

**Leadership  
Foundation**  
for Higher Education

# IN PRACTICE

ENGAGING WITH LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**SPECIAL**

## **EVALUATING LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES:**

**A SURVEY OF PRACTICE AND A TOOLKIT FOR HE**

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# EVALUATING LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

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## BIOGRAPHY

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## FOREWORD

It is almost half a century since Donald Kirkpatrick sought to encourage those with responsibility for the management of training and development to increase their evaluation efforts. As the authors of this IN PRACTICE special note, demonstration of the value of the investment made in training and development is notoriously difficult, but that doesn't mean that efforts should not be made to do so. The development of leadership and management capacity within the sector currently enjoys a high profile and the work of the LFHE is already increasing the investment in programmes. The evaluation of the value and impact of programmes and other development actions (local, regional and national) needs to be similarly enhanced.

Techniques and strategies available vary considerably, and virtually all of them have their place and value if used in the right place at the right time with the right language – using existing skills, capabilities and attitudes as the starting point. Knowing how and when to use them is the real challenge! The approach described here offers a useful addition to the staff developer's armoury. It is, incidentally, similar to that used by the LFHE for its own evaluation model. The way a university evaluates its investment in learning and development should be bespoke to that institution, designed to meet its needs and deliver the most relevant information in appropriate ways to all stakeholder groups. Evaluation often seems excessively complex and frightens organisations, and higher education institutions are no exception. This guide demystifies it, providing practical advice drawn from HE experience in a jargon-free style.

### Professor Bob Thackwray

Director, Membership and Organisational Development

## BACKGROUND

This study was undertaken as part of a Small Development Project funded by the Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA) in 2004. HESDA was integrated into the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education during the summer of 2004. The five universities participating in the study were Keele, Leicester, Aston, Birmingham and Nottingham Trent.

## CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The study was designed to establish the impact and value for money of accredited Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) programmes. The ILM is an awarding body which aims to “provide distinctive, innovative and comprehensive services to support all individuals and organisations wishing to initiate, improve and maintain their capability in leadership and management” (ILM mission statement). This includes accreditation of programmes that lead to nationally recognised qualifications, provision of conferences and ongoing development supported through membership of the Institute.

The study arose because of the acknowledged difficulty in trying to prove that there is a link between attending management and leadership development programmes and any change in performance or productivity. Quantifying costs and benefits is a difficult process. However, this requirement is now explicit in national and institutional strategies and in quality enhancement and assurance processes (eg HEFCE-funded HR Strategies (Rewarding and Developing Staff), Investors in People, European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and other quality frameworks). It is also a requirement, and for institutions a necessity, to establish if the learning outcomes have been achieved and if the resulting behaviour makes a difference in the workplace.

Each of the five participating universities had established in-house leadership and management development programmes accredited with the ILM and run by staff developers at team leader, first line manager and middle manager levels. The aim of the project was to “determine the impact of accredited

leadership and management programmes on the individual, the team and the organisation”.

The project objectives were to:

- identify the key indicators in the evaluation process
- measure the costs and benefits associated with the participants, their teams and their organisation
- identify performance changes at individual and team levels
- consider the implications for the monitoring and development of the organisation’s staff development strategies.

An additional outcome from the project was the development of an evaluation toolkit for programme developers and leaders to enable them to:

- reflect on current evaluation methods and fitness for purpose
- gather appropriate information to enable them to design or redesign programmes and their delivery
- review engagement and impact in the workplace
- establish a rationale for the programme that demonstrates added value within the organisation.

## INTRODUCTION

### WHY DID WE DO THIS?

How many organisations effectively review the difference their management and leadership development makes? How do you evaluate such programmes? Can you demonstrate a return on investment?

Apart from the obvious reason of a ‘need to know’, and to find out if the resources devoted to development are well used and worthwhile, the higher education sector has taken a fresh look at management and leadership support. In 2004 the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education was established. This was a new national body providing management and leadership development and other support including mentoring, coaching and action learning across the sector. HEFCE, through its grant support to teaching and learning and to research requires universities to have agreed HR strategies and initiatives in place to support good

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practice developments in leadership, governance and management. The five universities in the project had each adopted the ILM as the preferred standard and so the national priorities suggested that this was a timely and significant piece of research.

