

discipline, prior education, age and gender (Vermunt, 2005). McGurk (2009) also recognised the work done by Guest and King, (2005, pp. 250-1) and Thomson, Mabey, Storey, Gray and Iles (2001, p. 178), identifying that the evaluation of management and leadership development activity is further challenged by the reality that much of this development is informal with less specific and measurable objectives. As such, this gives reason to investigate how to maximise the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.

2.4 ROI on Training

Most organisations agree that employee training programmes are a valuable part of the human capital strategy, yet few have successfully quantified the ROI of that investment (Avolio, Avey & Quisenberry, 2010; Bartel, 2000; Estrada & Connolly, 2015; Mann et al., 1996; Phillips, Ray & Phillips, 2016). Travkin and Sharunina (2016) argue that an employer that invests in its employees expects to receive a return in the form of increased labour productivity. Travkin and Sharunina (2016) further state that “according to the theory of rational behaviour” (p. 264), a business will not invest if there is not an expected return in the future. Additionally, Travkin and Sharunina's (2016) article referred to a study that was conducted by Dearden, Reed and Van Reenen (2006) on UK based data which revealed that training had a much higher impact on productivity than the effect of an increase in wages did. Also, data on training in Italy revealed that labour productivity is more than five times higher than that of an increase in wages, and similarly data from Sweden and France shows that labour productivity increase more after employees have gone for training as opposed to a rise in their wages (Ballot, Fakhfakh & Taymaz, 2006).

Even though the ROI on training and development refers to a monetary value (Phillips, Phillips, Stone & Burkett, 2007), for this research, non-monetary returns are also seen as a positive return on the investment of training and development (Yaqoot et al., 2017). Both monetary (tangible) and non-monetary (intangible) values are important when determining the ROI of training and development (Bartel, 2000; Bukhari, Andreatta, Goldiez, & Rabelo, 2017). Intangible benefits would require the conversion into monetary values (Bartel, 2000), or these can be reported alongside the ROI calculation. Businesses often ignore intangible benefits, but then again, these do contribute over time (Boon, 2008; Seidle et al., 2016). An example of such an intangible benefit would be employee job satisfaction. Even though one would not be able to quantify this into monetary value, it will save the business time and money on employee recruitment in the future (Phillips, Phillips & Ray, 2015). Building on the research done by Bukhari et

al. (2017) the factors listed in Table 1 below can be seen as typical benefits associated with the return on investments in training and development. In this study, they differentiate between quantitative and qualitative benefits. Quantitative benefits are straightforward to identify and measure (Bukhari et al., 2017). With qualitative benefits being difficult to measure and to convert into a financial return (Bukhari et al., 2017).

Table 1 - ROI Benefits

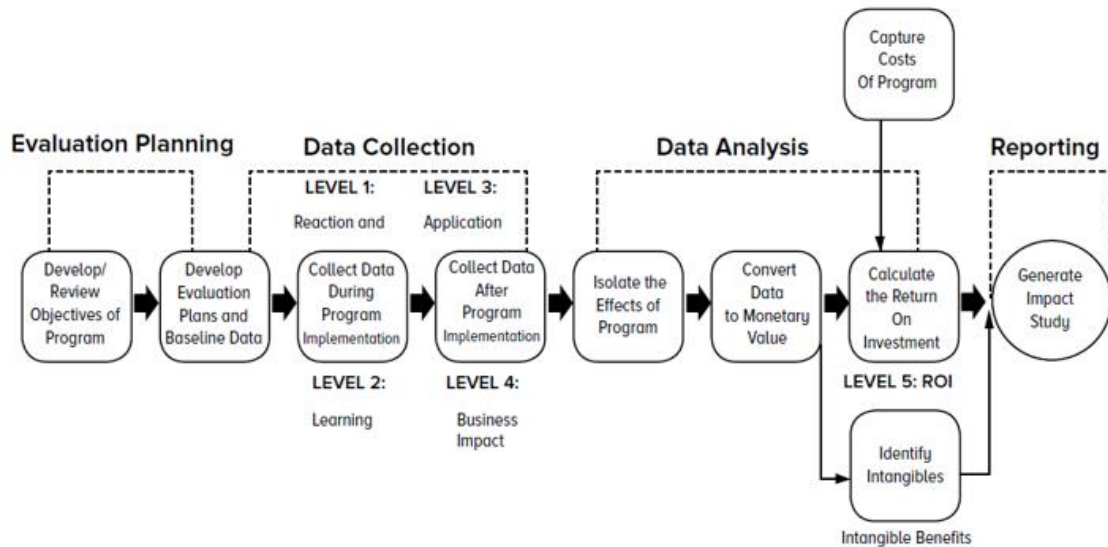
(Bukhari et al., 2017)

<u>Quantitative Benefits</u> <u>(Tangible)</u>	<u>Qualitative Benefits</u> <u>(Intangible)</u>
Increased efficiencies in processes	Improvement of output / results
Increased productivity	Quality of product/service
Financial gain	Employee & job satisfaction
Time savings	Increased employee motivation
Increased capacity	Team spirit
Reduction in errors & accidents	Reputation of the organisation
Faster time to competence	Competitive advantage
Increased consistency	Attract new talent
Reduction of employee turnover & absenteeism	Succession planning
Optimum resource utilisation	Less supervision

It is still necessary to determine how to measure this qualitative return successfully. The ROI methodology from Phillips et al. (2016) illustrated in Figure 1 below, demonstrates how intangible benefits are incorporated.

Figure 1 – The ROI Methodology

(Phillips et al., 2016)



This ROI methodology from Phillips et al. (2016) will be discussed further in this literature review as part of the different phases of training and development, namely as the pre, during, and post phases are explored.

2.4.1 Measurements of Training

In 1959, Donald Kirkpatrick issued a range of articles where he introduced measures of efficiency of training outcomes across four levels as illustrated in Table 2 below (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007; Kirkpatrick Partners, 2017; La Duke, 2017). Kirkpatrick's model stresses the need to aim attention at a shared attempt to achieve a return on stakeholder expectations by "showing the business value and worth of training" (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009, p. 2). The Kirkpatrick model is a straightforward and reasonably accurate method to measure the effectiveness of informal and formal workplace related training (La Duke, 2017). This model has become arguably the most widely used and popular model (Weber, 2015; Kirkpatrick Partners, 2017).

Table 2 - The Kirkpatrick Model

(Source: Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009; Kirkpatrick Partners, 2017; La Duke, 2017)

<u>Level</u>	<u>Evaluation Type</u> <i>(what is measured)</i>	<u>Evaluation description and characteristics</u>
4	Results	To what extent targeted outcomes occur because of learning event(s) and subsequent reinforcement (Reduction of costs; reduction in employee turnover; improved morale)
3	Behaviour	To what extent participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job (Using learning principles and techniques on the job) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once participants understand the purpose and importance of the intervention completed, and it is known that they have gained skills, because of the training; it is necessary to demonstrate those skills in the workplace - Through demonstration and practice - Ideally, also wait a month, then ask employee to demonstrate again the tasks on which training was given, to test if employee is still able to perform according to standard - Repeated evaluation and reinforcement ensures the training becomes internalised and finally as part of their behaviour
2	Learning	To what extent participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills and attitudes based on their participation in the learning event (Principles, facts, and techniques understood and absorbed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Typically achieved through identical pre- and post-tests (with only swapping the questions and answers (from a multiple-choice questionnaire) around - Essential to determine if participants learned anything during the intervention

<u>Level</u>	<u>Evaluation Type</u> <i>(what is measured)</i>	<u>Evaluation description and characteristics</u>
1	Reaction	<p>To what degree participants react favourably to the learning event (Trainees' liking of and feelings for a training programme, and did the trainee find it valuable?)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluations are completed at the end of the programme; known as the "smile sheet" referring to "how many smiles you counted at the end of the class" (La Duke, 2017, p. 20) 2. Typically focuses on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) course content 2) physical environment 3) instructor's presentation and skills

There is much evidence to suggest that Kirkpatrick's classification has dominated the training evaluation discussion since it was first published. Curado & Teixeira (2014) studied Kirkpatrick's four-levels model on training evaluation and estimating each training programme's ROI using evidence from a small firm. Phillips et al. (2007) designed a practical and usable field book to support the implementation of the ROI methodology. The Kirkpatricks' highlighted that formal training interventions as a stand-alone programme do not present noteworthy bottom-line outcomes, but that the outcomes are always due to different factors (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009). Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2007) explain that if one does not know which these factors are, nor will one know which ones to measure, and therefore the expected results and transfer of learning to on-the-job behaviour will not take place. As there is, even more, pressure on training professionals to deliver results, Kirkpatrick (2010) crafted yet another classic book full of information for evaluating learning per the four levels.

Jack Phillips formulated his initial work on training evaluation during the 1970s - 1980s (Weber, 2015). His plan was to move pass level four to a financial accounting of programme success, *return on investment (ROI)*, known as Level five (Phillips, 1995; Phillips et al., 2007). This level of evaluation was aimed at assessing the value of expensive and exclusive, high-profile programmes by including the different steps of cost-benefit analysis (Phillips, 1995; Phillips et al., 2007). Also, Phillips broadened Level three (Application and Implementation) and Level four (Impact) which comprises of the

transfer of learning and outcomes to processes other than training (Phillips, 1995). These are illustrated in Table 3 below. Moreover, to support the implementation of the evaluation process at each level, he established a process model and guiding principles (Phillips et al., 2007).

Table 3 - Jack Phillips – Five Levels of Evaluation Model

(Source: Phillips et al., 2007)

<u>Level</u>	<u>Evaluation Type</u> <i>(what is measured)</i>	<u>Evaluation description and characteristics</u>
5	ROI	Did the monetary value of the results exceed the cost for the programme?
4	Business Results (Impact)	Did the on-the-job application produce measurable results? (Reduction of costs; reduction in employee turnover; improved morale)
3	Job Applications	Did the participants apply what they learned on the job?
2	Learning	What skills, knowledge, or attitudes have changed and by how much?
1	Reaction & Planned Action	What are participants' reactions to the programme, and what do they plan to do with the material?

Both Kirkpatrick (2006, 2007, 2009 & 2017) and Phillips' (2007 & 2016) models of training evaluation and measurement methods provide a practical method to estimate the potential payoff, namely ROI of a proposed training initiative. It depends whether one needs to measure the return on expectations (Kirkpatrick, 2006) or the ROI (Phillips, 2007). These useful tools have emerged from the literature, and therefore these tools will form the foundation of the qualitative research while establishing how to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers.

2.5 The Assessment & Design of Training & Development Programmes (Pre)

Training and development are more important to employees than organisations realise, as most employees are willing to stay with their employer if training and development opportunities are offered (Borzykowski, 2017). Even though employers are willing to offer such opportunities to employees, the employees' understanding and ability must be on a specific level before they can enter the training and development programme (Dunlap,

2015). This typically forms part of the needs assessment that the organisation should conduct (Shibani, 2017).

Once the needs assessment is conducted, the training or development programme should be designed, followed by the selection of training and development techniques. These are the steps involved in the assessment and design phase, that takes place before delivery of training and development programmes. Also before the commencement of the training programme(s), the employer representative should ensure the appropriate training material is ready and that the trainers are devoted and geared to work with the group of employees and managers for the duration of the programme (Dunlap, 2015).

Interestingly enough, it is identified that the ability and the willingness to transfer learning should be measured in the pre-training phase to identify any possible transfer problems before the training intervention (Massenberg, Schulte, & Kauffeld, 2017).

2.5.1 Training Needs Assessment

Any business should realise that the first, and the most important step in training and development, is the identifying of training needs (Shibani, 2017), and even more so on the management level. Training needs assessment is gathering and analysing data on an ongoing basis, to establish the training needs to help the organisation accomplish its objectives (Wärnich et al., 2014). Thus, finding the gap between what is happening, and what should be happening, and as such training is required to fill the gap (Kraiger, Passmore & Santos, 2015). A training needs assessment supports all training activities (Shah, 2017). A training needs assessment also determines the relevance of training for performance problems, their solutions and the identification of required knowledge, skills and competencies (Marentakis, Panagos & Riga, 2016; Wärnich et al., 2014).

It is common cause that businesses provide training. However, the difficulty lies in identifying exactly what training is needed and suitable for the employees (Sarkar, 2013). The success of a training programme relies largely on the needs assessment (Sarkar, 2013). Even though there is agreement that training needs assessments are required, there is little understanding of how to measure these training needs (Ferreira & Abbad, 2013).

2.5.2 The Design

Training will be of no use if the content of the training does not match the identified training needs (Van Eerde, Tang & Talbot, 2008). Metcalf (2015) designed a middle manager leadership and management programme and found that during the design one

of the core principles is to specify what knowledge the individuals need to use to perform a required skill and adjust their behaviour. Critical factors include the contents that go into the training and development programme, as well as the sequence of training components (Harrison, 1994; Narcisa 2014; Marentakis et al., 2016). The quality of the training or development process is influenced by a “holistic approach” (p. 228) (Narcisa, 2014; Marentakis et al., 2016). Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2006) identified specific factors that should be carefully considered when training programmes are selected.

Based on the research, the design of a training programme can be outlined as follows:

1. Conducting training needs assessment
2. Setting programme objective(s) while aligning the programme with business strategy and departmental objectives
3. Determining training programme structure and outline
4. Selecting participants, based on training needs assessment
5. Selecting equipment and facilities
6. Determining costing and requesting approval of funding
7. Develop or acquire material (depending on capabilities and capacity)
8. Selecting the trainer or training provider (depending on capabilities and capacity)
9. Selecting methods (depending on needs)
10. Schedule and coordinating the programme
11. Evaluating the programme

By designing suitable training interventions with the help of thorough data collection done through training needs assessments, the organisation will address specific problems (Shibani, 2017). Such training needs assessment is of no use if the training is not aligned to organisational objects (Little, 2014). Context is also very important. McGurk’s (2009) study found that due to the “lack of appreciation of the operational and cultural context” (p. 474), training interventions focusing on softer leadership skills had limited success.

2.5.3 Selection of Training Techniques

Factors associated with selecting the most appropriate training method include the method of delivering the training, the training provider, the participants and their background, facilities and equipment, as well as the schedule, which includes the time available (Feltrinelli, Gabriele & Trento, 2017; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Chaimongkonrojna and Steane, (2015) conducted a six-month Full Range Leadership Development Programme (FR-LDP) study (p. 1165), and the results of this study suggested that it was an effective leadership development intervention. The programme contained practical aspects and raised participant awareness of more effective options in leadership behaviour and ability to distinguish leading from managing (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). Effective leadership can be enhanced through a combination of the following: “the training workshop, the 360-degree feedback and group reflection, plus peer coaching” (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015, p. 1176). As such this research will establish what can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers.

2.6 Implementation of Training & Development Programmes (During)

Once all the steps have been completed in the pre-training and development steps, then the programme is delivered through implementation and support. These are the stages involved during the implementation phase of training and development programmes.

Throughout the programme, managers should make use of the opportunity to update the organisation’s policies and procedures should they discover outdated information (Dunlap, 2015). It is also important for an employer to acknowledge the managers who do so (Dunlap, 2015).

2.6.1 Implementation

In the interview English and Alagaraja (2017) conducted with Dr Hardy MacKenzie in 2015, he explained that to capture and maintain the audience’s (middle managers in this instance) attention, consists of a combination of the activities presented, as well as one’s presence. The evidence from McGurk’s (2009) case, identified that the operational setting in which middle managers function, is the most important consideration when designing and implementing management and leadership development (McGurk, 2009a). This is once again confirmed by Dr Hardy MacKenzie’s recommendation that it is very important to know one’s audience when delivering a training or development programme (English & Alagaraja, 2017). Accordingly, focusing on only specific parts of the training or development programme, like only the design of the materials with little consideration for the audience could hinder the transfer of training in trainees, and also result in the training or development programme losing its impact (English & Alagaraja, 2017).

2.6.2 Support of Training

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2007) specified that since a fair amount of learning happens on the job, learning professionals should partner with a subordinate to assist them in preparing for the training or development. This partner should continue being involved during and after the training or development programme by emphasising the new skills and knowledge through continuous support (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2007). This research will further investigate what can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers.

2.6.3 Commitment and Engagement

Middle managers are more likely to give the right level of commitment if there is a proper communication plan supporting the programme (Conley, Lutz, Heather & Miller, 2017). This should be led by the training providers. An organisation's learning culture serves as a contributor to the commitment the middle managers have during the training (Conley et al., 2017). Typically insufficient time to actually learn something and the lack of support from the organisation's management when it comes to their employees' development (Conley et al., 2017).

2.7 Evaluation and Transfer of Training & Development (Post)

Once the training or development programme was conducted, this should be evaluated through an appropriate evaluation method; followed by the transferring of learning in the workplace. These are the steps involved in the evaluation phase, namely after the delivery of training and development programmes.

It is necessary for employers to evaluate the training intervention and the training provider after the training intervention through a questionnaire or survey (Dunlap, 2015).

2.7.1 Evaluation of Learning

Even since the sixties employers were concerned with the outcome of training and wondered whether the methods have resulted in any improvement in skill, or in making it easier or quicker to acquire the skill and whether one method gives more improvement than other (Holding, 1965; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Based on the Kirkpatrick model (2006) displayed in Table 2 earlier in this chapter, one can use the reaction level (level 1) as a sign of customer satisfaction, while the learning level (level 2), is expected to be a condition for behaviour change. The results of the behaviour level (level 3), prove how the training input is now applied on the job, and if the organisation finds it useful. The results level (level 4),

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) stated that evaluation takes place to determine the success of the training programme. Similarly, Mann et al. (1996) argued that the evaluation of training programmes is an essential part of the training process and they further argued that a measure of what has been learnt, should be taken after one month of the training; this is more realistic.

2.7.2 Transfer of Learning

On return from a training intervention, there is a reasonable expectation from the organisation that that manager should apply and pass on the learnings from the training. Transfer of such training refers to the extent to which the manager can successfully apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through the training to practice (Mann et al., 1996). Such transfer of learning is more likely to take place if employees are supported by their supervisor(s), adequate communication takes place, and how (assignment) decision are made (Ng, 2015). Ng's (2015) study found that limited attention has been given to this area. Cromwell and Kolb (2004) stated that even though organisations dedicate resources, time and energy to adequately develop the capacity for their leaders, only a few of the training programmes achieve more than 10 percent productive transference of learning to work. Amagoh (2009) pointed out that for a leadership development process to be successful, it relies on the capability to encourage participants to apply new skills and reflect on learning experiences. Chaimongkonrojna and Steane (2015) stated that these steps are integral in creating a transfer of knowledge and skills (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). Accordingly, this research will further investigate the evaluation phase to determine what can be done after the programme was delivered, to ensure the managers apply the learning and ensure it is maintained.

Positive transfer of learning is reliant on organisational factors that make use of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Jaidev & Chirayath, 2012). Pre-training motivation, as well as during-training activities, was related to transfer of learning, yet, supervisor support was unrelated to skills transfer (Jaidev & Chirayath, 2012).

