

**GURU
GUIDE**
with
Vidusha and Anton

in conversation with
Andrew Stotters

10

**MAKING THE MOST OF
TRAINING INTERVENTIONS**

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO THE GURU GUIDE

The 'Guru Guide' is an attempt to refine decades of hard-earned expertise into succinct, simple and practical advice.

It is NOT meant to be an exhaustive exploration of a topic: rather, pointed areas of focus which can only be discerned by a practitioner. It is not meant to be a generic set of advice: it is advice from battle-hardened professionals who have had a lifetime of experience and proven track records.

The Guru Guide has a pre determined format:

- ✓ It aims to understand a topic/ area of focus
- ✓ It aims to give tools to help you navigate the area
- ✓ It also gives contexts and examples: so that you can customize it to suit YOU

Exploratory, intimate and insightful, the Guru Guide aims to bring to you a wealth of expertise which can only be possible through veterans whose varied and in-depth experiences offer unparalleled insights.

The brevity and simplicity is by choice, and design. Focused on Executives and Managers who want to get quick tips and techniques, who are eager to improve their craft

and trade : the Guru Guide aims to offer 'little nuggets' of advice and importantly, simple tools, which will enable practitioners to up their game and benefit from expertise which may be hard to find in a hurry.

INTRODUCING



**VIDUSHA
NATHAVITHARANA**

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Luminary Learning and the organization's founder. His areas of expertise are with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



**ANTON
THAYALAN**

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands-on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management, and currently works as the Chief Evangelist of Luminary Learning and the Transformation Therapist of High5 Consultancy. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there: and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional clients.



INTRODUCING ANDREW STOTTERS

We met Andrew through one of our webinars : and we loved his insights so much that we asked him to come and offer our trainers a training - sharing his insights on what a 'client' would expect from training partners : this is what inspired the book.

Currently working with Etihad Aviation Group, as their Vice President for Learning and Development, Andrew takes an absolutely strategic and 'no nonsense' approach to training, which we love.

Understanding that training is not dependent on the presentation skills of a trainer, while appreciating that training

alone never really achieves results, Andrew works with the end in mind - the results and behavioural changes that are expected after training.... Andrew's entire career has been formed around building frameworks in order to ensure the training conducted is useful, effective, and results oriented : something he has a huge reputation for.

Andrew's vast experience - cutting across different industries and countries - enables him to understand the common threads across regions, cultures, industries and types of businesses : and is able to seamlessly bring in the best practices which are contextualised to suit the organisation he works with. His ability to masterfully weave programs to address identified issues has won him great accolade.

WHY IS TRAINING SO IMPORTANT ?



Well : for one simple reason : we ALL need to improve.

Unless we actually train people - how will they improve ? How will they grow ? How will they be exposed to different ways of doing things ? Different ways of perceiving things ? Honestly, training is critical - not just to boost current levels of performance and behaviour : but also to ensure that individuals are groomed to take over more demanding roles and also, take on more senior positions.... Just because a person is doing a fantastic job at present does NOT mean they are READY to take on the next role.

I think it is UNFAIR and IRRESPONSIBLE to promote a person without them having being trained : because you are taking a wild chance here. Imagine the individual failing in the new role because of a lack of training and exposure - the individual fails, the organisation fails : it demotivates every else around them.... So, it is OUR responsibility to ensure the individuals are trained - and trained right !

BUT WHY DOESN'T TRAINING ACTUALLY CHANGE PEOPLE ?

The issue is this...

Training needs to be thought through. Planned Out. And most importantly, there must be a PROCESS and a DESIGN around not only the program - but also what happens BEFORE and AFTER the programs.

It is not the trainer's fault - they merely come, deliver the program and go : that is the scope we give them - but we as HRD professionals need to ensure that the processes are robust so that we are able to gain the most out of the training done...

Training ALONE is NEVER enough. We need to create LEARNING spaces - and also LEARNING organisations - but that is a whole different topic - and I don't want to elaborate on it simply because we are solely focusing on training, here in this book. But, it NEEDS to be said that even if you run a 1000 training programs - without the right FRAMEWORKS in place, none of them will give you the impact you want. Sure - a few people may pick up something - but that is NOT the intent isn't it ?



IS TRAINING OVERRATED THEN ?



Training - the way most organisations do it - is indeed overrated.

