# DETERMINING AND OPTIMIZING THE IMPACT

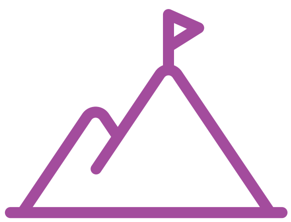
## OF YOUR TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

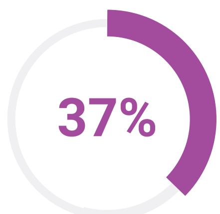
Kodo SURVEY

# INTRO

In survey after survey, CLO's, L&D Directors and Training managers say they either don't have access to data that enables them to measure learning impact, or they don't know how to analyse the data they have. At the same time, they are expected to be more data-driven than ever.


say they need to be able to analyse learning effects but don't know how to do it.






say this is one of their main challenges.

It needs to be easy to determine return on investment of training and development. And it doesn't stop there. Since you have to be able to do something about potentially low ROI of training and development, you also need to be enabled to take action to increase the efficiency of your portfolio – increase learning impact and decrease cost.

This white paper outlines what to think about in order to determine and optimize the impact of your training and development.

# DETERMINING THE LEARNING IMPACT

Making a web-search on how to determine the impact of your training and development will render you a lot of inspiration on the topic. There's qualitative ways of doing this, such as the success case methodology, and there's quantitative ways of doing it, such as through measurements.

No matter which way you prefer, the first thing you should always do, is getting your learning impact map in place.

**01** Identify organisational objectives and the desired results.

**02** Outline the employee behaviours that will help you reach your desired results.

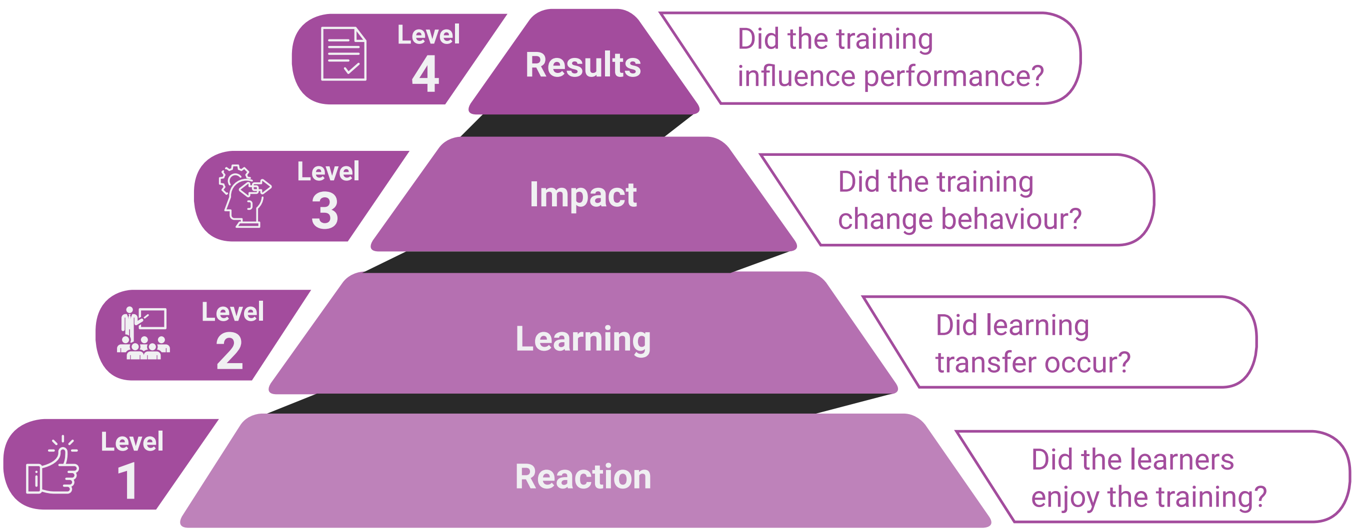
**03** Outline the intentions, attitudes and knowledge that will drive the behaviour.

**04** Define the crisp and measurable learning objectives of the program.

Now it should be easier for you to define the questions that will measure whether you achieve to deliver the learning objectives with your course or programme. The next step is to define high-quality questions and in some cases also alternatives that ensure objective and valid results.