## METHOD

### HOW DID WE DO IT?

The project steering group appointed a researcher to initiate the study. The chosen methodology was the use of questionnaires, which were sent to all ILM participants who had undertaken the programmes at the five universities within the last three years, and to their line managers. Structured interviews were held with a sample of line managers and participants in order to identify any critical issues to be followed through in the study. To facilitate speed of completion, questionnaires contained a range of mainly closed questions, but opportunities for additional comments were provided wherever possible. The questionnaires were anonymous, and all respondents were advised that the evaluation process was confidential.

The questionnaires used mirrored Kirkpatrick's model (1996) of four levels of evaluation. These are not intended as a hierarchy, but rather as an indicator of the different levels at which evaluation can be undertaken, such as:

- Level 1 – Reaction (ie what the participants thought about the course)
- Level 2 – Learning (ie the changes in knowledge, skills or attitude)
- Level 3 – Behaviour (ie changes in behaviour on the job, learning applied in the workplace)
- Level 4 – Organisational performance (ie return on investment).

The project steering group selected Kirkpatrick's model primarily because it was a tool which had already been used in some of the partner institutions, and it provided a pragmatic approach to determining the impact of programmes on the individual, their team and the organisation. It was felt that the model was widely respected and provided an appropriate and

practical framework for analysis.

Project questionnaires were also designed to provide information with regard to the following:

- background data about participants (eg course attended, current role, staff category, gender, age, ethnic origin, length of time at the university and length of time in current post)
- respondents' reasons for participating in the course
- the implementation of work-based projects/presentations, learning diaries and personal development plans
- the role of participating line managers (prior to and after the course)
- the role of staff development
- the perceptions of line managers and participants of the overall impact of the ILM programmes
- the perceptions of line managers and participants of 'value for money' in relation to courses and programmes.

## OUTCOMES

### WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?

The study found that the programmes did add significant value and were particularly useful in motivating change, in encouraging personal development and increased confidence, in developing individuals' skills including communication and also in promoting quality enhancement in their work area. What also emerged was the need to involve managers more in supporting individuals on programmes and following through the benefits and commitments to change and development that had occurred.

Analysis of the data indicated that the positive benefits derived from the accredited ILM programmes included:

- value for money – 93% of line managers and 94% of participants felt that the programmes provided value for money; the additional comments from the majority of line managers and participants were positive
- changes to understanding and awareness – both participants and line managers felt that the courses had heightened the participants' understanding of their own and other people's roles, leadership styles,

and strengths and weaknesses

- impact on individual, team and organisation – participants and line managers felt that programmes had resulted in participants being more motivated, more confident and more effective in communicating, and that they had encouraged quality enhancement in work areas
- linking learning to workplace – 89% of respondents tackled a work-based issue as part of their programme, 80% were able to make use of the results on their return to work and 82% were satisfied with the extent of implementation
- the role of staff development – 90% of participants felt that the advice and guidance provided by staff developers had been appropriate and comments reinforced the point that the input of staff development overall had been valuable and supportive

## WHAT WERE THE REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN PROGRAMMES?

The most common reasons cited by participants were to:

- gain a recognised management qualification
- learn
- gain recognition and responsibility
- check practice against theory.

In contrast, the least common reason was to adjust to their new role (either as a result of job promotion or change of job).

In interpreting the data the main focus of participants' reasons for attending was on Level 2 of Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation, ie learning. We felt that this had important implications for the evaluation process. Evaluation tends to be driven by the course organisers (ie staff developers). The rigour of that process might be enhanced if there was a better synergy between the learning needs of participants, line managers and the wider institution. Any model of evaluation of staff development should incorporate a needs identification stage. The pre-course discussion and possibly course booking forms could include the reasons for undertaking the programme in relation to the benefits perceived for the individual and for the

department/team (eg linked to the achievement of departmental plans).

## WHAT DID THIS MEAN IN TERMS OF SUPPORT FROM LINE MANAGERS?

Data analysis indicated that both pre- and post-course discussions could be improved. This may point to a greater involvement of staff developers in terms of considering:

- what support should be provided for line managers in assisting them to fulfil their role in developing their staff
- the provision and use of pre- and post-course guidelines for managers and participants.

The study found that there was a significant difference of opinion between line managers and participants regarding pre- and post-course discussions and the extent to which arrangements had been made to cover the participants' work. 60% of participants confirmed that they had conversations with their line manager prior to the course. However, 94% of line managers indicated that they had met with participants prior to the course. In addition, when participants were asked to elaborate on how such a conversation had taken place, their most common response was that it had been 'briefly discussed'. This contrasted with the most common response from line managers, which was that 'it had been discussed how the course fitted with their overall development'.