It IS a fad isn't it : and too many people look at training as a 'reward' and think it is part of the Rewards and Recognition scheme - and that's where the fundamental error takes place. See - sending a person to a five-star hotel and having a one day program is indeed a nice gesture - but that ISN'T training as I see it. I don't rely on 'one-off' sessions - I always make sure programs - by design - are interlinked - and also, importantly, linked to other learning interventions. A 'one-off' is just a feel good factor - doesn't deliver learning outcomes - but you know this already isn't it ?

Training done RIGHT - now THAT is where the REAL benefits come in. THAT is NEVER overrated - and the research on this clearly clearly shows that if training is done right, the overall organisational performance SOARS - and also, very importantly, it builds the kind of culture that everyone thrives in.

Training done right isn't a cost : it is ALWAYS an investment...

STEP 1 : UNDERSTAND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ORGANISATION

We generally start with doing a TNA - which is usually based on individual needs. This is a HUGE mistake. You need to FIRST identify what the organisation wants to do : and where it wants to go : and then ask yourself - WHAT KIND OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES are required to deliver on that goal/objective/vision.

Start here - always - everything else is secondary. Individual needs need to be PEGGED to THIS - and not just arbitrarily identifying needs based on what a line manager says or an individual identifies for themselves. Remember - you need to look at both technical AND 'soft skills' - one without the other is meaningless.

Think about it this way : WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE OUT OF TRAINING ? Ultimately, organisational performance is the apex objective isn't it ? Unless this alignment takes place, you will not be able to link people and their performance to something tangible and common. So, understand the organisations requirements - and study it deeply - and cull out the skills and competencies required to achieve that...





TOOL 1 : COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

- » Many assume a Competency Framework is a generic set of skills and competencies we 'cut and paste' from 'best practices.' (why waste time over it?)

See - whichever way you look at it, even though skills and competencies needed to succeed are generic - which COMBINATION of them is needed for YOUR ORGANISATION at THIS MOMENT in time - now, THAT is a rather specific thing. So, unless you really do your research, and arrive at it specifically, then, chances are you will not be going anywhere with it.

Think of this way : you want to be an opera singer : but you think all singing is the same - and go to a raghadhari oriental music teacher to learn how to sing better. True - your singing will improve - but NOT TOWARDS the dream you want to have isn't it ?

So, if you are undertaking to have a competency framework - which we think is absolutely essential BEFORE you undertake ANY training - then, you owe it to your organisation to do it right - and do it to be reflective of YOUR requirements...

Developing a Competency Framework

Linking Company Objectives and Personal Performance

You're probably familiar with the phrase "what gets measured gets done." Defining and measuring effectiveness - especially the performance of workers - is a critical part of your job as a manager.

The question is: how do you define the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that workers need to perform their roles effectively? How do you know they're qualified for the job? In other words, how do you know what to measure?

Some people think formal education is a reliable measure. Others believe more in on-the-job training and years of experience. Others might argue that personal characteristics hold the key to effective work behavior.

All of these are important, but none seems sufficient to describe an ideal set of behaviors and traits needed for any particular role. Nor do they guarantee that individuals will perform to the standards and levels required by the organization.

A more complete way of approaching this is to link individual performance to the goals of the business. To do this, many companies use "competencies." These are the integrated knowledge, skills, judgment, and attributes that people need to perform a job effectively. By having a defined set of competencies for each role in your business, it shows workers the kind of behaviors the organization values, and which it requires to help achieve its objectives. Not only can your team members work more effectively and achieve their potential, but there are many business benefits to



Objectives should align across the organization.

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MORE ABOUT HOW TO
COME UP WITH A
COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK
FOR YOUR COMPANY.

STEP 2 : IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING NEEDS

Once you have done up a competency framework, you will need to assess the competency of the employees against the competencies identified as important for their role. There are several ways of doing this :

- » Allow each person to do a self-assessment
- » Allow their line managers to assess them
- » Conduct a 360 review of them
- » Assessment Centres

We recommend allowing self-assessments to noncritical lower level positions, line manager reviews for midlevel junior positions and 360s for you middle management and above positions. Though 360s will be ideal, we think it will be utterly impractical for larger organisations. Assessment Centres are time consuming and costly affairs - so, limit them to identified top talent.

Whichever method you use what is important is that there is a clear appreciation for what the gaps in competencies are at individual level - so that you can start the development process.



TOOL 2 : TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

» The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is a composite of all the training you need to do in order to ensure the required level of competency is reached. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is what an individual has to undertake to bridge the skill or competency gap to reach their 'expected' skill or competency level.

