

Training Evaluation Beyond Satisfaction Surveys

A quick checklist that shows what each evaluation level tells you and how to measure it.

Quick use

1. Name your role (owner, instructional designer, presenter, sponsor, or stakeholder).
2. Write one sentence: “This course is successful if _____.”
3. Choose one Level 2, one Level 3, and one Level 4 measure that you can actually gather.

The 4 levels at a glance

Level	What it tells you	What counts as evidence	Methods for measuring	Most common mistake
Level 1: Reaction (Did they like it?)	<i>Individual</i> learners’ experience of the training (useful for diagnosing friction).	Ratings and comments about relevance, clarity, pacing, usability, confidence.	Post-session survey (“smile sheet”), quick poll, 24-hour follow-up question.	Calling this “evaluation” and stopping here.
Level 2: Learning (Did they learn it?)	Whether <i>individual</i> learners gained the knowledge, skill, or judgment the course promised.	Demonstrated competence right after training (application, not just recall).	Scenario-based MCQs, short cases, teach-back, checklist-based return demo, brief simulation.	Using recall-only questions (or confidence ratings) and assuming that equals competence.
Level 3: Behavior (Do they use it on the job?)	Whether <i>individual</i> learning transfer (using it on the job) happened.	Observable or verifiable behavior in real work. Example: correct device adoption and correct use per Instructions for Use (IFU); fewer workarounds.	Observation checklist, chart/documentation audit, device or system logs, workflow compliance reports, support-ticket tagging.	Confusing Level 2 test scores with real-world transfer.
Level 4: Results (Did it change what matters?)	Whether behavior change influenced outcomes that matter to the <i>organization</i> .	A measurable shift in a relevant metric over time (quality, safety, time, cost, revenue, risk).	Dashboards/KPIs, incident trends, operational metrics, customer metrics, cost and revenue measures.	Expecting perfect attribution to training; skipping the behavior link (Level 3).

Need more help? Read my post here: <https://medium.com/grow-yourself-grow-your-business/5-star-reviews-arent-enough-improving-training-evaluation-beyond-satisfaction-surveys-9e53d5edf494>

Tiny starter move

Replace vague verbs like “understand,” “be aware,” or “feel confident” with observable actions.

Make it verifiable. If you can’t observe it, document it, or see it in real decisions under real constraints, it doesn’t count.

Need assistance?

Want a simple, defensible evaluation plan for your next course? DM Marie Biancuzzo on LinkedIn and tell me your role and your success sentence.