



# Performance-Focused Smile-Sheet Diagnostic

Instructions: Choose YES when YOUR organization routinely engages in the practice, or NO when it does not.

Diagnostic Items		Yes	No or Not Sure
<i>IMPORTANT NOTE: Some items below are good practices; some are not so good!!!</i>			
1.	Our PRIMARY GOAL for our smile sheets is to get feedback to improve what we do, which we see as a more valuable goal than demonstrating our value.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	We use LIKERT-like scales (for example: Strongly agree to Strongly disagree).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	We use NUMERIC rating scales (for example: 1 2 3 4 5 6).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	We PUSH positive responses (with statements like “The program helped me learn”).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	We ask TWELVE or more substantive questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	We utilize at least some COMPOUND statements (such as: “The program was interesting and useful”).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	We ask questions for which learners are unlikely to have ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE (for example: “How much will your skills improve?”).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	As we develop each question, we CONSIDER WHAT MESSAGES we want to send to ourselves and our stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Before finalizing smile-sheet questions, we spend the time to work with our stakeholders to DEFINE WHAT SUCCESS will look like (FOR EACH QUESTION).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	We ask about the LEVEL OF MOTIVATION learners have for putting their learning into practice in their work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	We ask how much REALISTIC PRACTICE learners got during the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	We ask about the AFTER-LEARNING SUPPORT likely to be available on the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	We ask about the support likely to be provided by LEARNERS’ MANAGERS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	We write questions from the LEARNERS’ PERSPECTIVE (for example: “I was comfortable with the pace of the program”).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	We include questions that help identify HOW TO IMPROVE our learning events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	We BENCHMARK our results against other courses and/or other organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	For some of our learning programs, we ask learners to complete smile sheets immediately after training AND later on-the-job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	RIGHT BEFORE learners respond to our smile sheets, we ensure that they are reminded of what they learned (example: with a list of key points or a difficult summary exercise).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	We assign a NUMERIC VALUE to each answer, and then take an AVERAGE and report those numbers as our smile sheet results (for example: “Overall, this course got a 4.3”).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	We use smile sheets ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY to evaluate our learning, doing little or no measurement of learners’ decision-making ability, skills, or work performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\*\*\*\*\* COMPLETE THIS FIRST \*\*\*\*\*

Then turn the page to evaluate your results  
and get suggestions for improvement.



# Interpreting Your Results

*Determining whether your organization is using best practices.*

	<b>Best Practice?</b>	<b>Rationale</b> <i>Suggestion: On the previous sheet, circle the number for each item that is a best practice.</i>
1.	<b>YES</b>	Our primary evaluation goal should be to get feedback for improvement. If we seek data confirming our impact, we may bias our results and encourage our own poor performance.
2.	<b>NO</b>	LIKERT-like scales push learners to make fuzzy decisions, which create fuzzy data. Also, the common practice of converting the choices to numbers is not a valid statistical measure.
3.	<b>NO</b>	NUMERIC rating scales are even fuzzier than Likert-like scales. Note that some rare uses are okay.
4.	<b>NO</b>	We must be careful not to bias the responding with leading questions or statements.
5.	<b>NO</b>	There is no hard-and-fast rule for the number of questions, but asking too much of learners is counterproductive because they won't give their full attention—giving us bad data.
6.	<b>NO</b>	Avoid compound statements. First, because learners won't know how to answer them. Second, because we won't know whether learners responded to one part or another part of the question.
7.	<b>NO</b>	It may seem obvious, but we really should only ask learners questions that they are likely to be able to answer with some accuracy.
8.	<b>YES</b>	Smile sheets offer us an opportunity to educate ourselves and our stakeholders. For example, by asking about the level of realistic practice, we can send a message that practice is important.
9.	<b>YES</b>	For many of our questions, we should be able to determine, in advance, what an acceptable answer is—or is not. Determining such “standards” is a great way to seek stakeholder input.
10.	<b>YES</b>	Because a learner's motivation to apply what they've learned is critical to success, and because we have some influence on that motivation, we should measure our success in motivating.
11.	<b>YES</b>	Because providing learners with challenging realistic practice is critical to help support learners in developing skills and remembering, we should seek some indication of the level of practice.
12.	<b>YES</b>	Because after-learning follow-through is so critical to transfer, we should seek some indication of the likelihood that important supports will be in place.
13.	<b>YES</b>	Because supervisor support, guidance, and monitoring is critical to learning engagement and transfer, we should seek some indication of the likelihood of supervisor engagement.
14.	<b>NO</b>	By asking learners questions, we are seeking their input. Rewriting our questions as “I statements” adds little—AND too often pushes us to ask questions of less relevance to learning effectiveness.
15.	<b>YES</b>	First and foremost, we should include questions that give us feedback we can use to improve the effectiveness of our learning—much more important than questions on satisfaction/expectations.
16.	<b>NO</b>	Benchmarking is great in theory, but too often we will be comparing our data to the data others have captured using meaningless smile-sheet questions.
17.	<b>YES</b>	We get different perspectives when we measure after training and when learners are back at work. These dual insights are worthwhile for strategically important programs and pilot testing.
18.	<b>YES</b>	Because learners are making decisions on our smile-sheet questions, it's helpful to remind them of what they learned shortly before they make those decisions—so we get their full insights.
19.	<b>NO</b>	It is not acceptable to take responses that are comprised of words (like “strongly agree”) and turn those responses into a number. It is even worse to take averages of the resulting numbers.
20.	<b>NO</b>	Smile sheets can provide some valuable information; HOWEVER, smile-sheet data can't capture other critical information, like whether learners comprehend, remember, and apply.

To support your efforts at transforming your learner-feedback questions, read the book, *Performance-Focused Smile Sheets* (<http://SmileSheets.com>) and/or contact Dr. Will Thalheimer of Work-Learning Research ([info@work-learning.com](mailto:info@work-learning.com))