

Six Ways to Participate in ROI Certification

Building Serious Evaluation Capability in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous World

In today's economy, time and budget constraints make it difficult to develop serious capability with evaluation. At the same time, the skills needed to show the business value of your programs and projects are needed now more than ever. This document describes the different approaches to build capability in these economically uncertain and volatile times.

The Role and Importance of ROI

First, it is important to address the question - Why ROI? In recent years, we have witnessed change in organizational accountability, particularly toward investment in people, programs, and projects. Project sponsors have always been concerned about the value of their initiatives. Today, this concern translates into financial impact - the actual monetary contribution. Although the monetary benefit is a critical concern, it is the comparison of this value with the project costs that translates into ROI and captures CEO/CFO attention.

The Need for The ROI Methodology

“Show me the money” is the familiar response from individuals asked to invest (or continue to invest) in major projects and programs. At times this response is appropriate. At other times it is misguided. Money is not the only indicator of program success. Measures not subject to monetary conversion are still important and these intangibles are a part of most projects. However, excluding the monetary component from a successful profile of results is unacceptable in today's age of the “show me” generation. Reporting a balanced profile of success is needed. This balanced profile of success includes qualitative and quantitative data as well as financial and non-financial outcomes.

Sometimes the ROI is required before a project is approved. Sometimes it is needed as the project is being implemented. At other times, it is needed after project implementation. The concern that many projects today fail to live up to their “before implementation” expectations fans the “post-implementation” flame.

A systematic process is needed that can identify barriers to, and enablers of, success and can drive organizational improvements. The challenge is in developing the measures of value, including monetary value, when they are needed and presenting them in a way so that stakeholders can accept and use them before, during, and after program implementation. The ROI Methodology, presented through ROI Certification, is a process that addresses all three scenarios.

ROI Use

ROI use is growing. Perhaps the most impressive use of ROI is noted in *Chief Learning Officer's 2015 Measurement and Metrics* study. With 335 CLOs responding, 35.6 percent use business impact to demonstrate the value of the training organization on the broader enterprise, and 21.6 percent use ROI for that same purpose. In addition, 22.6 percent plan to implement ROI within twelve months, 9.7 percent plan implementation in twelve to twenty-four months, and 17.3 percent plan implementation sometime in the future. In total, 71.2 percent are using ROI or plan to use ROI in the future.

On the HR front, articles are describing the issues within HR that fuel the ROI conversation. A recent issue of *Harvard Business Review* suggests that it's time to 'blow up HR.' This series of articles and other recent articles suggest that HR is not showing the value of what they do, and more importantly, they are unable to show the ROI of investing in the organizations largest expense – the employees. The good news is that HR is tracking this issue with the assistance of the human capital analytics team. According to a survey of human capital analytics practices, the #1 topic for analysis is ROI studies.

Other functions are experiencing the same pressures. For technology, marketing, consulting, quality, and innovation, the challenge is to show value for the money provided through budgets, special funding or cost allocation. For example, one large government agency's \$1.9 billion annual budget was reduced to \$1.6 billion (\$300 million cut) with a promise that more cuts would come if they didn't show the impact and ROI for key programs. Measuring ROI is the most credible way to tackle this situation, and they used ROI Certification to evaluate IT projects.

ROI Institute records show that more than 6,000 organizations are now implementing ROI. More than 13,000 have participated in the face-to-face ROI Certification, with more than 5,000 becoming Certified ROI Professionals (CRP), making the ROI Methodology the most-used evaluation system in the world. ROI is here to stay and will be an important issue in the future. Accountability for programs is rapidly changing. Change is inevitable; progress is optional.

Options for ROI Certification

Several options to build the capability are available. Here are six ways that should fit time and budget constraints of any team.

1. Individual and Team Participation in the Five-Day ROI Certification Workshop

The standard approach, which is still the most common one, is described in more detail in our ROI Certification Brochure found www.roiinstitute.net/certification_brochure. This option requires individuals to attend a five-day certification workshop which is open to the public. Approximately 30 public offerings of ROI Certification are available each year, with about 12 in the United States and 18 internationally. These certification offerings target individuals involved in any functional area, including human resources (HR), organization development (OD), learning and development (L&D), consulting, talent management, quality, technology,

marketing, innovation, healthcare, and nonprofits. This approach involves the following components:

- Pre-Work – Identify a project for ROI evaluation. Prepare to know the basics.
- Workshop – Attend five days of content-rich, interactive sessions. The focus is on your project evaluation.
- Workbook and Materials – A valuable 300-page action-oriented workbook is provided. Several books are provided to use as a reference.
- Virtual Assistance – One-on-one help with your ROI evaluation project. Review and approval of your ROI study is provided.
- Right to Use Materials at Work – You have the right to reproduce our materials and use them within your organization as you work with internal clients and colleagues. Proper credit is required.
- Certified ROI Professional (CPR) Designation – A unique, sought-after credential is awarded, signifying that an individual has the ability to effectively perform ROI evaluations.

When a large organization sends only one person to ROI Certification with the goal of implementing this process, the task can be daunting. While it is possible, it often becomes challenging. Sending a team to ROI Certification is an approach many organizations take when they want to build serious evaluation capability quickly. Implementing the ROI Methodology means that certain processes, procedures, and policies will have to be adjusted. New programs must begin with business needs and objectives must be set at different levels. All stakeholders have a role in making programs work, and these changes affect the entire team. It is often difficult for one person to influence change within the larger group. Sending a team keeps one person from being a lonely voice in the woods, trying to convince others to change without the full support of the team.

