

# An Introduction to The New World Kirkpatrick® Model



Dr. Jim Kirkpatrick  
Wendy Kayser Kirkpatrick



Kirkpatrick  
Partners

The Standard for Leveraging and Validating Talent Investments™



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Kirkpatrick Partners, LLC  
8 Madison Street, Suite C  
Newnan, GA 30263

(770) 302-3500  
[permissions@kirkpatrickpartners.com](mailto:permissions@kirkpatrickpartners.com)  
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## An Urgent Need to Evaluate Training

Around the world, training and development is in a state of crisis. Training budgets are among the first to be cut when economic times get tough. Whether you're one of the in-house survivors or a struggling consultant, you can no longer coast on lofty notions about continuous learning and employee development. You need to provide compelling evidence that training delivers bottom-line results and contributes to mission accomplishment.

Training must reinvent itself and transcend the classroom to earn its budget and maintain its existence. Savvy business professionals and enlightened organizations know that training has no value unless what is learned gets applied on the job, and the subsequent on-the-job performance contributes to key organizational outcomes.

The New World Kirkpatrick Model will show you how to create an effective training evaluation plan for any program so that you can show the organizational value of your work. At the same time, an effective plan will ensure that your valuable, limited resources are dedicated to the programs that will create the most impact.

Employing these principles to your work will earn you a seat at the proverbial table with business executives and secure your future as a valuable resource and key partner in accomplishing organizational results.



To improve the program



To maximize the transfer of learning to behavior and subsequent organizational results



To demonstrate the value of training to the organization



## Why Evaluate?

Most training professionals are accustomed to evaluating training programs for the purpose of improving the program. Using formative (during the program) and summative (after the program) methods, they ask questions related to how participants enjoyed the program, whether they learned key information and how the program might be improved for future sessions. This type of information is useful to learning and performance professionals to gauge the quality of their training programs, materials, and presenters. If evaluation of the training program shows that the program was well-received and key information was learned, then the program can be called effective training.

More savvy training professionals realize that even the most well-designed and well-received training programs are of little use unless what is learned in training gets implemented on the job. This is often called the transfer of learning to behavior. If what was learned translates into improved job performance, then it is possible for better organizational results to be achieved. If training evaluation shows that on-the-job performance increased and results improved, then training effectiveness has occurred.

Finally, learning and performance professionals must be able to show the organizational value of their training. Like any other department in an organization, training is not exempt from showing how the resources allocated to them have been used. By gathering data related to effective training and training effectiveness, learning, and performance professionals can credibly show the value that training has brought to the organization.

### THE KIRKPATRICK MODEL

#### Level 4: Results

The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and support and accountability package

#### Level 3: Behavior

The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job

#### Level 2: Learning

The degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in the training

#### Level 1: Reaction

The degree to which participants find the training favorable, engaging, and relevant to their jobs

