

Review by Vickie M. McCardell PHR

HR as Strategic Partner: Using Data to Show Value of Training Functions

Dr. Richard Atkins, Founder and CEO of Improving Communications, a New York-based corporate education firm, stressed the importance of HR practitioners speaking the language of the C-Suite to justify the cost and value of employee training. The language of the C-Suite is *finance--numbers and percentages*.

To provide the financial information company leaders want, HR practitioners must do a training needs assessment to see what areas need to be addressed, provide the training and then measure the training effectiveness. Dr. Atkins referred to a training evaluation model, which measures the reaction of the participant, learning, behavior and results. A brief survey about the training can be formulated with coding variables to analyze the data. The survey should ask about the trainer, subject-matter usefulness, training methods used, materials used and duration of the training. The data collected can then be used to show the effectiveness of the trainer and the training. Training evaluation software can be purchased or a software program like Excel can be used to present the data in spreadsheets, charts and graphs.

In the end, the C-Suite wants to know what impact training has on the bottom line. To be effective, to be strategic, HR needs to provide financial information justifying the training.

Dr. Atkins was an engaging speaker and knows his topic well. I liked that he promoted the SHRM website as an important resource for training data. There are timely articles and reports available to help the HR professional justify the need for employee training and to use in training materials. You can learn more about Dr. Atkins at www.ImprovingCommunications.com.