Similar differences of opinion were found in relation to post-course follow up. 64% of participants and 81% of line managers indicated that the course had been followed up. The most common response from participants was that these discussions had only occurred 'briefly', whereas the most common response from line managers was that they had discussed 'in detail' how to transfer programme learning to the workplace.

A significant majority of participants (84%) claimed that there had not been any arrangement for their work to be covered whilst undertaking courses. However, approximately half of the managers (49%) claimed that they had made such arrangements.

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## WHAT WERE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR LINKING LEARNING TO THE WORKPLACE?

Some courses included the use of learning diaries or personal development plans. 48% of respondents who completed learning diaries or personal development plans indicated that the main focus was on changes to the way in which they carried out their work, or changes to themselves. However, from the data it was evident that the commitment to completing learning diaries or personal development plans on return to work had not been very strong. The most common reason cited for lack of progress was 'lack of time due to other work'.

In order to facilitate greater commitment, staff developers may wish to consider making the requirements for learning diaries or personal development plans part of pre- and post-course guidelines for discussion between line managers and participants.

## WHAT WERE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF STAFF DEVELOPERS?

Participants and line managers were asked about the role of staff developers prior to, during and after the courses:

- prior to the course – 92% of participants and 82% of line managers felt that the advice and guidance given was sufficient
- during the course – 96% of participants felt that advice and guidance was sufficient, compared to 64% of line managers (this is to be expected, as contact during the courses was understandably focused on the participants and not their line managers)
- after the course – 90% of participants felt that advice and guidance was sufficient, compared to 50% of line managers.

## WHAT OTHER INSIGHTS DID WE GAIN?

Over half of programme participants attended to gain a management qualification and/or because they thought it would help them gain promotion. Less than a quarter attended because their line manager had identified it as beneficial to their role. On the other hand, almost all tackled a work-based issue as

part of the 'ongoing' programme, and of these some 80% had implemented at least part of that project and were satisfied or very satisfied with the results. However, over half of these participants had encountered 'problems' in doing so, in many cases through lack of time or line manager/colleague support. Reassuringly, 93% of line managers and 94% of participants thought that the programmes offered value for money.

## CONCLUSIONS

### WHAT CONCLUSIONS DID WE COME TO?

- the programmes accredited with the ILM had impacted at each of the four levels identified in Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation, ie reaction, learning, behaviour, organisational performance
- the accredited programmes added value through personal development, motivating change, developing skills, and increasing confidence
- the evaluation processes could be strengthened through greater involvement of line managers and participants in preparation for the programmes and in the follow up
- quantifying the costs and benefits in order to calculate the return on investment is a difficult process. However, if the return on investment is to be appropriately measured then leadership and management development needs to be set into the context of the organisation, ie explicit in HR and staff development strategies and embedded in the organisation as part of the enhancement of quality.

Evaluation of leadership and management development programmes in higher education institutions should be an integral part of any HEI's quality improvement process and should lead to consolidation of good practice or result in changes to programme content, style or structure. A closing question and thought for staff developers: do we measure what we really need to or just that which is the easiest?

## WAS IT WORTH DOING?

The study has provided us with a rich source of evidence, which supports the integrity of the programmes and the frameworks used. Three key findings from the study are that the ILM programmes did add significant value and were particularly useful in:

- motivating change
- promoting personal development through building skills and confidence
- encouraging quality enhancement at work.

In addition, the study has:

- provided us with more qualitative information, which has enabled us to change and challenge some of the support processes typically expected of line managers and which are sometimes absent
- stimulated discussion and a greater ownership of the line manager's role in supporting individual development
- challenged us in our role as staff developers and encouraged us to think afresh about our strategic role in leadership and management development
- provided us with the evidence to influence institutional approaches to professional development in key areas.

## A NOTE ON THE EVALUATION TOOLKIT

The toolkit was developed as an outcome of the study, and provides a series of questions which will enable staff developers and programme leaders to analyse and reflect on their own programmes. It also provides a tool which enables them to demonstrate evidence to justify the value of those programmes. However, a cautionary note – in the introduction to the toolkit it is noted that “due to the complexity and individuality of organisations, it is impossible to prescribe a panacea or ‘one size fits all’ solution to evaluating leadership and management development”.

