support the mission and purpose of the organization. A more complete discussion related to promoting training's successes will be reviewed in Chapter 9.

Evaluating a Training Program: A Case Study

It is not uncommon to predicate a training program's success on influencing behavioral choices the trainee says they will display if/or when confronted with a specific situation. For instance, one goal of safety training would be that "by the end of this training, participants will be more likely to follow proper safety procedures in the event that a fire is observed in the workplace." A pre- and post-training questionnaire completed by trainees could ascertain their likelihood to follow these procedures and thus see whether the desired change in preferred behavior had been achieved.

Sexual harassment prevention training defines sexual harassing behavior for trainees and sends the message that it is unwarranted, illegal, and will not be tolerated by the organization. Additionally, information is usually presented instructing trainees to take appropriate action (such as talk with a manager and/or consult human resources) if they experience sexual harassment. Stated in SMART terms (see Chapter 4), "By the end of this training, participants will be more likely to contact a manager or human resources if they feel they are being sexually harassed as measured by trainee ratings on a pre and post training assessment instrument." A second SMART goal would state: "By the end of this training, participants will be less likely to ignore sexual harassment behavior as measured by trainee ratings on a pre- and post-training assessment instrument." The following case study examines efforts to evaluate the success of achieving these two goals.

Data Collection

A total of 687 people were surveyed before and after attending a two-hour sexual harassment prevention training program to determine the action they would pursue if they felt sexually harassed. Training program participants were mixed groups of males and females, managers and non-managers, from all departments of several different organizations. Group sizes ranged from fifteen to fifty attendees. All training programs had identical topic agendas. At each training session, after introductory remarks, the facilitator would make the following statement to the group:

"Assume for a moment that you currently feel you are being sexually harassed at work. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being highly unlikely and 5 being highly likely, write on the blank piece of paper in front of you the probability that you would take each of the following six actions: (1) talk to a manager (assuming he or she is not the harasser); (2) report the incident to human resources; (3) contact an attorney; (4) confront the harasser; (5) ignore the behavior; or (6) discuss the incident with a co-worker."

Trainees were asked not to put their names on their papers to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. Trainees then attended a two-hour instructor-led sexual harassment prevention classroom training program. At the conclusion of the two-hour session, just before distributing reaction evaluation sheets, the trainees were asked to take out the piece of paper they had previously completed and revisit their answers to the hypothetical situation: What would they do if they felt they were being sexually harassed at work? They were asked to write their new (post-training) 1 to 5 ratings for each action next to their original (pre-training) rating, even if it was the same as their original response. All papers were collected.

Data Results and Analysis

All trainee pre- and post-training mean scores for each action were compiled and analyzed for statistically significant differences. Statistically significant differences would indicate divergence that is not likely the result of a random event.

For the option *talking to a manager* (Figure 7.1), the mean pre-training rating was 3.4, as compared to a mean post- training rating of 3.7, a statistically significant change at $p < 0.001$.

For the option *reporting the incident to human resources* (Figure 7.2), the mean pre-training rating was 3.1, as compared to a mean post-training rating of 3.7, a statistically significant change at $p < 0.001$.

Figure 7.1. Group Average for Action 1

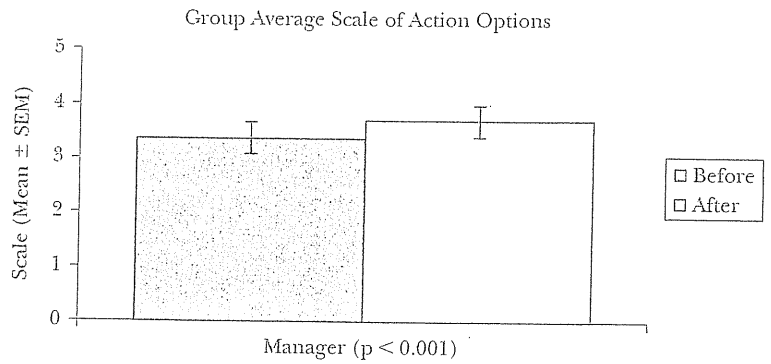
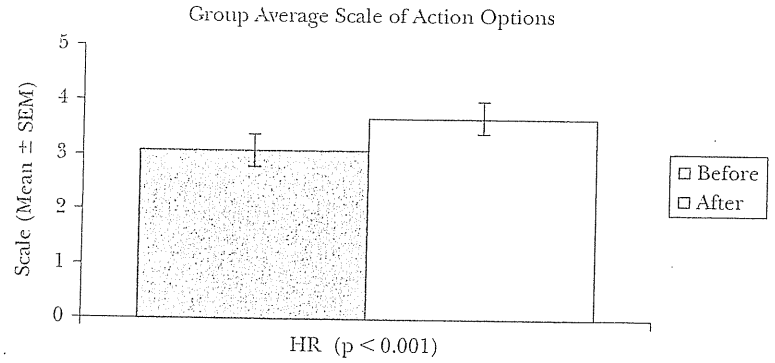


