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Main training evaluation models

How to evaluate the effectiveness of a course? Here is an overview of the main learning evaluation models.

Training is an investment and, like any investment, it is essential to measure its effectiveness and results. However, as training is intangible in itself, such evaluation is often complicated.

Today, there are dozens of **learning evaluation models**. Each method adopts a specific approach oriented towards analysing different aspects.

In this article, we will give an overview of the most popular evaluation models.

Kirkpatrick model

The **Kirkpatrick model** is the most popular and widely used model and has provided the basis for many other models developed subsequently. It is based on four levels of evaluation that provide a comprehensive overview of the effects of training:

- **Reaction**: did the users find the course interesting? Did they feel involved?
- **Learning**: what knowledge was imparted to participants and what skills were developed?
- **Behaviour**: Did what was learnt influence the learners' behaviour and performance?
- **Results**: What impact did the training have on company performance?

For more information, see also " **Assessing the effectiveness of an online course with the Kirkpatrick model**".

Kaufman Model

The **Kaufman Model** was introduced in 1994 and was developed from the Kirkpatrick model. It is based on five levels of evaluation:

- **Level 1a - Input:** were the training resources and materials adequate and appropriate?
- **Level 1b - Process:** Was the delivery of the training effective?
- **Level 2 - Acquisition:** To what extent did participants acquire new knowledge and skills?
- **Level 3 - Application:** To what extent did participants use their learning on the job?
- **Level 4 - Organisational outcomes:** How did the organisation benefit from the training?
- **Level 5 - Consequences:** How did the training have an impact on the organisation's customers and society in general?

Phillips' ROI model

The **Phillips ROI model** was developed in the early 2000s from the Kirkpatrick model and has five levels:

- **Reaction**: as in the Kirkpatrick model, it starts by assessing the participants' reaction to the training received.
- **Learning**: In this phase, it has to be determined whether the users were able to learn the knowledge and skills that the course was intended to impart.
- **Behaviour**: At this stage, it is assessed whether the training generated a behavioural change in the learners in the workplace. Compared to its predecessor, this model aims to determine whether any failure to apply workplace learning is directly due to the training or to external problems.
- **Impact**: The fourth level assesses how the training has affected company performance.

- **Return on Investment (ROI)**: the last level, which is new compared to its predecessor, uses cost-benefit analyses to determine the value of training programmes and helps companies determine whether their investment in training has produced measurable results.

CIRO model

This model, developed in 1970, is specifically aimed at evaluating **management training** and is based on 4 levels of evaluation:

- **Context**: the first step is to analyse the operational situation the company is in and assess the training needs.
- **Input**: in this second step, it is necessary to collect information on possible training techniques and methods.
- **Reaction**: The third step is to collect participants' opinions and suggestions on the training received.
- **Outcome**: The last step is to present information on the results of the training. Depending on the purpose of the evaluation, these results can be measured on four levels: learner level, workplace level, team or department level and company level.

Brinkerhoff Model

The **Success Case Method (SCM)** was introduced in 2003 by Robert O. Brinkerhoff and can be applied to a wide variety of events or activities (not just training evaluation). For example, it could be applied to assessing the impact of a new type of machinery or a new structure within the company.

One of the peculiarities of the **Brinkerhoff model** is that it is not concerned with analysing the average performance of training participants, but focuses on extreme cases, i.e. on the most and least successful participants.

The two most important questions posed by the Success Case Method are:

- how well does a programme perform at best?
- when a programme does not work, what is the reason?

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