2.8 Conclusion

It is established from the literature that training is focused on the short term to teach and improve critical skills, knowledge, and acquire capabilities to carry out their current responsibilities (Brown, 2016; Travkin & Sharunina, 2016; Wörnich et al., 2014). Whereas development is more long term directed to prepare people for additional responsibilities, like growing an employee into a new role (Wörnich et al., 2014). These training and development interventions are focused on building the competencies

needed to implement future strategies and manage the business towards its future goals (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Estrada and Connolly (2015) studied the outcomes and ROI of supervisory and leadership development programmes and presented that training has a substantial positive influence on the workforce. The managers have “lower turnover, higher performance, more frequent and higher value monetary awards, and higher promotion rates” (Estrada & Connolly, 2015, p. 12). Additionally, these trends are also extended to the employees they manage (Estrada & Connolly, 2015). It is known that training attends to the needs and demands of both the employees and the organisation (Lakra, 2016). It has also emerged from the literature that training has a positive effect on employees’ productivity, more so than the effect of the change in employees’ wages (Travkin & Sharunina, 2016).

Most organisations agree that employee training programmes are a valuable part of the human capital strategy, yet few have successfully quantified the ROI of that investment (Estrada & Connolly, 2015). From the research, it was established that one method to predict the potential ROI of a training initiative, can be done with training evaluation and measurement methods from both Kirkpatrick (2010) and Phillips’ (2007 & 2016) models.

Accordingly, it is known that businesses still believe that both training and development interventions are important and necessary. It is known that these interventions can be measured. It also emerged from the literature that middle managers play an important role within organisations and hence they deserve to be invested in. However, what is unknown, is what the return on that investment in middle managers could potentially be for the business. Therefore, this study aims to understand the different phases of training and development programmes better and subsequently propose a practical framework to ensure the maximisation of ROI for training and development of middle managers. The three phases of training or development are categorised as follows: the design phase, implementation phase, and evaluation of training phase. Last mentioned also involves the transferring of learning. As Kirkpatrick’s and Phillips’ useful evaluation tools have emerged from the literature, these tools will form the foundation of the qualitative research.

The research questions are covered in Chapter 3 that follows.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research aims to answer five specific research questions. Each of these research questions has been extracted from the reviewed literature.

3.1 Research Questions

Research Question 1: What can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?

Research Question 1 aims to identify how middle managers are selected for training and or development programmes, as well as how these programmes are designed. This research question will aim to establish if training needs assessments are conducted before middle managers are selected for training and or development programmes. This research question also aims to establish what the steps are that management and or training providers go through when designing a training or development programme before commencement.

Research Question 2: What can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?

The purpose of this research question is to establish what the managers who are responsible for training and development within the organisation, do to ensure that the programme is delivered adequately. As the training provider plays a key role in the implementation phase, this research question will also aim to establish what they do to ensure sufficient delivery of the programme. It is expected that through this question it will emerge that support during the training and development activities are essential, and for that reason, this research question will also aim to find out more about support possibilities.

Research Question 3: What can be done after the programme is delivered, to ensure the managers apply and maintain the learning?

Research Question 3 aims to determine what is done by the managers after the training or development programme is delivered to ensure they utilise what they have learned, and ensure long term sustainability of these learnings. Furthermore, it will provide the opportunity to establish if the transfer of learning takes place, and if so, how.

Research Question 4: What are the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development?

Research Question 4 will support the development of understanding how, and if, training and development are measured to determine the ROI.

Research Question 5: What do the training providers and the training and development managers think the other party should do more of to increase the ROI of training and development of middle managers?

This research question will provide greater insights into the distinction between the views of training providers and the views of those responsible for training and development within organisations. Specifically, the study will look at what the training providers' opinions are on what they believe managers should do extra and or differently to maximise the ROI of training and development. The study will also look at what the managers working with training and development in their organisations' opinions are on what they believe training providers should do extra and or differently to maximise the ROI of training and development. Once this difference is established, the information will be combined to propose a framework that will maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the chosen research methodology selected to investigate the research questions presented in Chapter 3. The literature review presented in Chapter 2 indicated that a deeper exploratory investigation was necessary to answer the research questions. A detailed literature review was conducted of the subject matter covered in Chapter 2 which investigated the ROI models available and discussed the three phases of training and development, namely pre, during, and post. This formed the basis of the design of the methodology and the interview guideline that was used during the one-to-one, semi-structured in-depth interviews. This study adopted a qualitative and exploratory approach. This chapter sets out the rationale that guided the research design and methodology, the reasons for choosing the design, data sampling, data analysis and the limitations of the chosen research.

4.2 Research Methodology and Design

Below is a discussion of the thinking behind the completion of the current study: maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers.

4.2.1 Rational for the chosen method or research

The area of study is unexplored; thus, a qualitative study was conducted. This study looked at how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers through an exploratory research with the intent of finding new insights, presenting new arguments and to evaluate topics from a different point of view (Creswell, 2012; Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2010). It enables one to provide detailed explanations of recent developments (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). From the research, it was found that the topic was a relatively complex, social sciences issue while trying to understand the field of study better (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). Additionally, qualitative business research addresses objectives related to business, while using techniques that do not require or depend on numerical measurements (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). The study aimed to identify or uncover groups or patterns of meaning (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). It concentrated on collecting data from three distinct sample groups, namely training providers, middle managers and managers from organisations that work with middle management training and development. Additionally, these groups had to either have provided or had to have undergone management training or development for middle managers within the last two years. It was necessary for this research to understand the environment that the training provider, the employer and the

middle managers, operated in (Zikmund et al., 2010). The research design consisted of qualitative data collection for each research question.

Pragmatism is a practical approach that believes in using procedures that “work” (p. 537) for a certain research problem under study (Creswell, 2012). The pragmatist looks at how to make things fit together by keeping the focus on the research questions and objectives (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This research study has taken a pragmatic approach as the aim was to build on existing ROI models to ultimately determine how to maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers. Therefore, it is clear that qualitative and exploratory research methods needed to be adopted and used (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010).

The data was analysed inductively which means this study developed a new theory based on what the data presented (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). For this reason, research questions were developed to provide answers to the questions, after the data had been analysed (Zikmund et al., 2010).

The research strategy has taken the form of semi structured in-depth interviews with open ended questions (Creswell, 2012; Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). More specifically, data was collected through one-on-one, mostly face-to-face interviews. Where it was not possible to interview the participants through face-to-face interactions, telephonic interviews were conducted (Creswell, 2012; Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010).

This research was conducted through a cross-sectional study, which is a type of empirical study that analysed primary data collected from a population, or a representative subset, at a specific point in time (Creswell, 2012; Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010).

For this research topic, 22 in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted. Seven with training providers who had trained middle managers on management training and development within the last two years. Another seven interviews with middle managers who attended management training and development within the last two years, and a further eight with the managers responsible for management training and or development of middle managers within their organisations within the last two years.

It is established that the ROI tool for training has been tested and implemented in large corporates, more specifically, mostly in other countries (Curado & Teixeira, 2014). This research would like to understand how an ROI tool has been successfully implemented in organisations and how it can then be maximised for middle managers’ training and development. As part of the interview process, it was anticipated that questions would

not have been understood accurately from the offset. Accordingly, direct interaction with the participants through one-on-one, and mostly face-to-face interviews (Patton, 2002) provided an opportunity for clarification, follow-up questions, and to probe for more information (Patton, 2002). All participants were given assurance of confidentiality, and anonymity on their request (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.3 Population

The population of relevance in this research study, was all training providers who conducted management training and/or development programmes to middle managers within the last two years; middle managers who had undergone management training and/or development within the last two years, as well as all managers responsible for middle management training and development within their organisation within the last two years. The training providers provided input on how engaging and successfully employees have learned and applied the skills and knowledge covered in the programme (Phillips et al., 2007). The investigation relied on the training providers to identify and refer those businesses that have been able to successfully implement training strategies and initiatives on the different methods of how to maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers.

4.4 Sampling Method and Size

The sampling comprised a blend of three types of techniques. First, quota sampling was used, where people from training providers, middle managers, as well the managers within organisations that are responsible for training and development were interviewed. As it was not possible to access the records of the total population being studied, a non-probability sampling was the chosen method (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This ensures that the various subgroups in a population represent specific characteristics that the research requires from those participants to be included (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). Additionally, the research used a purposive (judgemental) sampling technique, relying on one's judgment to actively choose the individuals with the required characteristics (Creswell, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). Lastly, as it was difficult to find members of this group, snowball sampling was also applied (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The use of snowball sampling technique was critical in obtaining access to key experts in the field of training and development of middle managers. As such a heterogeneous group of training providers, middle managers and managers responsible for training and development within organisations were recruited for interview purposes (Creswell, 2012).

Seeing that this was a qualitative study, the sample size was relatively small, consisting of 22 participants. Creswell (2012) explains that this number is an estimate based on the size needed for statistical procedures which determined that the sample would have most probably been an adequate estimate of the characteristics of the population. The 22 participants consisted of seven participants from training providers who had trained middle managers within the last two years, seven middle managers who had attended management training and/or development within the last two years, and finally eight managers responsible for management training and/or development of middle managers within their organisations within the last two years.

The sample was not limited to a specific industry. Nevertheless, the sample was taken across nine different industry sectors, which included: Retail and Wholesale, Information Communication Technology (ICT) Distribution, Parastatal, Education, Tourism, Telecommunication, Transport Infrastructure, Forestry and Financial Services. Because judgmental sampling was applied, the industries were not equally represented in the sample, but instead focused on individuals that were considered to have the necessary experience and knowledge, based on the current or prior role they held. The number of respondents interviewed in the different industries with the position each one fulfills, as well as the type of interview that was conducted is displayed in Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Industry and Position of Chosen Sample

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Positions</u>	<u>Interview Type</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
Retail & Wholesale	HR / T&D / Learning & Development (L&D) Manager	C: Managers working with T&D of MM	3
	Sales Manager	B: Middle Managers	1
Information Communication Technology (ICT) Distribution	Analyst	B: Middle Managers	1
Parastatal	Senior Functional Analyst	B: Middle Managers	1
Training & Development (T&D)	Business Development Manager	A: Training Providers	1
	Director	A: Training Providers	5
		C: Managers working with T&D of MM	1
	Programme Manager	A: Training Providers	1
	Educator	B: Middle Managers	1
Tourism	Team Manager	B: Middle Managers	1
Tele-communication	Consultant: L&D (Africa)	C: Managers working with T&D of MM	1
	Head: T&D		1

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Positions</u>	<u>Interview Type</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
Transport Infrastructure	Branch Manager	B: Middle Managers	1
Forestry	Principal Research Officer	B: Middle Managers	1
Financial Services	Head: L&D / National L&D Manager	C: Managers working with T&D of MM	2
TOTAL:			22

4.5 Units of Analysis

This is the principal entity that is being analysed by the research to gather information (data). It is the “what” or “who” that the respondents represent. For this research study, the unit of analysis was the perceptions, experiences and opinions of experts of training providers, middle managers who had attended management training and development, as well as managers who were responsible for training and or development of middle managers within the last two years. The study is focused at the group level.

4.6 Data Collection Tool

Studying academic literature and conducting in-depth interviews are seen as one of the most practical methods of conducting exploratory research (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Therefore, 22 one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts, business owners, managers, both senior and middle from a variety of organisations in different industries as illustrated in Table 4 above. The in-depth interviews varied in the time taken to complete depending from person to person. The longest recorded interview was 70 minutes, with the shortest recorded interview 30 minutes. On average interviews lasted about 45 minutes. Interviews were arranged in advance at a date, time and location convenient to the participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). These interviews were conducted where it was suitable for one-on-one interviews, and where there were little interruptions, for example, a closed office or boardroom at their place of work. One interview was conducted at the participant’s house where it was extremely quiet with no interruptions. Where it was not possible to conduct a face-to-face interview, telephonic interviews were conducted (Creswell, 2012; Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010).

Once access to the individual had been obtained, the individuals were formally invited via a standard email. The purpose of the research was explained, and participants had the opportunity to review the consent form and the interview guideline in advance. Once the individual agreed to participate, a meeting request with the proposed time and place

was sent. An example of the default email correspondence and invitation is given in Appendix A1 and A2.

The research obtained information about the organisation and the person that was interviewed, before commencing the interview. Each participant was asked to complete and sign a consent form to ensure the data that was gathered was used in an ethical way (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The consent form that was used is presented in Appendix B. After permission had been obtained from each individual, all interviews were recorded using a voice-recording device. These recordings were then personally transcribed.

For this study's interview process, an interview guideline was used as the measurement instrument. The semi-structured interview guidelines that were used are presented in Appendix C1 – C3. There were three different interview guidelines, one for each of the groups chosen, namely training providers, middle managers and managers responsible for training and development within their organisations. Questions in the interview guidelines were all the same, with small adjustments made to be more appropriate for the sample. There was a possibility that deviation from the interview guideline could happen since the interview had open ended questions, and not all questions were asked or answered in the order as set out in the interview guideline (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The mapping of the interview questions to the research questions which were developed in Chapter 3 is presented in Table 5 below. As this interview process followed a semi-structured approach, it should be noted that questions were not necessarily asked or answered in the order indicated (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Table 5 - Research Question and Interview Question Mapping

Research Questions from Chapter 3	Interview Questions
Research Question 1: What can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?	Interview Guideline A, B & C: 3. What should be done before a training and or development programme starts, that could maximise the ROI?
Research Question 2: What can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?	Interview Guideline A, B & C: 4. What should be done while the training and development programmes are running to ensure the maximum ROI or an increase in the ROI? 5. Do you believe it is important for you or anyone from your organisation to be involved once the programme started? Also explain how and why, or why not.
Research Question 3: What can be done after the programme was delivered, to ensure the managers apply and maintain the learning?	Interview Guideline A, B & C: 6. Do you believe it is important for the transfer of learning to take place in the workplace? Explain why / why not. If yes, how should this be done?

<p align="center">Research Questions from Chapter 3</p>	<p align="center">Interview Questions</p>
<p>Research Question 4: What are the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development?</p>	<p>Interview Guideline A:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What should be done to increase the ROI of training and development? 2. What should be avoided to ensure the increase of ROI of training and development? <p>Interview Guideline B:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.a). How much of the training and development, that you have attended, have you applied in the workplace? 1.b). In your opinion, what should be done to increase the ROI of training and development? 2. In your opinion, what should be avoided to ensure the increase of ROI of training and development? <p>Interview Guideline C:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.a). Has the organisation received a good ROI for training and development done? 1.b). In your opinion, when you send middle managers on training, what should be done to increase the ROI? 2. In your opinion, what should be avoided to ensure the increase of ROI of training and development? <p>Interview Guideline A, B & C:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What method should be used for evaluating the training or development programme that the middle managers have gone through? Please provide details. 8. What kind of limitations could be encountered in terms of evaluations, and how could these be eliminated or avoided?
<p>Research Question 5: Is there a difference in the opinions on the above four questions between training providers and the managers responsible for training and development of middle managers in organisations?</p>	<p>Interview Guideline A, B & C:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9.a). What in your opinion could training providers do extra and or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers? 9.b). What in your opinion could the managers from your organisation do extra and or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers?

4.7 Data Collection

Primary data collection is a useful way to conduct exploratory research by way of collecting and assessing information on targeted variables in a traditional and orderly way, which then allows one to answer the relevant research questions and assess the results (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). Data gathering methods best suited for exploratory study, requiring deep understanding of the concepts being explored, are focus groups, observations and in-depth interviews (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). For this study, primary data was gathered through semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews of the 22 experts, which included training providers, middle managers and managers responsible for training and development of middle managers within

organisations; which formed part of the chosen sample. The process was designed to ensure that open dialogue could take place and that conversations occurred around the relevant subject matter while still being able to address specific issues if needed (Patton, 2002; Zikmund et al., 2010).

Saunders and Lewis (2012), highlight the importance of the derived questions being centred on a set of predetermined themes. Accordingly, the interview questions put forward in the interview guidelines was extrapolated directly from the research questions as given in Chapter 3 of this document and used as the foundation of the interview guidelines presented in Appendix C1 – C3. The complicated nature of the questions, as well as the purpose of the questions, lent itself to the semi-structured approach (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010).

Before formally starting the data collection, three pilot interviews were conducted; one with each of the distinct groups, namely one training provider, one middle manager and one manager who works with training and development of middle managers. The pilot sample also formed part of the required target of management training or development conducted or attended within the last two years. This afforded the researcher with the opportunity to scrutinise the interview guidelines and determine that the questions were straightforward and unambiguous. There was an opportunity to make improvements if needed (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Only minor grammatical corrections were made based on the pilot interviews that were conducted, which enhanced the communication process and limited any ambiguity. Based on feedback received from the pilot interviews, it was decided to provide the interview guideline in advance to the participants once the interview was confirmed, because it provided them with the opportunity to prepare for the discussion. Most of the participants from training providers and the managers working with training and development of middle managers appreciated this since they could have the models or frameworks that they apply in their business readily available for the discussion. As such, this afforded the researcher the best possible insight into this research.

The interview process started off with formal introductions, followed by a brief explanation of the title and the purpose of the research. The researcher made it clear that the objective is to establish a framework that could be implemented by organisations based on what is the best practices to determine ROI of training and development of middle managers and how this could be maximised through the employment of this framework. Following this, nine open-ended, non-leading questions were asked during the discussion. Participants responded with what they believe were best practices based

on their knowledge, opinions and perceptions from experience, as well as ideas that they believe could be best practices.

To ensure a meaningful discussion and to support the exploratory nature of the research, the participants were encouraged to talk freely and openly. Even though the discussions were voice-recorded after permission was given by the participant, detailed notes were also taken on the researcher's laptop. The transcripts were completed from these notes taken during the interview. Even though key themes could be identified during the data collection process already, the exact categories were only proven by the analysis of the data post the interview (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Detailed discussions were held, and all responses were carefully listened to and noted. Interviews continued until a point of data saturation was reached or at such a point where no further insights were given by the participants. At the closing of the interviews, participants were offered to add any additional or final thoughts, and they were also offered the opportunity to ask any questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). All participants found the topic relevant and were interested to see the final results.

The voice-recordings from the interviews were documented in Microsoft Word and personally transcribed. These two sources, (the voice-recordings and the word documents) were the primary data that was analysed as described in Chapter 5 (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.8 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was concerned with the identification of common themes and insights that emerged out of the collected data from the interviews (Zikmund et al., 2010). To gain a deeper understanding of the categories and themes, an effort was made to analyse the data during the interview process already. This also enabled the researcher to explore any new themes and insights fully. Nevertheless, the bulk of the analysis was only done post the interviews. This was done using thematic analysis on a question by question basis (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Thematic analysis is a method that is used to identify, record and analyse patterns or themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Guest, MacQueen & Namey (2012) further explains that the person conducting the research is more involved and further interpretation is also required. Guest et al. (2012) also highlight that thematic analysis involves more than the counting of specific words or phrases; it concentrates on finding and interpreting both implicit and explicit views from the data, namely the themes. Codes were then established to depict these classified themes and connected to the original data as readily available tags for further analysis later (Guest et al., 2012). For thematic

analysis, reliability is more important than word-based analysis, as more clarification goes into defining the data items, that is codes, and applying the codes to large sections of the text (Guest et al., 2012).

