

Assessment 11–1

Learning Needs-Assessment Sheet

Instructions: Use this form to take notes during interviews with stakeholders in the client organization to assess the needs of both learners and the organization itself. Be sure to understand the person's response to each question before moving on and writing a summary of what he or she says. Assure the interviewee that the responses will be both anonymous and confidential.

1. How do you define listening?
2. How would you assess your own listening skills?
3. In your role in the organization, how would listening skills training benefit you?
4. Would listening skills training benefit the organization at this time? Why or why not?
5. How would you assess the listening skills of others in the organization?
6. What specific behaviors regarding listening have you observed that should be addressed in a listening skills course?
7. What preferences do you have about how you might receive listening skills training?
8. Are others in the organization interested in receiving listening skills training?
9. Should all employees in the organization receive listening skills training, or should only select groups at a certain level receive training? Why?
10. How should listening skills training be marketed internally to draw attendees?
11. What results would you like to see for the organization after listening skills training?

12. What else can you tell me about your training needs at this time?

13. What other factors for success could affect listening skills training?

14. What questions do you have for me?

End the interview by thanking the person for his or her candid responses to your questions. Reassure the interviewee that his or her comments will not be quoted by name, just combined with others' responses to analyze common themes. Explain that the listening skills training will reflect the priorities of those interviewed.

Assessment 11–2

Listening Self-Assessment

Instructions: The purpose of this activity is to help you learn about what you need to be a good listener and create an action plan for self-improvement in your listening skills.

Place a ✓ in one of the boxes to the right of each item, depending on how you see yourself today. No one will see your ratings unless you share them, so please be honest with yourself.

| LISTENING BEHAVIOR | ALWAYS | FREQUENTLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| When another person is speaking to me, I... | | | | | |
| 1. Focus on the speaker as much as possible. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Concentrate on content of the message. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Anticipate what the speaker is going to say. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Establish eye contact with the speaker. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Keep listening even if I disagree with the speaker. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Nod, smile, or give other nonverbal cues. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Plan my response in my head. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Get distracted by environmental sounds. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Take notes if necessary to help me remember. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Listen without judging or critiquing. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Interrupt the speaker before he or she is done. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Think about issues unrelated to the topic. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Pay attention to the speaker's nonverbal communication. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| LISTENING BEHAVIOR | ALWAYS | FREQUENTLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 14. Restate the speaker's message in my own words. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Adapt my response to fit the situation. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Can differentiate between fact and opinion. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Look like I'm listening when I'm not. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Ask questions to gain clarity about the message. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. React emotionally to the speaker's message. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Consider how the speaker may react to my response. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Clarify meanings of the speaker's words if I'm unsure about their definitions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Allow speaker to vent his or her frustration. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Think of different views on the topic. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Display an open and caring posture. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Create a nonthreatening environment. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Analysis: If you responded “always,” “frequently,” or “sometimes” for items 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 17, or 19, these may be areas in which you need to improve your listening skills, especially your focus on the speaker and how you filter information. You may also wish to address any of the remaining statements if you responded with “sometimes,” “rarely,” or “never,” particularly items 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 20, and 23, which directly relate to providing feedback to the speaker effectively during a conversation.

Assessment 11–3

Needs-Assessment Discussion Form

Instructions: Use this sheet to prepare your comments for the focus group discussion. Write the first thoughts that come to mind in response to each question. You may make any changes to your responses that you would like as the discussion progresses. Please do not write your name on this form. The facilitator will collect the form at the conclusion of the session.

1. How would you describe the listening skills of people in the organization?
2. What behaviors have you observed when others are listening to you?
3. What level(s) of employees do you think would benefit from listening skills training? Why?
4. How receptive would you be to receiving training to improve your own listening?
5. How receptive do you think others in the organization would be to receiving listening skills training?
6. What challenges or roadblocks may be present in the organization that could affect the success of a listening skills training session?

7. What would you personally like to see included in a listening skills training session?

8. How would you prefer that training be offered to you? (circle one)

- a. Private, individual instruction
- b. Half-day group session
- c. One-day group session
- d. Group session for one and a half days
- e. No preference

Thank you for your cooperation in this needs assessment.

Assessment 11–4

Facilitator Competencies

This assessment instrument will help you manage your own professional development and increase the effectiveness of your listening skills training sessions. Training facilitators can use this instrument in several ways:

- **Self-assessment.** Using the assessment to rate yourself on the five-point scale will generate an overall profile and help determine the competency areas that are in the greatest need of improvement.