One does not necessarily flow into the other. Apart from what is identified in the TNA, IDPs will certainly have coaching, mentoring, exposure visits and other interventions as well. However, we feel it is best if you put ANY development intervention you identify, to upgrade skills and competencies of the employees into one composite TNA which will help you monitor it and review progress better : not to mention having a central calendar for all development activities.

Oftentimes, not all the aspects identified in the TNA can be done/achieved during a financial year - given obvious budgetary and time-related constraints. So, once a TNA is done, a certain level of prioritization will need to be done - and here too - your North Point should be the Competency Framework and WHICH competencies the Seniors feel are CRITICAL to be improved in order to achieve the results one expects to achieve as an organisation. NEVER make budgets the sole criteria to choose which programs get the priority - make budgets count for those competencies deemed critical.

The screenshot shows a document titled "Needs Analysis: How to determine training needs" from HR.Survey.com. It includes a "Chapter Highlights" section with four points: 1. Types of Needs Analyses, 2. Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, 3. Tools, and 4. Checklist for evaluating an assessment. The "Introduction" section explains that in a work environment, employees need to be skilled in performing complex tasks. It defines a successful training needs analysis as identifying those who need training and what kind of training is needed. The "Types of Needs Analyses" section lists four types: Organizational Analysis, Human Resource Analysis, Performance Analysis, and Training Feasibility Analysis.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO DO A TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

STEP 3 : DESIGNING PROGRAMS

Far too many times, once a TNA is done, organisations call in for bid on the areas listed for the TNA. This too is a BIG mistake. BEFORE you call in trainers for a briefing, and making them the people who design programs for you, understand a few realities :

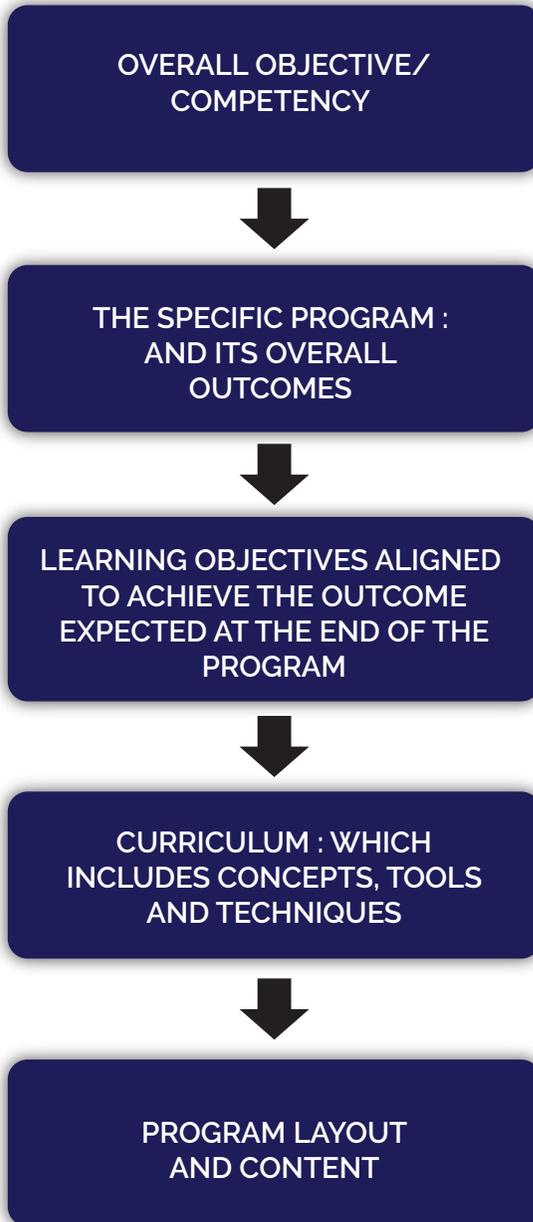
- » YOU need to OWN the program - as such, YOU need to give the learning outcomes
- » You also need to give trainers the 'overall objectives' the program needs to achieve
- » You need to be PART OF THE DESIGN process of a program, and, critically,
- » You need to ensure different programs don't contradict each other - the overall linkages between programs is really YOUR responsibility as a head of HR/HRD

So, don't rush into doing training no sooner the TNA is done - there IS a step that most miss in designing the programs - and the 'building blocks' the programs fit into in the overall training framework. Remember, you should NEVER have mixed messages and contradictory tools being taught. For example, you can't teach collective leadership only at junior executive levels and situational leadership only at mid management and senior levels : there is obviously going to be confusion about WHAT they should ACTUALLY do.