For this research, all interviews were personally transcribed by the researcher, where after the data was analysed making use of a computer aided analysis software programme, namely Atlas. Atlas is used for coding qualitative data. Atlas is the technique whereby one extracts themes from the data and categorises accordingly. Recordings were carefully listened to, and all interview notes were studied thoroughly, before assigning different units of data to specific categories. Simultaneously, codes were produced and assigned to the features of the data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes were then grouped to establish potential themes (Zikmund et al., 2010).

Themes were developed through the identification of a construct, an idea or thought that appeared repeatedly and had some significance about the research questions being studied (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The completion of the thematic analysis required a repetitive approach. Also, the producing of codes and identification of themes had to be completed twice before the review of the identified themes took place (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data was imported into Atlas, where after the necessary coding was completed. This part of the thematic analysis process was further supported by the additional use of frequency analysis. Each construct, idea or thought was recorded and the number of times each one was repeated was captured. These were then ranked per the frequency with which they occurred. The themes and insights that emerged from each interview were linked together and analysed in the framework of the developed research questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Guest et al., 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.9 Data Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity are two of the key criteria for evaluating measurements (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). Usually, reliability and validity are recognised by details the data source provides about how the data was collected and processed (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). Zikmund et al. (2010) refer to reliability in the context of consistency and highlights the importance of the measurement being reliable from one use to the next. Zikmund et al. (2010), then refers to validity as representing the accuracy and trustworthiness with which the measurement assesses the “intended concept” (p. 305), reflecting on whether the measurement is accurately

measuring what it is supposed to measure. As such, the measurement used was both reliable and accurate (Zikmund et al., 2010; Patton, 2002).

Naturally, qualitative research can be considered subjective and can be affected by many different biases (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). Interviewer bias, interpreter bias and response bias could have occurred when the interviews were conducted and the data analysed (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). To limit this and ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the semi-structured interview questions were standardised for each interview and was used as a guide throughout the process. During the interview, the opportunity was provided to ensure the respondents were given sufficient freedom to explore the topic. Recognising and being aware of the potential biases helped mitigate the influence of such biases during the process. Subsequently, the focus was on the perceptions and opinions brought forward by the participants. Furthermore, an effort was made to be strict when selecting the chosen sample to ensure the specified criteria was applied.

4.10 Research Limitations

Saunders and Lewis (2012) and Zikmund et al. (2010) stated that qualitative research is subjective and for this reason, there is a significant risk that biases and compromises may occur. The limitations of the research were identified as follows:

- The interviewer is not an expert in conducting research interviews, nor was the interviewer trained to conduct these interviews expertly, and as such, this could have influenced the method of data gathering, along with the results of the research (Agee, 2009)
- The quality of the data is reliant on the information obtained from the in-depth interviews.
- The possibility that the sample might not have been representative due to the use of non-probability, purposive sampling, making it difficult to generalise results to the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
- Geographical bias in the participant's responses could have been affected, as only a limited number of individuals from the Gauteng area in South Africa represented the sample. Subsequently, the size of the sample may not be sufficient for broad generalisations in other cultural contexts or environments.
- Due to the extreme urgency experienced from most of the participants interviewed, as well as the short timeframe that was applied, it could have discouraged the participants from offering more detailed information or additional. This could have

resulted in collecting incomplete data, which is significant for the quality of the information provided.

- Just as with Curado & Teixeira's (2014) study, the data was collected in a single moment in time. Curado & Teixeira (2014) recognised a longitudinal study would have included data from several different training programmes which could identify the effects of the different learning outcomes from each training intervention, and as such could result in a richer research.
- Additional components that could affect training effectiveness, such as individual characteristics, teaching characteristics or detailed training design was not examined (Curado & Teixeira, 2014).
- Generalisability to all organisations could not be possible as the number of businesses and the number of industries investigated represent only a small sample (namely nine).

4.11 Ethical Consideration

Before this research study, or any of the interviews took place, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Gordon Institute of Business Science's (GIBS) ethics committee. Proof of the issued clearance certificate is attached as Appendix D.

4.12 Methodology Conclusion

This research proposal and methodology was designed to address the requirements and objectives discussed in Chapter 1. This research aims to enhance the literature available on the measurements and frameworks of ROI on training and development of middle managers, and through this further develop the understanding and ability to implement such a framework more effectively.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to discover how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers. In this chapter, the outcomes of the study are presented and discussed in alignment with the five research questions that were formulated in Chapter 3. This section presents the outcomes and key findings of the qualitative analysis of the data that was collected by way of 22 in-depth, one-on-one, expert interviews across a variety of industries, using the data collection process described in Chapter 4. This chapter also discusses the content of the interviews and the themes that emerged as part of the proceedings.

5.2 Description of the Participants

In Table 6 below, a list of these participants with their names and surnames, the organisations they worked for during the time the interviews were conducted and the industries within which these organisations form part of, are represented. One participant requested that the organisation that she works for must be kept confidential. Each participant's position within the organisation and the number of years that the participant operated in the position at the time of the interview are also included in this list. Three of the training providers that were interviewed held more than 20 years' experience in the field. Four of the middle managers held their current position for longer than five years, of which two were more than ten years. Regarding the managers working with training and development in their organisations, six of the eight had more than five years' experience in the field and three of those for more than 18 years. This ensured the data that was collected, satisfied an expansive scope of opinions and best practices in the field of training and development. The entire sample consisted of 13 females and nine males. In selecting the 22 individuals, it was necessary to make use of judgmental sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The individual's current position or role within the organisation was taken into consideration when selecting the participant to take part in the research study. A participant formed part of one of the following groups:

- A. Training providers that conducted management training and development to middle managers within the last two years;
- B. Middle managers who received management training and development within the last two years that were arranged by their organisation; and
- C. The managers from organisations that worked with the management training and development of middle managers within the last two years.

Table 6 - Information of Participants from Sample

	<u>Participant / Sample</u>	<u>Participant's Name & Surname</u>	<u>Industry</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Number of years in position</u>
1	A: Training Provider	Angelique Maré	Training & Development	GIBS	CP: Programme Manager	2
2	A: Training Provider	Bennie Barnard	Training & Development	The Training Room Online	Global Commercial Director	2
3	A: Training Provider	Henry Sebata	Training & Development	CS Innovations (Campher & Sebata) Consulting	Director	6
4	A: Training Provider	Ian Clarke	Training & Development	Business Education Design	Director	30
5	A: Training Provider	Jay Owens	Training & Development	ROI Institute SA	Director	20
6	A: Training Provider	Kathy Bruere	Training & Development	The Mind Spa Institute	Business Development Manager	2
7	A: Training Provider	Mike Stonier	Training & Development	GIBS	Programme Director: CP	30
8	B: Middle Manager	Damien Naidu	Forestry	Sappi	Principal Research Officer	17
9	B: Middle Manager	Hope Pilane	Transport Infrastructure	Pt Operational Services	Manager: Pumulani Plaza	11
10	B: Middle Manager	Ingrid Trusler	Education	Hatfield Online School	Educator	8
11	B: Middle Manager	Lesego Mbele	Tourism	Tourvest Destinations	Team Manager	2,5
12	B: Middle Manager	Lori Grevler	Information Communication Technology (ICT) Distribution	Tarsus Technology Group	Analyst	3
13	B: Middle Manager	Norelle Stock	Parastatal	National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS)	Laboratory Information System (LIS) Senior Functional Analyst	4
14	B: Middle Manager	Oscar Malope	Retail	Builders Warehouse	Sales Manager	6
15	C: Organisations	Birgitte Davy	Telecommunication	<i>Confidential</i>	Consultant: L&D	5,5
16	C: Organisations	Dr Dorothy Ndletyana	Training & Development	Ndletyana Learning	Director	18
17	C: Organisations	Joyce Boshoff	Retail	Footgear	HR Manager	6
18	C: Organisations	Lisa Gallon	Financial Services	Bidvest Bank	National L&D Manager	20
19	C: Organisations	Louise Marx	Retail	Builders Warehouse	L&D Manager	20
20	C: Organisations	Ricky Hinde	Telecommunication	Cell C	Head: T&D	5
21	C: Organisations	Thandi Tisani	Retail	Footgear	T&D Manager	2
22	C: Organisations	Vanessa Mileham	Financial Services	FNB	Head of L&D	1,5

These 22 interviews were conducted over a total of 1025 minutes, with the average interview being 45 minutes long and the longest interview 70 minutes. A summary of the detail of the interview duration is displayed in Table 7 below.

Table 7 - Interview Duration

<u>Description</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
Number of participants	22
Total duration of the interviews	1025 minutes
Average duration	45 minutes
Shortest duration	30 minutes
Longest duration	70 minutes

A total of 22 interviews were scheduled over the course of three months. The researcher identified substantial themes relevant to the research study around interview four or five, depending on the type of interview conducted. Subsequently, with the following interviews, the development of new themes decreased considerably. At this point, the researcher reached a moment in the analysis of the data where sampling more data would not have led to more information related to the research questions. The researcher felt it necessary to continue with the remaining scheduled interviews to affirm that saturation had been reached and to assure an ample sample. Based on this, no further interviews were required for data collection. The participants that were interviewed shared information voluntarily and were imminent in sharing stories, ideas and their experiences.

5.3 Presentation of the Results

As discussed in Chapter 4, there was an effort to analyse the data while the interviews were conducted. However, most analyses took place after the interviews were held, by thematic analysis process, on a question by question basis. The results are given in table format below, per the Research Questions presented in Chapter 3 and the interview questions as mapped in Table 5 in Chapter 4. To derive these results, the researcher took the data from the interview transcripts and established the codes through Atlas.ti per Research Question. After which the frequencies were counted. The tables presented below are all illustrated in rank order from highest to lowest.

The first code presented in Table 8 below shows a frequency number of 49 – this number means that this construct was mentioned 49 times by the 22 participants. It is for this reason that the frequency can be greater than the total sample size. Participants also

tend to stray from a specific question, sometimes already leading into the next question's answer. To ensure continuous flow during the interview discussions, the researcher did not stop the participant from talking, as long it was still relevant to the topic. All the more reason why the frequency count resulted in high numbers.

5.4 Results for Research Question 1

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?

The purpose of Research Question 1 was to identify what should be done in the pre-training and development phase to maximise the ROI of the training and development of middle managers. The question relevant to Research Question 1 from the interview guideline sought to understand what the most pertaining factors are that one should take into consideration before the training and development programme commences. Additionally, the question intended to establish whether the three concepts are about the assessment and design of training and development – thus forming part of the pre-training and development phase – were, in fact, the most important factors that should be taken into consideration before the training and development programme starts. The factors that emerged from the literature review were: training needs assessment; the design of the programme and the selection of training techniques. Table 8 below displays the different constructs that emerged from the interviews conducted with the 22 participants.

Table 8 - Factors about the Pre-Training and Development Phase

Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	Design of the Programme	49
2	Conduct assessments	44
3	Line Manager support and involvement	39
4	Support, encouragement and involvement from the different stakeholders involved in the training and development process	38
5	Be clear about the organisational objectives and the outcomes that they want to achieve	35
6	Identify and understand the needs and the gaps; Conduct Training needs analysis (TNA) and establish a development plan	32
7	Identify the measures, set clear expectations and create future milestones and targets - right at the beginning	29
8	Selection of training techniques	25
9	Accountability – the middle managers, need to take responsibility for their development, and the organisations should hold them accountable for it	19
10	Commitment and engagement by training providers	18

Rank	Construct	Frequency
11	Collaboration between the training provider, the organisation and the middle managers	16
12	Management driving the process	15
13	Management buy-in	14
14	Allocate sufficient time to determine the needs of the middle manager(s) for organisational purposes	13
14	Commitment and motivation of middle managers	13
14	HR or someone from learning and development needs to be involved	13
17	Determine what the benefits and the impact will be; how will they add value	11
17	Should not pass the responsibility on to another - should not make it an HR or learning department thing	11
19	For the sake of succession planning	9
20	Create interest and buy-in with the middle managers	7
21	Flight risk - the chance that the middle manager(s) might leave your organisation after the training	6
22	Educate business	4

Based on Table 8 above, the top five constructs will now be discussed together with quotes from the different participants.

5.4.1 Design of the programme

In examining the transcripts, all participants felt that the design of the programme is the most important factor of the pre-training and development phase. More than one of the training providers pointed out that: *“In terms of how the training is set-up, it also needs to be blended training to ensure that you cater for all learning styles, i.e. classroom, group discussion, simulations, reflection time...”* The middle managers were also of the opinion that: *“Training providers should design something relevant to the environment, and relevant to the people he/she is going to train – don’t bring a standard programme to every industry; it is not helpful to the people. The training provider should first do research to provide a training programme that is relevant.”* The middle manager further stated that: *“Managers and training providers should involve the people that are going to get trained, for them to design a relevant training course.”* Overall all participants acknowledged that this factor, the design of the programme, is eminent to the pre-training and development process and both training providers and organisations should put a lot of effort into this when kicking off a training and development programme. Conversely, another manager working with training and development explained: *“Many companies make use of consultants & experts to design and deliver the programme, and this is very good practice, BUT it is just as important for someone from the organisation to be involved in the design and delivery of the programme. Thus, you cannot solely outsource this. With*

outsourcing I meant you cannot advocate it; you cannot say that we are happy to pay, the consultant goes off and runs with the programme, and we only receive the report at the end. The company needs to be absolutely involved from the design and in the delivery of the programme. This can be done by where people from the organisation are involved and present, call on experts within the organisation to be part of the delivery.”

5.4.2 Pre-assessments

A manager working with training and development expressed her opinion of why pre-assessments are so important: *“Ideally, you should launch pre-work or a pre-assessment, any knowledge assessment, so the person is already exposed to what he/she is going to learn. Thus, people are gearing themselves to the learning and the learning experience that they will go into, but done in their own time. This ensures that the session can take off quicker. It doesn’t take half the morning first to figure out why am I here, what am I going to learn, etc. Thus, eliminates the loss of time and loss of momentum.”* Most of the training providers with whom the interviews were conducted, agreed that pre-assessments are necessary and assist in getting the group prepared for training.

5.4.3 Line Manager Support and Involvement

Another important factor as part of the pre-training and development phase is the support and the involvement of the line manager. One of the middle managers explained that it is: *“important for the line manager to be involved, as this will be the person who completes the training needs analysis.”* Also, a training provider stipulated: *“In terms of the design and composition of the programme: line management has a challenge with articulating this properly. I personally experienced that line management’s expectation was that we [the training providers] are the business school, so we must figure it out.”* Similarly, another training provider stated that: *“Line managers seem to think that ‘people related stuff’ sit with HR, so it is easy for them to say we are waiting for HR, and they don’t take the accountability. The line manager is responsible for developing and growing their people.”* Furthermore, a training provider stated that: *“Management involvement, especially line management involvement, is one of the key factors that lead to success, or not.”* A manager working with training and development in her organisation stated that *“line management should be onboard, in the beginning, to support [the middle managers] when they come back.”*

5.4.4 Support, Encouragement and Involvement

The first training provider that was interviewed immediately stated that *“it is necessary to encourage training and offer continuous support.”* One of the middle managers specifically stated that: *“HR needs to be involved in the development, and encourage it.”* Interestingly enough, more than one middle manager believed that: *“it is Important for the people attending the training and development to have support by other staff members – holding their responsibilities – to ensure that the managers don’t need to make phone calls in between, etc.”* The one manager working with training and development felt that it is necessary to *“support the participant’s learning. Be clear about what their role is in the learning process. They [managers from the organisation] have to partner with the middle manager on the learning journey.”*

5.4.5 Clear objectives and Understanding the Objectives

One of the managers working with training and development felt that: *“A telecon call or a briefing session where everyone (incl. line management) is involved in discussing the programme and the outcomes. Everyone receives the same message of what the training can do.”* Another manager working with training and development specifically stated, *“Must be explicit about your rationale for sending them [middle managers] – you must contract with them, so they understand that you are sending them on programme X, in order for them to learn 1, 2, & 4. Must also be explicit at the beginning, before they go, that when they come back, we have expectations that you will be able to do ABCD differently, faster, better... Thus, it must be understood before they leave!”*

It might seem obvious that setting clear objectives and understanding what the objectives are, is important. Nonetheless, this was confirmed by all three groups with whom interviews were conducted that it is important, yet, there are still organisations who get this wrong. A training provider’s viewpoint on this: *“If it is ROI that they want, they should firstly be clear in terms of what they need, identify the need, identify the measures, if there are measures, communicate that clearly with the training provider which will enable the training provider to design and develop programmes that will meet that need.”* One of the middle managers explained: *“Communicate well with the people prior to enrolling. Tell them what it includes, and ask their opinion, so that by the time a decision has been made, doing course x, everybody feels comfortable that they’ve talked about it, and that they have all had a good look at it.”* Furthermore, a manager working with training elaborated: *“Understanding why you are going for the training... If people are not engaged, I feel that they will sometimes go for the training, just for the sake of attending training. But if as an individual one understands... ok, I’ve maybe just stepped into a*

management role, I will need to develop and improve in my role; in terms of my management skills; in terms of my how I deal with people; etc., I must first understand why am I going for this training; and what will I commit myself to; and what change will it bring?" There were very strong viewpoints about how important it is to set clear objectives upfront and ensured the managers attending the training understands those objectives.

5.5 Results for Research Question 2

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?

The purpose of Research Question 2 was to determine what should be done during the delivery phase of training and development to establish what will maximise the ROI of the training and development of middle managers. The interview questions relevant to Research Question 2 needed to discover which are the factors that have an influence on the ROI during the delivery of the training and development programme. Furthermore, the question aimed to establish whether the ideas about the implementation of training and development – thus forming part of the during training and development phase – were, in fact, the most prominent factors that should be given attention to when delivering the training and development programme. Table 9 below illustrates the constructs that emerged from the interviews conducted with the 22 participants.

Table 9 - Factors about the During Training and Development Phase

Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	Line Manager support and involvement	38
2	Support, encouragement and involvement from the different stakeholders involved in the training and development process	35
3	Understand the needs of the middle managers, and managing their expectations	29
4	The training provider should ensure practical and interactive sessions	28
5	Accountability – the middle managers, need to take responsibility for their development, and the organisations should hold them accountable for it	23
6	Good communication channels and have those conversations	22
7	Commitment and engagement by training providers	20
8	The necessity to be specific in the requirements and deliverables, together with ensuring the content is focused and relevant	19
9	Observation by management and monitor the progress; have check-ins	17

Rank	Construct	Frequency
10	Visibility of management / leadership	16
11	Allocate sufficient time for training sessions	12
11	Commitment and motivation of middle managers	12
11	HR or someone from learning and development needs to be involved	12
14	Check that the objectives and needs are being met	10
14	Maintaining relationships	10
16	Repetition of content and repetition of learning	7
16	The organisation should influence the different role-players	7
16	Reflect on what was learnt	7
19	Do not set unrealistic expectations	6

Based on Table 9 above, the top five constructs will now be discussed together with quotes from the different participants.

