

Management Checklist

Evaluating Training

This is an excerpt from a [Chartered Management Institute](#) checklist providing practical advice and guidance enabling managers to check out how to do a range of tasks quickly and efficiently using concise, tried and tested information.

Introduction

The evaluation of training should be a more thorough approach than to completing a 'happy sheet'. In-depth evaluation is not always possible, but a key to gaining an idea of returns on training investment is to have a training objective and indicator/s in place against which you can appraise the progress made. The information gained from evaluation will feed back into the appraisal process, support discussion of individuals' progress and development, and provide information about performance on which to base appropriate future training plans and processes.

Definition

Evaluation is an analytical process of assessing the value of something. In the case of training, it focuses on whether the time and money spent on training have achieved the required results.

Action checklist

1. Define what you want training to achieve

The evaluation process starts as soon as you begin to construct a training plan. Identify needs first; then, quantify the results and outcomes you expect.

It is harder to set measurable targets, however, for events designed to contribute to continuing learning or behavioural change. In these cases, work with the trainee to specify expected outcomes - for example, a more effective selling behaviour.

2. Turn targets into objectives

A training objective specifies what you can expect the trainee to be able to do or to know as a result of the training. It should be SMART: Specific - Measurable - Achievable - Realistic - Time limited.

In the case of knowledge, avoid the word 'understand', because understanding is not measurable. Replace it with words like 'state', 'explain' or 'describe', which enable you to check that the trainee has absorbed the knowledge to meet an objective.

3. Make sure everyone knows the objectives from the start

Trainees should receive advance information in their joining instructions and via personal briefings from their manager. Trainers need to design the training based on what it should achieve so, if training is provided by an external organisation, check that the provider can meet the specified objectives.

4. Design methods for comparing results with objectives

The best way to do this is to get people together to come up with one agreed and consistent approach. It may involve a post-training action plan, a debriefing session on return to the workplace, forms, questionnaires, observation checklists, feedback meetings or statistical data. The key point is that you must design the assessment procedures early on.

5. Evaluate the input

Remind trainees to keep their objectives in mind throughout the training and to raise the matter with the trainer if their needs are not being met. If the training is provided by an external organisation, ask the trainees to give you a summary of their reactions to the course at a debriefing session on their return. Encourage them to be honest in their opinion of the worth of the training.

6. Assess the training in the workplace

The process of evaluation is a matter of comparing results with expectations. Encourage trainees to produce a realistic action plan to implement what they have learned once they are back at work. In the longer term, ask the trainees what the training has helped them to achieve within a particular period.

7. Use the results

The information gained from evaluation is critical in starting the training cycle over again, and planning what needs to be tackled next year, and how.

The full [Management Checklist](#) is part of a series offered by the Chartered Management Institute, that focuses on issues relating to people management and personal effectiveness. The full checklists are freely available to all [members of the Institute](#). Further information can be obtained by calling (0)1536 207 373 to request a sample of what the Institute has to offer.