

Business Value Assessment for Workforce Development Organizations

CASE EXAMPLE

[Tucson Medical Center HealthCare](#) (TMC HealthCare) has a long history as an exemplary healthcare provider, employer and charitable presence in the community that it serves. During its participation in the WSI learning group that developed the Business Value Assessment methods, TMC HealthCare undertook retention and on-the-job skills analysis for several of their career-ladder workforce initiatives, components of which were coordinated by TMC-University ([TMC-U](#)), its nonprofit training and employee development branch.

One program hosted at TMC HealthCare is “Learn, Earn, Advance and Prosper” (LEAP), a combination of on-the-job skills training and work and life skills courses, which equips individuals transitioning from welfare to be employed as entry-level hospital staff (for example, patient transport, food service, and medical records), with the potential to move into other positions. TMC HealthCare focused on job performance and retention of LEAP participants for its business value assessment, in order to assess if LEAP helped address their need to hire and retain well-qualified entry-level staff.

TMC HealthCare used a [questionnaire](#) among managers to assess the LEAP graduates’ performance on-the-job and contribution to the work environment. Managers were given the choice to rate LEAP graduates as “less likely”, “equally likely” or “more likely” to perform well on many job skills, in comparison with entry-level workers hired from other sources. Between 60 and 90 percent of managers reported that LEAP employees performed as well as or better on a number of important soft skills, in comparison to employees hired by other means. The managers also indicated that having the LEAP employees in the workforce led to time and resource savings, because these employees did not require inordinate supervision and LEAP contributed to lower turnover.

TMC HealthCare looked at public employment records to assess retention results. Seventy-eight percent (78 percent) of 161 LEAP participants were employed as of July 2005. In some cases, this indicated employment for several years since their initial participation in LEAP. As of July 2005, 61 percent were employed at one of a number of Tucson-area healthcare organizations. Fifty-two of the 161 LEAP participants (32 percent) were employed at TMC HealthCare at the time of the retention assessment in 2006. TMC HealthCare learned from its retention tracking that termination was frequently related to histories of in-home violence, and has been increasing employee assistance monitoring and “rapid response” methods to assist employees in these situations.

TMC HealthCare used a business value approach to assess the impact of another training initiative. Nearly half of about 300 CNA-type employees were trained to solidify their nursing competencies for a newly-defined position, patient care technician (PCT). TMC used [manager](#) and [employee questionnaires](#) after training to assess the proficiency of these PCT employees on the nursing competencies that were encompassed in the training, and whether the training contributed to workplace satisfaction. The questionnaire revealed that both PCT employees and managers believed the training was sufficient to make them competent and comfortable performing all but two core competencies for the new PCT

position. The questionnaire results provided specific feedback from managers and employees, to improve future rounds of PCT skills training.

Emily Jenkins, Director of Government and Community Relations at TMC HealthCare commented about the Business Value Assessment tools:

These tools help the employer and the training provider determine and measure the desired outcomes...for meaningful assessment of the impact of training.

TMC HealthCare's experience conducting several business value assessments highlighted several elements that are important to consider as part of assessment planning.

Work on clearly defining ‘What is the result you, the employer, expect?’ A common expectation for training is that the trainees will perform better than similar employees who have not participated in the training program. As such, getting feedback that trained employees are “equally likely” to perform well in specified areas, as non-trained employees, might seem a mediocre training outcome. In the case of the LEAP program, however, the goal for TMC HealthCare was to diversify and expand the labor pool. Employees hired through the LEAP program were disadvantaged individuals who heretofore might not be able to access entry-level hospital positions. In evaluating the appropriateness of this new type of employee, TMC HealthCare wanted LEAP employees to perform at least as good as other employees, which is what feedback from the questionnaire among managers overwhelmingly confirmed.

Anticipate disruptions to the assessment process early in the planning phases. TMC HealthCare learned at the last minute that it had to postpone the distribution of the manager and employee questionnaires for the patient care technician (PCT) training, because the assessment coincided with a mandatory hospital-wide survey. Initially, this appeared to be very disruptive, because TMC HealthCare wanted to get manager and employee feedback within six weeks of when the training ended, to increase confidence that the results that were reported were related to training rather than accumulated on-the-job experience. So, they negotiated authorization with the hospital administration, to distribute the assessment questionnaires within two weeks of the originally planned date.

Business value assessment can sometimes be helpful for more than one purpose. Feedback from the more experienced employees who completed the first round of PCT training led TMC Healthcare to use an assessment of core job competencies at the time of hire, thereby avoiding unnecessarily assigning qualified PCTs to the training, and potentially saving training fees and employee time lost to training. TMC Healthcare also decided to offer incentive pay differentials for PCTs with CNA qualifications and PCT training as part of its retention and internal career ladder approach.