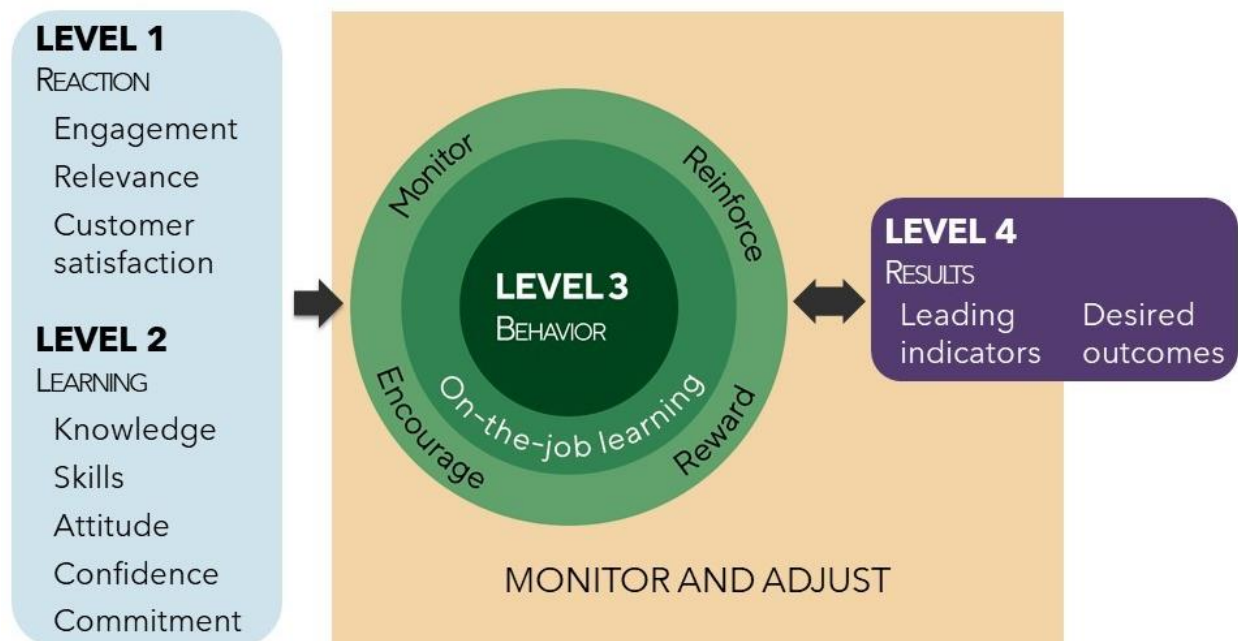


The New World Kirkpatrick Model honors and maintains the time-tested four levels and adds new elements to help people operationalize it effectively. We begin with Level 4 Results, as this is the way the model was intended.

## The New World Kirkpatrick Model

All you need to do is show that your training is effective and that it has created training effectiveness. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But how can this be done, especially with limited time, money, and resources? A simple and time-tested model for accomplishing this is the Kirkpatrick Model, or the four levels.

### THE NEW WORLD KIRKPATRICK MODEL



#### Level 4: Results

Level 4 Results holds the distinction of being the most misunderstood of the four levels. It is the degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the learning event(s) and subsequent reinforcement.

A common misapplication occurs when professionals or functional departments define results in terms of their small, individual area of the organization instead of globally for the entire company. This creates silos and fiefdoms that are counterproductive to organizational effectiveness. The resulting misalignment causes layers upon layers of dysfunction and waste.



Clarity regarding the true Level 4 Results of an organization is critical. By definition, it is some combination of the organizational purpose and mission. In a for-profit company, it means profitably delivering the product or service to the marketplace. In a not-for-profit, government, or military organization, it means accomplishing the mission within the resources allocated.

Every organization has just one Level 4 Results. A good test of whether the correct Level 4 Results has been identified is a positive answer to the question, “Is this what the organization exists to do / deliver / contribute?”

While this definition of results is straightforward, frustration with the seeming inability to relate a single training class to a high-level organizational mission is common.

Business results are broad and long term. They are created through the culmination of countless efforts of people, departments, and environmental factors. They can take months or years to manifest. Leading indicators help to bridge the gap between individual initiatives and efforts, and organizational results.

### **Leading Indicators**

Leading indicators are defined as short-term observations and measurements that suggest that critical behaviors are on track to create a positive impact on the desired results. Organizations will have several leading indicators that encompass departmental and individual goals, each contributing to the accomplishment of the highest-level results.

