

A HIGH-RESULTS SYSTEM FOR
DESIGN, DELIVERY, & EVALUATION

Training Effectiveness Handbook

LESTER T. SHAPIRO

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**A High-Results System for
Design, Delivery, and Evaluation**

Lester T. Shapiro, CFP

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To Herman Bass, my mentor,
who challenged me to defend my ideas
and supported me when
most of my attempts to teach *Guided Discovery* failed.

For Lesley J. Shapiro, my daughter,
so that someday, if you choose to,
you can help people learn new skills
that will help them achieve their objectives.

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Lester T. Shapiro

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Introduction

A. Training and Quality

Quality is on the mind of almost every business leader in America. Managers are trying to find new ways to respond to their customers and increase effectiveness in all parts of their organizations. The emphasis on quality, whether it focuses on Total Quality Management or continuous improvement or quality assurance, is related to the need to compete within the context of a global economy.

Training plays a key role in conveying the "quality" message. However, and this is an important distinction, the quality movement has not been associated with the quality of training. In a 1982 survey on the status of training evaluation, Brandenburg stated, "When I first conceived the idea for this study, I thought I would use the term 'Quality Assurance of Training' rather than Training Evaluation." He goes on to say that his colleagues in the business community discouraged him from using the *Quality Assurance* term because it could be considered jargon not generally accepted. (Brandenburg, 1982)

Brandenburg found that no universally accepted model of training evaluation existed. Quality is about judgment, measurement and accountability. Without adequate evaluation tools, quality and training cannot be linked.

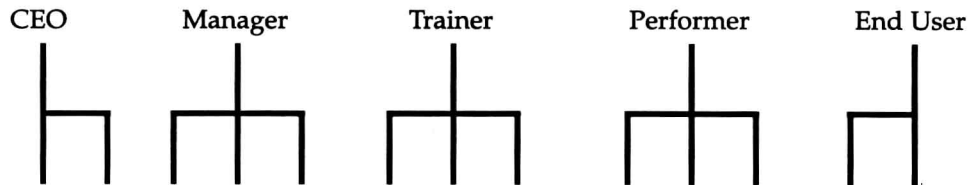
There is also an assumption that a quality initiative will permeate every part of the organization, including training. However, because of the difficulty associated with measurement, training has been immune from application of the processes used to achieve total quality elsewhere.

With today's worldwide competition, an organization must leverage every available resource to survive and prosper. The need for quality has never been greater. This includes the quality of the training the organization provides for itself or its customers.

The measure of a training program's quality is its effectiveness. Training is effective to the degree that it produces the desired behavior in the population being trained. In concise terms, total quality occurs when each participant is able to use the knowledge and skills taught in the program to bring about a desired result on the job.

B. Total Customer Satisfaction

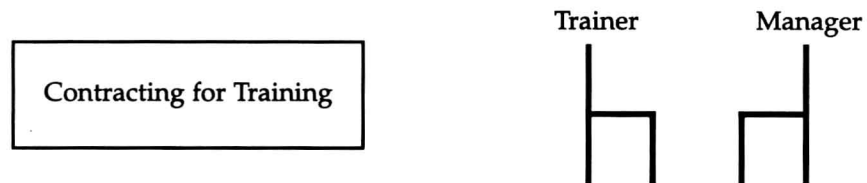
The quality movement is driven by total customer satisfaction. In a training transaction there are a number of customer relationships, each requiring satisfaction. These involve both internal and external customers. The following illustrations show these relationships.



Chairs facing back to back symbolize that an individual plays different roles in related transactions. For example, if the performer is a salesperson, he or she is accountable to the manager for selling the product and satisfying the customer (end user). In the transaction with the customer, the salesperson is responsible for bringing about a buying decision.

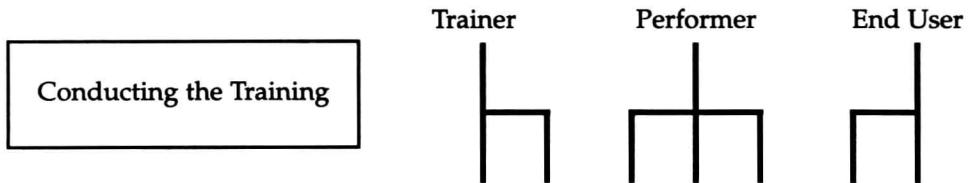


The end user is the manager's customer. The need for training is motivated by the need to satisfy the end user. In some cases, the performer may perceive the need for training and request it from the manager.



The manager is the trainer's customer. The manager contracts with the trainer to correct a discrepancy in one or more performer's knowledge and skill. While conducting the training, the trainer acts on behalf of the manager. Satisfaction occurs when the investment made in training brings about organizational

results and the conduct of the training supports the desired culture. Compensation for the trainer occurs in the form of a fee or a salary and in recognition for solving a problem.



The performer (student) is also the trainer's customer. Performers must feel that the training provided solutions to real-world problems that justified their time and effort. Total satisfaction is realized when they are effective in their transaction with the end user.

Total quality has been achieved when the training enables all performers to bring about the desired results on the job. When this occurs the investment made in training is justified and everybody wins: the end user, performer, manager, trainer and the organization.

C. Is Training Really an Investment?

Organizations in America spend in excess of 40 billion dollars a year on training. Are they getting the quality they deserve? Are they getting the maximum return on their investment?

