



Is your provider measuring the success of their training?

As the CIPD announce a new model of value and evaluation we ask what's really happening in the market place?

The CIPD have recently published a new paper 'The value of learning' which was undertaken for them by Portsmouth Business School. It provides some great insight into a wide ranging approach to learning value and as a welcome addition it once again raises the topic to the top of the pile. Yet at iManage our experience of the market place suggests very few training providers seem to be offering much by way of evaluation (other than the end of event happy form). We explore whether the measurement of learning and development is being taken seriously.

The report talks about the need for a wide ranging approach being required to assess learning value, involving three main areas:

1. Aligning learning processes and investments to organisational strategic priorities.

2. Using a range of methods to assess and evaluate the contribution to learning.

3. Establishing the most relevant approaches to assessing and reporting on the value of learning for the organisation.

In some ways none of these three should surprise us, it's not rocket science, yet the way in which the effectiveness of training is measured is seldom a priority to many. It's often very different when we are talking trainers and content.

Many organisations will be very concerned that the trainer fits, that they are the right person for the job, equally the course structure and content is frequently the focus of attention. These two elements of the intervention tend to receive most of the pre development effort, leaving the assessment discussion demoted to the bottom of the pile, if it occurs at all.

Learning and Development professionals need to start switching this around. We believe course effectiveness assessment should be the starting point of any training intervention development. Think about what this does; Suddenly the focus is on outcomes, we understand what success will look like, and how we know whether we've been successful. We will design everything focusing on the common goal of bringing about genuine return from the training budget being used, and there will be a direct correlation between the assessment process and the learning content.

Training that does not lead to a behavioural change is at best therapeutic, but most often a complete waste of budget. So when you are engaging your trainer, expect them to articulate how they will bring about a return for the investment that you are making. Expect them to have thought through mechanisms and processes for assessing and evaluating the contribution to learning. After all, they should be the experts at this. Watch out for training providers that want to focus all the attention on their wonderfully designed solution, but have to be prompted to talk about the any form of assessment.



Your learning and development budget needs to bring a return to your organisation, so learn to focus on specific outcomes. Test whether your trainers are more interested in the course design, than ensuring people change their practices. Expect them to have invested time and effort in creating effective assessment methods that you can use. Shift your focus to outcomes and ask what would constitute outstanding performance from the learning intervention. That's what really effective trainers are doing.