5.5.1 Line Manager Support and Involvement

An overwhelming response from all three groups expressed the opinion that they felt the line manager should be involved in the training and development programme. Firstly, a training provider stated that *“it is necessary to teach and give line managers the skills to support their employees when they go for training. Research shows that line managers’ support is an important role for the employees to come back equipped and empowered to do the job adequately.”* A manager working with training and development stated, *“the line manager should hold them [middle managers] accountable based on the pre-conversation they had.”* Additionally, another manager working with training and development specified, *“we want line managers to know what is going on in the classroom.”* Furthermore, a manager working with training and development explained, *“the line manager must stay connected with the [middle] manager to ensure they are learning, and make sure what they are learning is applicable - this creates accountability on the employee [middle manager].”* Still, *“it is these line managers that will mostly be held accountable. Gone are the days where you can send someone off to a programme and hope that they’ve learned. And when they return you don’t even ask them what they’ve learned. As the line manager, you have to be intimately involved and know what the process was, and you’ve got to use that information to support their continued application of the learning.”* Also, a middle manager expressly stated, *“the line manager needs to be involved, to guide, coach and mentor the employees – I cannot think of anybody else [that should be involved] ... as the line manager is the most important.”*

5.5.2 Support, Encouragement and Involvement

Another perception that came through strongly from the interviews was the support, encouragement and involvement from the different stakeholders involved in the training and development process. A middle manager stated, *“support the [middle] managers; need to allocate somebody as a mentor to the [middle] managers.”* The middle manager further stated, *“then, touch base with the [middle] manager, let them know how it is going, and let them know how you can help them with advice, and knowledge, and guidance.”*

A manager working with training and development mentioned, *“but I do believe you need a learning and development (L&D) resource, or an administrative resource to support the L&D; to actually take the time to monitor how well the [middle] managers are doing.”* She further mentioned: *“I think the L&D, like a programme manager kind of person, it is important to identify where the programme is failing; or when there is a gap in the programme, then it is the line managers that aren’t doing what they should be doing.”* Another manager working with training and development suggested, *“provide time for the person to have a buddy or a coach in the session where they can talk about their personal experience, or share how they feel about it or what is the anxiety levels...”* A training provider explicitly stated that *“you must give them support, including external support by providing them coaches, constantly meeting with the coach and provided with feedback, and also reflect.”*

After the participants were asked what they believed should be done during the time the training and development programme is running to ensure the maximum ROI, astoundingly, all 22 participants agreed that it is important for someone from the organisation to be involved once the programme has started. Some participants also made mention that this is not happening, as employees, especially middle managers are sent on training programmes, and everyone is too busy to check-in with them. So, even though it might seem obvious that involvement is important, it is also apparent from the discussions, that this is clearly not happening. This begs the question if this is one of the big flaws as to why organisations cannot maximise their ROI as things stand now.

5.5.3 Understanding the Needs

The construct, understanding the needs of middle managers and managing their expectation, came through as a strong opinion by all three groups interviewed. A training provider specified that *“Firstly, one must define why training? What do you want to achieve? All training, including middle management training, needs to be aligned to the strategic imperatives of the business, thus, if there is no alignment between the strategic*

imperatives of the business and the training process that is involved, then you'll be off track." A manager working with training and development suggested, *"bringing the learning objectives to the front and making sure they know why they [middle managers] are here and what they [middle managers] should expect to come out of here [the training]."* Then, a middle manager stated: *"Explain the benefits of the training; sell it to the employees. People are reluctant to go on any type of training, except if you could help them understand how it will help them, how will it help to improve efficiencies and how it will help them grow. How it will benefit the organisation and the individual."* Another middle manager explicitly stated, *"you've got to explain to that person [middle manager] and don't let the academic institution explain, this is what the training entails, and your job cannot be sacrificed."* Again, proving that the involvement and the hands-on process is critical, even throughout the during-training and development phase.

5.5.4 Practical and Interactive sessions

Throughout the discussions, all three groups made mention of how necessary and important it is for the training sessions to be practical and interactive. A training provider stated that it *"should also not be information overload and should be practical so that when delegates go back into the workplace, they know how to apply it."* A middle manager explained that it is necessary for the *"inclusion of practical examples; not just theory; not just someone talking all day. Like inclusive discussions and roleplay etc."* Another middle manager explained that he had experienced this level of practical, interactive training from the last management programme that he attended: *"Include practical demonstration of training – GIBS does this well. Let's say you are doing a marketing module, have the person go out to a shopping mall, and try and sell something for instance. Get other exposures during the module so that the person could see the world beyond their little world, i.e. different industry exposures."*

In addition, a manager working with training and development mentioned that *"companies should try and make sure the bulk of the learning is not just because of the classroom 10% phase, but instead the bulk of the learning that happens is actually the practical application and that they are given very specific projects - it's got to be experiential. At least 70% of what they do should be experiential."* Another manager working with training and development stated that it is necessary for *"methodology of the training provider is important; not only theory or models. There should be enough practical exercises, and enough time where the person can build confidence. They [middle managers] need to get the explicit time to practice. Let them practice; failure is also important. So, they have to create an environment where it is safe to continue trying*

until they've succeeded." The one manager working with training and development even explained the old way of purely *"lecturing is gone."* For him, it is all about *"gamification base (practical, real life, situational, task based, as if there is a customer in the room) and self-discovery – a technique that makes it fun and exciting to learn."* Because of this method, they had *"seen better results and the response from their staff was amazing!"* One of the managers working with training and development in the financial services industry specifically said, *"it should not only be classroom based, but more practical, a more blended approach (it includes online sessions covering the theory, so that theory isn't left for the classroom, but the practical application is done in the classroom), thus practicing the practical application of that competency."*

5.5.5 Accountability

Middle managers should take responsibility for their development, and the organisation's managers should hold them accountable for it. This is another point of view that came through very strongly from all three groups interviewed. The middle manager explained it is necessary to *"have continuous meetings, and provide feedback and keep record. And keep the employee accountable to keep track of it."* Additionally, he feels that *"companies who send their middle managers on training is often at a large expense, and often a large amount to invest in one individual. Thus, I strongly believe that when that individual comes back to work, you've got to allocate him a problem within the business, and ask him to leave that project and try and come up with a solution to a problem within that project. Then you can attach financials to that, and you can see exactly how much that ROI of that training has resulted in, based on the solutions drawn from that project. Thus, a little like an action learning project where you go back to your company and you do a little mini project, and implement all your learning."*

The one manager working with training and development suggested, *"let the [middle] manager facilitate certain sections of the training, as this will give them more or better accountability."* Another manager working with training and development suggested *"[the] line manager must stay connected with the employee to ensure they are learning, and make sure what they are learning is applicable (it is not just a week away from the office) - this creates accountability on the employee, especially when you put the pressure on them that they have to come back and teach the others in the team as well."* One of the training providers also suggested this earlier. Consistently, a training provider stated that *"HR is often blamed for poor outcomes from the training. Thus there is no accountability from the middle manager and the line manager."* Middle managers should

realise that the sooner they start taking the responsibility of their development, the sooner they will reap the rewards.

5.6 Results for Research Question 3

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What can be done after the programme was delivered, to ensure the managers apply and maintain the learning?

The aim of Research Question 3 was to determine what should be done after the delivery phase of training and development, to establish what will maximise the ROI of the training and development of middle managers. The interview question relevant to this Research Question allowed for the participants to identify the aspects that have an influence on the ROI post the delivery of the training and development programme. Moreover, the question intended to authenticate whether the findings of the post training and development phase, were, in fact, the most meaningful factors that should be taken into consideration. Table 10 below illustrates the constructs that emerged from the interviews conducted with the 22 participants.

Table 10 - Factors about the Post Training and Development Phase

Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	Evaluate: assess for improvement in skills, competencies, knowledge and performance	43
2	Line Manager support and involvement	42
3	Behaviour change should be assessed	40
4	Transfer and sharing of learning	33
5	Allocate sufficient time and the opportunity to apply the new skill that they've learned	30
6	Managers should provide feedback to the middle managers on their change in performance	29
7	Accountability – the middle managers, need to take responsibility for their development, and the organisations should hold them accountable for it	24
8	Good communication channels and have those conversations	23
9	Observation by management and monitor the progress; have check-ins	17
10	Mentoring & Coaching	17
11	Determine what the benefits and the impact is and are they meeting the original objectives and ultimately adding value	12
12	Should not pass the responsibility on to another - should not make it an HR or learning department thing	11

Based on Table 10 above, the top five constructs will now be discussed together with quotes from the different participants.

5.6.1 Assess for Improvement

As the first and most important point raised as relevant to the post-training and development phase was that managers need to assess the middle managers' skills, competencies, knowledge and performance, on return from the programme. It is necessary to evaluate and determine if there had been any improvement. A significant point raised by one of the training providers were, *"Discuss it at EXCO, ask at EXCO level what is happening differently in the organisation now that you've sent all these managers on training; how are they behaving differently? Thus, you send a huge message across the organisation that the boss is paying attention... what gets measured, gets done."*

A middle manager gave a good example of the scenario that is currently playing out in the workplace when asked the question: *"don't you believe that if an employee's performance has increased, it is a direct result of the training that he/she attended?"* The middle manager answered: *"yes, I believe so. However, this is not done... they do training, and it is just left there. Before and after training assessments, the reviews to evaluate if the output or production or turnaround times had improved or changed are not being measured."* To add onto this, three of the managers working with training and development explained how significant it is to assess that manager's performance on return from the training. One manager working with training and development specifically stated: *"If you look at how we measure programmes in general, like Kirkpatrick's 4 or 5 levels, where the first level relates to the 'happy sheet,' however, this alone is insufficient; you've got to ask them [middle managers] what did you learn – the level two, and you've got to look at what they've learned in relation to the objectives of the programme. This will give you a sense of, "ok, as we've designed the programme, people did learn some of the objectives that we've set down to teach them. This is also not enough, you've got to go to the third level – from the stuff that you've learned, what are you going to apply back at the office. THIS is where the richness is – where you can take what you've learned on the programme, and you can actually on the job perform differently because of the input I've got during the programme."*

A manager working with training and development raised this specific requirement as part of the post training and development phase, *"Post training (especially in leadership training): line manager should have discussions 3 - 6 months afterwards to identify if they've recognised a change in the knowledge and skill set of the person [middle managers] and change in behaviour? - When it was a leadership or management training, they will ask their subordinates if they have noticed anything different? What is*

your leader doing differently?” The general feeling from most of the participants was that it is important for the line manager to engage with the middle manager to determine what feels different; is the manager performing differently; is the manager more capable, and will the manager be able to add value, and if yes, how? Ultimately, it needs to happen through engagement with the middle manager to determine what improvement one has seen in the manager’s performance.

5.6.2 Line Manager Support and Involvement

Again line manager support and involvement came through as a strong construct. Thus, all three groups agreed that this is a significant aspect of the post training and development phase, as well. As one training provider put it: *“Ask participants [middle managers] at the end of the training what are they going to do differently? And record it! So, the line manager should ask the participant what he/she should do differently. And ideally, the participant should go to the line manager and tell him what he would like to do differently, and ask for his cooperation and participation in the matter. Thus, there should be a conversation between these two parties.”* Another training provider further stated, *“back in the workplace, they [the organisation] need to provide opportunities to apply learning – this is line managers’ responsibility.”*

An experienced manager working with training and development believed: *“The other thing to increase ROI... Let’s say line managers are involved with the needs analysis, the development, and the content of the programme, but after that, we don’t really make them accountable for the application of skill.”* She further stated that to *“not involve business, the line manager and the operational area; it becomes an L&D initiative. Thus, L&D becomes like a “caretaker” of the person, physically while they [the middle managers] are learning. They [business, line management and operations] are also not involved in measuring. Thus, L&D takes complete ownership of the process.”* One manager working with training and development put it simply, *“onboard the line management to support when they [middle managers] come back [from the training programme].”*

The one middle manager made the next statement based on his own experience: *“Don’t go back to the status quo. It is fine if it is the same job, but perhaps give them [middle managers] a special project or more responsibility, or responsibility in a different area. Don’t go back and ignore the fact that the training has happened – this will demotivate the person and will stop any possible return on your investment.”* He further stated that it is necessary for *“more dialogue post the training; just have a one-on-one with the*

person to say, “what do you think you can infuse from what you’ve learned, of the company, and how?” It doesn’t need to be a long conversation, but you are basically opening up that door to show the person that we’ve sent you on this training, we acknowledge that you’ve learned something, but now, how are you going to apply it? And we expect you to apply it, so open your mind, and start giving us information. Thus, you are opening that door, and opening that channel, and the person can unlock that potential. This conversation takes place between employee and line manager. This conversation should be within a week after they’ve returned, to build on that momentum.”

5.6.3 Behaviour Change should be Assessed

A pertinent concept that emerged from the interviews conducted, but did not appear infinitely in the literature, were the behaviour change of the middle managers, as part of the ROI on training and development. In particular, the one training provider said, *“leadership development is not about the fact that you [the middle manager] are bad at something. Thus we want to give you skills and teach you how to do it better; rather it is how to change your behaviour.”* The training provider further explained that *“if you know what the skills are of your people that are in the training, and you can measure it before, and again afterwards, then you can also see the change in behaviour and change in skills. Thus again, this is difficult to translate into ROI. But a tool that could be used beforehand, and assuming they go through all the levels of Kirk Patrick and Jack Phillips’ ROI models; 1 – 4, and up to level 5.”* This training provider felt very strongly that it is not possible to quantify the ROI of training and development. Another training provider who concurred this point firmly stated, *“so, unless you change behaviour, you are wasting your time! Thus, I believe that ROI will be delivered by changing behaviour.”*

Another training provider explained that *“it is to create in the minds of the client, the importance of changing behaviour, and this is done in three ways, namely Individual, Team and Organisation. Thus, what is the ROI for the Individual, the Team and the Organisation?”* The training provider further clarified that one should simply ask the line manager if they saw a change in the behaviour of the middle manager after the training programme; this is the most evident assessment. A manager working with training and development explained it is important to *“engage both the line manager & the participant about what feels different, what should be done differently. Thus, you want to know from the line manager if this person is performing differently because they’ve gone on this intervention.”* Another manager working with training and development gave an example of where she has seen a positive change in behaviour following the management training that the middle manager had attended: *“Specifically, they were aware of this one*

manager who had the wrong approach when she speaks to people, but after this course, you could see that she is trying to improve herself, and the atmosphere in her department became better. Thus, one can also say the behaviour has changed.”

Manager working with training and development stated that *“the person must have the confidence at the end of the programme to display what he/she has learned by means of practicing. It is ok to make mistakes at this stage. Thus, try out the new behaviour and the new thing that they’ve learned.”* The manager further stated that to *“ask the person [middle manager] and the line manager what has been the impact on the organisation? These can all be done through email; however, it is good for the person to also demonstrate that change in behaviour and knowledge.”* Another manager working with training and development concurred this by saying *“the line manager should ultimately test if there is a change in behaviour, and line management should give feedback.”*

To determine what the ROI of training and development of middle managers is through the means of assessing the behaviour change is a concept that was identified noticeably by the training providers and the managers working with training and development. However, only one middle manager identified the change in her behaviour because of the management training: *“as with the current course I’m attending, Generic Management, it looks at the various things that a manager should do, i.e. motivating the team, how to deal with a difficult situation within your team. Over the last six months or so, I’ve learned from this training, that as a manager, you need to be the leader of your team, it teaches you how to communicate and how to identify the different personalities within the team, and how to react to certain situations that you’ve identified within the team. Accordingly, I feel that the training is relevant to me, as I am a new manager (only been in position for 2½ years). Thus, it is helpful. I’ve been on the programme for six months now, however, especially in the last three months I’ve seen an improvement in my team’s approach when they encounter a situation [that they have to deal with].”*

5.6.4 Transfer and sharing of learning

A training provider specified, *“line managers should create opportunities for people [middle managers] to share what they’ve learned with the rest of the team. This is how we make meaning out of what we’ve learned when we share and discuss.”* Another training provider categorically stated that *“behaviour change and transfer of learning MUST be driven by line management and not by HR. If the learning is not transferred into the workplace, then it is pointless.”* One of the training providers concurred that *“if there is no transfer of learning, you won’t get results. And you need to manage this*

process. This is Level 3 evaluation = application, thus, make sure there is application in the workplace.” One more training provider affirmed, “it has the appropriate measures with the actions that you have to do, AND the constant sharing of information.”

The one middle manager explained that she is currently doing this [transfer of learning] herself. Based on the management training that she is attending, on her return to the office, she provides feedback to her team on what she has learned, and how they can apply it to their day-to-day work. One of the consultants [in her team] specifically said, *“through my learning, he has learned a lot!”* She also keeps the modules at work, for anyone to read up on, and they provide feedback. Conversely, she felt that they are also helping her to retain what she has learned. Subsequently, this middle manager felt it is necessary for other managers from her organisation to do the same; to, *“transfer the knowledge that they’ve gained from training, and pass it on to their colleagues and the people working under them. I am aware of other managers that don’t pass that knowledge to their team like I am doing. This will assist in making sure the company did not waste their time and money on the training.”* Another middle manager raised another important perspective on this matter, saying, *“the success of the company is dependent on the quality of their staff, and the quality can be improved by sharing, provided you have metrics to share. Because if you are rewarding people based on a dog-eat-dog environment or attitude, then you are not going to get that [the sharing].”*

A manager working with training and development stated *“once I’ve gained knowledge from any course, or workshop, I need to share that knowledge with others as well. Why? Because it also helps me to apply what I’ve learned. If you don’t practice it, it will be a waste of time. This is also how you know if you have learned something, is when you can share it with my colleagues.”* To add to this, another manager working with training and development stated, *“it is affirming for people to know how to do things and it empowers them, it makes them more competent, and it could make them more capable.”* She further stated that *“this transfer of learning is one of your indicators that you achieved your ROI – because if that learning only stays with me who attended the course, that is minimal. But if I have learned and come back and teach others. And then that team goes on and teaches another team... and the organisation as a whole is learning... that is much more powerful!”* Another manager working with training and development mentioned that *“after the programme- it is important to ask the employee “what did you learn, how could you implement it, what can you share with your colleagues?” – Acknowledging that the person now has a ‘new way.’ They should not just focus on catching up on their backlog. There is research that shows this is where you should*

'catch' the person and helping them to translate their learning and help them to transition that back into their workplace. Otherwise, a lot of that will remain personal knowledge, or it will get lost."

Additionally, the one manager working with training and development suggested that organisations should implement a skills transfer plan that details what the manager has learned and what that manager has transferred to the team. Another point of view from one of the managers working with training and development explained that especially where one deals with large numbers of managers, *"it is not possible for all of them to attend classroom facilitation, it is too much of a hustle for all of them to go on all the training, due to cost, operations, logistics, etc. We currently make use of our online platform. However, I realise that it is very impersonal."*

Furthermore, participants were asked whether they believed it is important for the transfer of learning to take place in the workplace, and again, all 22 participants concurred that yes, it is indeed important. Especially the managers working with training and development felt that it is a critical aspect to enhance the learning for that middle manager even more.

