

# Effectively Compare Internal & Outsourced Training

Choosing internal vs. outsourced resources for a training initiative can be tricky. It's not a simple matter of what appears to be the cost. That type of analysis can be misleading. A sound decision should be based on hard and soft costs related to core business processes, staff utilization, timelines and training effectiveness. A hasty or uninformed decision either way can produce less-than-desired results and actually be more costly in dollars, morale and effectiveness. Use our five questions to make an informed decision to support your recommendation regarding a suitable training solution.

1. Does the initiative primarily involve proprietary or general knowledge and is it short or long-term?

*If proprietary knowledge is required, internal staff may already possess it and be able to quickly create a program to transfer that knowledge to others. Short-term proprietary programs requiring rapid development may make internal staff the only choice. Even if proprietary, if it is long-term or for large numbers, training other resources to provide services might be better.*

2. What learning resources (objectives, curriculum, materials, exercises and metrics) currently exist?

*Not an issue if it already exists but new programs usually require modification or complete design. Building even simple courses is time consuming and expensive. Would it be better to leverage a vendor who has existing curriculum or who can provide expertise in the design and/or training you need?*

3. Will undertaking the training initiative internally distract employees from their core business purpose?

*People are necessary to carry out training including preparation, registration, training, evaluation, support and more. Do you have staff who provide these services as their normal job role? If not, who will perform these tasks? What trade-offs will they have to make to perform the duties for this initiative?*

4. While staff may possess excellent technical skills, are they equally as capable of instructional design, curriculum development and effective transfer of knowledge to adult learners?

*Technical expertise does not necessarily mean a person can effectively design or deliver instruction. You want to ensure learning outcomes are positive and immediately applicable in the workplace. An outsourced*

*solution might be able to provide more experience and expertise than is held by internal staff. Fact is, it is often easier for a good trainer to prep new skills than it is to teach a good technician to become a skilled instructional designer or trainer. Can you provide training that is as effective as a professional training company?*

5. What is the true cost of internal implementation?

*It's not as simple as having an employee or two who can facilitate sessions. You must consider the many people and duties that surround a training initiative including registrars, facility prep, material prep, follow-up support, record-keeping, distraction from normal responsibilities, prep time and travel. If technical staff instruct, will they be able to rollout systems and train at the same time or will they need to juggle two duties? How will that affect the timeline? While initial costs may seem less, does evaluation of the true costs continue to make an internal solution more cost effective?*

These questions analyze core business processes, timelines, hard/soft costs and effectiveness. Be sure you have detailed vendor info. Don't assume you know what's involved. Compare the balance of all costs to what will be provided and make the best decision for your specific training initiative.