An investment is an outlay of money usually for income or profit. We invest in stocks, bonds and real estate for the purpose of realizing a gain. We measure our success, as investors, by the amount of our gain. Investments which go down in value are considered a loss.

Training is effective to the degree that it enables each performer to produce results on the job using the knowledge and skills taught. When this occurs, the organization gets a return on its investment. If the performer continues to use the skills we can say that the investment has grown in value.

However, if the skills acquired in the training proves to be ineffective or the performer does not use them, the organization must look at the time and money spent as a loss. If the product of the training is only a certificate on a wall or a book gathering dust on a shelf, then the purchaser of training has lost on that particular investment.

Loss, in this instance, does not mean a total loss. For example, a share of stock purchased for \$40 that drops to \$20 still has value. Likewise, all training will have some value; at worst, it may convince the performer that there must be a better way to approach the issue under discussion.

If you, as a decision maker, approve an expenditure for training but cannot demonstrate the impact of the training on your organization's results, then you have made a questionable investment.

D. Have You Invested in Poor Quality Training?

Here is an informal survey. Answer each question by inserting the appropriate number from this rating scale:

3	Frequently
2	Occasionally
1	Seldom
0	Never

How often have you attended training where you:

- ☐ Felt your time was wasted by attending the program.
- ☐ Had a good time, were entertained, but can't remember what was taught.
- ☐ Knew more than the person conducting the training.
- ☐ Disagreed with what was being taught.
- ☐ Felt the instructor's explanation of the subject was inadequate.
- ☐ Were exposed to a large quantity of knowledge-based material but did not receive an adequate explanation or demonstration of how to put it into practice.
- ☐ Did not have adequate opportunities to practice the skill taught and receive feedback.
- ☐ Were not challenged.
- ☐ Were unable to challenge and explore the relevance and efficacy of the skills being taught.
- ☐ Learned about a skill for which you had no practical application.
- ☐ Learned a skill that seemed to work in the classroom but did not work on the job.
- ☐ **Attended a course, which appeared to meet your need, only to discover that it did not deliver the knowledge or skills needed for you to achieve your goals.**
- ☐ Were unable to use the skills taught with confidence or competence.
- ☐ Total Score.

A total score over 25 or a rating of 2 or 3 on the last two items suggests that you or your organization have invested in poor quality training.

E. What About the Quality of the Training You Deliver?

Let's look at the effectiveness of training from the developer's or instructor's viewpoint. Answer each question by inserting the appropriate number from this rating scale:

3	Frequently
2	Occasionally
1	Seldom
0	Never

How often have you experienced the following problems with the training you designed or conducted:

- ☐ Students were reluctant to be trained.
- ☐ Students felt their time could be better spent doing their job.
- ☐ You had difficulty getting people to participate in class discussions.
- ☐ You had difficulty controlling a discussion and reaching a focused conclusion.
- ☐ Students were reluctant to engage in role play activities.
- ☐ You ran out of time for role play and performance evaluation exercises.
- ☐ Students were reluctant to change their behavior.
- ☐ You frequently hear students say that their situations are different.
- ☐ Managers were reluctant to send their people to training.
- ☐ Skills being taught were not reinforced by the manager.
- ☐ Top management did not support the training effort.
- ☐ You were unable to determine the student's needs prior to training or during the early stages of the training.
- ☐ You had difficulty writing learning objectives.
- ☐ You had difficulty planning and organizing a training manual.
- ☐ You had difficulty replicating instructor performance. Instructors who facilitated the program depart from the training manual.
- ☐ You were unable to measure the effectiveness of the training.
- ☐ You were unable to link the training conducted to the results produced on the job.
- ☐ Students did not use the skills taught in the program on the job.
- ☐ Total Score

A total score over 25 or a rating of 2 or 3 on the last three items suggests that you are less than satisfied with the quality of the training you developed or conducted.

F. Questions for the Chief Executive Officer

Is your organization getting the maximum return from its investment in training?

If your answer is yes, and you have convincing evidence, then disregard this section. If you are not certain, then see if you, or anyone in your organization, can answer the following questions:

1. What are your organization's training standards?
2. How does your organization measure the effectiveness of existing training, new projects or programs purchases from outside vendors?
3. What process is used by decision makers to purchase sales and management training from an outside vendor?
4. What are training personnel in your organization held accountable for?
5. Can you demonstrate the impact of training on your organization's results?

If you cannot answer these questions, your organization may be wasting valuable time and money on ineffective or inappropriate training programs.

G. Mistakes Can Be Expensive

Every person who invests time and money for training is a consumer of training. This includes company executives, managers, developers, facilitators and students. Depending on your level of authority within an organization, that investment can be considerable. For example:

A CEO purchases a 5-day training program to train 500 managers to be more effective in their transactions with employees. Assuming a cost of \$500 per manager, \$250,000 will be paid to the vendor. 2500 worker days will be spent in the classroom, which, at an average salary of \$800 per week, represents a \$400,000 opportunity cost. Assuming no travel and expenses, the training investment is \$650,000.

If the training fails to bring about the desired skills, \$650,000 is essentially lost. Also, if the organization does not measure the change or link the skills to its production or sales results, then the prudence of the investment must be questioned.

H. What Types of Training Are Subject to Quality Problems?

Training related to skills that can be quantitatively measured are less subject to quality problems. A typing course is a good example. If 80 percent of the students