5.6.5 Sufficient Time and the Opportunity to Apply

Participants believed that to allocate sufficient time and the opportunity to apply the new skill that the middle managers have learned is extremely meaningful to the process of post training and development. Specifically, two training providers stated that it is necessary to *"allow sufficient time for the application of learning"* after the middle manager attended the training. Another also made mention that *"ROI is not only based on the training one receives, but other factors also have an impact. Like the environment is it conducive to apply and to share what they [middle managers] have learned; does the culture support it; is the organisational structure set-up to support what they want to do?"*

Four of the middle managers felt that the time allocated to the training itself, and then time allocated afterwards to apply the learning is insufficient. Thus, they believed it is necessary for the organisation to provide more time. Specifically, the one middle manager stated that *"it should provide them with sufficient time to practice what they've learned practically in their relevant department."* Another middle manager explained that *"once the manager returns from the training, I feel it is necessary for the line manager or HR to revisit the job description (of the manager that has gone on the training) to see if*

they could make it work – aligned with the training that I attended. This way I will be able to make use of what I've learned. Even if the salary doesn't increase, as long as I can gain the experience, that is in order. It's important for me to use the training that I have attended."

The one manager working with training and development had cognisance of the fact that *"learning deepens with time; thus, the person might not be on that expert level within the first week of the training. Thus, the transfer must be given time! And through a supported environment – it is a continuous process."* Overall participants believed sufficient time is essential. However, it emerged that the middle managers felt steadfast that their organisations and or their managers are not providing them with sufficient opportunity to apply these newly acquired skills.

5.7 Results for Research Question 4

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: What are the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development?

The purpose of Research Question 4 was to establish what is the best way to measure ROI for middle managers' training and development. The interview questions relating to this Research Question gave the opportunity for the participants to identify methods to evaluate training and development for ROI purposes. The interview questions also looked at what the participants believed are the limitations to the methods of evaluations. Table 11 below illustrates the constructs that emerged as the best ways to measure ROI on training and development of middle managers. The table is ranked from highest to lowest order regarding the total number of times a construct appeared during the 22 interviews. Additionally, the frequency tables per group are also displayed in Table 11. However, these were not ranked in any order. The training and development phase in where the measurement will have an impact is also listed in Table 11 to identify the level of engagement that would be required.

Table 11 - Best ways to measure ROI of Training and Development

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Construct</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>			
			<u>TP's</u>	<u>Org.</u>	<u>MM</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1	Must collect information throughout the process (from trainees, from the training provider, from management, etc.) to determine if there has been an improvement in performance and what has the impact been (i.e. sales figures, stock take results)	Pre During Post	2	6	4	12

Rank	Construct	Phase	Frequencies			
			TP's	Org.	MM	TOTAL
2	Pre- and or post-assessments (written / online / multiple choice / simulation)	Pre Post	3	4	2	9
3	Application of the learning in the workplace through observation, on-the-job evaluations, questionnaires, etc.	Post	1	3	4	8
4	Action Plan with Check-In points: Make sure managers know what the outcomes are, have debriefing sessions, interviews, evaluate it regularly, provide feedback and set the next deliverables	Pre During Post	2	2	3	7
4	Link it to the manager's performance reviews (KPA's & KPI's) and the development plan (monthly/quarterly)	Pre During Post	1	4	2	7
6	Detailed survey where you ask participants if the programme objectives were achieved (5-point scale) - incl. Managers, training providers, L&D/HR	Pre During Post	2	1	3	6
6	Pre- and post-measurements - set measures from the design phase	Pre Post	4	1	1	6
8	Assess change in behaviour	Post	2	3		5
9	Provide support - line manager or provide a coach, and provide continuous feedback, guidance and reflection	During Post	1	2	1	4
10	Demonstrate the value created (especially in Rands) and or has a positive impact on the organisation profit	Post	2		1	4
11	Repetition (one week after the training, then one month later again, three months, etc.)	Post	1	2		3
12	Constant sharing of information	During Post	2			2
12	Kirk Patrick 4 Levels and Jack Phillips 5 Levels of evaluation	Pre During Post	1	1		2
12	Talent reviews, especially for success planning	Pre Post		2		2

Based on Table 11 above, the top five constructs will now be discussed together with quotes from the different participants.

5.7.1 Assess for an Improvement

The construct that surfaced the strongest regarding what the participants believed were the best ways of measuring the ROI of training and development, where the fact that it is necessary to collect data at different stages throughout the process. A training provider explicitly said, *“[you] must collect information throughout the process, i.e. collect from trainees, from the training provider, from management, collect info continuously and this gets rolled up into your ROI report to ROI analysis. Collect data continuously; at all levels of the ROI model (Level 1 through to 5) – they stack up. I.e. at the during phase, you will collect data from the individuals that are participating, or from the facilitator – the facilitator provides a report on the dynamics. In the satisfaction questionnaire, there is a section that asks about benefits – these might even be personal benefits that eventually translates into an organisational outcome, i.e. feedback on the organisation objectives and how it is perceived by the employees, which you weren’t aware of. Thus this adds value.”*

The one manager working with training and development mentioned, *“[you] want to have conversations with them, conversations with the line managers & direct reports to ask what have you noticed that are different.”* Another manager working with training and development stated, *“to measure the ROI: Measure if there has been a change in the performance of the employee – electronically, i.e. an email to the line manager with a few specific questions, i.e. have you seen an increase in revenue/productivity.”* On the contrary, one of the middle managers stated, *“pre- doing the training, one’s line manager will know the state of the team, and I feel one should look at how the team is performing after training, this is an indication of whether the training worked or not. And whether more training is required. Thus, looking at the success of the team is a good indicator. I.e. The team is performing better than before I went on training. To me, it is a practical method.”* One middle manager explained it this way: *“thus, to get your ROI, you need to make sure that you know the specifics, and what needs there are, and what the team needs to improve on before you provide the training. That way you get your ROI, because you give your people exactly what they need, to make the organisation a better company, or to be successful.”* Each participant raised their viewpoints on what they were familiar with. However, it all comes down to the same theme; there must be a measurement to assess if there has been an improvement in the manager’s performance, and what is this impact on the business.

5.7.2 Pre- and Post-Assessments

One of the most popular constructs as part of the measurement of ROI on training and development were the pre- and post-assessments. More than half of the participants raised this exact concept when asked the question what they believed were the best methods to evaluate training and development of middle managers. Different ideas of exactly how these assessments should be done were suggested. Examples consisted of online assessments, run a simulation, let them complete a multiple choice online assessment, with one training provider specifically stating, *“rather make it fun, make it exciting, make it competitive – have a scoreboard, leadership awards, recognition. I.e. if someone does well on a specific topic, communicate it – reward him/her for it.”* Nevertheless, the participants agreed that this is a quick and reliable method that can be used to determine one’s ROI on training and development.

A training provider stated: *“assessments – each 6-weeks, the outcomes should be evaluated, progress provided and the next deliverables to be achieved should be agreed on.”* Then one of the training providers gave an example of a university’s requirement: *“not until you can demonstrate that there is Rxxx of value created through the programme that you’ve attended, you cannot graduate. Upfront determination of those measures influences the emphasis of the intervention itself, thus if you have a simulation, those outcomes will be identified and defined, and in the intervention, itself you are creating orientation and sensitivity towards that, because the intervention is aimed at shifting those dials, and then you’ll see the shifting of those dials in the post.”* One of the training providers recommended, *“ideally you want an ongoing review of what people have just learned, i.e. could be written in a book, where you explain what you’ve learned... you can call it your learning diary where you write in there what you’ve learned on the day. And the important part of the design is for an organisation to set time aside for this. Usually, they find it more effective during the learning as opposed to saying to the manager he/she must sit tonight and think about what he/she has learned. From his experience, some people will do it, and some people won’t. So, it is important to understand everyone’s learning style, and who do you have in the room, and will they actually do what you ask them to do...? One has to put time aside to do it. But we ask them, as per a familiar system called KQS (keep doing this, quite doing that & start doing this), and just fill it in on an ongoing basis during the training, is a benefit.”*

One of the middle managers suggested to *“provide post-assessments, 3-6 months later, to test their application.”* Another middle manager elaborated saying, *“employees attending the training needs to be assessed to determine if they’ve learned anything out*

of the training. And what have you applied in your work environment regarding the training? I feel that the training provider assumes that the material provided, and the activities are done in class are sufficient and that the employees would be able to apply it to their day-to-day work environment. However, I feel it is inadequate, because you can give people a module, and they will read through it, and you will go through certain aspects of the module with the group, but if it is not understood, then it has not reached its desired outcomes. Assessments need to be extensive and more hands-on!”

One manager working with training and development stated, *“pre-course, as well as post-training assessments, will definitely help [to maximise the ROI on training and development].”* Another experienced manager working with training and development explained, *“then there is a formal assessment on an individual basis - we use panels to (give feedback) to say, well, these guys show up well, and these guys don’t show up well...”* A further comment by a manager working with training and development stated, *“one of the critical features of ROI is doing your pre-assessment; your baseline assessment, which will give you something to measure in your during phase and post phase. These assessments all have to be set up before you start with any training.”* Adding to this, one manager working with training and development suggested, to provide the middle managers with *“a ‘teaser’ – find a way of giving them pre-work and getting ALL of them to complete the pre-work, which will get them all onto that base level. Once everyone is on the same base level, the trainer could get involved at a higher level. Important that everyone should be on the same level when the class starts.”*

5.7.3 Application of the Learning

Book smarts are no longer good enough; one should be able to apply it in the real world. This was the general feeling of the 22 participants interviewed. A training provider believed that *“it is important [for the middle managers] to practice the skill. Then weeks, months, years later, you start noticing better performance, accountability, etc. amongst the team members and the manager, and that is when you can see your ROI. However, I don’t think this is quantifiable.”* One training provider explained it as follows, *“one of the abilities that the middle manager has, is that ability to educate. Also, a very useful and very powerful process regarding internalising it and even deriving greater value from what you had learnt, is ‘transferring’. Your understanding is also tested this way.”* One training provider storytelling it, *“if you are going to help people to achieve their potential, then it can only be achieved through an experiential process. It is not possible to do it any other way, and the reason is this, if you want people to do better, at what they are currently doing, you have to get them to want to do it, which is a challenge, because*

most people expect to do tomorrow what they did yesterday – it is human nature, it's their comfort zone, and continue very happily doing that. But, if you can get people to want to do something, and you can then help them to develop the capacity to identify opportunities to want to do better. But opportunities themselves are of no value unless you have the relationships within the org. to implement them, and that is relationships within the team, across the silos, and most critically amongst the levels. Thus, if you can achieve this – that people want to achieve more in spite of their comfort zone, they've got the capacity to identify opportunities, which most people will say is not them... I can tell you categorically there is no opportunity for improvement within this organisation, and you can get them to develop relationships, then what you create is a virtue cycle that results in behaviour change. But of course, you cannot tell people something like this – they won't believe you and won't understand you. This is normally done through playing a game – a simulation. And in the simulation, you are going through the cycle, round-and-round, and the cycle is driven partly through competition, but also through people taking their thinking which is implicit and making it explicit. So, however, much they had in their brain at the beginning of the day, they have ten times more in their brain at the end of the day, because it is now explicit. You establish that cycle and the potential of the cycle for everybody. He's done this for hundreds of people and has never had a failure in a simulation. This means you have a processed structured application that will work. This alone does not add value. The value is only created in the implementation. Thus, there is an ongoing process of implementation over time. This also assists in managing the process with other people as well – because they can see what you've achieved.” Thus, proving the importance of the application of learning in the workplace.

One manager working with training and development believed that the most important method of evaluation, is the *“observation of actual application of learning – we want to observe them doing their work differently.”* Another manager working with training and development listed what he believes are the best ways to measure ROI of training and development:

- 1. “An observation check-list completed by regional managers (can be tracked from a distance), not a test assessment - This check-list is of everything (technical, financial, leadership, operations, etc.) – As part of the during-phase.*
- 2. On-the-job evaluation (this is where the rubber hits the road...) - Are you implementing practically what we've taught you theoretically? I.e. number of sales, the performance of the store, through means of sales/revenue / absenteeism - Assess along the same criteria throughout the different phases: 1 week, one month, three months, six months. - As part of the post-phase.”*

It is a critical aspect – here a middle manager explains how, “[I have] applied what I’ve learned, daily. I.e. I am now able to integrate financial statements, analyse it and make informed decisions. I am comfortable with decision-making.”

5.7.4 Action Plan with Check-In Points

This construct is in line with the first construct for this Research Question, as discussed in 5.7.1 because it also speaks to the collection of information. However, the difference is the importance of setting the measures and the importance of having those conversations. One training provider stated, “make sure people know what the outcome is.” The middle managers’ perception is that the line manager should conduct face-to-face interviews with them, asking them about the training, “finding out how their experience was” – it is important for the line manager to “show interest” in their development, and they need to offer guidance.

One manager working with training and development stated, “have interviews about what has shifted for you, what is different for you, what have you learned; then have a look at the results of what has now been delivered or just get a sense of what the impact is.” Another manager working with training and development suggested, “ask the person [middle manager] and the line manager what [do they believe] has been the impact on the organisation? These [conversations] can be done through email; however, it is good for the person to also demonstrate that change in behaviour and knowledge. The line manager and the employee should also write a reflective report two months later discussing how he/she has implemented it, and this is what I still would like to achieve... Draw an action plan.” Ultimately, through this process, one will be able to measure the training and development that the middle managers have undertaken. In summary, this process includes the following actions, suggested to be led by the line manager:

- Make sure the managers know what the outcomes are (Pre)
- Check-in with the managers (During and Post)
- Offer guidance (During and Post)
- Have debriefing sessions (Post)
- Conduct face-to-face interviews (Post)
- Evaluate the training and development regularly (During and Post)
- Establish the next deliverables (Post)
- Provide feedback to middle manager (Post)

Finally, a manager working with training and development explained, *“thus if you want a good ROI, you need a ‘joint delivery’ from the consultants, university, as well as internal people, in particular, the line managers that the middle managers work with.”*

5.7.5 Link it to the Performance Contracts

One’s performance contract plays a central part of the employment relationship. Based on the constructs retrieved from the interviews, it is now clear that participants feel this agreement also plays an important role in the measurement of training and development. It was mostly the middle managers and the managers working with training and development which had a strong opinion on this concept. A manager working with training and development stated, *“360° degrees evaluations completed by the line manager is also important; every three months, six months, etc. Any training that the employee has gone through will be measured through their performance review twice a year, as part of their personal development plan.”*

One middle manager explicitly stated, *“it has to be practical because a person could come back with an A-pass of 76% and do you then categorise that as a successful ROI? All that you’ve actually done is enhanced that person’s personal development. However, have you seen an ROI, then the is no, because until you can get a payback on the amount that you’ve spent on the person’s training. Thus, you’ve got to have some means of evaluating how elevation of performance post the training has contributed to the business financials.”* Another middle manager stated, *“I like performance reviews because they give clarity, but we’ve got to look at better ways of measuring performance rather than having two conversations – one in the middle of the year, and then one at the end of the year. This process is essentially flawed; performance reviews have got to be continual and you’ve got to have visual performance indicators, with ongoing measurement, rather than having a conversation at yearend, to determine if the person has met the goals that you’ve set the year before.”*

5.7.6 Limitations regarding Evaluations

Participants were asked what they believed were the limitations regarding evaluations of training and development that will influence the ROI of middle managers training and development. The responses were evident, with the highest ranked construct as the limitation of time. This is interesting if one takes into consideration there just seems to be less of it the further we go into the millennium.

Table 12 - Limitations regarding Evaluations

Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	Limited time or lack of time	19
2	Poor design and or using the wrong measures	16
3	Misunderstanding of evaluations and ROI	12
4	Cumbersome and time-consuming	10
5	Not creating awareness and not defining the outcomes	10
6	Logistics	6
7	Limited resources	6
8	Inaccuracy and inconsistency	4
9	Do not measure enough	4
10	Subjectivity and or bias	4
11	Costs	3

Based on Table 12 above, some of the most pertinent quotes from the different participants will now be discussed.

One training provider explained, *“time is a limitation – set it up in terms of the measurement and impact that they would want to measure, and then the client never sees the process to the end, thus often the impact does not go through, because of the change taking place, running out of time, change in resources, capacity, etc.”* A middle manager stated, *“time is a limitation because if you look at the suggestion of having to see if your team’s performance has improved, could take months – years. Thus, the results are not as immediate as we want to.”*

As part of the poor design and or use of the wrong measures, a training provider explained, another limitation is, *“using the wrong measures; sometimes you will get a client who insists on using a specific measure.* Adding to this, a middle manager stated, *“because it is closed questions, one cannot test the real feeling or result. What about body language?”* Another middle manager alluded to this during his interview, saying to eliminate this, one should have *“open interviews, dialogue, discussions, you’ll get more relevant and accurate feedback. This will also provide an opportunity to explain the question.”*

“Language barrier – the debriefing and feedback afterwards will help to discuss any unclarity and make sure everyone understands it the same way. Encourage those who don’t have English as the first language to explain how they see it, and this could become very valuable feedback.” This was one middle manager’s suggestion on how to eliminate the limitation of misunderstanding evaluations. Adding to this, one manager working with training and development explained a limitation in her department, is *“[the] ability to*

analyse the result [of the evaluation]. Intervention from senior management [is required] to ensure observations are done in the best way.”

A manager working with training and development stated, “*one could do very exotic evaluations that are very cumbersome and time-consuming, and that is a huge consideration, for all parties. Whether it is line management, HR, or the people concerned. You’ve got to look at these limitations.*” A middle manager shared her experience in completing questionnaires as part of evaluation: “*taking the default answer or rushing to finish it.*”

One manager working with training and development explained as part of the ‘not creating awareness and not defining the outcomes’ limitation, “*if you don’t have the commitment of the participant & the line manager.*” One training provider clarified it as follows, “*[the limitation is] inadequate engagements and definitions of the outcomes in the beginning and the process of being clear about what is going to be measured. Often the vagueness around what interventions are directed to, because we go on to say that it is directed towards profitability and improving those business outcomes, is not something that is assumed across. Defining those measures, as they also influence the emphasis of the intervention and provide a basis for being able to measure post.*”

5.8 Results for Research Question 5

RESEARCH QUESTION 5: What do the training providers and the training and development managers think the other party should do more of to increase the ROI of training and development of middle managers?

The aim of Research Question 5 was to establish what the difference in opinions are of training providers and managers working with training and development within their organisations. The interview questions relating to this Research Question gave the opportunity for the managers working with training and development to identify what they felt training providers could do extra and or differently to maximise the ROI of training and development. Additionally, training providers could identify what the managers working with training and development could do extra and or differently to maximise the ROI of training and development. Table 11 below illustrates the constructs that emerged based on each of the two groups’ opinions, namely training providers and managers working with training and development. The table is ranked from highest to lowest order regarding the total number of times a construct appeared during the 15 interviews –

seven with training providers and eight with managers working with training and development.