So, designing programs isn't just about going through the training material the trainers provide - it is about having a framework of what you want achieved 'by design' BEFORE a single training program is conceptualized.

TOOL 3 : TRAINING CURRICULUMS AND LINKING TO LEARNING OBJECTIVES

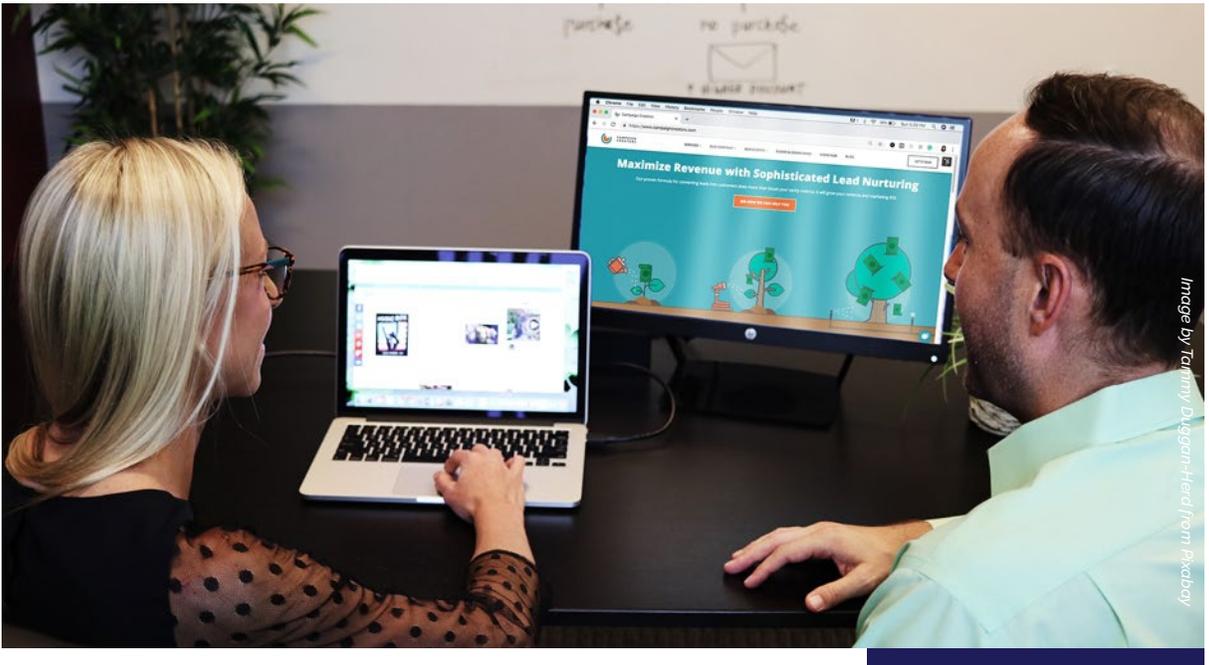
CHECK : WILL THIS CURRICULUM HELP ACHIEVE THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE SET



Designing a Training Curriculum and linking it to Learning Outcomes and overall Objectives isn't an easy thing : and requires focused attention. This framework is almost never used when designing training programs - rather all that comes up is a set of generic slides - mostly with generic concepts and very little in the form of tools, contexts and also, limited to a lecture-type presentation and a few activities which hardly connect to the topic at hand...

So, use this tool to ensure your training programs are actually properly aligned - and actually delivers VALUE. Remember also that this is what YOU do as a HRD practitioner : it is only the program layout and content that the trainer IDEALLY should do. This way YOU own the program - after all - shouldn't you ?

STEP 4 : CHOOSING TRAINING PARTNERS



Once you have built up the training frameworks and checked all the required designs for programs done up, comes the step where you select your training partners.

Choosing a training 'partner' rather than a 'trainer' is an important distinction to make. Training Partner is someone whom you will have a long term relationship with : and a 'trainer' is someone who 'trains' - and that's about it. Trainers don't necessarily become training partners - and not all of them need to be either. You as an organisation have a multitude of different training needs - and some may well be filled by a 'trainer' : however, remember, IF you want training that is actually custom done JUST FOR YOU - and also, continuously tweaked and improved on annually - then, you really DO need a partner...

See : the transactional approach doesn't bring the best out of anybody. Be fair on trainers too - why would they want to spend all that time customising programs, spending days of research and also, going through the hassle of really gaining an appreciation for your company and its culture just to run one or two days of training ? Doesn't make sense, does it ?