## Measuring what's hard: Learning transfer and behavioural change

As early as in the 50's, Professor Donald Kirkpatrick told us about evaluating four levels of training impact. What organisations want to achieve with training is on level 4 – the results and the performance, which are usually measured through KPI's. But if measuring only KPI's before and after a learning intervention with the hypothesis that the training led to a potential improvement can't be done for certain, how can you know whether it truly was the training that led to certain results? That it wasn't a marketing campaign taking place just then that contributed to the increase of sales revenue, or an increase in the head count of that particular department, or something else driving the results?

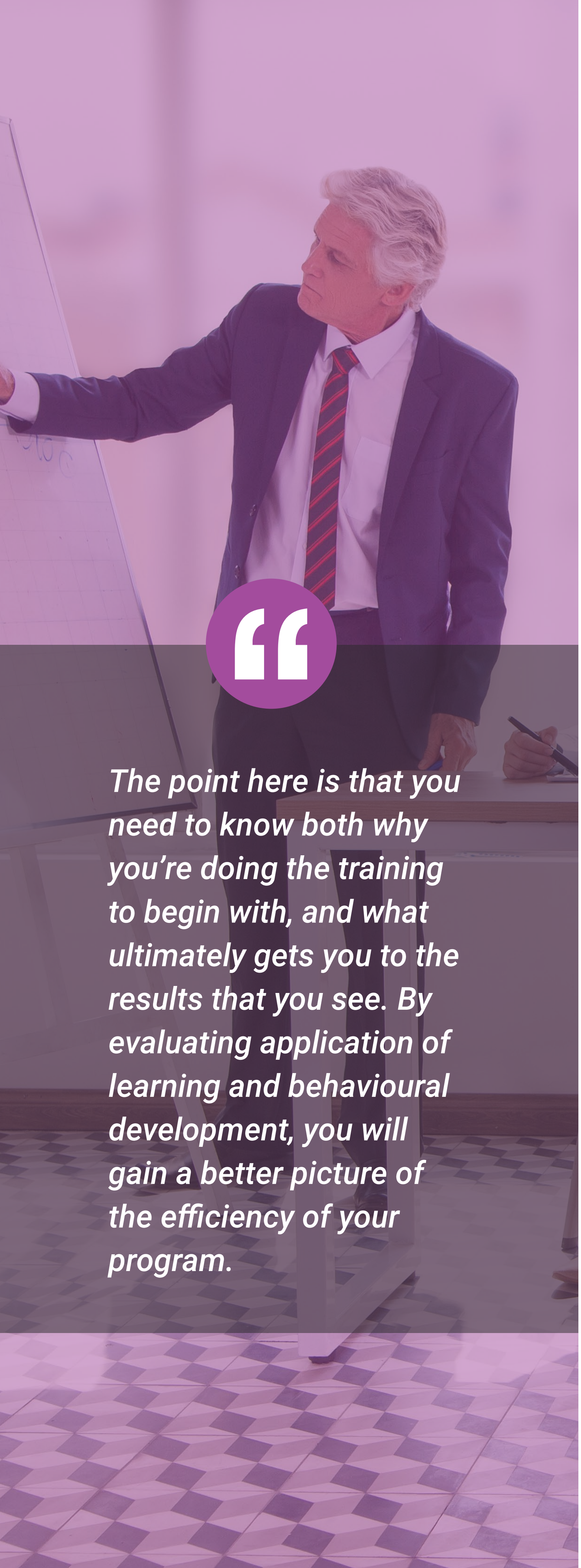



Most organisations, however, evaluate on level 1 – the reaction of the learners and whether they are satisfied with the learning intervention. This is easily done with a set of generic questions which is probably why more than 70% of all organisations already do so-called "happy sheets". But we know that a quarter of those satisfied with a particular training doesn't use a fraction of what was being learned. Satisfaction is, in other words, not a factor for ROI of training. It's far from it.

So, several organisations measure on Kirkpatrick's level 1 but we know that that is not a guarantee for valuable training. Many organisations also measure on level 4, but we can't for sure say a change in the KPI's is a result of the training. Or can we?

