

When you are considering purchasing training, you need to ask a lot of questions to ensure the proposed training solution is going to be a good fit for your professional services firm. There are questions you should be [asking internally to ensure training is a good solution](#), but also questions to be asking externally to potential training providers. In this article, let's focus on the key questions to ask training providers.

How can I be sure the training will solve our identified problem?

If your targeted problem isn't solved after their training, it could easily be a waste of your money and their time (which is also your money). Ask the provider what systems it has in place to measure the effectiveness of its training.

How do you measure the results of your training?

This second question asks about the metrics which the training is going to track. Are they just measuring initial reaction to the training, some sort of understanding or actually tracking on-the-job activity. Is the training impact measured once or on several occasions?

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How do you measure attendee satisfaction?

All training providers will naturally tell you they're good, but it's only when their clients and participants say so that it really counts. Client feedback is vital for the provider to improve course content and delivery routinely. So always check just how thoroughly a provider obtains client feedback.

To what extent is training content or delivery customisable?

Many training experiences are often fixed experiences. There is little or no variation in the content or delivery between firms and industries. That may be OK depending on the topic. However, it may also make the training very generic and lacking context. You should ask how the training can, or is, adjusted by the training provider to suit different scenarios? Also, ask to what extent peer learning is incorporated in the training to allow experienced staff to contributed real-world ideas into the process?

How often do you update your course content to ensure relevancy?

The one constant in today's competitive, global marketplace is change. Change not just in

content and ideas, but also in technology and delivery methods. It's fast and unrelenting. Make sure your provider reviews its courses and updates them regularly if necessary. Not just at the start of the year. Ask them about their review and update process, or for specific examples of how their content or delivery has changed over the years.

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What kind of feedback do you provide participants?

While you may receive feedback and reporting from the training provider, you should also ask what participants will receive. Often participants finish training experiences with little or no feedback for themselves. The training company receives feedback and the purchasing firm receives feedback, but not the participants. Find out what participants may receive to help their reflection and improvement activities.

Where do you source your content?

Some training is geared more towards selling product, than giving people a thorough grounding in its use. These training providers are more like marketing companies aiming to sell seats in workshops or eLearning licenses. These training providers may not create content themselves, but hire external people to write content for them. As a result, they have no personal stake in the content and it can be generic or out of date.

Do you keep your instructional methodologies current?

In addition to content, the instructional design methodologies of training are always changing to reflect new understandings in adult-learning, and developing trends in participant engagement. Training should also show you how to apply the technology to real-world problems rather than just teaching theory.

Are your courses eligible for professional development?

For [professional services firms](#), most of your staff will have on-going or continuing professional development requirements. If so, check that the training from your training provider will qualify for professional development in your industry and they can provide appropriate documentation for your staff. Ideally, their content may have already been reviewed by your industry body for accreditation.

What are your facilitator's qualifications and how are they evaluated?

Always ask your provider for their qualifications, real-world experience with the content, and the frequency of the instructor training they receive. Check out the detail, not just paper qualifications. This is critical for smaller organisations which may rely on subject matter experts for content and facilitation. Often those subject experts are not qualified for facilitation or training, so the delivery of their content is lacking. Great content, poorly transferred, is an adverse outcome.

How does your training scale for size and location?

If you have a large number of people in different locations across the world to be trained, it's essential to confirm that your training partner has a suitable solution to deliver the results you need consistency in all locations.

Can you guarantee satisfaction?

Always ask what steps the training provider will take if you are not happy with the training provided. This is a contentious area, as the training provider may do everything correctly, but the failure in training might come from your organisation. Perhaps you selected the wrong participants, or your managers were not supportive of the training, or an external event occurred in your industry which diluted the impact of training. Nevertheless, this is a question worth asking as it will reveal your training providers experience with implementing their training.

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