The full report of the project and copies of the original questionnaires can be seen in the ‘HESDA’ archive via the Leadership Foundation website, [www.lfhe.ac.uk](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk)

## THE PARTNERS

Colleagues who were partners in the original project were:

Anne Burrows, professional development advisor, Aston University; David Harrison, assistant director, Personnel Services and Sue Rex, staff development officer, Birmingham University; Keith Willis, staff training and development manager, Nottingham Trent University.

Particular thanks also go to Marj Spiller (now the university education development co-ordinator at Staffordshire University) and to Annette Knight, research assistant, for their work on the original survey and report.

# EVALUATION TOOLKIT:

A resource for staff development practitioners

**Developed by Marj Spiller and Carol Mountford, Keele University on behalf of the project steering group (participating universities: Keele, Aston, Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham Trent)**

## INTRODUCTION

Few would argue against the notion that the evaluation of staff development should be planned, purposeful and lead to improvement, but not everyone is convinced that their process gives them the right information. Evaluation of staff development activities is now well entrenched in many organisations. It seems to be an accepted process to go through, and can sometimes absorb considerable amounts of time and energy. However, due to the complexity and individuality of organisations, it is impossible to prescribe a panacea or 'one size fits all' solution to evaluating staff/management and leadership development.

To help to address this problem, the questions below are designed to encourage staff development practitioners to reflect on some key issues. By doing so, they can then ascertain whether or not their existing evaluation methods continue to be fit for purpose within their own organisation.

### WHY EVALUATE?

Before either designing or redesigning evaluation questions it is necessary to determine the fundamental purpose of the activity. Is the information collected going to be used to inform future activities or merely stored as evidence of the evaluation process? Ultimately, what value does the process add to the organisation?

### HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED AND BY WHOM?

Will the analysed information feed into annual reports, departmental meetings or be used in future publicity material? Will participants completing evaluation instruments be allowed access to the analysed results? How will sensitive information (including names) be handled?

### WHO SHOULD EVALUATE?

Is it just participants, or should workshop presenters, staff developers and line managers be included? Could a combination of these be used? Is evaluation a mandatory or voluntary activity?

What other processes does the evaluation feed into? Is the evaluation a stand-alone activity or is it used to inform audits, self-evaluation documents, external examiner, verifier or Investors in People (IiP) visits?

### WHO SHOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WHOLE PROCESS?

Who is going to drive the evaluation activity and ensure that it is planned, implemented, reviewed and, if necessary, remodelled? Will it be staff development or quality managers?

### HOW FORMALISED SHOULD THE PROCESS BE?

Is the process formalised through documents (paper-based or electronic) or is it flexible enough to allow informal comments to be included?

### WHAT EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS/EVALUATION METHODS ARE USED?

Are evaluation questions to be asked through paper-based or electronic questionnaires? Will group forums or individual interviews also be used? How will anonymity and confidentiality be facilitated? Is qualitative or quantitative data required (or a combination of both)?

### IS THE EVALUATION PROCESS A DOCUMENTED PROCEDURE?

If so, who writes this and how often is it updated? Is it available and accessible to all staff?

## HOW OFTEN DOES EVALUATION TAKE PLACE?

Is every staff development activity evaluated or just a sample?

How is this justified?

Are new activities evaluated in greater depth?

Are there any organisational constraints, eg time?

Having addressed the issues raised above the type of questions to be asked and the timing of these questions need to be decided. Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation (developed in 1959 and revisited by Kirkpatrick in 1996) sets out four levels and based on this model, questions can be asked to determine:

- 1 reaction
- 2 learning
- 3 change of behaviour
- 4 impact on organisational performance

The purpose of the questions listed below is to provide a guide to the type of issue to explore at each level of evaluation. The lists are not exhaustive and merely serve to give an indication of the different sorts of questions to ask. They can be used with or instead of each organisation's existing staff development evaluation, and are meant to be adapted to suit context-specific or situational variables.

## 1 REACTION

The purpose of evaluating at the reaction level is to identify participants' views on what they initially thought of the staff development activity. End-of-course/workshop questionnaires are the most frequently used form of evaluation for staff development activities. The following types of questions tend to be asked:

- Did you enjoy the course?
- Was the content relevant to your job?
- Did the course meet with your expectations?
- Did the course achieve its specified learning outcomes?
- What aspects did you find particularly useful?
- How appropriate was

- a) the structure of the session?
- b) the sequencing of activities?
- c) the teaching style?
- d) the pace of the session?
- e) the learning materials?
- f) the accommodation?