By measuring Kirkpatrick's levels 2 and 3 - whether learning is transferred to the job and behaviour has changed as an effect, you will get a whole other view of the quality and ROI potential of your training. If you can see that the learning from the training is used and that behaviour has changed as an effect of the training, your conclusion that a change in KPI's is a result of the training is more trustworthy.

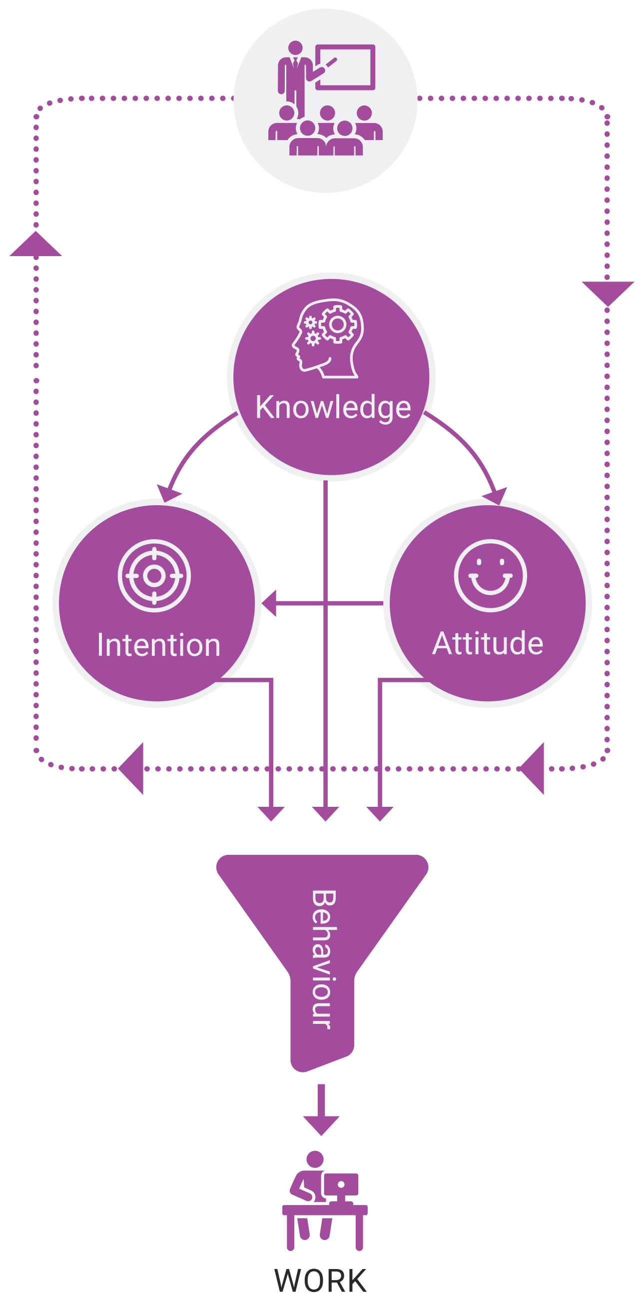
Yes, you should of course be happy that those KPI's are pointing in the right direction after a learning intervention, but in order to determine whether that's thanks to your million Euro investment in training and development this year, you will need to look at Kirkpatrick's levels 2 and 3.



*The point here is that you need to know both why you're doing the training to begin with, and what ultimately gets you to the results that you see. By evaluating application of learning and behavioural development, you will gain a better picture of the efficiency of your program.*

## KAIB™

When evaluating application of learning and behavioural change, the KAIB™ model is great to use. With KAIB™, you can evaluate all of the factors, *from a learning point of view*, that drive behavioural development: knowledge, attitude and intention. So, in order to evaluate the quality of your training, you need to evaluate knowledge gained, changed attitude, created intentions *as well as* developed behaviour.



## KNOWLEDGE - What to think of when measuring it.

### Ask the question on the right taxonomy level

Rather than asking people themselves to evaluate their level of knowledge, a good way to measure this in an objective way is through single-choice questions or multiple-choice questions. Obviously, different types of questions will be suitable for different levels of taxonomies. A knowledge question therefore needs to be defined depending on the taxonomy level of the learning objective it's supposed to measure.

