TRANSFER OF TRAINING

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AGENDA

• Does training really transfer?
• Do our evaluation models serve us well?
• Moving on to better approaches
• The research
• The results
• What does it mean for practice/research?
DOES TRAINING REALLY TRANSFER?

90% of all training wasted
IS IT WORTH THE COST?

America spends $126bn annually on training!

Very little of it transfers to the job

Does not deliver much in terms of money/skills
MODELS OF EVALUATION

Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels Model

1 Reaction
2 Learning
3 Behaviour
4 Results
5 ROI

Phillips’ ROI Model
CRITICISMS OF EVALUATION

• Historically based
• Poorly applied
• Linkages are not demonstrated
• It’s not a model
• Managers don’t trust it
• Application of levels 3, 4, and 5, is expensive
• Does not deal with the BIG question

• What causes training to be effective?
DEFINITION OF TRANSFER

....the effective and continuing job application of the knowledge and skills gained in training...(Holton 1999)
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ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS

- Evaluation asked ‘what did we get?’
- Transfer asks ‘how did we get it?’ and …
- ‘How will we get more next time?’
QUESTION

What do you think are the factors which most affect whether learning is transferred back to the job for improved performance?
EXERCISE FOR GROUPS

What do you think are the factors which most affect whether learning is transferred back to the job for improved performance?

Working in groups for 10 minutes, please answer the question above. Come up with your TOP THREE factors.
In a similar way this research began by seeking practitioner opinion. What do the experts think?
PRACTITIONER OPINION RESEARCH

- Senior HRD practitioners, half day workshop
- Inventory - 103 items
- Wider group of 2000 HRD professionals
- Email invitation to participate
- Online survey
- Factor analysis
- 314 responses (15.7%)
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I have a lot of freedom in the work I do
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither Agree or Disagree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

2. I will have the time to put this learning into practice in my job
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither Agree or Disagree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

3. There was a free and useful exchange of information between participants on this programme
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither Agree or Disagree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
HRD DIRECTORS (IRELAND)

1. Trainer Effectiveness
2. Perceived Relevance
3. Job Design
4. Organizational Support for Learning
5. Motivation to Attend
6. Quality Focus
7. Training Event Climate

(Donovan & Darcy, 2011)
THE END OF THE STORY?

Since the practitioners have spoken, is there nothing more to say?
CRITICISMS OF TRANSFER RESEARCH

- Tangible measures not used to assess transfer
- Research overstates the relationships
- Self-reporting on transfer is flawed
- Duration of interventions was minimal
- Most work on transfer is based in the US

(Blume, 2010, Van Der Klink, 2005)
What tangible common measure could we choose to represent an outcome that would allow us to compare the effectiveness of different courses from different sectors of business?
THE TANGIBLE MEASURE

Return on Investment - ROI
WHY ROI AS A MEASURE?

• Convert impact of training into one consistent measure
• Compare the effectiveness of different training events
• Compare transfer of training across business sectors
• Simple conversion to money would not suffice
• Would disguise the cost of investment in the training etc.
• Rarely if ever done
ROI – THE FORMULA

Benefits of Program – Cost of Program

Cost of Program

\[ \times \frac{\text{Benefits of Program}}{\text{Cost of Program}} \times 100 \]
THE METHOD

- 12 participating organisations/training events
- Participant group of 310 employees
- 70 item questionnaire
- Likert Scale – 5 points, Strongly Agree...
- Voluntary, Confidential, Online completion
- Factor Analysis
- Partial Least Squares Path Modelling (SEM)
The research suggested seven factors that correlated to positive return on investment from the training programmes.
7. TRAINING CLIMATE

Participants work well together on the programme and there is a free and useful exchange of information between them
6. PERCEIVED RELEVANCE

Participant can see the relevance of this training for their job and can see how they are to use this learning on the job
5. SUPERVISOR EXPECTATIONS

The supervisor has a key role in deciding on this training
4. CAREER UTILITY

*Participant sees this course as an extra qualification and can see how this training will enhance their career*
Participant believes they will receive support and a pre and post brief from their manager; that their manager prepared them for this training; this training will be evaluated; they get feedback on how they apply learning.
2. TRAINER EFFECTIVENESS

*Trainer shows commitment to the goals of the training and is well prepared/ tries to relate the training content to participants’ job needs*
1. OPPORTUNITY TO USE

Participant believes they will have the opportunity, time, and resources to put this learning into practice.
WHAT ROI SUGGESTS

1. Opportunity to use
2. Trainer effectiveness
3. Learning transfer management
4. Career utility
5. Supervisor expectations
6. Perceived relevance
7. Training climate
## COMPARISON - ROI AND EXPERT OPINION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors from ROI</th>
<th>Factors from Experts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Opportunity to use</td>
<td>1. Trainer effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
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SUPPORTIVE OF PREVIOUS TRANSFER RESEARCH

1. Opportunity to use
2. Trainer effectiveness
3. Learning transfer management
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TRANSFER OF TRAINING

EXPECTANCY THEORY

To what degree do the findings fit expectancy theory?

TRAINING CLIMATE

The employee believes that effort will result in acceptable performance.

Performance

The employee believes that acceptable performance will produce the desired reward.

Reward

The employee values the reward.
WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR THIS RESEARCH?

• What are the implications for practice?

• What are the implications for future research?
IMPLICATIONS

• More research needed
  – Sector
  – Type of training,
  – Staff category
  – Tangible measures

• Partners sought
FURTHER CONTACT

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