You should be able to examine the impact of EVERY training program.

When evaluating their studies, there are a few critical things you will want to look for:

- 1) How many people were in the study? The more people involved the more confidence you can have that you will see similar results.
- 2) Was there a control group? A control group is made up people in the same job who do not participate in the training. To demonstrate that training had an effect on performance the vendor should be able to show that those who took the training are performing better after training than those in the control group. Why compared to the control group and not compared to how they are performing before training? Imagine this scenario: You provide in-bound sales people with training before your peak season. Sales performance is then

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measured later during peak season. Lo and behold, it's higher! The training must have worked! If the group that received training was performing better during peak season than the control group you have evidence that the increase was due to the training.

- 3) How large was the performance improvement? Was it large enough to justify the costs of the training? You need to do some homework here to determine all of the costs of delivering the training and evaluating the economic return of higher performance.
- 4) Was the performance improvement sustained? Vendors should be able to show performance improvement over a period of time, not at only one point.

When buying training products and services the burden is on you to be an informed consumer. Be wary of vendors who cannot supply you with the information you need to make an educated decision.

For more information on conducting ROI analyses please contact [Warren Bobrow](#).

Rx For Progress--Take a Pulse

One key indicator of progress in any organizational change effort is feedback from the participants. In addition to any "hard" measures you are able to collect (e.g., reduced absenteeism, number of deadlines met, changes in customer service ratings), it is important to seek input from the employees that are making the changes to see how they are doing.

In a recent client engagement, we were pleased to see strong indications that we were on the right track. Employees readily acknowledged the organizational improvements and recognized the value of the specific procedures and processes that were implemented in the previous six months. In areas

where we focused our efforts (communication, cooperation, teamwork, administrative work), employees were positive about the organization's direction.

If you would like to learn more about developing and implementing an [organizational survey](#) or [organizational change](#) effort, please contact [Kammy Haynes](#).