



for



Training Impact Survey

Abstract of the document
prepared for the Management & Leadership Programme
of the Food and Agriculture Organization

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for Public Consumption

SUMMARY

- I. Company background
- II. Project Objectives
- III. Survey Methodology
- IV. Intended outcome
- V. Time Frame

I. Company background

Ad Meliora was founded in 2003, putting together experiences made both in the market research and adult education fields.

Since that time we've worked with several organizations from different markets, private and public.

In 2012 our main customers are:

- ENEL
- ATAC
- DEXIA
- Roma Servizi per la Mobilità
- LOTTOMATICA
- Italian Ministry of Economic Development
- MAGGIORE AUTONOLEGGIO
- SHERATON Roma
- POSTE Italiane
- F.S.

We deliver tailor-made training courses, to develop soft skills and behavioral competencies above all, designing them through a careful analysis of the participants and organization situation. We believe adults can learn only if the learning contents are related to their own experience and practical utility is vital for them.

We have conducted some surveys for customers who needed to measure soft skills or the impact of training delivered (see note 3).

We have also recently launched in joint venture with 2 companies (Tendentia and Com & Spo) a CAWI system to check the return on sponsorship operations called AUDIEVENT, preparing the questionnaire and the reports.

II. FAO context and Project Objectives

This proposal is being submitted at the request of the Management and Leadership Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization which wishes to measure the extent to which its courses are contributing to better performance.

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From our discussions with the MLP team it is our understanding that the organization wishes to gather data and facts about **the efficacy of the training programs¹ through a structured survey process.**

¹ Effective Leadership programme, Foundations of Management programme

In this vein, our proposed survey should therefore answer the question: Is training helping FAO to better manage its people and resources and to provide leadership in pursuit of its global objectives?

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In simple words and as far as we have understood, FAO wants:

- To understand what participants do with what they have learned.
- To find out whether these programmes are changing people and in which way.

These will be the drivers of all the activities we propose in this project.

III. Survey Methodology

We propose a blended methodology, using both **qualitative** and **quantitative** research tools i.e. personal/group interviews and web survey systems together. Our experience in this domain comes from several years of work in both market research and the adult education field.

Since 2003, Ad Meliora has been using web survey tools, particularly CAWI², to develop organizational survey³. In other words, we have transferred our experience and expertise in market research, to organizational surveys. This way organizations save time and money, keeping high level quality if attention is paid to some important details⁴.

In order to develop the survey and reach the objectives mentioned above, we propose the following steps:

1) PREPARATION PHASE

a) Kick off meeting

b) Provide information to all participants about the survey, showing real commitment from top management and focusing the message on the following:

- ▶ FAO is going through an impressive training programme
- ▶ We want to understand the impact of this training on the organization
- ▶ An independent company has been appointed to conduct the survey
- ▶ In the next 3 months you may be personally contacted by this company, please give your honest feedback (feedback will be kept anonymous).
- ▶ Survey results will be shared with all participants to the survey

² Computer Aided Web Interview

³ Buffetti (National retail chain) Survey on training impact – Serono (Multinational Pharma) and Cittadinanzattiva (Active Citizenship Organization) Soft Skills Survey using web system. Other references available on request.

⁴ See “Web Survey Design and Administration” in Public Opinion Quarterly, volume 65, issue 2 pp. 230-253

2) QUALITATIVE PHASE

a) **Arranging the framework of themes** to be explored.

The area of experience to be explored could be, according to us: "What happens in the work place, after the training?"