- **End-of-course feedback.** Receiving honest feedback from the training participants can lessen the possibility of facilitators deceiving themselves regarding the 12 competencies. Trainees may not be able to rate the facilitator on all 12, so it may be necessary to ask the participants to rate only the ones on which they consider themselves qualified to provide accurate feedback.

- **Observer feedback.** Facilitators may observe each other's training sessions and provide highly useful information on the 12 competencies that are crucial for conducting effective listening skills training.

- **Repeat ratings.** This assessment can be used to track professional growth on the competencies needed to be an effective facilitator. The repeat measure may be obtained as often as needed to gauge progress on action plans for improvement.

The Competencies

Facilitators face many challenges anytime they lead a training session. The facilitator must be effective at many things to ensure that participants have their

learning needs met and that the organization achieves its desired results for the training. This assessment contains a set of 12 important competencies that are required for effective listening skills training. Not all seasoned facilitators have expertise in all of these competencies, but they may represent learning and growth areas for almost any facilitator.

Here is a detailed explanation of the importance of each of the dozen crucial elements of facilitator competence:

- **Understanding adult learners:** Uses knowledge of the principles of adult learning in both designing and delivering training.

Effective facilitators are able to draw on the experiences of the learners in a training session; they must provide them with content and tools that they can immediately apply to fully engage them and help them see the value of the learning. It's also important to address the participants' various learning styles and give them opportunities to problem-solve and think critically so they can work through real business issues and develop additional skills.

- **Presentation skills:** Presents content clearly to achieve the desired outcomes of the training. Encourages learners to generate their own answers through effectively leading group discussions.

Of all the competencies a facilitator uses during a training session, none may be more obvious than the need to have exceptional presentation skills. The facilitator's ability to present content effectively and in an entertaining way is one of the first things learners notice and is a large part of a successful workshop. Due to the nature of adult learning, it is equally important that the facilitator is

also adept at initiating, drawing out, guiding, and summarizing information gleaned from large-group discussions during a training session. The facilitator's role is not to feed answers to learners as if they are empty vessels waiting to be filled. Rather, the facilitator's primary task is to generate learning on the part of the participants through their own process of discovery.

- **Communication skills:** Expresses self well, verbally and in writing.

Understands nonverbal communication and listens effectively.

Beyond presenting information and leading discussions, it is vital for a facilitator to be highly skilled in all aspects of communication. A facilitator should use language learners can understand; give clear directions for activities, involve trainees through appropriate humor, anecdotes, and examples; and build on the ideas of others; this will lead to training sessions that are engaging and highly valuable for the participants. Facilitators must also be able to listen well and attend to learners' nonverbal communication to create common meaning and mutual understanding.

- **Emotional intelligence:** Respects learners' viewpoints, knowledge, and experience. Recognizes and responds appropriately to others' feelings, attitudes, and concerns.

Because there may be learners of many different backgrounds, experience levels, and opinions in the same training sessions, facilitators must be able to handle a variety of situations and conversations well; they must also be sensitive to others' emotions. This means paying close attention to the dynamics in the room, being flexible enough to make immediate changes to activities during

training to meet the needs of learners, and creating an open and trusting learning environment. Attendees should feel comfortable expressing their opinions, asking questions, and participating in activities without fear of repercussion or disapproval. Monitoring learners' emotions during a training session also helps the facilitator gauge when it may be time to change gears if conflict arises, if discussion needs to be refocused on desired outcomes, or if there is a need to delve deeper into a topic to encourage further learning.

- **Training methods:** Varies instructional approaches to address different learning styles and hold learners' interest.

All trainees have preferred learning styles, and one of the keys to effective training facilitation is to use a variety of methods to address them. Some people are more visual ("see it") learners, while others are more auditory ("hear it"), or kinesthetic ("do it") learners. An effective facilitator needs to be familiar with a variety of training methods in order to tap into each participant's style(s) and maintain interest during the training session. These methods may include activities such as small-group activities, individual exercises, case studies, role plays, simulations, and games.

- **Subject matter expertise:** Possesses deep knowledge of training content and applicable experience to draw upon.

Facilitators must have solid background knowledge of the training topic at hand and be able to share related experience to help learners connect theory to real-world scenarios. Using anecdotes and other examples to illustrate how the training content relates to participants' circumstances and work enhances the

learning experience and encourages learners to apply the information and use the tools they have been given. Facilitators must know their topics inside and out so they can answer trainees' questions and guide them toward problem-solving and skill development.

- **Questioning Skills:** Asks questions in a way that stimulates learners' understanding and curiosity. Encourages critical thinking.

