

Using Learning Impact Maps to Change Behavior and Produce Results

By Bill Wilder, Life Cycle Institute

The only sustainable competitive advantage is the ability to learn and adapt – fast. Old methods of assessing and applying learning are too cumbersome and slow. Often learning initiatives become bogged down in costly, time-consuming “needs analysis.”

A Learning Impact Map accelerates alignment of learning investments with organizational goals. This alignment is the catalyst for behavior changes that produce the desired results.

A Learning Impact Map will:

- Identify if the training can achieve the desired results in terms of broad business goals
- Prepare participants to learn and change their behavior based on the training
- Link the desired behavior with organizational performance and business goals

The Learning Impact Map facilitates management support and expectations alignment. This support and engagement is necessary to change behavior. The postmortems of failed business initiatives where leadership engagement are cited as the point of failure are legion.

Learning Impact Maps can be created for a single individual, a team, or several job roles that may be attending training together. A well-written Learning Impact Map always shows:

- Knowledge and skills the participant will learn in the training
- Behaviors driven by the new knowledge and skills
- Results that will be realized by the new behaviors
- Goals of the organization that the results will help accomplish

Applying Learning Impact maps is an elegantly simple process that includes roles and responsibilities before, during and after training.

Roles

There are four key roles in the process:

Participant: The individual who is the target of the learning intervention and the one expected to change behavior to produce a desired result.

Manager: The participant’s immediate boss.

Coordinator: The individual who is responsible for the success of the learning investment. They may also be the sponsor or funding source. Often this is someone on the organization’s learning and development team, but may also be someone in a specific functional area of the business.

Facilitator: The individual who delivers the training, often referred to as an instructor.

The Learning Impact Map (LIM)

The Learning Impact Map is a very simple one page document with four columns. The first, far left column and the last, far right column are completed before applying the tool. The two center columns are completed during application.



Learning Impact Map

Name:

Date:

What I will learn	What will I do with my learning	What results will I get	Organization goals

Life Cycle Institute • 4360 Corporate Road • Charleston, SC 29405 • 800-556-9589 • education@LCE.com • www.LCE.com

Applying Learning Impact Maps

Before Training

The coordinator works with the leadership and the facilitator to complete the first and last columns of the Learning Impact Map. Learning investments are made to advance the success of the organization by advancing specific goals. The starting point for using the map is the last column on the far right, which identifies the organization goals advanced by the learning objectives.

The learning objectives are described in the first column on the left. While the training may seek to fulfill many objectives, the key here is to focus on a few. Less is more. Three specific, active, measurable objectives is a practical number. This is completed in advance by the coordinator with input from the manager and facilitator.

The coordinator schedules time with the managers of the participants to describe the manager's role and secure their commitment to fulfill it. During this scheduled time, the coordinator:

- Reviews the organizational goals
- Describes the training learning objectives
- Impresses on the manager how their engagement will impact the desired behavior change
- Demonstrates how to "read" the LIM
- Provides questions for the manager to use in the pre-training meetings with participants, including:

- What are the business results you personally impact the most?
- What are the key areas of training that can impact these results?
- What are some actions you might take after training to reach these results?

Once prepared, the manager leads a meeting with the participant to complete the LIM. The meeting should be held three to seven days before the class. The meeting can be as short as 15 minutes and it may be conducted in person or on the telephone.

The coordinator collects copies of the completed LIM for each participant.

The coordinator delivers copies of the LIMs to the training facilitator/instructor.

During the Training

Class participants update and revise their LIMs as necessary based on what they have learned in the class.

The facilitator collects copies of the revised LIMs at the end of the class.

After Training

The facilitator provides the coordinator with a copy of their participant's updated LIMs.

The coordinator provides a copy of the LIM to the manager and reminds managers to schedule a follow up meeting within the first week after the training.

The coordinator provides the manager with a list of questions to use in their post-training meetings:

- What did you think of the training?
- Why did you make the changes to your LIM?
- What are the potential obstacles?
- How can I support you?
- Ask the employee to summarize the actions he/she will take to implement learning and summarize the actions you will take to support them.
- Agree on how you will jointly monitor/measure progress.

The manager leads a meeting with the participant and documents the results.

The coordinator follows up with managers 7-10 days after the training to:

- Determine if they have met with their program participants
- Find out how the conversations went (what went well, what could have gone better)
- Address any concerns/questions

Following this process will make learning faster and more effective. Using Learning Impact Maps helps you discern if the learning intervention will produce results that advance organizational goals. The process establishes the expectations and leadership alignment that facilitate application of the new knowledge and skills. It will save you time and money while producing documented results.

Bill Wilder is the Director of The Life Cycle Institute at Life Cycle Engineering (LCE). Bill holds a Masters of Education degree from East Tennessee State University and a Bachelors of Science in Human Resources. Bill has more than 25 years experience creating learning environments that help employees reach their highest potential. You can reach Bill at bwilder@LCE.com.