TOOL 4 : 5 FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS TO ASK IN ORDER TO ASSESS TRAINERS

HAVE YOU WORKED AT THIS CAPACITY ?

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A TRAINER WHO CAN ACTUALLY RELATE TO THE CONTEXTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAVING WORKED IN THE SAME LEVELS BECOMES A HUGE PLUS. IT ALSO HELPS BUILD CREDIBILITY WITH THE AUDIENCE

WHAT ARE YOUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS ?

GENERALLY, IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO HAS VARIED INTERESTS AND CAN TRANSFER 'MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE' INTO OTHER AREAS - THE CONTENT THEY BRING TO THE TABLE IS RICHER THAN SIMPLY LINEAR PROGRESSION AND HAVING DONE ONLY ONE OR TWO ASPECTS - UNLESS OF COURSE YOU ARE LOOKING FOR PURELY TECHNICAL TRAINING

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE LEARNING OUTCOMES ?

THIS QUESTION WILL HELP YOU ASSESS THE DEPTH OF THE TRAINER : AND UNDERSTAND IF THE TRAINER HAS THE TOOLKITS AND DESIGN KITS TO BE ABLE TO OFFER YOU SOMETHING TRULY EXCEPTIONAL AS A PROGRAM

WHY DO YOU USE THESE/ PROPOSED TOOLS

WHEN THE 3RD QUESTION IS ASKED AND THE TOOLS/TECHNIQUES AND DESIGN ELEMENTS ARE DISCUSSED, ASK WHY THOSE WERE CHOSEN. THIS WILL ENABLE YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE LEVEL OF THINKING THE TRAINER HAS : AND ALSO, IF THEY ARE ABLE TO CHOOSE FROM A VARIED TOOL KIT - OR WHETHER WHAT IS PROPOSED IS ALL THEY HAVE !

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE OUTCOMES OF PREVIOUS PROGRAMS

WHEN THE 3RD QUESTION IS ASKED AND THE TOOLS/TECHNIQUES AND DESIGN ELEMENTS ARE DISCUSSED, ASK WHY THOSE WERE CHOSEN. THIS WILL ENABLE YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE LEVEL OF THINKING THE TRAINER HAS : AND ALSO, IF THEY ARE ABLE TO CHOOSE FROM A VARIED TOOL KIT - OR WHETHER WHAT IS PROPOSED IS ALL THEY HAVE !

NOTICE THAT I HAVEN'T SPOKEN OF QUALIFICATIONS. IT'S GOOD TO BE QUALIFIED : AND ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL - IT WILL BE A PLUS : THE THE 5 AREAS ABOVE ARE FAR FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN A QUALIFICATION ON PAPER

STEP 5 : EXECUTING TRAINING AND MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

The final step, of course, is about conducting training - and the critical part of assessing effectiveness.

Please don't make assessing training effectiveness laborious and painful for participants and trainers alike : and understand what type of measurement to use for WHICH type of program is important. It really is SILLY to ask for a 3 page feedback form from participants after a half day training program, and ask the trainer 'What ROI you can offer' after a one day program ? Get real : and be sensible - and please - don't disrepute your vocation by asking these type of questions because it shows very clearly that you have no clue what you are talking about !

So, firstly, understand what type of programs are being run, and what type of assessments are requirement. Remember the 'learning objectives' - and the 'overall objective' - well, your assessments must ideally assess THIS - and nothing else. So, 'feedback' is only good as a quick litmus test : so, don't think that 'good feedback' equals a 'good program' and NEVER use this to be the only (or even the main/key) test to assess trainers. Just like your teachers whom you hated who somehow managed to get you through your exams - and the teachers you may have LOVED but you flunked because they didn't teach you right (yep - it certainly helps if you love them, and they also teach you right - which is the very point we are trying to make here !) If you have to choose between 'likability' and 'effectiveness' you will need to make a conscious choice about where you put your focus on.

Remember - what gets measured gets done - and if your measurements are wrong, all the effort you put into training is also wasted. So, if you measure 'feedback' all the trainers will do is become entertainers and make sure their ratings go up - can't blame them can you ? So, make sure you look at 'outcomes' and not 'feedback' as your measurement.

Can't really measure outcomes ? Well that's not true. You can ALWAYS measure outcomes - you just need to get the right tool kit for it...