For example, recently in Amsterdam, a team of seven managers and professionals from the National Forensic Institute (NFI) of the Netherlands attended the open enrollment certification conducted by Patti Phillips. Team members indicated that this is the only way to make change like this work. The key people who were needed to make it work participated. Collectively this group worked together to make ROI implementation successful.

To help facilitate training the team, discounts are available when two or more team members attend certification. If the team is large enough, it may be best to invest in the next option, an Internal Certification.

2. Internal ROI Certification

More organizations are switching to an Internal ROI Certification where ROI implementation involves large numbers or multiple groups from different functional areas. When the number of participants reaches six to eight, it becomes more cost effective to consider an internal certification. When the number reaches 15 to 20, the fee per participant is half the public certification rate.

In addition to cost savings and efficiency, internal certification allows participants in the organization to concentrate on their situation, programs, and projects. In open enrollment offerings, participants attend from many different areas, and some projects discussed are not relevant to others. Also, some critical information may be confidential or proprietary, it is easier to discuss in an internal certification.

An internal focus is also helpful for planning the ROI implementation. This is particularly important when the manager or executive responsible for the team is involved in the session and decisions can be made during the workshop about building capability and awareness, the use of technology, preferred methods of data collection, roles and responsibilities, and reporting results. The outcome is not only the skill development for the team, but the formulation of the evaluation strategy.

The ROI Institute team is available to discuss this strategy with you.

3. Coaching for ROI Certification

Coaching has taken its place as an important way for people to learn and apply. Under the direction of a professional ROI coach and through interactive dialog, participants stay focused to complete the first ROI study. Although the certification approach described in option 1 and 2 (above) provides for virtual support from the ROI Institute, this is not coaching. Virtual support involves transactional activities of responding to questions, reviewing documents, and ultimately approving the study.

Some participants have asked for an ROI coach to guide them through the process every step of the way. We now have this approach available throughout many of our countries and in the United States. With this option, the coach will be assigned to participants before they begin the five-day ROI Certification workshop.

The coach will initiate a series of sessions, through different media, to guide participants to achieve the CRP quickly. The coach is not only focusing on planning and execution but will raise the level of performance and efficiency of participants. In essence, the coach will facilitate personal change as participants connect this program to the business.

In our work in two European countries, the success rate more than doubled with the ROI coaching option. It keeps the process on track while responding to specific obstacles along the way. It also reduces the time to complete the ROI study and is an effective way to achieve certification.

The ROI coach will provide a minimum of eight hours and a maximum of 24 hours of direct time to each participant in the coaching process. Because of the resources required to provide expert coaching on ROI, the cost of the coach is the same as the certification registration fee. Consequently, the total cost is twice the public certification fee. Only a select number of coaches are capable of providing this service, and participants have the opportunity to select their particular coach.

4. Three-Day Option for ROI Certification

A three-day certification option is available for individuals who have attended a two-day or three-day ROI Institute workshop offered through another organization (e.g., Association for Talent Development (ATD)) or through ROI Institute (i.e., classroom or the online academy). In addition, if an individual attends a two-day or three-day workshop conducted by ROI Institute faculty, we will credit the workshop fee toward certification fees.

This approach decreases the time away from work and may lower the cost. To discuss this option in more detail, please contact the ROI Institute team.

5. Test and Submit

While there is no substitute for attending live sessions where there is much discussion and activities, some participants are unable to travel and, instead, embark on a self-study program. Perhaps, they have attended some eLearning programs or live workshops in the past and have read several articles or books written by ROI Institute authors. These individuals consider themselves to be very qualified in the ROI Methodology, and they want to achieve the ROI certification to validate what they know and can accomplish. However, these individuals are still required to complete an ROI study to meet the requirements of the ROI Institute.

While there is no coaching or support provided with this option, two steps are necessary to achieve certification. First, for a nominal fee, the individual can take a 75-item test about their knowledge of the ROI Methodology. The participant must achieve 75 percent to proceed. If the test is passed, then an individual can submit an ROI study for approval. For a nominal fee, the study will be evaluated for final approval. The study review will provide feedback for adjustments only once. If the subsequent and final study meets the standards of ROI Institute, certification will be granted. This is a short-cut way for those individuals who have developed capability in a very deliberate and successful self-study program.

6. Guided Self-Study Program

Some individuals prefer to learn in a guided self-study environment. This option includes a combination of reading assignments, exercises, and online learning offered through ROI Institute. Guided by an ROI facilitator, the participant reads the materials, books, and case studies; prepares the assignments; completes the exercises; takes a quiz; submits an impact study; and ultimately achieves certification.

A study guide has been developed to include all the materials that would normally be used in the live certification process. Certification can be granted by paying a fee, completing the self-study program, completing a comprehensive exam, and submitting an ROI study along with some evidence of implementation in the organization.

This option is tailored to the individual based on previous experiences and future needs. Optional one-on-one assistance along the way is available, as some individuals may need more help. For more information, please contact the ROI Institute team.

It's Your Move

ROI capability is needed now, more than any time in the past. Several alternatives are available to build ROI capability within your organization. The key is to take action to show value in a proactive way. You need ROI capability to convince the executive team that your programs or projects are making a difference. In many cases, that difference is ultimately defined by the financial ROI.

ROI implementation can have a big influence in the funding and budget allocation for the function. Additionally, ROI use can improve executive respect, support, commitment, and involvement. When executives see the business contribution, they often perceive your function as an investment instead of a cost. Costs can easily be cut, particularly in difficult times. If they see that an investment is positive, they are less likely to take that action. Remember, when it comes to showing the value of your programs:

1. Hope is not a strategy.
2. Luck is not a factor.
3. Doing nothing is not an option.

Be proactive. Begin the ROI journey.

Contact the ROI Institute team at info@roiinstitute.net or by phone at 205-678-8101.