

How to guide:

How to assess whether training has led to improved performance:

Run a post-training evaluation

What is the J4A ‘How to’ series?

The guide is part of a series of products developed by J4A to communicate lessons learned from projects and pilots, to provide stakeholders with guidance on how to adapt and replicate the initiative in their own context.

Who is this ‘How to’ guide for?

Influencers and decision makers in the justice sector (police, prisons, judiciary and civil society).

Reference tools

Accompanying reference tools are available at www.j4a-nigeria.org or by request from info@j4a-nigeria.org

The problem

- Organising training is a common activity to help address skills gaps and improve performance of staff and officers of organisations providing justice-related services.
- Training is costly in terms of both money and time, especially as trainees are away from their 'normal duties' for the duration of the training.
- It is essential that training is both well delivered and relevant to the participant's day-to-day duties, and more importantly leads to a tangible change or improvement in how he/she goes about carrying out duties.
- It is necessary to understand whether the skills and knowledge provided during training are being applied in practice when the trainees are back at work, and if not, why not.

Background

Each of us attends a wide range of training and other events during the course of our professional life. Some training is essential for us to be able to do our jobs effectively as it teaches us skills without which we could not function (e.g. investigation, legal drafting, prosecution etc.) Other training teaches us how to improve the way we carry out our duties (e.g. managing people, communicating and influencing, leadership). Whilst these latter skills are often not essential to us in carrying out our duties, if they are effectively applied they can make a significant difference to performance.

Because of the importance of training to individuals and organisations it is critical to ensure that all training events are:

- Well designed and comprehensively cover the subject matter, both theory and practice.
- Include elements that enable understanding of the theories or concepts through case studies and practical exercises.
- Are delivered by trainers that are well versed in the subject matter and ideally have had real experience of the techniques/skills they are teaching.

After the training, it is important that:

- Trainees are **given the chance to use the skills** they have acquired when they are back at work.
- Trainees **choose to apply the skills** they have acquired when they are back at work.
- **Lessons are learned about the effectiveness and the relevance** of the training and the methods of training delivery to inform the approach to future events.

What you can do

- Test trainees on their learning and seek feedback from participants on the perceived value of the training events at the end of the event.
- Assess the extent to which the trainees have been able to put their newly acquired skills into practice some time after the training event.

Methods for carrying out post training evaluation

1. End of training assessments

End of course tests and feedback forms on the final day of the training course are common and have a certain value. Tests help assess how much the course participants have understood and feedback is the most useful way to assess the manner of delivery of the training and the organisational aspects of the training (e.g. venue, infrastructure, feeding).

However, these can only go so far in assessing the value of the training as they do not measure the extent to which trainees apply the training in practice at work.

2. Post training evaluation

This is the most effective way of evaluating training events. It can be done in two ways, usually three to six months after the training.

- **Visits by evaluators** (possibly the trainers) to the trainee's workplace to ask questions and view evidence of the how the training has been put into practice. This can include interviews with trainees, managers and other persons that the trainees come into contact with in carrying out duties.
- **Written trainees questionnaires** completed by trainees, focusing on the application of skills and learning since the event. The questionnaire typically covers the following:
 1. The trainees' view of the overall value of the training, including whether and how it has enhanced their performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, etc.

2. The extent to which they have been able to make use of skills and knowledge and how much support they have received from managers and others to do so.
3. Specific questions tailored to testing retention of knowledge and its application in practice. For example, in three months we could ask you whether the J4A post training evaluation tool has been used by you, how many times, and what challenges you faced in its application.

Whilst the usual practice is to ask trainees to complete the post-training evaluation questionnaire, it can also be sent to managers to complete in relation to whether the trainees that work under them have applied the skills.

Analysis of evaluation questionnaires

Once the questionnaires have been completed and collected, the information gathered through them is analysed to **identify the extent of use** of the skills taught and what specific issues have been identified that may have either prevented the skills being used; or the effectiveness of their application.

Depending on the type of questions asked, the analysis can be:

- **Quantitative:** identifies the number/proportion of participants that answered a question positively or negatively or gave a specific response to a question, and/or;
- **Qualitative:** analyses answers and comments in order to identify trends and themes.
- For example, a questionnaire might identify that 30 per cent of participants have not been able to put any of the training into practice (quantitative analysis). Of these participants, more than half said it was because their manager did not support them to put it into practice for various reasons also commented on and analysed (qualitative analysis).

The analysis is usually captured in a report that draws conclusions in two main areas:

- **The impact of the training on the trainee and their organisation:** including whether any additional support is necessary to enable the full use/benefit of the skills taught (e.g. mentoring, provision of additional resources, support of manager).
- **The lessons for the training organisation:** including whether the training modules, delivery method, handouts, etc. need to be adjusted for future training events to improve the relevance and application of the skills once trainees are back at work.

Post training evaluation case study

Evaluation of investigation training delivered to the police

Setting the scene

1. **The JSRT** has identified weaknesses in police investigations as a major cause of delay in justice delivery. The team decided to support the police by organising training for police investigators.
2. A project plan was prepared and implemented including a training needs analysis, identification of trainers, preparation of materials and selection of trainees.
3. A two-week training course in investigative techniques was delivered to 50 investigative police officers from a number of divisions. During the training the participants were provided with a comprehensive investigation manual to take away and use as a reference document.

End of training examination

On the last day of the training, the participants were given a test to measure their recall of the skills taught during the course. 42 of the 50 IPOs took the test.

The results of the test showed that on average the participant answered 71 per cent of the questions correctly.

Feedback on the training

At the end of the training, each participant was given a feedback form. 47 forms were returned. The answers were analysed and showed that 94 per cent of the trainees thought the course was beneficial to them. 85 per cent said they would put a large proportion of the skills they had been taught to use when they returned to their normal duties.

All of the trainees said that the training should be repeated in the future. There was also feedback provided on the trainers, the venue and the administrative arrangements for the training.

Post-training evaluation

Four months after the completion of the training, the JSRT carried out two post-training evaluation exercises.

Trainee evaluation: each trainee was sent a post training evaluation questionnaire which they were asked to complete confidentially. They were asked general and specific questions about the application of training skills since they returned to their investigation duties. 21 completed questionnaires were received.

- 71 per cent said the training had been beneficial, quoting examples of how it had made a difference to their work. A large proportion also said they were now more efficient in how they do their work.
- In relation to the specific questions, 43 per cent said they had used the problem solving skills and gave examples of murder and drugs investigations where they had used the techniques.
- 71 per cent said they use the scenes of crime management techniques when dealing with crimes.
- 24 per cent said they had used the interviewing methodology taught on the course. The reason four people gave for not using it was that the 'lead' interviewer did not know the system.
- The JSRT analysed the results and draw conclusions on the value of the training. It was clear it had been useful but the application of the skills was not as wide as had been hoped.

Manager follow up evaluation: The JSRT also met with DPOs and officers in charge responsible for managing some of the trained officers.

- Managers were broadly supportive but were reluctant to allow officers to use techniques they were not familiar with themselves. They also challenged whether things like the interviewing methodology would actually work.
- The learning from the evaluation enabled the training content to be adjusted and steps taken to train managers as well as IPOs the next time the training was delivered.

Contact

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