- What could be improved?
- What other issues could have been included?
- How easy/difficult did you find the course? (consider using rating scale)
- How satisfied were you with the course? (using a satisfaction index such as: very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied)
- Would you recommend this course to other staff?

Evaluating at the reaction level tends to be used by organisations to find out the general level of satisfaction of participants. It is probably the easiest stage at which to evaluate, hence its popularity. Caution needs to be exercised, however, and staff developers should perhaps reflect upon the following issues:

- Does the data gathered provide all the information required to fully evaluate the activity?
- Is questioning at this level used merely because it is the easiest to administer?
- Does enjoyment during staff development lead to learning and/or change of behaviour?
- Is enjoyment during staff development positively or negatively linked to learning and/or change of behaviour?
- Is the completion of end of course questionnaires by participants merely a ritual and not necessarily linked to improvement?
- Are the issues which matter to the organisation being addressed (eg did the development activity make any difference or have any impact)?

## 2 LEARNING

Evaluation is undertaken at the learning level to assess the degree of change in knowledge, skills and/or attitude that has occurred. Assessments may be in the form of verbal questioning, written assignments, level of engagement in group discussion, presentations or practical skill testing.

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To ascertain the amount of learning that has occurred, staff development practitioners should consider incorporating some or all of the following questions in their evaluation:

- Was your level of learning about the topic measured before you started the course?
- What key facts have you learned?
- Estimate how much you have learned (use rating scale, measuring understanding and/or skill acquisition before and after the course)
- How was your learning assessed during the session (eg questioning, exercises)?
- How was your learning assessed at the end of the session (questioning, tasks, tests)?
- Was the assessment of your learning formalised (eg through written tests, written assignments, oral assessments/presentations)?
- What feedback on your learning were you given during or after the course?
- What have you learned from others on the course?
- What have you learned about yourself (perhaps through self-reflection)?
- What have you learned from the process of being involved in a staff development activity?

To be reliable, an assessment needs to be made of the participants' level of learning before, during and after the development activity. Engaging in this type of performance measurement may be welcomed and encouraged in some organisations whilst in others it would be strongly opposed. Therefore the degree to which this is implemented should be in line with the organisational culture and needs.

Another issue which should be considered is the validity of such testing either before, during or after a development activity. Would improvements in performance shown in development-based assessments necessarily indicate changes transferable to the workplace? In addition, to what extent is the learning likely to be short-term or long-term?

A key factor in deciding the appropriateness, timing and type of assessments of learning relates to the subject matter. In any development activity designed

to heighten knowledge, understanding or awareness the differences in levels of learning can easily be measured before, during and after the workshop. If, however, skills/competency are being learned these can sometimes be situation- or context-specific and cannot always be assessed during a course/workshop.

## 3 CHANGE OF BEHAVIOUR

For staff development to be of value to an organisation, the learning that occurs as a result of a course/workshop must be transferred into the workplace. For example, when delivering workshops on chairing meetings, the true assessment of this learning can only be measured when the participant attempts to utilise these skills in the next meeting that they chair (ie a non-simulated situation).

There are certain workplace factors which are conducive to learning, and staff development practitioners should be aware that the absence of any one of these can thwart the chances of transfer taking place. For example:

- the support of the person's manager
- the support of their colleagues
- the time for consolidation of learning/practice,
- the level of autonomy within the job role
- the level of motivation of the person
- the self-belief of the person

Staff development practitioners should consider asking some or all of the following questions:

- What changes have become evident in the way you approach/perform the topic of the course (eg chairing meetings, managing staff)?
- Have any changes been noticed by others around you (eg manager, colleague)?
- How long after the course did it take for any changes to occur?
- What opportunities/conditions have made the transfer of learning from the course into work easier (eg supportive manager, time)?
- What feedback have you been given on the implementation of your learning/performance of your new or improved skills? By whom?

- What barriers at work have made the transfer of learning from the course into work more difficult (eg pressure of work, unsupportive colleagues)?
- What factors about you as a person have affected the transfer of learning from the course into work (eg motivation, confidence in own ability)?

At this level of evaluation, staff development practitioners must also consider who should be involved in the process. Depending on the nature of the course and perhaps the circumstances of the workplace, a self-evaluation by the participant might be appropriate. On other occasions, however, opinions should be sought from a range of different people connected to the task. For example, when a member of staff has engaged in development activities on the topic of 'effective recruitment and selection', the opinions of fellow panel members and possibly the person being interviewed should be sought. On the other hand, if a member of staff has attended a 'managing time' course, a self-assessment by the person, combined with the opinion of their colleagues and/or manager might be needed.