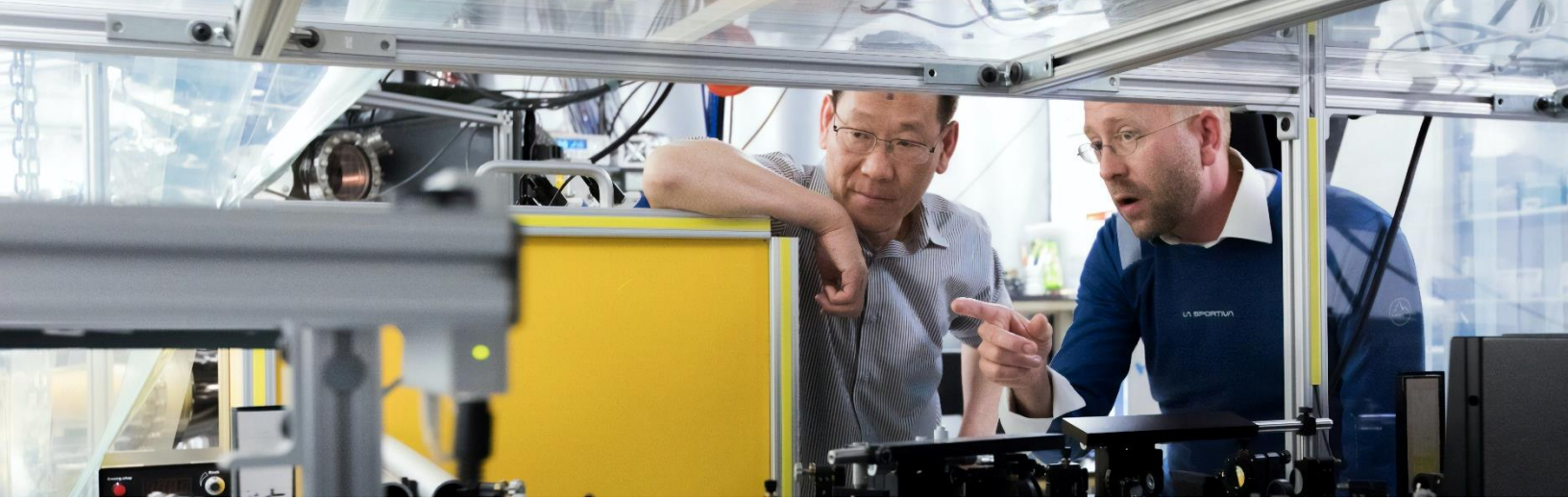
Common leading indicators include:

- Customer satisfaction
- Employee engagement
- Sales volume
- Cost containment
- Quality
- Market share

While leading indicators are important measurements, they must be balanced with a focus on the highest-level result. For example, a company with excellent customer satisfaction scores could go out of business if it does not maintain profitability, comply with laws and regulations, and keep its employees reasonably happy.

Note that customer satisfaction is an example of a goal that does not provide an affirmative answer to the question, “Is this what the organization exists to contribute?” No organization exists simply to deliver customer service alone.





## Level 3: Behavior

Level 3 Behavior is the degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job. It has three components: critical behaviors, required drivers, and on-the-job learning.

### **Critical Behaviors**

Critical behaviors are the few, specific actions, which, if performed consistently on the job, will have the biggest impact on the desired results.

There are perhaps thousands of behaviors a given employee might perform on the job; critical behaviors are those that have been identified as the most important to achieving organizational success.

### **Required Drivers**

Required drivers are processes and systems that reinforce, monitor, encourage, and reward performance of critical behaviors on the job. Common examples of required drivers include job aids, coaching, work review, pay-for-performance systems, and recognition for a job well done.

Required drivers are the key to accomplishing the desired on-the-job application of what is learned during training. They decrease the likelihood of people falling through the cracks, or deliberately crawling through the cracks if they are not interested in performing the required behaviors.

Organizations that reinforce the knowledge and skills learned during training with accountability and support systems can expect as much as 85% application on the job. Conversely, companies that rely primarily on training events alone to create good job performance achieve around a 15% success rate (Brinkerhoff, 2006).



## **On-the-Job Learning**

On-the-job learning is part of Level 3 in recognition of two facts of the modern workplace:

1. Up to 70% of all learning takes place on the job.
2. Personal responsibility and motivation are key partners to external support and reinforcement efforts for optimal performance.

Creating a culture and expectation that individuals are responsible for maintaining the knowledge and skills to enhance their own performance will encourage individuals to be accountable and feel empowered.

On-the-job learning provides an opportunity for employees and their employers to share the responsibility for good performance.