Taxonomy 1 refers to remembering something. The learner should be able to tell, list, name or describe something in quite simple terms after the learning intervention and that should be reflected in the questions. A good example, from a coaching course, measuring taxonomy level 1 is: "What does GROW stand for?" With four alternatives provided in a single-choice question, such a question is more or less designed to see if you can remember what was taught during the training.

Taxonomy 2 refers to comprehending something. The learner should be able to explain, discuss, summarize and describe something with own words. This needs to be reflected in the questions so that we truly measure the right things. A good example from a performance management course measuring on taxonomy level 2 is: "Which of the following is the closest to a SMART objective?". With four alternatives representing four goals/objectives designed in different ways, the respondent will have to understand the concept of SMART objectives in order to be able to identify the right answer. That's a higher taxonomy level than merely repeating what the SMART acronym stands for.

### Make sure the alternatives look equally likely to be correct

Kodo Survey will by default include the alternative "Don't know" for single-choice and multiple-choice questions. The reason for this is *of course* to encourage the learners to select "Don't know" rather than guessing the answer to the question. However, some learners are more likely to guess even if they don't know the answer. It's therefore important that the alternatives you define for single-choice and multiple-choice questions are equally likely to be right for the "untrained eye". There's two practical tips we'd like to share:

**Tips 1:** Make sure the alternatives for the questions contains approximately the same amount of symbols or words. The below alternatives for question 12 reflect this better than for question 11:

| Question 11. | Question 12. |
|---|---|
| ------------------------------------------- | --------------------------------------------------------- |
| • ------------------------------ | • ------------------------------------------------ |
| • ------------------------------ | • --------------------------------------------------------------------------- |
| • ------------------------------------------------------------------ | • --------------------------------------------------------------------- |
| • Don't know | • Don't know |

**Tips 2:** Make sure the content of the alternatives make them look equally likely. The below four alternatives are not good alternatives when asking for the chemical composition of superglue:

a. Ice cream

b. Chocolate

c. Cacao

d. Methyl 2-cyanoacrylate

## ATTITUDE - What to think of when measuring it.

### Avoid a cap-effect on the results for attitude questions.

A tendency amongst respondents on questions using Likert 5-scale is that most respondents score themselves as high as four or five. In order to avoid a cap-effect already before your learning intervention, you therefore need to take measures to push the results down. You do that by adding extreme words like “very”, “extremely”, “highly”, “absolutely” etc.

a. Example when using Likert 5-scale to measure attitude: “It’s *extremely* important to complete the safety round once every second week.”

b. Example when using Likert 5-scale to measure intention: “I will *absolutely* ensure the safety rounds are completed once every second week”.

Or, you can make sure using extreme words to begin with. For example “It’s important to allow silence in coaching conversations” could instead be “It’s crucial to allow silence in coaching conversations.”

## INTENTION - What to think of when measuring it.

### Use critical incident to measure intention.

As already explained, an intention question can be measured with Likert 5-scale. For example, such questions could look like:

a. I intend to spend more of my time taking steps to break down silos in my unit’s teams.

b. How likely is it that you will [critical behaviour] if you are facing a problem for which you find you have the perfect solution?

However, it can also be measured with single-choice and multiple-choice questions and that's when the critical incident questions are useful. A critical incident can be described as one that makes a positive or negative contribution to the key job results as defined in the impact map. The questions should describe a situation in which it's critical to behave in a certain way. Here are two examples:

a. Imagine the following scenario: Even though you have had high-volume sales the last three months, you haven't achieved your sales budget for the last quarter. Your manager has asked you to find out why and you have discovered that one of your sales representatives has adjusted the prices for several customers without advising with you first. By all means, the adjustments are within the limits of the policy but not with much. Even though it was never documented anywhere, your entire sales team agreed last yearly kick-off that all aversion from normal proposals should go through you. What do you do?

b. An employee is obviously struggling with one of the tasks for which he has overall responsibility. He has heard that you were the expert on this subject in your former position, and decides to approach you with the problem. You remember that you had a similar problem that you needed to resolve a few years ago. It's a complex matter, but there are a few different ways of resolving it. What do you do?

These intention question describe critical incidents in which the learning objectives for the learning intervention purposes to make sure that the learners develop an intention to behave in a certain way. Remember: Make sure the alternatives are equally likely (for the "untrained").

