

Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

7. Explain the rationale for performing training evaluations.
8. Identify possible reasons for resistance to training evaluations.
9. Explore the evaluation and cost analysis processes.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 9: Evaluation of Training

Unit Lesson

After implementing training in the organization, evaluation of the training should occur. Evaluation of training is meant to indicate if learning occurred and if behaviors intended to change with the training have indeed changed (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013). The bottom line in most organizations deals with productivity and output. Thus, measuring if the training did in fact affect behavior performance, which in turn affects productivity, is essential.

To date, there still is some resistance to the evaluation of training. Some supervisors feel there is nothing to evaluate. Others feel that such evaluations are too expensive. Yet others may feel that these evaluations will threaten their current job or that no one really cares about the evaluations.

However, the training offered should be measured to determine if indeed it was effective. Accountability can be tracked, as well as possible avenues for retraining if the evaluation determines that there was a low level of learning achieved with the training.

Taking the example of the Firearms Training Simulator (F.A.T.S.) for police officers from previous units, one would definitely want to measure the level of learning achieved due to the costs involved with this system. As mentioned, this system creates numerous scenarios in which officers determine whether they should shoot or not shoot as well as explain their reasons. An evaluation of this training is vital in that it relates to taking the life of civilians.

The department could definitely test the officers before and after to determine the level of learning achieved through scenario and role play situations. The department could issue pen and paper tests to determine their knowledge of the current laws regarding officer use of force, especially deadly force. They could also collect data from all officer related shootings in the department before and after such training to determine if any behaviors had changed. An evaluation of such training is vital in areas of employment that deal with citizens' constitutional rights.

Social science occupations, in general, deal with the product of people. Training in diversity, cultural differences, knowledge of the job in order to help those in need, personality traits, communication skills—all of these types of training could be evaluated by surveys of coworkers, supervisors, and, of course, persons assisted through the numerous offices that fall under social science occupations. Customer service entails much training in the area of people skills.

Training costs money and organizations want to see if the investment made is worth it. A cost/benefit evaluation compares financial costs against non-financial gains. The gain could be in improved working relationships, more satisfied employees, or a reduction in grievances. A cost-effectiveness valuation

compares financial costs with financial gains. Cost savings analysis and utility analysis are two approaches for determining the financial gains associated with training.

Thus, with social science occupations, most of the gain from training evaluations would be in non-financial terms. Perhaps the number of police officer shootings would decrease due to F.A.T.S. training scenarios, causing more peace between the police department and the communities. This could also create a greater trust of the police by citizens which could encourage them to contact the police more in the future to prevent and solve more crimes. This training could also result in fewer liability lawsuits against the police department, causing a decrease in resources needed for trial, attorneys, and potential damages to victims.

A utility analysis could consist of a self-evaluation of officers about their job performances as well as a citizen survey of attitudes towards the police department before and after training. Grievances filed by employees and citizens could decrease as a result of this training.

When the decision to evaluate training is made, it is important to be sure that the findings are valid. Factors affecting internal validity include the history of events surrounding the training, passage of time, training group dynamics, testing instrumentation, as well as several others. Factors affecting external validity include the selection of trainees who participated in the training, as well as changes in both training and evaluation techniques from group to group (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013).

Thus, perhaps an outside agency should be contacted and hired to complete the training evaluations. The public would be more apt to believe the findings of an outside, neutral evaluation than an in-house evaluation conducted by the department, especially if the relationship between the community and police department is not positive at the current time. Of course, not all training needs to be evaluated; only those areas of training in which the department identifies as necessary. There should be a plan of action in place in case the evaluation determines that there was a lower level of learning than appropriate for the organization, especially when dealing with social science occupations.

Reference

Blanchard, P. N., & Thacker, J. W. (2013). *Effective training: Systems, strategies, and practices* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Learning Activities (Nongraded)

Nongraded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.

Review the case analysis in the textbook on pages 90 and 132-133 (the WestCan case). Answer question #4 on page 345.