## **Level 2: Learning**

Level 2 Learning is the degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and commitment based on their participation in the learning event. Confidence and commitment were added to Level 2 Learning to help to close the gap between learning and behavior, and to prevent the cycle of waste when training is repeated for people who possess the required knowledge and skills but fail to perform appropriately on the job.

### **Knowledge and Skill**

Knowledge is the degree to which participants know certain information, as characterized by the phrase, “I know it.”

Skill is the degree to which they know how to do something or perform a certain task, as illustrated by the phrase, “I can do it right now.”

Many organizations make the common and costly mistake of inaccurately diagnosing poor performance as a lack of knowledge or skill. Underachievers are continually returned to training with the belief that they do not know what to do, when, the more common cause of substandard performance is a lack of motivation or other environmental factors.

### **Attitude**

Attitude is defined as the degree to which training participants believe that it will be worthwhile to implement what is learned during training on the job. Attitude is characterized by the phrase, “I believe it will be worthwhile” (to do this in my work).

### **Confidence**

Confidence is defined as the degree to which training participants think they will be able to do what they learned during training on the job, as characterized by the phrase, “I think I can do it on the job.”





Addressing confidence during training brings learners closer to the desired on-the-job performance. It can proactively surface potential on-the-job application barriers so they can be resolved.

## **Commitment**

Commitment is defined as the degree to which learners intend to apply the knowledge and skills learned during training to their jobs. It is characterized by the phrase, “I will do it on the job.” Commitment relates to learner motivation by acknowledging that even if the knowledge and skills are mastered, effort still must be put forth to use the information or perform the skills daily.

## **Level 1: Reaction**

Level 1 Reaction is the degree to which participants find the training favorable, engaging and relevant to their jobs.

Approximately 78% of training events measure Level 1 Reaction in some fashion. The current investment in gathering this type of data is far greater than the importance this level dictates. This investment occurs at the cost of measuring Levels 3 and 4, which would yield data more meaningful to the business; these levels are only measured 25% and 15% of the time, respectively (American Society for Training and Development, 2009).

Level 1 Reaction has three dimensions: customer satisfaction, engagement, and relevance.

## **Customer Satisfaction**

The original definition of Level 1 Reaction measured only participant satisfaction with the training. Dr. Kirkpatrick, Sr., referred to this as the customer satisfaction measurement of training.

## **Engagement**

Engagement refers to the degree to which participants are actively involved in and contributing to the learning experience. Engagement levels directly relate to the level of learning that is attained.

Personal responsibility and program interest are both factors in the measurement of engagement. Personal responsibility relates to how present and attentive participants are during the training. Program interest is more commonly the focus, including how the facilitator involved and captivated the audience.

## **Relevance**

Relevance is the degree to which training participants will have the opportunity to use or apply what they learned in training on the job. Relevance is important to ultimate training value



because even the best training is a waste of resources if the participants have no application for the content in their everyday work.

## Putting It All Together

Levels 1 and 2 of the New World Kirkpatrick Model provide data related to effective training. These levels measure the quality of the training and the degree to which it resulted in knowledge and skills that can be applied on the job. These measurements are useful primarily to the training function to internally measure the quality of the programs they design and deliver.

Levels 3 and 4 provide the needed data related to training effectiveness. These levels measure on-the-job performance and subsequent business results that occur, in part, due to training and reinforcement. Training effectiveness data is key to demonstrating the value that the training has contributed to the organization and is typically the type of data that stakeholders find valuable.

## A Purposeful Approach to Training Evaluation

You may be wondering why this piece introduced Level 4 first, and not Level 1. The reason is that this is how successful training professionals organize their work when planning programs and major organizational initiatives.

When you start training with a focus on the Level 4 Results you need to accomplish, efforts are automatically focused on what is most important. Conversely, if you follow the common, old-school approach to planning and implementing your training, thinking about how you will evaluate Level 1 Reaction, then Level 2 Learning, then Level 3 Behavior, it's easy to see why few people get to Level 4 Results in this fashion.