Table 13 - Difference in Opinion of Training Providers and Training Managers

Rank	<i>Training Providers' opinion on what managers of organisations should do differently</i>		<i>Managers from organisations' opinion on what Training Providers should do differently</i>	
	<i>Construct</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Construct</i>	<i>Freq</i>
1	Both the organisation and the training provider should engage in a more collaborative process	4	A more blended and practical approach; focusing on the application of learning	4
2	Be clear about organisational objectives and the outcomes that they want to achieve; the organisation needs to set clear expectations to the middle managers; allocate sufficient time to first determine what is needed	4	Make assessment criteria specific and relevant (including one participant specifying the need for pre-assessments)	3
3	Commitment and engagement by the organisations and the managers, and they should understand their responsibilities	3	Programmes should be customised and flexible	3
3	Managers should be involved in follow-up programmes afterwards and remember to check-in with the middle managers	3	Training providers should understand the business culture and the organisational goals better	3
5	Line managers should know what the training needs assessments (TNA) of their staff are, and they are responsible for developing and growing their people (not the training provider)	2	Make it a repetitive process	3
6	Be involved in the programme - throughout the programme (Pre, during & post)	2	Training providers should provide enough opportunity for evaluation; provide feedback to the middle managers	2
7	Provide line managers with the skills to support their middle managers when going for training	1	Training providers should stop trying to drag it out for more profit	1

Rank	<i>Training Providers' opinion on what managers of organisations should do differently</i>		<i>Managers from organisations' opinion on what Training Providers should do differently</i>	
	<i>Construct</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Construct</i>	<i>Freq</i>
7	Organisations should hold the training providers accountable to prove the impact	1	Have more practical evaluations - the facilitator should assess the manager's performance on-the-job	1
7	Managers need to influence role-players within their organisation to maximise the ROI	1	The need for credible training providers	1
7	Managers should lead by example	1	The training providers should provide enough support to the middle managers (attending the training)	1
7	Create an opportunity for the middle managers to apply the learning	1	Both the organisation and the training provider should engage in a more collaborative process	1
7	Organisations need to specify the level of each manager beforehand	1	Training providers should understand the needs of the middle managers	1

Based on Table 13 above, the most pertinent themes constructed from what do the training providers and training and development managers think the other party should do more of will now be discussed together with quotes from the different participants.

5.8.1 Training Providers' Thoughts

Looking at the different recommendations from the training providers to the managers of organisations working with training and development, the most pertinent themes appear to be over all three phases of training and development. They talked a great deal about the organisation's strategy and culture. The perception was that organisations should better understand their objectives and the outcomes that they want to achieve first; and, it is important that they set clear expectations upfront. A director from a training provider affirmed, *"where both the people and the organisation are not clear about the outcome – there isn't an openness to engage in the definition of business value and then working through the nature thereof. Sometimes there are managers or organisations who will say one thing about what it is that they desire as an outcome, and then, when you engage you realise the real thing, the business outcomes, has very little to do with these things [that they requested initially]. To the extent where people are willing to engage, right from the outset on a journey of discovering and exploring and arriving at a clearly defined*

business outcome, it does help.” The one training provider even explicitly stated it is necessary to allocate sufficient time to determine what is really needed before kicking off with a programme. The one training provider declared: *“probably the least glamorous part of what training provider does, is measuring ROI because it is difficult. So, in an ideal environment, the better organisations hold the training providers accountable to account regarding impact.”* Additionally, the idea of a more collaborative process also appeared evident during the discussions with the training providers. To add onto that, at least four of the training providers felt it necessary for the organisations to also show commitment and engagement throughout the process, and each role-player must understand their obligations in the process. One of the directors working for a training provider expressly stated, *“ask participants at the end of the training what are they going to do differently? And record it! So, the line manager should ask the participant what he/she should do differently. And ideally, the participant should go to the line manager and tell him what he would like to do differently, and ask for his cooperation and participation in the matter. Thus, there should be a conversation between these two parties.”* Another training provider built on this, saying, *“[to] support the effort, like when they insist on ROI, then they also need to understand the role and responsibilities that they have and to support it. They also need to influence role-players within their companies.”*

It concurred that the managers from the organisations, especially the line managers, should have check-ins with the managers while the programmes are running. A training provider specifically stated: *“[the managers] should be involved in the programme in some way, i.e. introducing the particular programme or even teaching certain parts on the programme.”* Furthermore, the training providers also concurrently agreed that these managers should be involved in follow-up programmes after the completion of the programmes. The training provider further very passionately stated that: *“[the managers] should be involved in follow-up programmes afterwards. The follow-ups afterwards involve challenging application; challenging results; making sure the participant is looking to quantify the benefits and results, and questions around what is inhibiting the application of the new learning or the new behaviour that is required.”*

5.8.2 Training and Development Managers’ Thoughts

Managers working with training and development predominantly gave recommendations related to the design of the programme, and the selection of training techniques, thus part of the pre-training and development phase. Specifically, the most important construct was the managers working with training and development requesting that the

delivery of training should be more blended and more practical. The one training and development manager working in the financial services industry explained that *“training providers should customise it better for the organisation’s need – the off-the-shelf product does not work for everyone.”* Another manager also stated, *“[the training providers] have to ensure they have the best content that matches what the individuals coming to the training requires.”* One manager working with training and development put it this way: *“less talk and more action through physical role play; the use of practical examples. Let the manager answer scenario planning.”*

There is an agreement between these two parties that it is important to understand the business needs first. However, the bulk of managers working with training and development feel the training providers should make a better effort in first understanding their business’ culture and what drives the business. For the training provider to be part of the company and to be able to deliver that training with the same passion. One training and development manager based her opinion on her recent experience, *“it is important that they [training providers] understand the delegates, that will attend the training, that they understand the organisation culture and roles of individuals.”* The one manager working with training and development explained, *“a training provider should get a more in depth understanding of the business and the business goals. Their good training providers embed themselves in the business.”* The one manager from an organisation explained, *“there has to be a collaboration between training providers and organisations, where the training provider asks for feedback from the organisation, i.e. you asked for XYZ, did we deliver on it? That post assessment: what worked and what didn’t work.”* A knowledgeable manager working with training and development provided a specific list of recommendations that training providers should consider revisiting, namely:

- *“Implement exceptional programme design that focuses on application of learning, thus design the intervention to be based on real business problems*
- *Make sure the learning is relevant and specific to what people are expected to do differently*
- *Provide lots of opportunity for problem solving, for working in teams*
- *Building opportunity for the participants to observe themselves, reflect on their practice, go away to apply what they’ve learned, reflect on it, come back to present, say what worked, what didn’t work, go back and try again – that feedback loop and that repetitive process is really important!”*

It appears these role-players are directing the accountability to each other, with more so the training and development managers from the organisations. From the discussions

earlier in this chapter, each one of these parties plays an important role and that they will not be able to deliver without the other. Moreover, from this data collected it appears the pre-training and development plays an essential role.

5.9 Conclusion

The results from the 22 interviews were presented in this chapter. The constructs that appeared from these interviews and the analysis conducted after the data collection, support the findings found in the current literature on the topic of ROI for training and development. Additionally, new findings and insights developed through the process and will add to the current ROI model. In Chapter 6, the results and the research findings on how to maximise the ROI on training and development will be discussed in detail. In this chapter, a framework on how to maximise the ROI of middle managers' training and development will be presented.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented and discussed by the research questions that were formulated in Chapter 3. This section provides an understanding of the data that was collected during the in-depth interviews by comparing and contrasting theory and constructs that are outlined in Chapter 2. The data obtained answers for the five research questions that were gathered during the 22 in-depth interviews across three sample groups, namely training providers, middle managers and managers from organisations working with training and development of middle managers. The data analysis offered clarification of the data which provided a further understanding of how to maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers.

As established from the literature review, ROI on training and development is not a new idea to the field of business. The results discussed in this chapter contribute to a better understanding of each of the different stakeholders' opinions on how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers. The applicability of the results and the current literature relevant to this study are discussed in the sections following.

6.2 Discussion of Results for Research Question 1

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?

Research question 1 sought to establish what should be done in the pre- training and development phase that will maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers. It was necessary to establish what the importance of training needs assessments, the design and composition of the programme and the selection of training techniques are (Dunlap, 2015; Kraiger et al., 2015; Sarkar, 2013; Shibani, 2017).

The results from the data analysis as presented in Table 8 in Chapter 5 displays 22 general factors related to the pre- training and development phase. These factors have now been condensed into five broad categories. In the approach in clustering these together, the researcher looked for similarities and overriding themes. The frequencies were established by adding the frequencies of each of the different constructs per category. A summary of the clustering is displayed in Table 14 below which follows with a discussion on each of these categories. The table is ranked from highest to lowest order.

Table 14 - Clustering of Pre- Training and Development Factors

Rank	Category Name	Total number of frequencies per cluster
1	Support and involvement	123
2	Design of the programme	74
3	Pre-assessments	44
4	Commitment and collaboration	30
5	Needs assessment and development plan	28

The most important category that emerged from the clustering of the pre- training and development factors was the overall support and involvement of various stakeholders involved in the training and development process. The support and involvement category had six constructs with a total of 123 frequencies. This is a new factor that emerged from the data collection, as the literature did not speak to the importance of support and involvement at this phase of training and development. The middle managers admitted that the support from their line manager is the most important factor to them. They expect the line manager to be involved from the pre- phase, as it helps with their confidence and motivation to complete the programme successfully. The training providers also raised the point more than once, that it is important for the line managers and another representative from the organisation, like the HR department and or the CEO to be involved from the pre- phase. Thus, all the stakeholders should be considered, including the training providers, the middle managers as well as the organisation. All stakeholders should be actively involved at this stage of training and development.

The design of the programme was the second most important category from this phase with only two constructs in the clustering, but a high total number of frequencies of 74. Dunlap (2015) referred to the fact that it is important to have the appropriate training material ready and this point was also raised by various of the participants during the interviews. Metcalf (2015) designed a leadership programme for middle managers and during the design phase found that one of the core principles is to specify what knowledge the individuals need to use to perform a required skill that will ultimately change their behaviour. This theory is confirmed as several participants expressed their frustration with generic training programmes. Shibani (2017) explained that it is necessary to design suitable training interventions with the help of thorough data collection done through training needs assessments.

The importance of conducting pre-assessments had only one construct in the category, yet, it is ranked the third highest with a total frequency count of 44. Little attention is given in the literature to the significance of conducting pre-assessments. However, the participants clearly felt there is a need for this to take place before the training and development commencing.

The fourth category of the pre- training and development phase relates to the commitment and collaboration of everyone involved. This category contains six constructs with a frequency count of 30. Dunlap (2015) explained that even though employers are willing to offer training and development opportunities to employees, the employees' understanding and ability, must be on a prerequisite level before they can enter the training and development programme.

Finally, the fifth category identified is the requirement of needs assessments and development plans with seven constructs and a total frequency count of 28. Shibani (2017) stated that the first and most important step in training and development is the identifying of the training needs. The data of the current study agrees that it is an important factor. Sarkar (2013) explains that it is difficult to identify exactly what training is needed and what is suitable for the managers. However, the success of a training programme relies largely on the needs assessments (Sarkar, 2013). Ferreira and Abbad (2013) found that even though there is agreement that training needs assessments are required, there is little understanding of how to measure these training needs. For this reason, it is important that organisations take the necessary time to conduct thorough needs assessments with the middle managers.

The results indicate the five most important categories around the pre- training and development phase are the support and involvement of the different stakeholders, the design of the programme, conducting pre-assessments, commitment and collaboration by everyone involved, and lastly the requirement of needs assessments and development plans. The findings of this section are mostly in agreement with the current literature found on the topic. However, the most significant category revealed in the finding on the pre- training and development phase, which was the support and involvement of the different stakeholders, as well as the commitment and collaboration by everyone involved, are absent from the literature for this phase of training and development. None of the literature emphasised these two points as crucial factors, so these findings identify a gap in the literature. It appears the focus is mainly on the administrative side; almost like a tick-box exercise, though, there is a clear need also to give attention to the psychological factors.

6.3 Discussion of Results for Research Question 2

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?

Research question 2 sought to establish what should be done in the during training and development phase that could maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers. It was significant to establish what is necessary to ensure successful implementation of training and development programmes.

The results from the data analysis as presented in Table 9 in Chapter 5 displays 19 general factors related to the during training and development phase. These factors have now been condensed into four broad categories. The researcher looked for similarities and overriding themes in the approach of clustering these together. The frequencies were established by adding the frequencies of each of the different constructs per category. A summary of the clustering is displayed in Table 15 below which follows with a discussion on each of these categories. The table is ranked from highest to lowest order.

Table 15 - Clustering of During- Training and Development Factors

Rank	Category Name	Total number of frequencies per cluster
1	Support and involvement	125
2	Design of the programme	73
3	Needs assessment and development plan	68
4	Commitment and engagement	64

Support and involvement by the line manager, as well as the support, encouragement and involvement from other stakeholders in the organisation, like HR and senior management appeared as the most important category in the during phase, as well. The category consists of six constructs with a total of 125 frequencies. This important view is supported by the literature where Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2007) highlights the significance of learning professionals' involvement and the necessity for them to partner with the employee on this journey, as a fair amount of employee learning happens on the job. Yaqoot et al. (2017) explain that training is affected by factors such as managerial support, peer encouragement, adequate resources and consequences for training application on the job field.

The importance of the design of the programme still appeared as part of the during training and development phase. This category consists of five constructs with a total of 73 frequencies. The participants viewed practical and interactive sessions during the training and development interventions as the most important construct. Based on the research done by English and Alagaraja (2017) it is vital to capture and maintain the audience's (the middle managers attending the training intervention) attention. They explain it consists of a combination of the activities presented, as well as one's presence. The findings highlight the necessity to be specific in the requirements and deliverables of the management training, together with ensuring the content is focused and relevant to their daily functions. This is supported by McGurk (2009) who found that when designing and implementing management and leadership development programmes, the most important consideration is the operational setting in which the middle manager's function. Additionally, as part of the design of the programme during the training and development, it is imperative to allocate sufficient time for the training session. It emerged that the repetition of content and repetition of the learning, as well as the importance to reflect what was learned also adds to the increase in the ROI of training and development, thus, stressing the importance of a good and solid design of the programme.

As with the design of the programme, the needs assessment and development plan category also emerged as part of the during phase and is not only limited to the pre-training and development phase. This category consists of four constructs with a total count of 68 frequencies. It firstly speaks to understanding the needs of the middle managers and managing these needs. The managers must take responsibility for their development, and the organisation should hold them accountable for such development. Furthermore, as part of the during phase, the line manager should monitor the progress to determine if the objectives and needs are being met. This can be done with the line manager contacting the employee on the first day to check-in on the training programme. Lastly, as part of this category, the results showed it is also important to set realistic expectations for the middle managers, yet challenging ones. This proves the importance of a thorough needs assessment and the fact that it should be a working document throughout the process.

The commitment and engagement by the training providers, as well as the commitment and motivation of the middle managers, proved to be relevant factors as part of the last identified category of the during training and development phase. It consists of four constructs with a total frequency rating of 64. Good communication channels also form part of the commitment and engagement category. Conley et al. (2017) explain that

middle managers are more likely to give the right level of commitment if there is a proper communication plan supporting the programme. This should be led by the training providers. An organisation's learning culture serves as a contributor to the commitment the middle managers have during the training (Conley et al., 2017). Typically insufficient time to learn something and the lack of support from the organisation's management when it comes to their employees' development (Conley et al., 2017). Dunlap (2015) further stated that it is essential for the trainers to be prepared and dedicated to work with the group of managers for the duration of the programme. As such, this contributes to the literature by confirming that communication is necessary to deliver an effective programme. Adding to this, line managers should have conversations with their middle managers during the time the training takes place and not leave it to when they return. If these conversations take place during the programme, concerning matters can be dealt with immediately; before any further resources are wasted.

The results indicated that support and involvement remain one of the most important concepts as part of the training and development process. Both the design of the programme and the needs assessment and development plan processes are not limited to only the pre- training and development phase but also plays a valuable part in the during training and development phase. Commitment and engagement by the training providers and the middle managers is required to ensure an increase in the ROI. Finally, as part of the during training and development phase, it is evident that there is still lack of good communication channels between the different stakeholders, even though it is imperative to the success of a positive ROI on training and development.

6.4 Discussion of Results for Research Question 3

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What can be done after the programme delivery, to ensure the managers apply and maintain the learning?

Research question 3 sought to establish what should be done in the post training and development phase that should maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers. It was significant to establish if evaluations are done post the training, and why the transfer of learning or the ability to apply the learnings is important as part of the post training and development phase.

The results from the data analysis as presented in Table 10 in Chapter 5 displays 12 general factors related to the post training and development phase. These factors have now been condensed into four broad categories. The approach in clustering these together, the researcher looked for similarities and overriding themes. The frequencies

were established by adding the frequencies of each of the different constructs per category. A summary of the clustering is displayed in Table 16 below which follows with a discussion on each of these categories. The table is ranked from highest to lowest order.

Table 16 - Clustering of Post- Training and Development Factors

Rank	Category Name	Total number of frequencies per cluster
1	Evaluate, assessment and provide feedback	164
2	Transfer of learning and applying the skills	63
3	Support and involvement	59
4	Accountability	35

With an overwhelming 164 frequencies, the first category from the post training and development phase refers to the evaluation, assessment and providing feedback factors. The category consists of six constructs. As part of the evaluation, the line manager should assess the middle manager for improvement in skills, competencies, knowledge and performance. After which the line manager should provide the middle manager with feedback on the relevant changes in performance. This is supported by Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) who stated that evaluation takes place to determine the success of the training programme. As part of this evaluation, Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2009) Level 3 tests for behaviour change through on-the-job application. It tests to what extent participants apply what they have learned during training when they are back on the job. The line manager should also be able to determine what the benefits are, what the impact is, and if the middle manager is meeting the objectives set at the pre- phase and ultimately adding value.

The transfer of learning or the ability to apply the skill was the second most important category in the post training and development phase consisting of two constructs and a total of 63 frequencies. Cromwell and Kolb (2004) stated that even though organisations dedicate resources, time and energy to adequately develop the capacity for their leaders, only a few of the training programmes achieve more than 10 percent productive transference of learning to the workplace. Conversely, the findings show that middle managers feel better opportunities should be given to them on their return from the training, to apply the new skills that they have learned.

Support and involvement appeared again as a category at the post training and development phase with two constructs and a total of 59 frequencies. It remains a crucial

factor for the line manager to support the middle manager throughout the process. It makes sense that the line manager should act in the role of a coach or a mentor after the middle manager returns from the training intervention. Ng (2015) explains the transfer of learning is more likely to take place if the middle managers are supported by their supervisor and when adequate communication takes place. Interestingly, Jaidev and Chirayath (2012) found that pre-training motivation, as well as during-training activities, had a correlation to the transfer of learning, yet, supervisor support was unrelated to skills transfer. The research findings are clearly in support of Ng's (2015) finding.

The findings further indicate that accountability by the middle manager at this phase of training and development is essential, as they are responsible for their development, and the organisation should hold them accountable for it. This category consists of two constructs with a total of 35 frequencies. It happens too often that the responsibility of management development gets passed onto the HR department or the learning and development department. It is one's responsibility, and the findings clearly agreed with this.