An effective questioning technique works well to assess learners' understanding of training content, as well as provides opportunities for them to analyze information and think critically. When learners ask questions, the facilitator is able to see where there may be confusion or a need to go over concepts again for better understanding. Similarly, when a facilitator asks thought-provoking questions in a way that invites participation, learners can brainstorm solutions to problems; they can also think through situations to help them apply the training content to the issues they deal with on a regular basis.

- **Eliciting behavior change:** Influences others effectively both individually and within groups. Gains support and commitment from others to achieve common goals and desired outcomes.

This competency is important in two ways. First, facilitators must be able to persuade trainees to consider points of view that will lead to desired changes in behavior. Many times a facilitator is called upon to sell an organization's culture or policies, or to simply gain learners' participation to achieve the desired results of the training. To do this, a facilitator must be able to help trainees' understand and accept the organization's realities and practices while being sensitive to their

own views. Second, an effective facilitator needs to know how to form small groups and work well with them in order to influence groups to accomplish tasks, work through problems, and fulfill the needs of the group members. Drawing out the creative energy of groups through brainstorming or other activities and helping group members blend their unique knowledge and skills to achieve a common goal will lead to greater commitment on behalf of the learners to change their behavior for the better and apply the training content.

- **Feedback:** Gives and receives constructive, specific, and timely feedback and communicates observations clearly and accurately.

Providing learners with helpful feedback, whether formally through an assessment or informally through conversation, is a vital skill for facilitators. Specific examples that communicate a learner's strengths and weaknesses will help the trainee better comprehend the information and may also lead to increased self-reflection by the learner. Feedback can also serve as the basis for a coaching relationship for individual training and clarify the most important thing for the learner to focus on for his or her growth and development. The facilitator must also be familiar with a variety of tools to gather feedback from training participants to improve the learning experience; the feedback can also be for the facilitator's own self-reflection and growth.

- **Motivation:** Encourages learners to participate and achieve desired results. Generates enthusiasm and commitment from others.

One of the many responsibilities of a training facilitator is to inspire others to achieve the desired outcomes of a training session and to focus on their goals.

While it is generally believed that motivation comes from within, a skilled facilitator can unleash the energy and enthusiasm of the learners by creating a vision that motivates and inspires. Providing meaningful learning activities and infusing fun into the training experience are just two ways this can be done. It's the facilitator's responsibility to channel trainees' motivation effectively into a commitment to achieving results.

- **Organizational skills:** Works in an orderly and logical way to accomplish tasks. Ensures that work is correct and complete. Presents ideas logically and sequentially for learners to understand.

The importance of this competency for facilitators is twofold. One aspect is that the facilitator must have good work habits and pay attention to detail. With any training event, there are a myriad of logistical and other details to take care of to ensure a successful experience. Work must be done thoroughly and accurately. A well-organized training facilitator typically creates well-organized, professional training. Another aspect of this competency is that facilitators must train in a manner that allows learners to absorb new content easily, as well as be able to retrieve it quickly. Information should be presented in a logical, sequential order for greater understanding. This also lends itself to a higher probability that the learners will use the content. The more organized the facilitator, the better.

- **Time management:** Plans and prioritizes time effectively. Balances important and urgent tasks and can work on multiple tasks simultaneously.

One of the many things facilitators do is conduct training sessions. They must also be highly effective at budgeting their time to tend to other priorities in their

work, including preparing for the training, keeping accurate records, analyzing assessment data, designing new content or activities, and reporting to the client organization. The most competent facilitators are able to multitask and stay focused on the goals of the learners and client organization. Good time management is an essential part of helping a facilitator stay on top of all there is to do during any given day.

Facilitator Competencies

Instructions: If using this instrument as a self-assessment, place a ✓ in the box to the right of each of the 12 facilitator competencies that best describes your skill level. If using this form to provide feedback to a facilitator, place a ✓ in the box that best fits his or her level of competence in each area.

| COMPETENCY | NO EXPERTISE | LITTLE EXPERTISE | SOME EXPERTISE | ADEQUATE EXPERTISE | EXPERT |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Understanding adult learners: Uses knowledge of the principles of adult learning in both designing and delivering training. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Presentation skills: Presents content clearly to achieve the desired outcomes of the training. Encourages learners to generate their own answers through effectively leading group discussions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Communication skills: Expresses self well, verbally and in writing. Understands nonverbal communication and listens effectively. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Emotional intelligence: Respects learners' | <input type="checkbox"/> |

viewpoints, knowledge, and experience.

Recognizes and responds appropriately to others' feelings, attitudes, and concerns

Training methods: Varies instructional approaches to address different learning styles and hold learners' interest.