## 4 IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Attempting to evaluate the eventual impact of a development activity on an organisation is a complicated (and some might argue an impossible!) task. The problem arises from the difficulty of finding an absolute causal link between the development activity and the eventual improvement in a task. Many variables could potentially intervene. For example, if a member of staff attended a development activity on 'managing staff absences' and then there was an improvement in the staff attendance statistics in the following few months, is the latter the result of the former? Could the staff just be more motivated (eg having returned from a holiday or having been given a pay rise)? Might it depend on the time of year? Here are some questions that could be considered.

- What has been the resulting impact on work of you having attended the course (eg more productive meetings, faster processing of key tasks)?

- What impact has there been on other staff and/or other departments?
- What effect has this change of performance had on the targets for your area?
- Any examples where it is possible to quantify the impact (eg reduction in staff absenteeism, increase in students enrolled)?

Indeed the difficulty arises in trying to prove that there is a link between attending staff development courses and any changes in performance or productivity. Instead of trying to find absolute proof of improvements, what staff development practitioners might prefer to do is suggest that there are certain 'indicators' of changes in performance that could be partly attributable to their interventions.

To add further complexity, there are examples of improvement in practice which are qualitative rather than quantitative in nature and therefore would never result in 'hard' evidence. For example, if a manager attended a course on 'how to motivate staff', the resulting change in their behaviour might lead to staff within their department enjoying work more or generally experiencing a 'feel good factor' about their work. Admittedly there might be other 'indicators' such as a consequent lowering of staff turnover or a decrease in absence rate but it would be more difficult to prove that these were a direct consequence of the staff development activity.

An added complexity to this difficult level of evaluation is timing ie how soon after attending a development activity should there be an impact on performance or productivity? When should the evaluation take place? Should there be an expectation that improvements should result within a specified time period?

As with the evaluation at the previous level (change in behaviour), there is the issue of who should evaluate. Should it be staff development practitioners or should it be participants and their line managers? Who should take responsibility for this process and ultimately report on the results? Increasingly with the use of the Investors in People standard in organisations, there is pressure to evaluate, quantify and document the costs and benefits of staff development activities.

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## CONCLUSION

The evaluation of staff development activities is a complex task, which needs careful consideration in order to be of value within an organisation. Staff development practitioners should assess the appropriateness of all the four levels (reaction, learning, change of behaviour and impact) and should decide on their evaluation strategy and procedure according to the needs of the organisation. Evaluation should not be done just for its own sake or as a box ticking exercise to impress others. Instead, evaluation should be an integral part of the quality improvement process within staff development and should lead either to the consolidation of good practice or resultant changes to content, style or structure.

A summary of the key questions together with a checklist for staff developers is given in Appendix 1 of the Evaluation Toolkit. The checklist covers pre-course preparation, facilitation of ongoing development and post-course follow up.

## ADDITIONAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

As a closing thought, staff developers should perhaps reflect on these key questions:

- Are we measuring what we really need to or just that which is easiest?
- How do you evaluate the evaluation?
- What was of real value and how do you know?
- What are the values underpinning the evaluation?
- Is the evaluation process ethical (ie how will the data be collected and used, who will use the data, who owns the data)?

## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX 1

### STRATIFIED EVALUATION TOOLKIT SUMMARY

The purpose of the following questions is to provide a guide to the type of issue to explore at each level of evaluation. The list is not exhaustive and merely serves to give an indication of the different sorts of questions to ask. It can be used with or instead of each organisation's existing staff development evaluation and it is meant to be adapted to suit context-specific or situational variables.

#### REACTION

- Did you enjoy the course?
- Was the content relevant to your job?
- Did the course meet your expectations?
- Did the course achieve its specified learning outcomes?
- What aspects did you find particularly useful?
- How appropriate was
  - a) the structure of the session?
  - b) the sequencing of activities?
  - c) the teaching style?
  - d) the pace of the session?
  - e) the learning materials?
  - f) the accommodation?
- What could be improved?
- What other issues could have been included?
- How easy/difficult did you find the course? (use rating scale)
- Would you recommend this course to other staff?