## BEHAVIOUR - What to think of when measuring it.

When it comes to measuring behaviour, critical incident questions are highly useful. Since the behaviour questions purpose to measure a behavioural change, it always focuses on historical incidents and asks the learner to quantify. The quantification could be over time or over occasions.

c. Examples of using critical incident questions for measuring behaviour over time: "Think back over the last three months. How many times have you…" or "Think back on the last 10 times you encountered [situation]. How many of those times did you…". Another example is to use percentages. For example: What percentage of your time in the past month have you spent coaching your direct reports?

What period of time you choose to use (e.g. three months, four weeks or five days) depends on the nature of the situation which is also the case for your choice of number of occasions.

# USING THE RESULTS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

### The #1 most important thing to look for before the training: High level of pre-knowledge

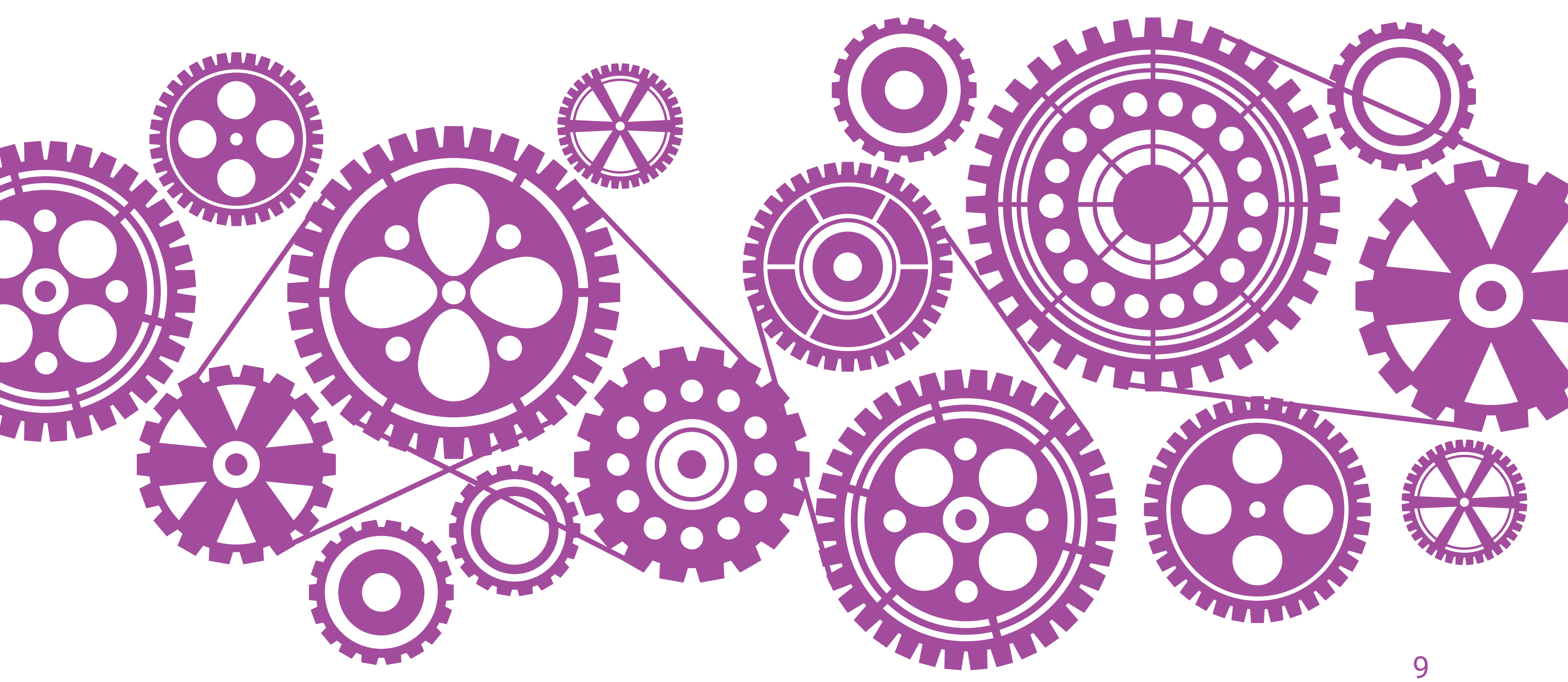
If you have decided to measure learning effect and work to maximize ROI of training, the most important thing for you to look at, already before a training takes place, is the overall pre-knowledge level.

