

# Management Models



## Kirkpatrick's Evaluation of Training Model

Dr Donald Kirkpatrick's four-level model for training evaluation should be part of a broader process of training design and implementation into which the evaluative levels can be integrated. The four levels of the model are: Level 1: Reaction; Level 2: Learning; Level 3: Behaviour; and Level 4: Results. Each of these levels are described more fully in the boxes opposite.

Evaluation of training is often thought of as a complicated process, but Kirkpatrick's four levels set out simple stages that make the process easier to understand. Many organisations use the model, though some focus only on its first two levels, and this will reduce its effectiveness, since the third and fourth levels aim to assess transfer of training and impacts in the workplace.

Some writers suggest that the model should be extended with a fifth stage of establishing the ROI (return on investment) for training that takes place.

Establishing ROI is difficult, however, because of the need to identify and control for many variables in any organisational context.

**Level 1: Reaction**  
Measure participant's reaction to the training.  
Often done with feedback sheets at the end – sometimes described as 'happy sheets'.

**Level 2: Learning**  
Test or evaluate participant's retention of knowledge, skills, etc.  
Usually done through testing, questioning, demonstration or observation, but should be done during as well as at the end of training, so that comparisons can be made.

**Level 3: Behaviour**  
Assess changes in behaviour, skills, or attitudes that demonstrate the transfer of learning or knowledge into the workplace.  
Can be done through testing or observation at work, after training ends.

**Level 4: Results**  
Evaluation of organisational benefits in terms of impact on the business, or return on investment.  
Quantification of gains or establishing of outcomes that contribute to organisational objectives.

**How can this help me?** Kirkpatrick's model gives a frame of reference within which it is possible to validate training by showing its progress and outcomes in terms of increased knowledge or ability, together with its benefit and impact within the organisation.

**Find out more** - Read *Evaluating training programs: the four levels* by Donald L. Kirkpatrick.