

**Proposal for Level III Evaluation
of the
South Carolina Budget and Control Board
Office of Human Resources
Supervisory Practices**

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Proposal for Level III Evaluation of Supervisory Practices

Problem Statement

The Associate Public Manager Program (APM) is offered by the Office of Human Resources as a professional development program for State employees. In 2002, the APM program was redesigned and courses revised based on the Adult Learning Model. Classes became more interactive and less lecture in delivery. Participants were encouraged to be involved and exercises were developed to facilitate accountability for their own learning.

In August, 2006, the Supervisory Practices class was again revised. A core class in the APM program, Supervisory Practices generates the most revenue of all of OHR's offerings because of the cost of the four-day session and the frequency it is requested. Since July, 2005, the training division has conducted twenty-five sessions of Supervisory Practices. There are seven more scheduled through the end of the fiscal year 2007. This includes open enrollment and customized classes.

Up to this point, no data has been collected on change in job behavior after completing Supervisory Practices. A "plus/delta reaction evaluation" has been used to gather Level 1 information.(see Appendix #11) This gives the training staff immediate feedback on the participant's initial reaction to the session. Additionally, participants are asked to complete an action plan at the conclusion of the session, outlining areas of improvement on which to focus. After several months, the instructors of the session are to randomly pull some of the action plans and contact the participants to get feedback on their progress. This has been done sporadically and there is no process for compiling or analyzing the information gathered. In February, 2005, Stephanie Duncan of OHR submitted a CPM project evaluating the entire APM program. A survey was conducted and data gathered that supported the success of the program. Participants reported the greatest benefit was

improved supervisory skills. The greatest gain was recognized in Supervisory Practices training. (Duncan, CPM project, pg. 5)

Agencies are spending large amounts of money to have employees trained. However, without an ongoing process to follow up on progress and evaluate behavior changes, it is much less likely that the learning from the session will be applied for any length of time or any significant behavioral change will result in long term observation. It is imperative that agencies approach training with a mindset of “intentional learning”. By that, I mean that participants are coming to training knowing they will be accountable to learn and perform and also prepared to use “strategic thinking processes that have learning as a goal rather than an incidental outcome.” (www.trainingplace.com/il/)

The mission of the Office of Human Resources states the importance of partnering with our customers to create excellence in human resources. In addition, we are tasked with “applying human resources best practices and innovations to make South Carolina state government an employer of choice”. (<http://www.ohr.sc.gov/OHR//OHR-mission-vision.phtm>) The Office of Human Resources has as customers all citizens of South Carolina. Specifically, our service of training impacts all agency employees of the State either directly or indirectly. Consequently, the quality and effectiveness of our efforts affects those agencies’ bottom line. At this time, there is little or no valid evidence of training’s effectiveness on the agency’s services. In the May, 2006, issue of *Training and Development*, Robert Brinkerhoff states that “about 80% of training failures are not caused by flawed interventions”(pg. 24). We must also consider ongoing supervisory support, the employee’s preparation to learn and organizational culture unique to their agency.

In early 2006, Karen Kuehner, a contract OHR consultant, designed post-assessment surveys for supervisors and managers to encourage feedback on APM customized programs. (see Appendix)

The feedback was not encouraging. Managers and supervisors at that time were not willing to complete a three page survey and the project was put on hold indefinitely.

My proposal includes strongly marketing the positive impact of ongoing communication between the supervisor and manager. The pre and post surveys are accessed through an electronic link and are easily completed in less than 15 minutes. OHR will offer the feedback as a tool for continuous improvement and highlight the value of managers coaching employees and reinforcing the concepts learned in Supervisory Practices. Training is never effective alone or completed in a vacuum. By using assessments, critical performance factors can be examined that help or hinder the positive results of the participant.

Data Collection and Analysis:

After discussing my proposal with Nathan Strong, Stephanie Duncan and Laurette Burdyl of OHR, the decision was made to interview several agencies to examine their methods of data collection in evaluating ongoing training programs. Most agencies, at the very least, conduct Level I evaluations after a class. Simply a customer satisfaction index, this data is reactive. It captures immediate feedback on if the participant liked the training and was satisfied with the delivery. My goal was to research any agencies that collected Level III evaluation information. (see Appendix #11) According to the Donald Kirkpatrick model, Level III evaluates the job impact of training. He questions, “What actually happens when trainees leave the classroom and return to their jobs and how much transfer of knowledge, skill and attitudes occurs? In other words, what change in job behavior occurred because people attended a training program?”¹

¹www.knowledgeadvisors.com/kirkpatrick.asp