

## No Train, No Gain

The ROI of Training, by Paul Stewart, Chairman IRSMarketing

At IRS, we're obsessed with measurement.

Following the maxim 'You are what you Measure', we apply metrics ruthlessly to our client work generating sales pipeline. If we can't measure the value of a client sales opportunity, we won't count it in the campaign ROI stats. Our Campaign Delivery Managers spend many hours totting up hours and outputs, team and personal performance and, most of all, campaign results.

Training of our people comes in all shapes. From management, project and tech training to communications, social media and telemarketing training, there is a wide topic range. IF you don't yet have formal training metrics, start with something easy to measure like basic job performance metrics, then expand your coverage. For now, let's share what training measurement should be about and why we should spend our valuable time on it. And then commit to action.

First, let's recap on the importance of training with a word from Lionel Messi, the world's best footballer. "I'm lucky to be part of a team who help to make me look good, and they deserve as much of the credit for my success as I do for the hard work we have all put in on the training ground".

That about sums up the importance of Team and Training in one sentence, a killer combination. It's that ethos we strive to create at IRS. In our business, like many other service companies, the contribution of our people is not just important, it is ALL. So, why would we NOT invest in increasing their knowledge, skills and self-



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confidence, helping them to become, yes, more effective at their jobs, but more important, to grow and learn as individuals?

And the best thing is: as well as the higher goals of personal self-improvement, good training delivers better team performance, job satisfaction and client happiness.

It's in the hard tack of job stats that training can most easily be measured. So, here are some tips on how to measure the real ROI of training more effectively, based on our 30+ years of experience, learning from our failures and successes alike.

Post-training feedback forms are one thing but, according to recent research

Learner Name:		Title of Course / Module / Training Activity	
Q.1 Did the training meet your learning objectives?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comment:			
Q.2 How do you intend to apply what you learned?			
Comment:			
Q.3 Was the programme / module delivered clearly?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comment:			
Q.4 Was the aim of the programme / module explained?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comment:			
Q.5 Was the training room suitable to the training programme / module?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comment:			

from McKinsey, **50% of organisations don't bother to keep track of participants' feedback** about learning programs. Consider that... half the time, no one looks at these results again. Feedback forms also don't measure on-the-job effectiveness of each training module. There's a crying need to be more holistic and, dare I say, strategic about it...

## 1. Start asking questions well before the training starts

Planning training involves someone from the business to guide the content, necessary but not enough on its own. A great Training Manager should involve the learners themselves in this process. Research is very clear on this...**adult learners do not learn without knowing what's in it for themselves** (Malcolm Knowles, Adult Learning Theory), so we'd best make sure they get what they want out of a training programme.

This initial survey is your chance to begin capturing not just their thoughts, but their hearts and minds. Use it to acknowledge their motivations and expectations, and then incorporate those into your sessions.

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Here are some example questions for telemarketing training focused on acquiring new business:

- What would most help you to qualify 20% more opportunities next week?
- What challenges did you face last week in agreeing calls to action?
- When you think about the type of performer you want to be, what qualities and skills come to mind?
- When you think about your most successful results, what makes the difference?

Take the answers to those questions and make them part of the intro to your training, share a graph of the responses and highlight the common themes. Throughout the training, point out where the training content is speaking to these themes.

## 2. Measure what participants DO, not just what they say

People say a lot of things. We say we exercise 3 times a week, are patient with our children, and that we are fully engaged in each training session. Yet, according to research, we do not and were not and are not.

So, measure the learner's demonstrated engagement, test the learning. You can make it a friendly competition or use a set of "what if" scenarios that the group discusses. This not only tests their knowledge but improves it through the magic of group learning.

In this way, you get to see who is engaged, not who says they were engaged. And how much relative value each session has generated.



## 3. When you ask direct questions in the training, ask the right ones

Stop asking about the meeting room, the toilet facilities and whether they enjoyed the speaker. Those can be important but are not what the training is about.

To get to the heart, include some deeper learning questions into your sessions. Such as...

### 1. Scenarios.

Present a scenario and ask for suggestions from the group on what to do next.

### 2. Best Answer.

Pose a multiple-choice question where several of the options are technically correct. Ask participants for the best answer amongst the correct ones, and then facilitate a debate about why they chose as they did. This promotes discussion and active thinking, not temporary memorisation.

### 3. Peer Review.

Have participants construct a worked example, perhaps the text of an email campaign. Put it up on display and then have the group make suggestions for improvement.

## 4. Get a commitment

At the end of the session, ask learners to make a commitment. Ask them to do this



before they leave the room.

What action will they commit to doing? What tactical change will they institute when they go back to their desk? Research suggests that this simple act of committing, particularly if done in front of a group, has an impact on behaviour.

## 5. Extend the session into their day jobs

The deep learning that matters is the one that happens after the training. Follow up. But do so in a way that is personalised and tailored to their experience. At IRS, we call it **One-to-One Coaching** and it's the most effective way to cement the learning, modify behavior and start to reap the rewards for the whole team. And, in essence, it's the only way to know what needs to be reinforced and practiced over time. And the personal interaction presents opportunities for motivation and building self-confidence.

It's on-the-job that training ROI is measured most effectively.

**In number terms**, the productivity of a motivated, confident and skilled team member can be twice or three times that of an untrained demotivated person. It's where the individual and the team interact to create that positive working environment where no challenge seems impossible, where everybody wins.

**In personal terms**, the satisfaction of seeing the personal development of a well-trained and confident person operate at the highest level, gain high job satisfaction and move up and onwards is second to none.

It starts and continues with Training.

### **About IRSMarketing**

Run by Marketing professionals for Marketing professionals, IRS delivers outstanding new business marketing results every day for the global tech industry. Using real-world digital, social, telemarketing and data expertise backed by robust processes, IRS are truly The Pipeline Generators.