#### LEARNING

Evaluation is undertaken at the learning level to assess the degree of change in knowledge, skills and/or attitude that has occurred. Assessments may be in the form of verbal questioning, written assignments, level of engagement in group discussion, presentations or practical skill testing.

To ascertain the amount of learning that has occurred, staff development practitioners should consider incorporating some or all of the following questions in their evaluation:

- Was your level of learning about the topic measured before you started the course?

- What key facts have you learned?
- Estimate how much you have learned (use rating scale, measuring understanding and/or skill acquisition before and after the course)
- How was your learning assessed during the session (eg questioning, exercises)?
- How was your learning assessed at the end of the session (questioning, tasks, tests)?
- Was the assessment of your learning formalised (eg through written tests, written assignments, oral assessments/presentations)?
- What feedback on your learning were you given during or after the course?
- What have you learned from others on the course?
- What have you learned about yourself (perhaps through self-reflection)?
- What have you learned from the process of being involved in a staff development activity?

To be reliable, an assessment needs to be made of the participants' level of learning before, during and after the development activity. Engaging in this type of performance measurement may be welcomed and encouraged in some organisations whilst in others it would be strongly opposed. Therefore the degree to which this is implemented should be in line with the organisational culture and needs.

Another issue which should be considered is the validity of such testing either before, during or after a development activity. Would improvements in performance shown in development-based assessments necessarily indicate changes transferable to the workplace? In addition, to what extent is the learning likely to be short-term or long-term?

A key factor in deciding the appropriateness, timing and type of assessments of learning relates to the subject matter. In any development activity designed to heighten knowledge, understanding or awareness the differences in levels of learning can easily be measured before, during and after the workshop. If, however, skills/competency are being learned these can sometimes be situation- or context-specific and cannot always be assessed during a course/workshop.

# EVALUATING LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

## CHANGE OF BEHAVIOUR

For staff development to be of value to an organisation, the learning that occurs as a result of a course/workshop must be transferred into the workplace. For example, when delivering workshops on chairing meetings, the true assessment of this learning can only be measured when the participant attempts to utilise these skills in the next meeting that they chair (ie a non-simulated situation).

There are certain workplace factors which are conducive to learning, and staff development practitioners should be aware that the absence of any one of these can thwart the chances of transfer taking place. For example:

- the support of the person's manager
- the support of their colleagues
- the time for consolidation of learning/practice,
- the level of autonomy within the job role
- the level of motivation of the person
- the self-belief of the person

Staff development practitioners should consider asking some or all of the following questions:

- What changes have become evident in the way you approach/perform the topic of the course (eg chairing meetings, managing staff)?
- Have any changes been noticed by others around you (eg manager, colleague)?
- How long after the course did it take for any changes to occur?
- What opportunities/conditions have made the transfer of learning from the course into work easier (eg supportive manager, time)?
- What feedback have you been given on the implementation of your learning/performance of your new or improved skills? By whom?
- What barriers at work have made the transfer of learning from the course into work more difficult (eg pressure of work, unsupportive colleagues)?
- What factors about you as a person have affected the transfer of learning from the course into work (eg motivation, confidence in own ability)?

At this level of evaluation, staff development practitioners must also consider who should be involved in the process. Depending on the nature of the course and perhaps the circumstances of the workplace, a self-evaluation by the participant might be appropriate. On other occasions, however, opinions should be sought from a range of different people connected to the task. For example, when a member of staff has engaged in development activities on the topic of 'effective recruitment and selection', the opinions of fellow panel members and possibly the person being interviewed should be sought. On the other hand, if a member of staff has attended a 'managing time' course, a self-assessment by the person, combined with the opinion of their colleagues and/or manager might be needed.

## IMPACT

- What has been the resulting impact on your work of you having attended the course (eg more productive meetings, faster processing of key tasks)?
- What impact has there been on other staff and/or other departments?
- What effect has this change of performance had on the targets for your area?
- Any examples where it is possible to quantify the impact (eg reduction in staff absenteeism, increase in students enrolled)?

## CHECKLIST FOR STAFF DEVELOPERS

### INTRODUCTION

The checklist covers pre-course preparation, facilitation of ongoing development and post-course follow up.

