

# Results from Leadership and Management Development

## Level 3 – Behavioural Change

### What Results will Providers Operating at this Level Provide?

The results of behavioural change can include: process improvements, bottom line contribution, increased levels of motivation, enhanced reputation, more effective use of time, higher levels of influence, greater creativity, stronger decision making, and better sales results.

*“What happens when trainees leave the classroom and return to their jobs? How much transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes occurs?”*  
Kirkpatrick

This is the reason why most learning and development initiatives are undertaken – to change behaviour in the workplace. But surprisingly it is only once we reach this third level that we encounter any deliberate attempt to facilitate the transfer of what has happened in the seminar room back into the real world.

### Do I Have to Change...?

Kirkpatrick identifies a number of difficulties in creating behavioural change:

- An opportunity to do something different may not present itself to the delegate
- The person might not take that opportunity when it does present itself
- They might change their behaviour but not feel sufficiently rewarded for doing so to make this new behaviour a permanent feature of their style, and go back to old ways of doing things

These and other factors Kirkpatrick outlines in his chapter on Evaluating Behavioural Change betray an inherent difficulty learning and development departments and training companies encounter when attempting to change what people do back in the workplace. Training companies’ attitudes to client businesses and the delegates on any programme are often subtly or overtly subservient. Further, learning and development managers are usually working within an organisational hierarchy in which they are not at the very top, and it is tempting for them too to treat delegates involved on a programme with deference.

These attitudes result in a conspicuous absence of *demand* that delegates change their behaviour. And without a demand to change, it is effectively left up to the delegate whether they push themselves to try new behaviours or simply stick with their habitual ways of doing things. This absence of a requirement to change is particularly significant in leadership development programmes, because without a demand to improve, those programmes themselves lack leadership. Subliminally, this conversation is taking place:



*Clues:*

*testimonials focus on the delegate rather than the training*

*testimonials focus on how delegates applied the material at work and what the result was*

*provider is happy to cite individual examples of how delegates approached workplace challenges differently as a result of attending a program*

*testimonials from MDs and senior executives are evident, which talk about how the course benefitted them in their work*

*line manager support of programs is a routine part of any initiative*

*content of programs is robust and directly useful to delegates*

*structure of the training is a day a month over 5 or 6 months, allowing time for behavioural change to take place*

*provider uses full time employees, rather than trainers hired on a day by day basis*

Trainer: *The goal here is to develop your leadership capabilities.*

Delegate: *Do I have to?*

Trainer: *Well, only if you want to, you aren't too busy, and you're feeling up to it today. Honestly, I don't want to put you out...*

It is hard to develop leadership in others when the whole atmosphere and ethos of the leadership development programme lacks leadership.

### **A Program where Behavioural Change is the Norm**

Imagine a development programme which:

1. demands that delegates seek out opportunities to behave differently in the month-long gaps between each seminar, to create new business results
2. expects that delegates will meet with their line manager prior to the following seminar to discuss their results and gain further guidance about where they could apply the material to create additional results
3. requires that delegates make a three minute formal business presentation at the start of the subsequent seminar outlining what they did differently, what the results were and their recommendations for the future

The tone of our exploration here switches immediately from a passive feeling that it is difficult to influence the behaviour of other people to a sense of active engagement with a well-managed development process.

### **But Have they Really Changed their Behaviour?**

Kirkpatrick urges us to interview or survey others to find out whether a delegate's behaviour has changed or not. We outlined many of the problems with using surveys or questionnaires in our article on Level 2: Learning, so let us concentrate on interviews here. Kirkpatrick advises us to interview line managers, delegates' peers, and even their staff if possible.

With a structure in place as described above, most of the relevant people are already involved in the process: line managers are already meeting delegates once a month to explore what behavioural change is taking place, the delegates themselves are already evaluating their progress as they prepare presentations on their results, and their peers on the programme are already giving feedback on what has been achieved and what is yet to be fully assimilated. The further benefit is that, rather than passive reporters after the programme has finished, all these key people can adjust and refocus their efforts if behavioural change is not taking place *as the course progresses*. Line managers can advise, delegates can adjust their approach, peers can encourage. With this level of involvement, the chance that an interview at the end of a programme will reveal that a delegate had not changed is zero.

Another important group should also be considered: the seminar leaders themselves. They too will have to demand that delegates re-evaluate their approach and change their behaviour, and they will also have to orchestrate the involvement of all the other parties mentioned above: line managers, the delegates themselves and their peers. Creating a demanding and supportive environment where behavioural change will take place is a rare skill among seminar leaders, and is unlikely to be present where they are not full time employees of a training company whose ethos is geared to the creation of results. "Associates" or trainers hired for the day are usually asked back by the employing company to do another day based on whether delegates enjoyed themselves or not. The safest approach to creating a fun environment is to make any requirement to change relatively light.

*the tone changes to a sense of active engagement with a well-managed development process*

*many leadership development programs lack leadership*