Set yourself apart from and ahead of the crowd by using the four levels upside down; start every project by first considering the leading indicators you plan to influence and articulate how this will contribute to the Level 4 Results of your organization. Then, think about what really needs to occur on the job to produce good results (Level 3). Consider next what training or other support is required for workers to perform well on the job (Level 2). Finally, consider what type of training will be conducive to imparting the required skills successfully (Level 1).



## A Call to Action

Learning and development professionals enter new territory in the New World Kirkpatrick Model. They are no longer relegated to only formal training and issues related to Levels 1 and 2. The focus on Kirkpatrick Levels 3 and 4 encompasses factors other than learning, such as business processes and systems, role-modeling, resource availability, and other workplace issues. This expands the role of the learning and development professional to that of a learning and performance consultant. This is the key to a valuable and sustainable role as an internal training professional or a sought-after training consultant.

This newly cast role may require some courage and a bit of adjustment. Your responsibility is to seek the truth through assessment and analysis. Then, you need to speak the truth about true root causes and the type of intervention package that will remedy the situation. You will need to lead a conversation about the level of effort required by each party involved. You may not always find an open door but sharing your knowledge and gathered data will build trust and eventually make you a highly valued project team member.

The choice is yours. If you embrace this new world view of the role of training and evaluation, you can become an indispensable partner to the business you serve. View training evaluation as mandatory, not optional. Redeploy your resources to involve and embed yourself in the business. Use new world methods to drive program results and demonstrate your role in contributing to improved job performance and subsequent business results.

## Works Cited

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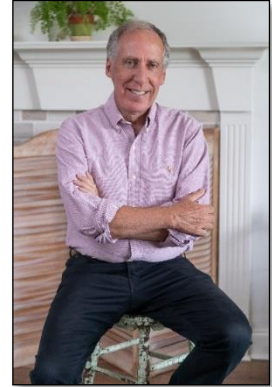


## About the Authors

**Dr. Jim Kirkpatrick** is the chief vision officer for [Kirkpatrick Partners](#). He is a thought leader in training evaluation and the creator of the [New World Kirkpatrick Model](#).

Using his 15 years of corporate experience, Jim trains and consults for organizations around the world. He is passionate about assisting learning professionals in redefining themselves as strategic business partners.

Jim co-authored three books with his father, Dr. Don Kirkpatrick, who is credited with creating the Kirkpatrick Model, and four books with Wendy Kirkpatrick, including [Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation](#). Jim and Wendy also served as the subject matter experts for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's *Training Evaluation Field Guide*.



**Wendy Kayser Kirkpatrick** is the president of [Kirkpatrick Partners](#). As a global driving force of the use and implementation of the [Kirkpatrick Model](#), Wendy leads companies to measurable success through training and evaluation.

Wendy's results orientation stems from over two decades of business experience in retailing, marketing, and training. She has held positions as a buyer, product manager, process manager, and training manager, which leveraged her ability to organize multifaceted projects and yield rapid results.

Wendy has co-written four books with Jim Kirkpatrick, including [Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation](#). Jim and Wendy also served as the subject matter experts for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's *Training Evaluation Field Guide*.



Wendy is a recipient of the [2013 Emerging Training Leaders Award](#) from [Training Magazine](#).





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### Bronze

Create a four-level program implementation and evaluation plan



### Strategic Evaluation Planning

Establish the necessary communication, cooperation, and partnership



### Silver

Implement your plan, and monitor and report on progress and results



### Gold

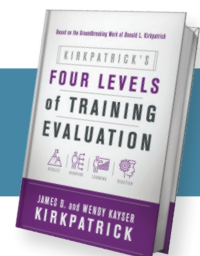
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*Kirkpatrick's four levels is the best I've ever seen in evaluating training effectiveness. It is sequentially integrated and comprehensive. It goes far beyond 'smile sheets' into actual learning, behavior changes and actual results, including long-term evaluation. An outstanding model!*

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