The main points to be explored:

- ▶ Which contents are the first in participants' minds when thinking of the training they attended?
- ▶ What has been put into practice?
- ▶ What helped/hindered putting into practice?
- ▶ Why?
- ▶ Considering the learning points as seeds, which have you planted?
- ▶ Any fruit picked up? Get examples...
- ▶ Are participants doing a different job after the training? Key differences.

b) **Exploring the themes**

Two (2) dual moderator⁵ focus groups⁶ will be conducted, with 6 participants each, who attended Foundation of Management training programme. Focus groups will be held in Rome (2/2,5 hours each). The composition of the participants will be decided in order to represent a qualitative mix of ages, gender, nationalities, positions in the organization, departments - functions, time since the training was completed)

Semi structured one to one interviews⁷. These interviews (45 minutes each) will help to obtain qualitative information from people who are not in Rome HQ and/or could not easily attending the focus group. At the same time, one to one interviews will help to avoid a possible groupthink and social desirability bias that adversely the focus group method.

- (i) **8 telephone interviews** with participants to Foundation of Management training programme, coming from other offices than Rome.
- (ii) **5 telephone interviews.** with participants to Effective Leadership training programme, coming from other offices than Rome
- (iii) **15 personal interviews** with participants to Effective Leadership training programme, coming from Rome office.

c) **Analysis of the output** in order to have an overview on the qualitative issues to be measured with a questionnaire. This will be our first check point in terms of output. This output will be **reported to the customer complete and in good time.**

⁵ A fundamental difficulty with focus groups is the issue of *observer dependency*: the results obtained are influenced by the researcher or his own reading of the group's discussion, raising questions of validity. Two moderators keeps this difficulty under control. Other common (and related) criticism involve groupthink and social desirability bias.

⁶ A group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product/service/concept/advertisement, idea, or else. Questions are asked in a non directive way and participants are free to talk with other group members.

⁷ Other common (and related) criticism of a focus group involves groupthink and social desirability bias. Then personal telephone interviews are useful to avoid these criticisms, gaining data in a different setting. A semi-structured interview is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored.

3) **QUANTITATIVE PHASE**

a) **Preparing the questionnaire.**

The output of the previous phase will form basis on which to design the questions for the quantitative phase. We assume questions vary, according to the attended training. The questions are only one side of a proper questionnaire. It also needs to be user friendly, in order to minimize as much as possible the number of people who may fail to complete it (see footnote 4).

b) Once arranged, the questionnaire will be **programmed on a CAWI system⁸ and tested** with the customer.

c) The questionnaire will be launched via e-mail to the 216 participants who have so far attended the Foundations of Management and Effective Leadership programmes. They will find a link to go to the questionnaire and fill it out. A help desk will be available. All the data will be collected and processed by a remote server.

4) **FINAL REPORT**

The Report of the results will be prepared by Ad Meliora and submitted to the attention of the Management and Leadership Programme Manager. The Manager may request for explanations and raise all possible questions. However Ad Meliora will be the only responsible for data and their interpretation, with the only aim to guarantee independency of judgement and fairness.

Ad Meliora will also give advice to FAO on the feedback to be given to the participants (as mentioned in the first phase of the project).

IV. Intended outcome

The outcome of the survey will give FAO indications that may answer the following questions about the training programmes:

- Is training content retained after programme completion?
- Are people motivated to use what they have learned?
- Is training content useful on the job?
- Is training content being applied on the job? Examples...
- Is the comparison between expected learning (based on the objectives of the training programmes) and real learning (as it has been gathered with the survey) satisfactory?

This information will then be used to provide advice to the organization in order to make changes, if needed, to the training programmes, and to make them more in line with the expectation of the individuals and the organisation. In other words, the outcomes of the training programmes should be seen to support the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation through enhanced performance

These suggested actions will be based on the evidence of the data, as well as our previous research findings and training experience in the adult education field.

⁸ CAWI system used for this survey is held and managed by Tendentia a partner of Ad Meliora for technological aspects of the survey, please visit www.tendentia.it

V. Time Frame

This time frame is indicative, its full implementation will depend on the level of collaboration

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As indicated above, this time frame is based on a high level of efficiency and cooperation among customer, participants and supplier. As examples: all the 28 personal interviews will have to be arranged in 7 working days (4/day); 5 days will be allowed to answer the questionnaire; First report will be completed after questionnaire definition and then the quantitative phase can start.