Figure 7.2. Group Average for Action 2



For the option *contacting an attorney* (Figure 7.3), the mean pre-training rating was 1.8, as compared to a mean post-training rating of 2.0, a statistically significant change at $p < 0.01$.

For the option *confronting the harasser* (Figure 7.4), the mean pre-training rating was 3.8, as compared to a mean post-training rating of 4.0, a statistically significant change at $p < 0.001$.

For the option *ignoring the behavior* (Figure 7.5), the mean pre-training rating was 2.5, as compared to a mean post-training rating of 2.2, a statistically significant change at $p < 0.001$.

Figure 7.3. Group Average for Action 3

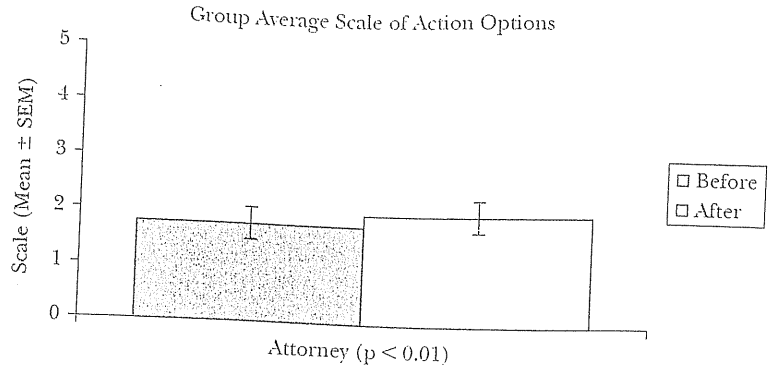


Figure 7.4. Group Average for Action 4

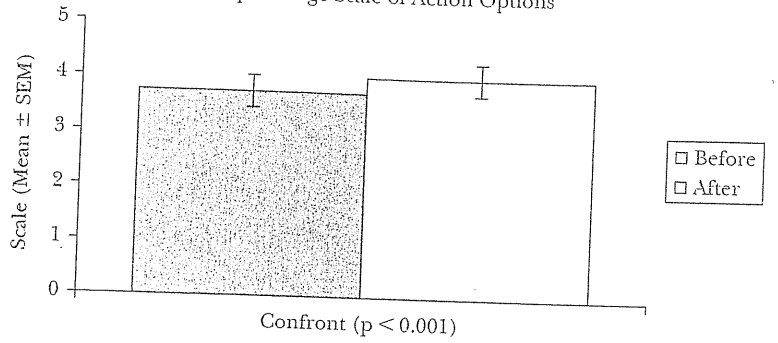


Figure 7.5. Group Average for Action 5

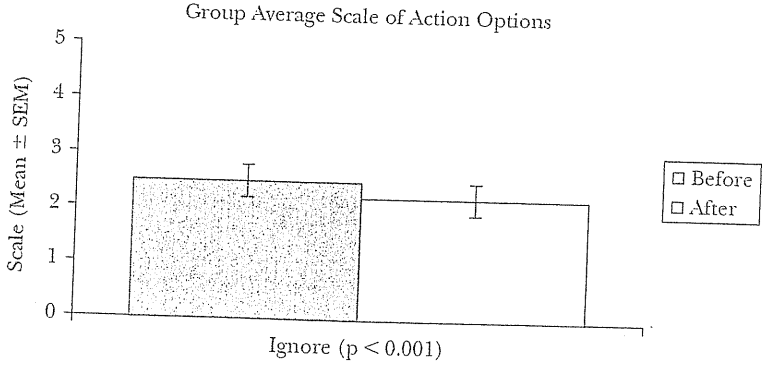
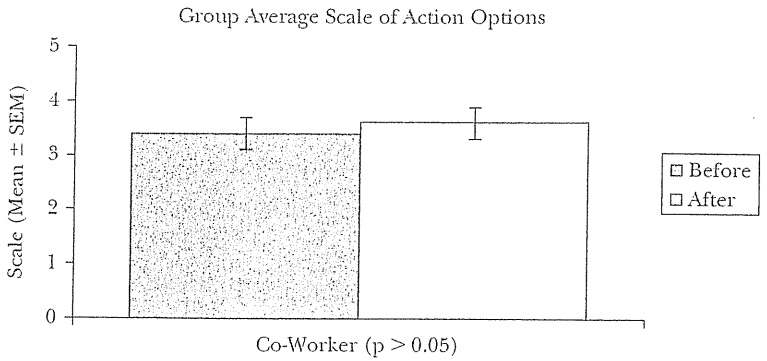


Figure 7.6. Group Average for Action 6



For the option *discussing with a co-worker* (Figure 7.6), the mean pre-training rating was 3.4, as compared to a mean post-training rating of 3.6, a statistically significant change at $p < .05$.

Discussion

Before attending sexual harassment prevention training, trainees anticipated that if they were confronted with sexually harassing behavior, they would respond, in descending order of preference, in the following ways:

1. Confront the harasser
2. Report the incident to human resources
3. Discuss with a manager or co-worker (tie)
4. Ignore the behavior
5. Contact an attorney

After attending the training, trainees anticipated that if they were confronted with sexually harassing behavior, they would respond, in descending order of preference, in the following ways:

1. Confront the harasser
2. Talk with a manager or report the incident to human resources (tie)
3. Discuss with a co-worker
4. Ignore the behavior
5. Contact an attorney

Using the criterion of self-reported anticipated behavior, Level III according to the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model, the results indicated that the training program achieved the goal of increasing the likelihood that trainees would contact a manager and/or human resources if sexually harassed. The training program also achieved the goal of decreasing the likelihood that trainees would ignore sexually harassing behavior. Level 1 reaction data was collected, analyzed, but not reported; it was determined that trainees had overwhelmingly positive feedback related to their overall impression of the training, the presenter, and the practicality of the information. Level II learning data was not collected, nor was Level IV results data. Level III data was viewed as most relevant in this case.