The results indicate that evaluation and assessment post training and development is still important and that line managers should provide feedback to the middle managers. Furthermore, the line managers should monitor the progress and have regular check-ins with the middle managers. Transfer of learning is crucial to the ROI on training and development because if the middle manager is not able to apply the skill, the business will not receive an ROI for that training and development. Support and involvement by the line manager once again prove as a vital factor to a positive ROI on training and development. Even though there is contradicting literature on successful transfer of learning when the line manager supports the middle manager, the findings of this study indicate that it is necessary for the line manager to give support during this phase.

6.5 Discussion of Results for Research Question 4

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: What are the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development?

Research question 4 sought to establish the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development. It was significant to establish which methods should be used for evaluating the training or development programmes that the middle managers have gone through. The evaluation of training and development is still unappreciated. As such these evaluations can be caught up in an informal, sometimes unimportant systematic process that involves and produces little, even though it uses

essential resources (Ward et al., 2006). Evaluation can prevent the misuse of resources, including money, and as such, it is important to structure it in such a way (Ward et al., 2006).

The results from the data analysis as presented in Table 11 in Chapter 5 displays 14 general factors specified per phase. The clustering per phase (of the training) is displayed in Table 17 below followed by a general discussion on what the best ways are to measure the ROI of training and development of middle managers. The table is ranked from highest to lowest order. The approach in categorising these per phase assists in developing the new framework.

Table 17 - Best Ways to Measure ROI per Phase

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Construct</u>	<u>Phases</u>			<u>Total Frequencies</u>
		<u>Pre</u>	<u>During</u>	<u>Post</u>	
1	Must collect information throughout the process (from trainees, from the training provider, from management, etc.) to determine if there has been an improvement in performance and what has the impact been (i.e. sales figures, stock take results)			Level 1	12
2	Pre- and or post-assessments (written / online / multiple choice / simulation)			Level 2	9
3	Application of the learning in the workplace through observation, on-the-job evaluations, questionnaires, etc.			Level 3	8
4	Action Plan with Check-In points: Make sure managers know what the outcomes are, have debriefing sessions, interviews, evaluate it regularly, provide feedback and set the next deliverables			Level 3	7
4	Link it to the manager's performance reviews (KPA's & KPI's) and the development plan (monthly/quarterly)			Level 4	7
6	Detailed survey where you ask participants if the programme objectives were achieved (5-point scale) - incl. Managers, training providers, L&D/HR			Level 1	6
6	Pre- and post-measurements - set measures from the design phase	Evaluation Planning		3.	6

Rank	Construct	Phases			Total Frequencies
		Pre	During	Post	
8	Assess change in behaviour			Level 3	5
9	Provide support: the line manager or provide a coach, and provide continuous feedback, guidance and reflection			New	4
10	Demonstrate the value created (especially in Rands) and or has a positive impact on the organisation profit			Level 4 & 5	4
11	Repetition (one week after the training, then one month later again, three months, etc.)			New	3
12	Constant sharing of information			Level 3	2
12	Kirk Patrick 4 Levels and Jack Phillips 5 Levels of evaluation			4.	2
12	Talent reviews, especially for success planning			Level 3	2

In Table 17 above the different levels from Kirkpatrick's four-level framework (2009) and Jack Phillips's revived five-level framework (2001) are identified in the different constructs of what the best ways are to measure ROI on training and development. Table 17 illustrates how complex the measurement of ROI on training and development is – some factors relate to the pre- training and development phase, or to the during phase, or to the post phase, where others relate to more than one of the phases or all three of the phases. While the Kirkpatrick (2001) and Phillips (2009) frameworks only fit into the post training and development phase, as the focus of these frameworks are on measuring after the training took place. Even though the Kirkpatrick (2006) and Phillips (2007) frameworks were identified as one of the best ways to measure ROI by the participants of this study, these frameworks relate to each of the constructs listed in Table 17, except for two. The support of the line manager or a coach, and the need to repeat the evaluation (within a week, and then again within a month, and again after three months) are identified by the participants as important factors for measuring ROI on training and development.

The research found that it is important for the managers to understand why they need to attend certain programmes, and what the benefit to them is. This is supported by Phillips et al. (2016) who acknowledged generating a positive ROI, the purpose of the training programme must exist. This is measured in Level 1, the Reaction Level.

Looking at the highest ranked construct on what the participants believed was the best ways to measure ROI – that is to ensure one collects data throughout the process –

relates to the well-known Kirkpatrick model (2006). The model emphasises the need to concentrate on a shared effort to achieve a return on stakeholder expectations by presenting the value and worth of the training to the business (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2009). Building on this, the ROI methodology from Phillips et al. (2016) as displayed in Figure 1 in Chapter 2, specifies that data should be collected during and after the programme. As such, it is still confirmed as a relevant requirement to measure the ROI of training and development effectively. Additionally, this also speaks to the fourth highest ranked construct where participants had a strong opinion that it is important for the managers to know what the outcomes of the evaluations are. The managers should be informed through debriefing sessions, interviews, regular evaluating, providing feedback and setting the next deliverables.

The data that was collected agrees with the existing literature. The data collection allowed for the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the current ways to measure ROI, and broaden the understanding by specifying in which of the three phases (pre, during and post) this measurement is required. As such, this information substantially contributes to the input required for the new framework that is presented in Chapter 7. It is evident that the evaluation of training and development cannot only start after the intervention. Instead, the measurement should be determined right from the start.

The research findings concluded that the Kirkpatrick Four Levels (2006) and Phillips ROI methodology (2007) frameworks are still relevant, but a new finding established that it is crucial for the line manager to be involved in the process of evaluation – from the start of the training and development programme. According to Mann and Robertson (1996), the evaluation of training programmes is a vital part of the training process and that the most effective way to measure is one month after the training to determine what has been learnt. The research further found it is useful to conduct repetitive evaluations based on the training and development that the middle managers attended. More specifically, it will be useful to conduct the evaluation one week after the training, again within a month and then again within three months. This repetitive measuring is found to be a more accurate measure, as the different factors can be tracked over this period and tested for consistency in performance. Phillips et al. (2001) stated that understanding what drives the ROI process and knowing what the essential pros and cons of ROI are, enables one to apply a logical method and accordingly an “appropriate mix of evaluation strategies” (p. 2). Additionally, this research focused on how to implement such measurements over the three training phases, namely pre, during and post. As such,

these new findings form part of the new framework on how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers as further discussed in Chapter 7.

6.6 Discussion of Results for Research Question 5

RESEARCH QUESTION 5: What do the training providers and the training and development managers think the other party should do more of to increase the ROI of training and development of middle managers?

Research question 5 sought to establish what the difference in opinion of training providers and the opinion of those responsible for training and development within the organisation are on how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers. This information serves as good advice to each of these parties to ensure an improved training and development process for all parties involved.

Referring to Table 13 from Chapter 5, it is interesting to note how different the opinions of these two groups are. Based on the top five constructs from this finding, it shows that the training providers need more involvement from the other party. However, the managers from the organisations clearly do not share the sentiment. The managers are only talking about what they expect from the training providers, like a better programme design, where it seems that the training providers' approach is more inclusive.

There is an agreement between the two parties that it is important to understand the organisational goals and that these should be linked to the training and development programmes. This supports the finding by Little (2014) who established that organisations could increase their ROI if the learning is aligned to organisational objectives. The training providers go a bit further and suggest that the organisation needs to set very clear expectations to the middle managers and they need to allocate sufficient time to determine what is needed. It happens too often that this function is rushed. Again, the training providers talk about commitment and engagement by the organisation and that the middle managers should understand their responsibilities. The line managers need to give attention to their managers' training needs assessments, and they should take responsibility for their managers' development. The line managers should not expect the training provider to do this on their behalf. Overall it seems like the training providers' approach is more inclusive with a requirement for accountability from the line managers. The managers working with training and development in their organisations made suggestions on how the design of the programme can improve, like the programmes should be customised and flexible; the assessment criteria should be specific and relevant, and it should also be a repetitive process.

The results indicated two major influences identified by the training providers that could maximise the ROI on training and development of middle managers:

1. The concept of collaboration between the training providers and the managers working with the training and development within their organisations. This process should be a two-way channel where the training managers provide the training providers with as much information as possible, from the start. This will avoid any assumptions that need to be made by the training provider, and instead ensure consistency and professionalism.
2. The second major influence is that the organisation should be clear on what the objectives are and what the outcomes are that they would like to achieve. Furthermore, the organisation needs to set clear expectations for the middle managers, and they need to allocate sufficient time first to establish what is needed.

This development indicates a new finding in the field of training and development. It is understood that with a more collaborative approach and setting clear objectives and expectations for the middle managers' training and development interventions from the start, the ROI can be increased or even maximised.

6.7 Conclusion

The findings confirm the importance and the complexity of what goes into a training and development intervention. In Table 18 below a summary of the clusters of each of the training and development phases: pre, during and post is revealed, followed by a short discussion on the main points. These categories are displayed in rank order of highest to lowest based on their number of frequencies as presented earlier in this Chapter in Tables 14 – 16 respectively.

Table 18 - Summary of Pre-, During and Post Clustering

Rank	Pre- Phase	During Phase	Post Phase
1	Support and involvement	Support and involvement	Evaluate, assessment and provide feedback
2	Design of the programme	Design of the programme	Transfer of learning and applying the skill
3	Pre-assessments	Needs assessment and development plans	Support and involvement
4	Commitment and collaboration	Commitment and engagement	Accountability
5	Needs assessment and development plans		

Four out of the five categories from the pre-phase repeats itself in the during phase. This confirms the significance of the work that goes into the training and development programmes. Without this, it would not be possible to conduct an evaluation and assessment at the post phase. Support and involvement are an important category at all three of the phases of training and development. Collaboration is evident in the pre-training and development phase, with the need for engagement in the during training and development phase.

The research findings concluded that the Kirkpatrick Four Levels (2006) and Phillips ROI methodology (2007) frameworks are still relevant, but a new finding established that it is crucial for the line manager to be involved in the process of evaluation – from the start of the training and development programme. The research further found it is useful to conduct repetitive evaluations. Training providers felt it necessary to engage in a more collaborative process with the other stakeholders which is a major new finding in the field. The managers, on the other hand, felt it more important for the training providers to improve the design of the training programmes which would ultimately have a positive impact on the ROI of training and development of middle managers.

The research objectives, as conferred by the five research questions in Chapter 3, have therefore been met and contribute to the current literature on how to measure ROI on training and development. The data collected provides valuable information for establishing a framework on how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers which is further discussed in the subsequent Chapter 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 a business problem was presented regarding the need for empirical research on how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers. This, together with the challenge that business is facing regarding competition, technology changes and high recruitment costs – all adding to the pressure to save money elsewhere – substantiated a relevant business problem that this study aimed to solve. This Chapter discusses how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers regarding the original two frameworks identified through the literature review and discussed in Chapter 2. The findings and further developments that emerged from the data analysis, which was discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively, presented useful information to introduce a new framework that will assist organisations in maximising their ROI on training and development of middle managers. Based on the findings and the new framework, recommendations for training providers, for middle managers, as well as for managers working with training and development in organisations are presented, and ideas and recommendations for future research are also proposed.

7.2 Maximising the ROI on Training and Development of Middle Managers

7.2.1 Synthesis of the Data

The Training and Development ROI Process framework was established through the rigorous and mindful integration of the themes and constructs analysed in Chapter 5 and proven in Chapter 6. Consideration was given to what the most pertinent components of each of the three training and development phases are, namely the determinants of the pre-, during and post phases. All factors of the examined and compiled data were pulled together to produce the return on training investment (ROTI) framework illustrated in Figure 2 below.

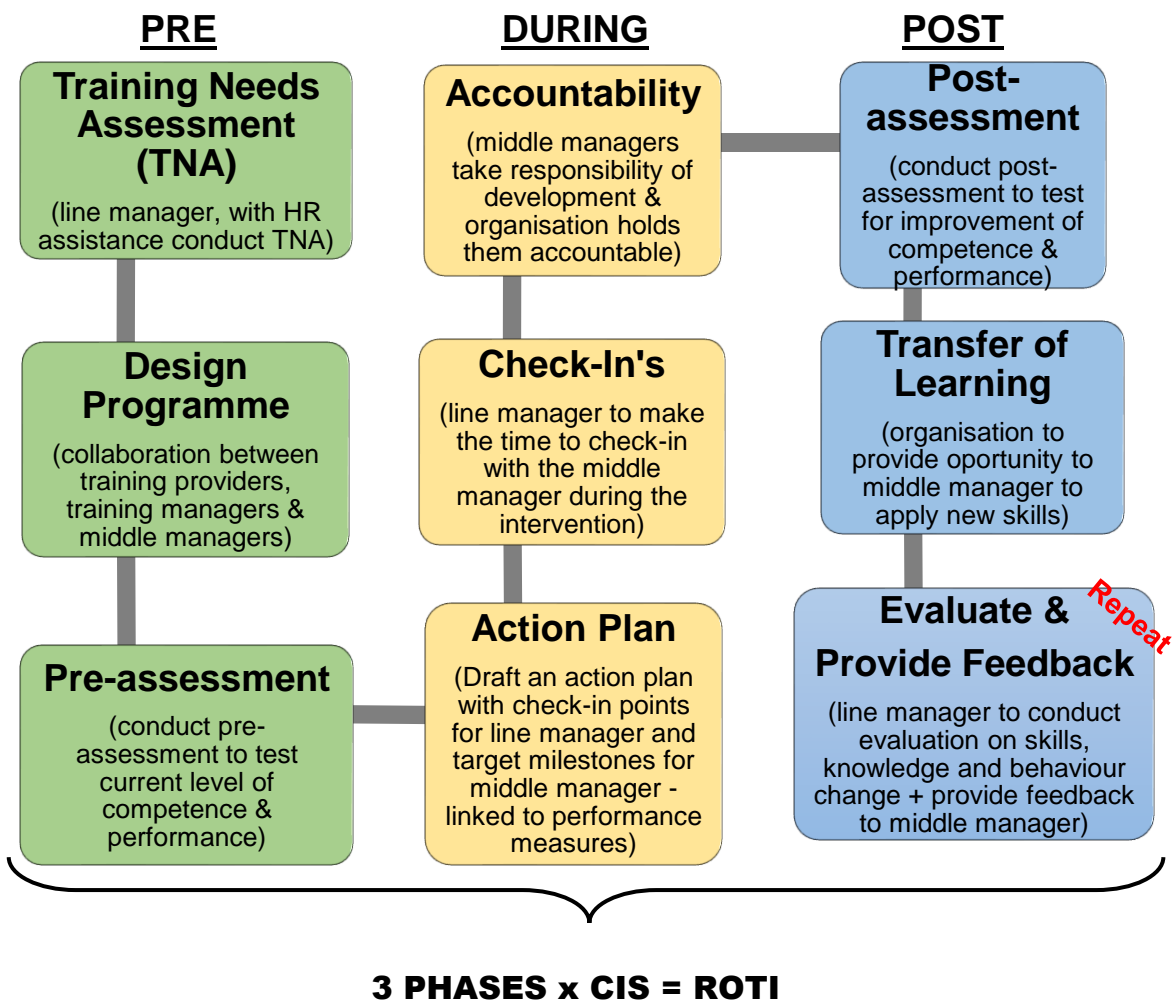
The framework was designed with the idea of assisting organisations on how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers. The Kirkpatrick Four-Level model (2006) presented in Table 2 in Chapter 2 and the Jack Phillips, Five Levels of Evaluation Model (2007) presented in Table 3 in Chapter 2 now, proved its relevance to the post training and development phase. These two models are still useful to determine the ROI on training and development, however, based on the research findings, there is a clear gap for the effort that needs to take place in the pre-and during phases. It is further important to remember that the return discussed in this study does

not only refer to monetary value but also takes the intangible benefits into account. This will now be discussed in the section that follows.

7.2.2 Explanation of The ROTI Process Framework

The training and development process consists of three stages, namely the pre- training and development phase, the during training and development phase and the post training and development phase. If the required steps from any of these phases are neglected, it will prevent the possibility to maximise the ROI on the training and development. The ROTI framework as displayed in Figure 2 below, makes provision for a step-by-step process that organisations can follow through the training and development programme. These steps will now be discussed in more detail in the section that follows.

Figure 2 - The ROTI Process Framework



As discussed in Chapter 6, each phase has a specific set of actions that are required to enhance the success of the process. The steps and detail involved in each of these phases are as follows:

PRE:

- **Training Needs Assessment (TNA):**

The line manager should conduct a thorough TNA to establish what the departmental goals are and what training needs the middle manager has, to achieve such goals. The HR department or learning and development department should aid the line manager during this process to ensure all the different aspects are covered. It is also important for the line manager to involve the middle manager during this process.

- **Design Programme**

With the information obtained from the TNA, a training programme can now be designed. This design involves the manager working with the training, like the HR department or the learning and development department, the line manager, the middle manager, and of course the training provider. This is where the collaboration process starts. This process is vital to the ROTI; thus, stakeholders should ensure all aspects are covered before moving onto the next step in the process.

- **Conduct a Pre-Assessment**

The training provider, in collaboration with the line manager, to conduct a pre-assessment on the middle manager, to assess for current level of competence and performance. This can be done through various methods, like a written test, online assessment, a multiple-choice assessment or a simulation. The pre-assessment should ideally be completed at least two to three days before the training commences.

DURING:

- **Action Plan**

The line manager to draft an action plan, stipulating the expectations, and the middle manager to agree to this. The action plan also includes target milestones to be clear on when what should be achieved. Furthermore, the action plan should make provision for the opportunity to have conversations about the middle manager's progress and to discuss further expectations from the line manager and the organisation. These action plans should also be linked to the middle manager's performance contract. It will be useful to involve HR and the training provider at this

step, as they will give vital input and guidance that will ensure a seamless process. The line manager is responsible for ensuring this plan is managed accordingly.

- **Check-In's**

Line management should realise that their involvement continues, even while the middle manager is attending the programme. It adds to the ROTI if the line manager makes time to check-in with the middle manager on the first day that the programme has started to ask how everything is going. Should the middle manager feel the programme is not beneficial, the programme can still be adjusted without any serious delays or resources wasted. The middle manager should also pose questions to the line manager that relates to the business at this stage, to relate the training back to the business.

- **Accountability**

The middle manager has just as much responsibility to ensure this training programme is a success as does the line manager. The middle manager should take full responsibility for his/her development, and the organisation should hold him/her accountable through a development plan agreement and constantly have conversations on the progress and new developments.

POST:

- **Post-Assessments**

Immediately after the training intervention, the training provider should again conduct an assessment on the middle manager to test for improvement of competence and performance. The training provider should design the post-assessment in collaboration with the line manager. This can be done through various methods, like a written test, online assessment, a multiple-choice assessment, an interview or a simulation. Additionally, the stakeholders should also provide feedback to the training provider to confirm if the objectives were achieved.

