

How do you know if your e-Learning product has been successful? Evaluation need not be difficult, and it won't be if you plan ahead. Here are some key tips that will help you keep your efforts realistic.

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ROE Versus ROI: Which Do You Measure?

Most people consider ROI (Return on Investment) the most important thing to measure when it comes to determining if your training program is paying off. I submit to you that ROE, *return on expectations* is initially a more important area of evaluation.

From an ROI perspective, you should evaluate your training program based on what your "expected" measurement of success should be. For example, what are your realistic expectations regarding cost savings? How much money do you need to save to consider your training program a success? What is the overall business impact of your program? Has productivity improved, and how much improvement do you need to consider your program a success?

Once you determine your expectations, then you can determine your ROI.

Next, you'll need to consider how you should use the information you've gathered. Will the information be used as a tool for budget justification, support for additional programs, or perhaps a corporate case study?

How do you measure "training impact?"

Here are some key benchmarks for evaluation when determining if your training program makes sense ... and the relative importance of each.

- ROI = 5% - 10%
- Business Results = 20%
- Job Impact = 30%
- Learning = 70%
- Satisfaction = 100%

Questions to use to evaluate

- Did they like the course? What percent of the skills they learned was new? Did they use the material on the job? Are they planning to apply the new skills?
- How much time does the new skill save? How many fewer errors are the employees making as a result?
- How much money can they save? How many new orders can they take? How many new files are they able to process faster?
- What can they now do that they couldn't do before? What opportunities does this open up for the organization? Is there a dollar amount that can be associated with the opportunities?

So, to make it simple, you should "heavily" judge your program on two factors. First, are they learning faster, and are they using the new skills? Second, are they satisfied with the program material?

You'll need to obtain this information through post-event and follow-up surveys. Pre- and post-follow-up assessments are critical evaluation tools that you should be using regularly.

Remember, when implementing an e-Learning management solution or an LMS, how you plan your program initially from set up can make all the difference. Think "program," not "course." For your program, you'll need to plan the communication, how you will schedule and deliver your training, and what the realistic expectation criteria are for evaluating your program later.

Here is the "blueprint"

1. **Identify your target learners.** Who is your group? What is the learning path? Identify them through manager surveys and online assessments.
 2. **Determine what learners need.** What is the learning material for this group? How does it relate to your business goals, or to solving your business "gaps" or problems? Again, use manager surveys, online assessments, and consider company objectives.
 3. **Identify the pre-requisite skills.** What building blocks are needed? Determine these through learner surveys and assessments.
 4. **Prepare the learner for learning.** This involves more one-to-one interaction through meetings with managers, conference calls, and Webinars.
 5. **Prepare the managers for coaching and supporting the learners.** Do this through conference calls, Webinars, and face-to-face meetings with managers.
 6. **Determine scheduling and delivery.** Determine what the proper mix of repetition and frequency is. How might your employees benefit from emphasized and timed delivery of certain material through automated engagement? Which material do you need to reinforce regularly, and what is the timeline for that? What are the delivery mechanisms – classroom, e-Learning, books, CD's, DVD's, Webinars, teleseminars, collaboration, etc.?
 7. **Apply the learning.** Evaluate how employees learn. Are they auditory, visual, or kinesthetic? Evaluate role-plays and collaborative interaction. Implement learning labs and simulations.
 8. **Provide support and reinforcement.** This can be evaluated with surveys, assessments, consistent message delivery, group interaction, and collaboration.
 9. **Track the learning.** Do this through your e-Learning management solution or LMS.
 10. **Ensure learning is being used.** Use progress monitoring from your LMS.
 11. **Keep the learning current.** Always evaluate your material through ongoing surveys, assessments, and meeting with managers.
- Know what you want to measure and why ... before you implement your computer-based learning program. Know what your realistic expectations are for evaluation. Being smart up front can save you a lot of time, money, and resources later.