

# A Concept Note on Learning Effectiveness Evaluation

Evaluation of learning effectiveness is as critical a task as creation and implementation of learning strategies. The work of Donald Kirkpatrick (introduced in 1959) continues to be seminal in this regard. The model proposed four levels of evaluation, which has been explained with additional parameters added by Exult! Solutions below:



The Kirkpatrick Model applies in the context of evaluation of learning strategies that are already implemented. In our experience, sustained application of the model at various levels has brought about the following benefits to our clients:

- Credible data to change/tweak learning delivery
- Commitment on behalf of learners towards the action plan made after the intervention
- Positive pressure on learners to transfer learnings to the workplace
- Timely support to learners whenever there is a problem in application of learning
- Surfacing of environmental issues that block application to learning (such as lack of support from supervisors)
- Enhanced credibility of learning and development efforts due to sustained and meaningful engagement
- Cost-savings in the long-run since learning gets applied on the job and very often, shared by learners with colleagues and peers

## Return on Investment in Learning

It is important to note that not all learning interventions warrant Level 4 measures. There are learning areas that cannot be easily monetized due to nature of content or nature of work areas. In such cases, we can try to maximise the measurement of learning effectiveness but need to stop at a point where the measures become too subjective and involve a lot of assumptions.

We are in an era where 'ROI' or 'Level 5' is a buzzword. However, one must understand the huge logistical efforts required in these measures. There is a huge amount of data gathering and analytics involved and sustained follow ups with the training groups and control groups (which are, for practical reasons, difficult to maintain) take up a lot of time and resources. Also, measuring ROI entails making assumptions about changes in the external environment that impact business (such as political changes, attrition, competition, etc.) and finding a way to monetize them so as to be able to factor them in.

## Our Take

It is important that learning partners – internal or external – understand business and make a sincere effort to implement as many levels of the Kirkpatrick model as possible. However, given the high correlation between dynamic business environment, performance levels and subjectivity of human behaviour, the only way to really experience ROI is to stop training for year and observe the impact on performance. If you cannot afford to do that, continue your learning efforts and stay engaged with the business.

