An experience-based model to implement ROI analysis for Continuing Education Programs.

The investment that companies make on training and continuing education programs is not always linked with a direct improvement or benefit on the employees' or company's performance.

Every investment and expense have to convey to the company's vision and strategies; therefore the continuing education programs should be evaluated with a clear return of investment for the company. This is evaluated with Phillip's ROI measure (Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model 5th level indicator) or in the 6th level of Allen's training evaluation model "Individual Behavior Change Regarding Application of New Knowledge".

An example of programs that incorporate ROI analysis is Six Sigma certification program, which includes acquiring knowledge, in-field practice and generation of financial benefits for the company with certifiable evidence. This process is evaluated by Consultant-Teachers and the ROI is validated by the finance department of the company, so that the participant can obtain the certification. The results of this kind of programs have achieved more than 5xROI.

This certification process has been replicated to other engineering programs such as Lean manufacturing and soft skills programs such as Management skills. There are interesting challenges to overcome when implementing these tools going from a program with defined methodologies, processes and benefits to obtain, to programs where those elements are not clearly defined. This entails the need to develop a model of Continuous Learning that incorporates the certification of competences, the in-field practice of knowledge supported by robust methodologies and the generation of financial benefits for the company. An experience-based model is described in this paper

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