TOOL 5 : TRAINING MEASUREMENT HIERARCHY

Possibly the most widely used training measurement hierarchy is Kirkpatrick's model. Building toolkits around each level of important for you to have a robust assessment methodology.

Ultimately, this is what you want to happen : but it can be tricky : but genuinely, enough organisations ensure this is measured : and finally ROI measured too !

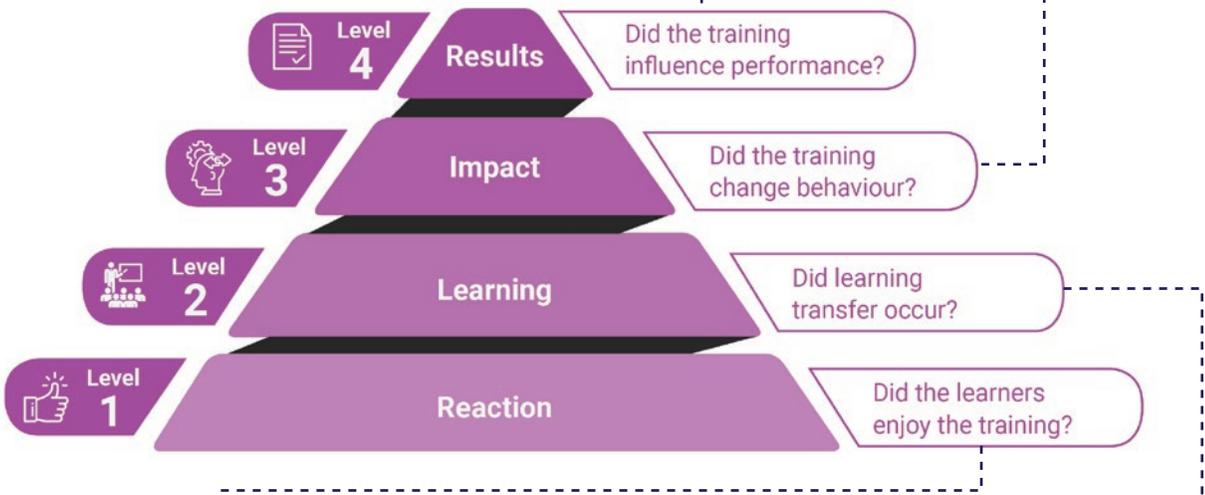
A. Performance improvements - directly linked to particular skill improvements
 B. Projects done to increase organisational effectiveness

Are the two easiest ways to measure this : but there are also extremely focused methods of assessing ROI after training using extremely focused AI type tools - which you can invest in if required

Now THIS is what most soft skills programs OUGHT to do... So :

A. Self Reflections - and a presentation of it
 B. On going observations and feedback from line managers and
 C. A 360 before and after

Are some of the tools you can use to ensure this is measured.



Do this as a standard for all programs. It certainly helps if the program was enjoyable - but that is NOT the primary focus. So, a simply 4-5 questions will do here. Don't bother with lengthy feedback !

Ensuring LEARNING happened is far more important than having a really awesome program. So:

A. Have a simple MCQ type question paper to see if the key knowledge areas were understood

B. Have a small skill test to assess if skills imparted were learnt right

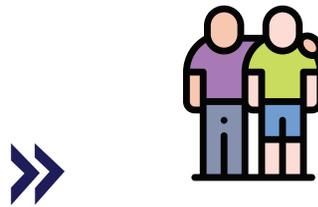
C. Ask for a small presentation for participants to talk about what they can do with the learning at work

A FEW TIPS



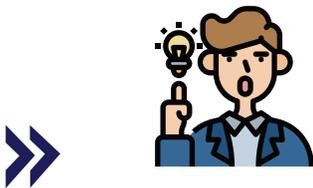
Work hard

don't leave anything on the pitch. Only you know if that's true. The harder I practice, the luckier I get. Be the judge of your efforts and don't cheat Own it!



Understand Others

Understand what people/guests/business need from you and make sure they get it. Seek to understand before you seek to be understood.



Minimal Viable Product (MVP)

Don't delay getting your product or service to market and actively seek feedback and then develop your idea quickly. Ideas grow, they are never perfect



Be Authentic

Be you! Have faith in what you, and your values are. If you are working on numbers 1, 2 and 3 above this will come naturally. Don't be tempted to compromise - Compromise is lose-lose. Instead think about how you can collaborate with others - Win - Win!

ANDREW STOTTTERS



**DIGNITY OF WORK :
WILL IT EVER ARRIVE HERE?**

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