Unexpectedly, trainees reported with statistical significance that their first choice was to confront the harasser, a preference that was a consistent finding with both the pre- and post-training assessment. Confronting the harasser is an option rarely discussed, much less encouraged in sexual harassment prevention training.

Evaluation Process Raises Questions

When the evaluation process raises unexpected questions, it is imperative that the training professional pursue the finding(s) to see where they may lead. In this case, the training professional unexpectedly found that trainees would prefer to confront their harasser. If this were the finding within a single organization, the training professional, in discussion with human resources, should weigh the proposition that employees, if they so desire, should have the opportunity to confront their harassers.

The irony is that guidelines from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency responsible for enforcing laws regarding sexual harassment, states that "It is helpful for the victim to inform the harasser directly that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop." Current sexual harassment training does not typically encourage or include tips for trainees to

confront sexual harassers directly. The subject is certainly one for further discussion.

The evaluation process hopefully finds positive trainee reactions, learning gains, desired behavioral change, and improved job performance results. If the evaluation process uncovers less than satisfactory feedback, the training professional has the information necessary to make needed changes to the training program to improve outcomes. The next chapter will examine a further delineation of the evaluation process that helps determine training's value in financial terms.

Summary

1. The training professional must collect data to determine the training program's impact on trainees knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior.
2. Although the training professional is ultimately responsible for an effective evaluation process, others in the organization play significant roles in supporting the effort.
3. Donald Kirkpatrick's four-tiered evaluation model is the most widely respected and used evaluation model in the field.
4. Evaluation data builds from each successive tier, although data gathered at each subsequent level is increasingly valuable and difficult to obtain.
5. The evaluation process can uncover unexpected findings that may have unintended implications for the organization.