Staff developers should address the questions listed under each section. The examples given are an aid to achieving good practice. The culture of the organisation, the priorities for the programme (ie where the programme fits in the overall strategy for the development of leadership and management) and the resources available will all affect the extent to which the examples can be applied. The examples are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

## WHAT PREPARATION IS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO THE PROGRAMME?

Pre-course preparation assists in setting and clarifying the expectations of both line managers and participants. Each party needs to be clear about:

- the aims of the programme
- the benefits to the team and department
- the benefits to the individual
- the requirements of the programme eg. completion of a work-based project or assignment, learning logs/diaries, action plans
- ownership of learning ie the individual needs to actively participate and engage in the learning opportunities presented through the programme; the line manager needs to engage with the individual in supporting the implementation of action plans, work-based projects, application of the learning and ongoing development
- the evaluation process and the purpose of evaluation ie the benefits to both the participant and the line manager, as well as the organisation
- the role of staff development eg. the level of support for participants and line managers, the provision of networking opportunities

## WHAT SUPPORT IS PROVIDED FOR PARTICIPANTS AND LINE MANAGERS IN THE WAY OF PRE-COURSE PREPARATION?

Examples:

- pre-course briefings for line managers and participants
- guide to the programme including not only purpose and learning outcomes, but also role of participants and line managers in engaging in the programme, reviewing the outcomes and supporting the ongoing learning
- using a booking form that is completed by the line manager and participant which includes the outcomes expected by the line manager (ie benefits to the team, to the department), how the course supports or contributes to the achievement of departmental or institutional goals, arrangements for covering the work and the date of the planned follow up meeting; the participant's goals.
- using a learning agreement between participant and line manager (this may be facilitated by the staff

developer and may be part of the pre-course preparation or done at the end of the course as part of the follow up in order to facilitate ongoing development)

## FACILITATING ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

### HOW IS SELF-DEVELOPMENT FACILITATED DURING THE PROGRAMME?

Examples:

- building personal development planning into the programme
  - eg. including it as part of the briefing day/workshop prior to the programme; including it early in the programme and providing tools for participants to use during and after the programme (eg. learning log, learning diary, action plan, reflection on practice)
- setting expectations as part of the course – requiring participants to commit to a minimum of two actions on return to the workplace; building time into the programme for participants to complete action plans so that they can record their intentions and develop these into actions with target dates (eg. intention, action and by when); if the programme has a follow up day, including opportunities for the sharing of achievements as part of the day
- considering the use of mentors to support the participants' learning experiences
- considering the use of action learning sets to develop the problem solving and listening skills of participants and to facilitate learning from the actions taken
- encouraging networking eg. providing opportunities for exchange of ideas and sharing of good practice, sharing of skills/knowledge

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE COURSE HAS BEEN COMPLETED?

The evaluation toolkit provides examples of questions for each level (ie reaction, change of behaviour, learning and impact).

Examples:

- staff developers and participants engaging in the evaluation of the programme – reaction level
- participants using learning logs/diaries and action

plans to reflect on the learning experience in preparation for debriefing, appraisal, ongoing personal development

- participants and line managers engaging in post-course follow up, which reflects the levels of evaluation (ie reaction, change of behaviour, learning and impact), which is likely to mean follow up at different time intervals and it may be worthwhile embedding this in the appraisal process as part of ongoing development
- staff developers following up a random selection of line managers and participants to evaluate changes in behaviour and impact, and evidence of quality enhancement
- celebration of success – presentations of certificates by senior manager, internal newsletters, webpage updates, inclusion in institution's annual report
- review of the programme and evaluation outcomes with stakeholders eg with representatives of participants and line managers, workshop/session leaders, staff developers
- reports to senior managers – eg statistics, impact and quality improvements

### HOW CAN ONGOING LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT BE SUPPORTED IN THE WORKPLACE?

Examples:

- development of line managers – support from staff developers to enhance the skills required for the development of staff and the creation of a positive working environment where innovation and change is encouraged, where there is commitment to the enhancement of quality and service improvement
- networking opportunities, for participants and line managers to engage in, which help to create a climate where learning is facilitated
- provision of updating sessions for past participants; provision of facilities for past participants to continue to meet and to share experiences, share ideas and ways of tackling problems
- provision of personal development planning opportunities in order to facilitate ownership of learning and development and to encourage reflection on practice eg workshops, appraisal processes, one-to-one provision.
- provision of other learning opportunities eg development of departmental and cross-functional teams addressing work-based issues, thereby engaging team leaders and line managers in the development of staff, and facilitating learning through the sharing of ideas and good practice within and between teams

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### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information concerning this paper, events associated with it, and other Leadership Foundation publications, please contact:

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