If the group has a high level of pre-knowledge, you will lose ROI potential of the learning intervention. In straight terms: If the participants possess 25% of the knowledge they are expected to possess after the training, then 25% of the training's potential is lost. So, what you need to do as a next step if that's the case is to see if it's 25% because everybody knows 25% of the training or because a few know a lot of what's to be trained.

In the case of the first alternative, you might be able to cut the training time down by app.25% and save time away from work for the employees. By looking into the details of your survey, you'll be able to find out what 25% that would be. In the case of the second alternative, you might be able to reduce the number of participants and save time away from work. Perhaps you can even identify what training those employees should attend instead.

### The #1 most important thing to look for just after the training: Level of the Learning Quality

After the training, you want to look at the immediate effect of the training. Basically: Did the participants learn anything? However, you would prefer that they did so in a pleasant way. So, what you're looking for is engaged learning.



If the immediate effect is low, then it's interesting to know if that's the case because of the design of the training or if other circumstances discouraged learning as such or if the participants already knew everything to begin with.

By comparing the actual learning that took place with the learning potential prior to the learning intervention took place, it becomes transparent if it is the needs analysis that needs improvement or the training as such (e.g. whether it's design or delivery). Moreover, if you're looking into the details of the results, you will know exactly what you need to reinforce in order to increase the effect and achieve what you have been set out to achieve.

### The #1 most important thing to look for 3, 6 and 12 months after the training: ROI

No matter the quality of the learning intervention, after a while you need to look at the true value of the training: Whether learning is used on the job and whether behaviour has changed as an effect of the training. Usually, when the learning transfer is high the behavioural change is also high, and the other way around, but not always.

If the learning transfer is high but the behavioural change is low, this could be an indication that the learning held high quality and is really relevant but something is stopping the employee from applying the learning on their job. It could be lack of the right access in systems, lack of time to practice, lack of support by manager etc.

If the learning transfer on the other hand is low but the behaviour is high, that's an indicator of the learning being of low quality or highly irrelevant but the behaviour has changed anyway. But watch out, it could also be an effect of the social desirability effect and tampered answers.

Both these scenarios will need further qualitative analysis to understand better.

# SUMMARY

Always have your learning impact map in place.

Measure learning transfer and behavioural change, not just KPI's and learner's perception.

Determining the learning impact by measuring KAIB™

## What to think of when measuring:

| 01 KNOWLEDGE | 02 ATTITUDE | 03 INTENTION | 04 BEHAVIOUR |
|---|---|---|---|
| You can use single choice or multiple choice to measure this | You use Likert-scale to measure this | You can select single choice, multiple choice or Likert-scale to measure this | You use the peak performance to measure this |
| Ask the question on the right taxonomy level | Avoid a cap-effect on the results | For single choice and multiple choice: Make sure the alternatives look equally likely to be correct | Use critical incident questions |
| Make sure the alternatives look equally likely to be correct | | Use critical incident questions | Focus on historical behaviour |

What to look for when optimizing the training:

- Watch out for a high level of Pre-knowledge among participants
- Keep an eye on the level of the Learning Quality
- Follow the ROI closely and take action if needed

# ABOUT KODO SURVEY

Kodo Survey enables organisations to determine ROI of their training and development activities, maximize effect of their investment in training and development and cut unnecessary costs related to wasted training and development.

Our SaaS platform provides easy-to-use learning impact measurement, automizes sourcing of the learning data and does the analytics for the user.

We have a vision to make it possible for all sizes and types of organisations to evaluate their training and development initiatives, determine the ROI and increase their efficiency. We believe that learning is a must in order to progress and succeed with business and growth, and by offering Kodo Survey we contribute to the development of a sustainable future.

With a gathered experience of more than 50 years, from large international enterprises as well as local companies and municipalities, it's with confidence that we say that we know measuring learning impact is a challenge that traditional systems do not solve for our customers. But we are making that possible - in an easy way - for large as well as small companies and consultancies.