

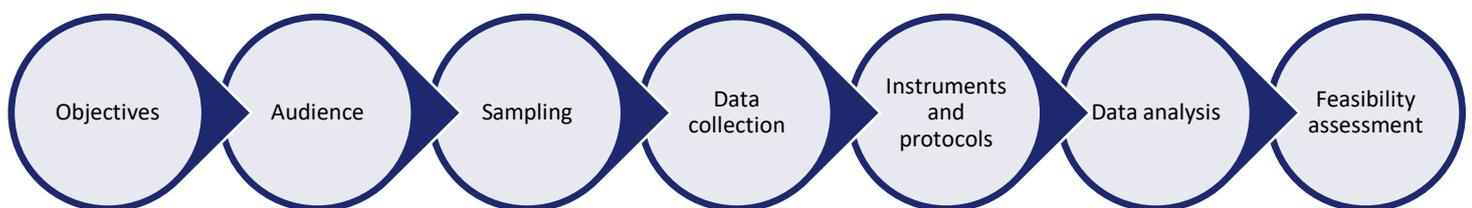
Learning Needs Analysis Process

7 Steps to a Training/Learning Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is an important process to conduct prior to launching a training program. The analysis ensures the training is needed, validated, and will provide a solid return on investment for the organization.

The ADDIE model of needs assessment is a well-known framework in training and development and educational settings. ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation (Rothwell and Kazanas, 2008). Rothwell and Kazanas (2008) interpret the ADDIE model by describing a series of seven steps to complete the needs assessment.

The following seven steps and subsequent questions provide a guideline for trainers to adapt the model to their particular industry.



1. Objectives of the Needs Assessment

- What do you want to learn from the needs assessment?
- Is there a performance problem/issue/concern that needs to be addressed from the needs assessment?
- Are stakeholders in agreement on what the needs are and how the needs should be met?
- What must the learners know, do, or feel to overcome a deficiency of knowledge?
- What will the final work product of the needs assessment look like? (I.e. detailed report, memo, presentation, executive briefing, email or combination?)

2. Target Audience

- Who are the potential learners?
- Who is presently affected by the performance problem/issue/concern?
- Can you measure how they are affected?
- Where are they located? (i.e. centrally located, decentralized regionally, nationally, globally)
- How does job, position, or department affect the deficiency of knowledge? For example, employees may lack knowledge of policy; managers may lack knowledge or skill on enforcing organizational policy.
- Whose support is crucial for a successful needs assessment?
- When the needs assessment is complete, who will make the decision related to potential training?
- Who will use results of the needs assessment?

- Who will receive results of the needs assessment?

3. Sampling Procedures

- How will a small representative group be identified to participate in the needs assessment?
- When should I use a convenience or judgmental sample?
- When should I use a simple random sample?
- When should I use a stratified sample?
- When should I use a systematic sample?

4. Data Collection Methods

- Is the method appropriate for investigating the performance problem?
- When should I use interviews?
- When should I use direct observation of work?
- When should I use indirect examination of performance or productivity measures?
- When should I use questionnaires?
- When should I use task analysis?
- When should I use focus groups?
- When should I use critical incidents?
- When should I use nominal group technique?

5. Specifications for instruments and protocols

- What instruments should I use to collect data? For example: questionnaires, interview guides, observation guides, tests
- How should instruments be used? For example: electronic scoring formats such as Google forms, surveymonkey.com
- What approvals or protocols are necessary before collecting data?
- With whom in the organization should the instructional designer interact?
- Whose approval is necessary to collect information?
- To whom should results of needs assessment be reported?
- Who should have periodic reports?
- How can I present results to receive most consideration?

6. Methods of data analysis

- How will collected information be analyzed?
- Will I describe past and current situations?
- Will I use anecdotal data to build my case?
- Will I express data results quantitatively as frequency, mean, median, or mode?
- Will I use statistical techniques such as analysis of variance, chi square, etc.?
- What type of analysis best fits the assessment of performance problem?

7. Assessing the feasibility of the Needs Assessment Plan

- Is it workable in the organizational culture?
- How many and what kind of people will be required to staff the effort?
- What equipment and tools are needed?
- How long will it take to conduct the needs assessment?

- What are the limitations, if any, on staff, money, equipment, or access to information?
- How realistic is the plan?
- Is it workable in the organizational culture?
- How well does the needs assessment plan match the organization's decision-making processes?
- Whose opinions are most valued?
- Does the plan take their opinions into account?
- How well does the plan match how the organization solved problems in the past?
- Has superfluous information been eliminated?

These steps and questions provide the basis for completing a needs assessment of a training program. If the assessment results in a recommendation for training, additional instructional design techniques should be employed to ensure the training program meets the needs identified in the analysis process.¹

¹ Reference: Rothwell, W. J., & Kazanas, H. C. (2008). *Mastering the instructional design process: A systematic approach 4th ed.*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.