COMPETENCY

NO EXPERTISE

LITTLE EXPERTISE

SOME EXPERTISE

ADEQUATE EXPERTISE

EXPERT

Subject matter expertise: Possesses deep knowledge of training content and applicable experience to draw upon.

Questioning Skills: Asks questions in a way that stimulates learners' understanding and curiosity. Encourages critical thinking.

Eliciting behavior change: Influences others effectively both individually and within groups. Gains support and commitment from others to achieve common goals and desired outcomes.

Feedback: Gives and receives constructive, specific, and timely feedback and communicates observations clearly and accurately.

Motivation: Encourages learners to participate and achieve desired results. Generates enthusiasm and commitment from others.

Organizational skills: Works in an orderly and logical way to accomplish tasks. Ensures work is correct and complete. Presents ideas logically and sequentially for learners to understand.

Time management: Plans and prioritizes time effectively. Balances important and urgent tasks and can work on multiple tasks simultaneously.

Assessment 11–5

Listening Skills Follow-Up Assessment

Instructions: This form focuses on the outcomes of the training in which the learner recently participated. Please give your open and honest assessment of the person’s current level of functioning. On the line to the left, write a number from 1 to 6 that best corresponds to the scale below to rate the person on some of the more important behaviors in being a good listener.

| |
|---------------------------------------|
| Participant Code: _____ |
|---------------------------------------|

1 = HIGHLY INEFFECTIVE

4 = SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE

2 = INEFFECTIVE

5 = EFFECTIVE

3 = SOMEWHAT INEFFECTIVE

6 = HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

The listener...

- _____ Focuses on the speaker and eliminates or ignores distractions.
- _____ Establishes eye contact with the speaker.
- _____ Nods, smiles, or gives other nonverbal cues when listening.
- _____ Listens without judging or critiquing the speaker.
- _____ Avoids interrupting the speaker before he or she has finished talking.
- _____ Restates the speaker’s message in his or her own words.
- _____ Responds appropriately to the speaker’s message and emotions.
- _____ Asks questions of the speaker to gain clarity about the message.
- _____ Avoids reacting emotionally to the speaker’s message.
- _____ Allows the speaker to vent his or her frustrations.
- _____ Displays an open and caring posture.
- _____ Creates a nonthreatening environment.

Assessment 11–6

Training Evaluation

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Workshop Title: _____

Facilitator: _____ Location: _____

Please circle the number that best corresponds to your ratings for today's training session.

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Poor</u> | <u>Fair</u> | <u>Good</u> | <u>Excellent</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Quality of the workshop content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Applicability of content to my work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Quality of training materials/handouts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Quality of audio-visual materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Facilitator's presentation skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Facilitator's knowledge of subject | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Amount of participant interaction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Time allotted for activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Facility/location | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Overall workshop rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Would you recommend this session to a colleague? Why or why not? _____

How will you begin to apply the training content after today's session? _____

Assessment 11–7

Feedback Self-Assessment

Instructions: Use this assessment to determine areas for improvement for giving and receiving feedback. Place a ✓ in one of the boxes to the right of each item. Please complete the assessment based on how you tend to behave right now and give honest responses, as no one will see the results unless you choose to share them.

| FEEDBACK BEHAVIORS | TO A GREAT EXTENT | FOR THE MOST PART | TO SOME EXTENT | NOT AT ALL |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| When giving feedback, I... | | | | |
| 1. Ask if receiver is open to feedback. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Give specific examples and observations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Use a positive tone of voice. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Share the impact of the person's behavior. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Am aware of timing and location. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Keep an open mind to the receiver's views. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Practice good listening skills. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When receiving feedback, I... | | | | |
| 8. Am grateful for the giver's input. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Concentrate on what the giver is saying. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Keep my reactions and emotions in check. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Paraphrase the message to improve understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12. Ask clarifying questions if needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Listen more than I speak. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Avoid interrupting the giver. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Analysis: The results of this assessment can help direct your focus for areas of improvement as a giver and/or receiver of feedback. You may find that you score higher as a giver than as a receiver, or that you score higher on particular items in either category.

For giving feedback, if you rated yourself in the “To Some Extent” or “Not At All” areas for items 1, 3, 5, or 7, this means that you need to pay particular attention to the receiver’s moods, emotions, and circumstances. If you scored low on items 2, 4, or 6, you may need to improve on the content of the feedback itself.

Under receiving feedback, ratings in the “To Some Extent” or “Not At All” areas for items 8–14 indicate a need to be more open to feedback and to improve your focus on the message and meaning of the giver. You may also need to pay attention your own reactions and find ways to minimize any negative or defensive behaviors.