- **Transfer of Learning**

On return to the office, the line manager should have made provision for the middle manager to now apply the new skills through a supported transfer of learning programme. As part of the programme design, the stakeholder should set expectations of what the middle manager should be able to do in return, and then create those opportunities where he/she can adequately apply these skills in the workplace. The opportunities can be measured through observation, on-the-job evaluations, questionnaires, feedback from other departments, and more. If there is no opportunity for this, the training was a waste of time, and the ROTI will be

negatively affected. The middle manager should also make use of this opportunity to share his/her learning with the rest of the team and organisation.

- **Evaluate and Provide Feedback**

Also on return from the training intervention, the line manager should evaluate the middle manager's skills, knowledge and any behaviour change. An evaluation sheet for this purpose should be designed and agreed upon during the programme design step in the pre- training and development phase. This process should be transparent, and the opportunity for feedback should be afforded. The line manager should complete the evaluation with the middle manager repeatedly: one week after the intervention, again one month after the intervention, and again three months after the intervention as a minimum. After each evaluation session, the line manager should provide thorough feedback and set the next deliverables.

THE FORMULA:

The ROTI framework consists of the three phases of training and development as displayed in Figure 2 and the subsequent discussion from section 7.2.2; together with the commitment, involvement and support (CIS) of the stakeholders involved results in ROTI.

$$3 \text{ PHASES} \times \text{CIS} = \text{ROTI}$$

7.2.3 Summary of The ROTI Process Framework

The following key points should be considered when the ROTI framework is used:

- It is advisable that training providers should take part in this process from the start, as the evidence has revealed the importance of a collaborative approach.
- Information should be collected throughout the process (during all three of the training and development phases) from all the different stakeholders involved, namely from the training provider, the line manager, the middle manager, HR and other senior management.
- Throughout the process, the support and involvement of the line manager are key to ensure a positive ROI on the training and development of the middle managers. In the absence of the line manager, the organisation should at least provide the middle manager with a coach or a mentor.
- Involve this process in the talent management and succession planning process.

7.3 Recommendations

The recommendations for each of the participating groups, namely the training providers, the middle manager, and the manager working with training and development within their organisations were developed from the top themes that were identified from the data analysis. These will now be discussed in the section that follows.

7.3.1 Recommendations for training providers

- Encourage to work with the managers of the organisations who work with the training and development, in a more collaborative process from the start to ensure a better understanding of the needs and to set clear expectations of the outcomes.
- Training providers should make a greater effort to understand the business and the department from which the middle manager is a part, before designing the programme. The training is of no use if it is not aligned with the organisational goals.
- Provide a more blended training programme, which focuses on the application of learning, instead of only theory and facilitation based training. There has been a development of the method of training delivery, but not all training providers have moved to this new approach.
- The design of the programme remains critical in the process of training and development. As such, the training providers should be clear on what the organisation wants to achieve, and if the programme will achieve this. The training provider should make changes to the programme where necessary, and communicate this with the organisation for further input. The training providers should be firm that the programme will not start before all the stakeholders have agreed on the content and the deliverables.
- Ensure organisations set the ROI measurements of the middle managers' training and development at the pre- training and development phase. Training providers should assist with this where necessary.
- Training providers should show commitment and provide encouragement throughout the process – the middle managers quickly pick up when the training provider is no longer motivated or committed to the programme. This in return has a negative impact on the middle managers' commitment.

7.3.2 Recommendations for middle managers about to go on training

- Middle managers should make sure they hold their line manager accountable to be engaged in the process.
- It is the middle managers' responsibility to make sure they know what the process of the training intervention entails and to ensure they are prepared for the training.
- Middle managers are responsible for their development. It is not HR, nor the line manager's responsibility.
- The middle managers should ensure that they will be able to apply the learnings when they return to the workplace.

7.3.3 Recommendations for organisations using training providers

- Work with the training providers, in a more collaborative process from the start to ensure a better understanding of the needs and to set clear expectations of the outcomes.
- Assist the line manager in conducting a thorough training needs assessment before any other step or process begins.
- Encourage the line managers to be more involved in their middle manager's training and development, in all three phases, and hold the line managers accountable.
- Set targets for the line managers to provide feedback to the middle managers and HR or the training managers.
- Create communication channels that will encourage open and free dialogue between the different stakeholders.
- HR, together with the line manager should ensure there is an opportunity for the middle manager to apply the new skills on return from the training intervention.
- The design of the programme remains critical in the process of training and development. As such, the organisation should make it clear to the training providers what they want to achieve.
- Ensure organisations set the ROI measurements of the middle managers' training and development at the pre- training and development phase. Training providers should assist with this where necessary.

It is crucial for the different stakeholders to understand the expectations that other stakeholders have of them. As such, this information will be useful to all the stakeholders involved, to better understand the other's point of view.

7.4 Limitations of the Research

In Chapter 4 it was discussed that qualitative research is subjective and prone to several biases (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2010). For this reason, the researcher recognised the subjectivity of the study and identified the following research shortcomings:

- The interviewer is not an expert in conducting research interviews, nor was the interviewer trained to conduct these interviews expertly, and as such, this could have influenced the method of data gathering, along with the results of the research (Agee, 2009)
- The quality of the data is reliant on the information obtained from the in-depth interviews.
- The possibility that the sample might not have been representative due to the use of non-probability, purposive sampling, making it difficult to generalise results to the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
- Geographical bias in the participant's responses could have been affected, as only a limited number of individuals from the Gauteng area in South Africa represented the sample. Subsequently, the size of the sample may not be sufficient for broad generalisations in other cultural contexts or environments.
- Due to the extreme urgency experienced from most of the participants interviewed, as well as the short timeframe that was applied, it could have discouraged the participants from offering more detailed information or additional. This could have resulted in collecting incomplete data, which is significant for the quality of the information provided.
- Just as with Curado & Teixeira's (2014) study, the data was collected in a single moment in time. Curado & Teixeira (2014) recognised a longitudinal study would have included data from several different training programmes which could identify the effects of the different learning outcomes from each training intervention, and as such could result in a richer research.
- Additional components that could influence training effectiveness, such as individual characteristics, teaching characteristics or detailed training design was not examined (Curado & Teixeira, 2014).
- Generalisability to all organisations could not be possible as the number of businesses and the number of industries investigated, represent only a small sample (namely nine).

Despite the limitations listed above, the researcher remained truthful during the process of this study.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

There is very little empirical evidence on how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers. The following five recommendations for future research would add significant value to the existing literature:

1. Investigate what the best turnaround time to measure the ROI (immediately, or within a week, or within a month, or more, or at all of these times) is;
2. The need for much greater collaboration between training providers and managers in the organisations. Thus, there is a need for frameworks or models of best practice in how such collaboration can be achieved;
3. Establish how to train and develop members of boards of directors – a very different skill set is needed for these;
4. Determine if there is a difference in measuring the ROI in small, medium enterprises (SME), large, and multinational organisations;
5. What is the effect of a compelling talent management process on the organisation's training and development ROI?

7.6 Conclusion to Research Project

The literature confirms that training and development remain an important factor in a business' planning and budgeting. It further affirms that there are several methods available to measure the ROI on training and development, but that businesses still struggle to quantify this adequately. This research established that businesses should start looking at the bigger picture. The ROI on training and development does not only relate to the Rands and cents that the business gets in return, but that a positive change in behaviour, a manager that takes better accountability and just the ability to apply the skill successfully in the business, justifies the ROI. It is no longer only about the numbers when the ROI on training and development for middle managers is measured, but the emotional concerns have a huge influence on whether the business will be able to maximise its return. As long as the line manager, and HR include this measure in the ROI, and it is easily measurable.

All three groups are relatively in agreement regarding each of the three phases, namely pre, during and post training and development. Two major findings emerged from this study, namely:

1. There should be a more collaborative approach between the training providers and the managers working with training and development.
2. The line manager plays a much bigger and significant role than any of the other stakeholders. It is necessary for the line manager to be involved in the process from the start and throughout.

This study contributed to the theoretical and practical understanding of how to maximise the ROI of training and development of middle managers. Furthermore, it is expected that this research adds to the practice of management through the application of the ROTI framework. Training providers and managers working with training and development, who are seeking to maximise their ROI on training and development of middle managers, can make use of this user-friendly framework.

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9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix A1: Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Request to take part in my research project (voluntary)

Dear Xxxx

Trust this email finds you in good order.

Prof Margie Sutherland referred me to you, as she is currently the supervisor on my research project. I am a second year MBA student at GIBS, and I am conducting research into what the best practices are on how to maximise the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.

Would it be possible for you to participate, through a face-to-face interview, in my research project? The interview should take between one to an hour and a half to complete, your time and your knowledge input would be of great value.

If you are able to assist, we can schedule a time and a place convenient to both of us, however, due to the timeframe, I would appreciate if this would be possible within the next 6 weeks.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Leané Breedt-Maree

082 472 0771

9.2 Appendix A2: Invitation: Interview for Research Project

Dear Xxxx

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me.

I am conducting research into what the best practices are on how to maximise the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.

The interview is expected to last about an hour, and the information and insights gained through the interview will hopefully help me to better understand how to maximise the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.

Please find attached interview guideline that will be used as the main structure during our discussion next week.

Yours sincerely

Leané Breedt-Maree

082 472 0771

9.3 Appendix B: Consent Form

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

MAXIMISING THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDLE MANAGERS

Researcher: Leané Breedt-Maree, MBA Student at the Gordon Institute of Business
Science, University of Pretoria

I am conducting research into what the best practices are on how to maximise the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.

The interview is expected to last about an hour, and the information and insights gained through the interview will hopefully help me to better understand how to maximise the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. The audio recording of this interview is also voluntary, and you may choose not to be recorded. All data will be kept confidential, and any quotations used will be anonymised.

If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below:

Researcher

Name: Leané Breedt-Maree

Email: breedt.lean@gmail.com

Cell phone: 082 472 0771

Supervisor

Margie Sutherland

sutherlandm@gibs.co.za

073 170 6917

Participant

Name & Surname (optional): _____

Position: _____ **Email:** _____

Location: _____ **Cell:** _____

Signature of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ **Date:** _____

9.4 Appendix C1: Interview Guideline A: Training Providers

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE A:

TRAINING PROVIDERS

Name & Surname (**optional**): _____

Job Title/Position: _____

Time in Position: _____

Organisation Name (**optional**): _____

Time in Existence: _____

Type of Business / Industry: _____

Training and/or Development provided within last two years: YES / NO

Type(s) and name(s) of intervention(s): _____

Nr. of Employees: _____ Nr. of middle managers trained: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I really appreciate your time and input into this research.

The title of the research is 'Maximising the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.' Businesses are continuously concerned with what the return on investment is for training and development. Most organisations agree that employee training and development programmes are a valuable part of the human capital strategy, yet few have successfully quantified the return on investment (ROI). In the context of this research, ROI relates to the benefit that the organisation will/should get from the money, time and other resources spent on the training and development of their middle managers. Middle managers or middle management is a position in the organisational structure between senior and junior management where they are responsible for a particular division within the organisational hierarchy. As middle managers play a central role within organisations, one could argue they are significant role players in the delivery of operations, customer care, strategy and employee

relations. The purpose of this study is to determine what are the best practices to ensure the ROI for training and development of middle managers.

The key objective of this research is:

1. What can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?
2. What can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?
3. What can be done after the programme was delivered, to ensure the managers apply and maintain the learning?
4. What are the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development?
5. Is there a difference in the opinions on the above four questions, between training providers and the manager responsible for training and development in organisations?

The nature of this research and interview is both conversational and exploratory. I would like to encourage you to speak freely and be confident in the fact that the information shared in this interview will be confidential and you will remain anonymous.

Before we begin, may I ask you to please sign the consent form and can you please confirm that you are happy for me to record the interview using an audio recording device?

1. What should be done to increase the ROI of training and development?

2. What should be avoided to ensure the increase of ROI of training and development?

3. What should be done prior to a training and/or development programme starts, that could maximise the ROI?

- *Training needs assessments?*
- *Design and composition of the programme?*
- *Selection of training techniques*

4. What should be done whilst the training and development programmes are running, to ensure the maximum ROI or an increase in the ROI?

(What should be done to ensure successful implementation of training and development programmes?)

5. Do you believe it is important for you or anyone from your organisation (as training providers) to be involved once the programme started?

Also explain how and why, or why not.

(I.e. To allocate a partner to the manager to support him/her during the process)

6. Do you believe it is important for transfer of learning to take place in the workplace?

Explain why / why not.

If yes, how should this be done?

7. What method should be used for evaluating the training or development programme that the middle managers have gone through? (For example, questionnaires, surveys, performance reviews, interviews, and so forth).

Please provide details.

8. What kind of limitations could be encountered in terms of evaluations, and how could these be eliminated or avoided?

9. a). What in your opinion could training providers do extra and/or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers?

9. b). What in your opinion could the managers from organisations do extra and/or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers?

10. Could you please refer me to organisations that according to you have implemented best practice in terms of best practice on maximising the ROI on training and development for middle managers?

9.5 Appendix C2: Interview Guideline B: Middle Managers

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE B:

MIDDLE MANAGERS

Name & Surname (**optional**): _____

Job Title/Position: _____

Time in Position: _____

Name of Organisation (**optional**): _____

Type of Organisation / Business / Industry: _____

Date(s) and period when Training or Development was attended within the last two years:

Type and name of intervention: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I really appreciate your time and input into this research.

The title of the research is 'Maximising the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.' Businesses are continuously concerned with what the return on investment is for training and development. Most organisations agree that employee training and development programmes are a valuable part of the human capital strategy, yet few have successfully quantified the return on investment (ROI). In the context of this research, ROI relates to the benefit that the organisation will/should get from the money, time and other resources spent on the training and development of their middle managers. Middle managers or middle management is a position in the organisational structure between senior and junior management where they are responsible for a particular division within the organisational hierarchy. As middle managers play a central role within organisations, one could argue they are significant role players in the delivery of operations, customer care, strategy and employee relations. The purpose of this study is to determine what are the best practices to ensure the ROI for training and development of middle managers.

The key objective of this research is:

1. What can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?
2. What can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?
3. What can be done after the programme was delivered, to ensure the managers apply and maintain the learning?
4. What are the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development?
5. Is there a difference in the opinions on the above four questions, between training providers and the manager responsible for training and development in organisations?

The nature of this research and interview is both conversational and exploratory. I would like to encourage you to speak freely and be confident in the fact that the information shared in this interview will be confidential and you will remain anonymous.

Before we begin, may I ask you to please sign the consent form and can you please confirm that you are happy for me to record the interview using an audio recording device?

- 1. a). How much of the training and development, that you have attended, have you applied in the workplace?**

- 1. b). In your opinion, what should be done to increase the ROI of training and development?**

2. In your opinion, what should be avoided to ensure the increase of ROI of training and development?

3. What should be done prior to a training and/or development programme starts, that could maximise the ROI?

- *Training needs assessments?*
- *Design and composition of the programme?*
- *Selection of training techniques*

4. What could be done during the time the training and development programmes are running, to ensure the maximum ROI / an increase in the ROI?

(What should be done to ensure successful implementation of training and development programmes?)

5. Do you believe it is important for someone from your organisation to be involved once the programme started?

Also explain how and why, or why not.

(I.e. To allocate a partner to the manager to support him/her during the process)

- 6. Do you believe it is important for transfer of learning to take place in the workplace?
Explain why / why not.
If yes, how should this be done?**

- 7. What method should be used for evaluating the training or development programme that the middle managers have gone through? (For example, questionnaires, surveys, performance reviews, interviews, and so forth).
Please provide details.**

- 8. What kind of limitations could be encountered in terms of evaluations, and how could these be eliminated or avoided?**

- 9. a). What in your opinion could training providers do extra and/or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers?**

9. b). What in your opinion could the managers from your organisation do extra and/or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers?

9.6 Appendix C3: Interview Guideline C: Training Managers

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE C:

MANAGERS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THEIR ORGANISATIONS

Name & Surname (**optional**): _____

Job Title/Position: _____

Time in Position: _____

Organisation Name (**optional**): _____

Time in Existence: _____

Type of Business / Industry: _____

Date(s) and period when Training or Development was initiated within the last two years:

Type(s) and name(s) of intervention(s):

Nr. of Employees: _____ Nr. of Middle Managers: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I really appreciate your time and input into this research.

The title of the research is 'Maximising the return on investment for training and development of middle managers.' Businesses are continuously concerned with what the return on investment is for training and development. Most organisations agree that employee training and development programmes are a valuable part of the human capital strategy, yet few have successfully quantified the return on investment (ROI). In the context of this research, ROI relates to the benefit that the organisation will/should get from the money, time and other resources spent on the training and development of their middle managers. Middle managers or middle management is a position in the organisational structure between senior and junior management where they are responsible for a particular division within the organisational hierarchy. As middle managers play a central role within organisations, one could argue they

are significant role players in the delivery of operations, customer care, strategy and employee relations. The purpose of this study is to determine what are the best practices to ensure the ROI for training and development of middle managers.

The key objective of this research is:

1. What can be done in the assessment and design phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?
2. What can be done at implementation phase to maximise the ROI for training and development of middle managers?
3. What can be done after the programme was delivered, to ensure the managers apply and maintain the learning?
4. What are the best ways to measure the ROI for middle managers' training and development?
5. Is there a difference in the opinions on the above four questions, between training providers and the manager responsible for training and development in organisations?

The nature of this research and interview is both conversational and exploratory. I would like to encourage you to speak freely and be confident in the fact that the information shared in this interview will be confidential and you will remain anonymous.

Before we begin, may I ask you to please sign the consent form and can you please confirm that you are happy for me to record the interview using an audio recording device?

- 1. a). Has the organisation received a good ROI for training and development done?**
(I.e. productivity increased)

- 1. b). In your opinion, when you send middle managers on training, what should be done to increase the ROI?**

2. What should be avoided to ensure the increase of ROI of training and development?

3. What should be done prior to a training and/or development programme starts, that could maximise the ROI?

- *Training needs assessments?*
- *Design and composition of the programme?*
- *Selection of training techniques*

4. What should be done whilst the training and development programmes are running, to ensure the maximum ROI or an increase in the ROI?

(What should be done to ensure successful implementation of training and development programmes?)

5. Do you believe it is important for you or anyone from your organisation to be involved once the programme started?

Also explain how and why, or why not.

(I.e. To allocate a partner to the manager to support him/her during the process)

6. Do you believe it is important for transfer of learning to take place in the workplace?

Explain why / why not.

If yes, how should this be done?

7. What method should be used for evaluating the training or development programme that the middle managers have gone through? (For example, questionnaires, surveys, performance reviews, interviews, and so forth).

Please provide details.

8. What kind of limitations could be encountered in terms of evaluations, and how could these be eliminated or avoided?

9. a). What in your opinion could training providers do extra and/or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers?

9. b). What in your opinion could the managers from your organisation do extra and/or differently to assist in maximising the ROI on training and development of middle managers?

10. Could you please refer me to middle managers and organisations that according to you have implemented best practice in terms of best practice on maximising the ROI on training and development for middle managers?

9.7 Appendix D: Ethical Clearance Letter

**Gordon
Institute
of Business
Science**
University
of Pretoria

31 May 2017

Leane Breedt-Maree

Dear Leane Breedt-Maree,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee