TRAINING DESIGN DOCUMENT

Associate Relations Investigations Training

MPHR-6200: Learning and Development

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Training Assessment

Context/Problem Overview

A current performance gap at HD Supply is the lack of a standardized and organization-wide training and framework on how HR Business Partners should conduct associate relation investigations. Without clear guidelines, new hires and current associates in the organization are often trained informally through peers or peer-generated materials, resulting in inconsistent investigation practices. Similar cases can be handled differently depending on how the associate was trained, critical details are sometimes left out, and documentation is recorded and submitted in different formats. Additionally, investigation notes and summaries lack uniformity, making it difficult to ensure accuracy, consistency, and fairness across investigation cases. This gap also creates confusion among HR partners and reduces efficiency, limiting the company's ability to maintain reliable investigation standards.

The root cause of having a lack of formalized training and internal investigation standards, is a significant gap and impact for the organization. Not having a uniform investigation training and framework not only increases compliance risk but also creates potential legal risk and undermines fairness and associated treatment. Additionally, this also limits the HR compliance teams' ability to monitor case outcomes and enforce accountability among HR partners. To address this issue, HD Supply needs a standardized investigation training program that equips not only field HR business partners but also our corporate HR business partners with a clear, uniform framework for conducting associate investigations. Having a program like this will not only reduce compliance risk but also ensure consistency across the organization. But overall, will strengthen transparency and fairness in associate relations and embody the values of HD Supply and Home Depot.

Organizational Analysis

HD Supply is a leading industrial distributor with a culture focused on service, growth, and teamwork. The company emphasizes developing its people, valuing respect for all associates, and working together to achieve results. Its core values highlight doing the right thing, acting with integrity, and delivering excellent service. These values show that fairness, accountability, and transparency are central to the organization. The current lack of a standardized investigation framework directly conflicts with these values, as inconsistent handling of cases risks undermining fairness and trust among associates.

As part of The Home Depot family, HD Supply also operates under broader governance principles of Home Depot, which emphasize accountability, transparency, and protecting stakeholders' interests. This means that inconsistencies in HR investigation practices not only create compliance and legal risks but also threaten alignment with the parent company's commitment to ethical operations and corporate responsibility. Key stakeholders, including associates, managers, and shareholders, expect reliable and fair practices. HD Supply's culture and its parent company's governance structure indicate strong readiness for a training intervention. A standardized investigation training program would align daily HR practices with both HD Supply's values and The Home Depot's corporate standards.

Target Audience/Person Analysis

The target audience for the training intervention consists of the HR Business Partners responsible for conducting associate relation investigations. This includes 58 Field HR Business Partners, who are located at 40 distribution centers across the United States and Canada (with two of them serving as area managers for the Employee Relations team), and 20 Corporate HR Business Partners who support Corporate Functions and a Sales Team.

A key detail for the training design is that the Field and Corporate HR Business Partners report to different Senior Directors within HR. This may influence how the training is received and applied within each group, and it is something to keep in mind as the training content and implementation strategy is developed.

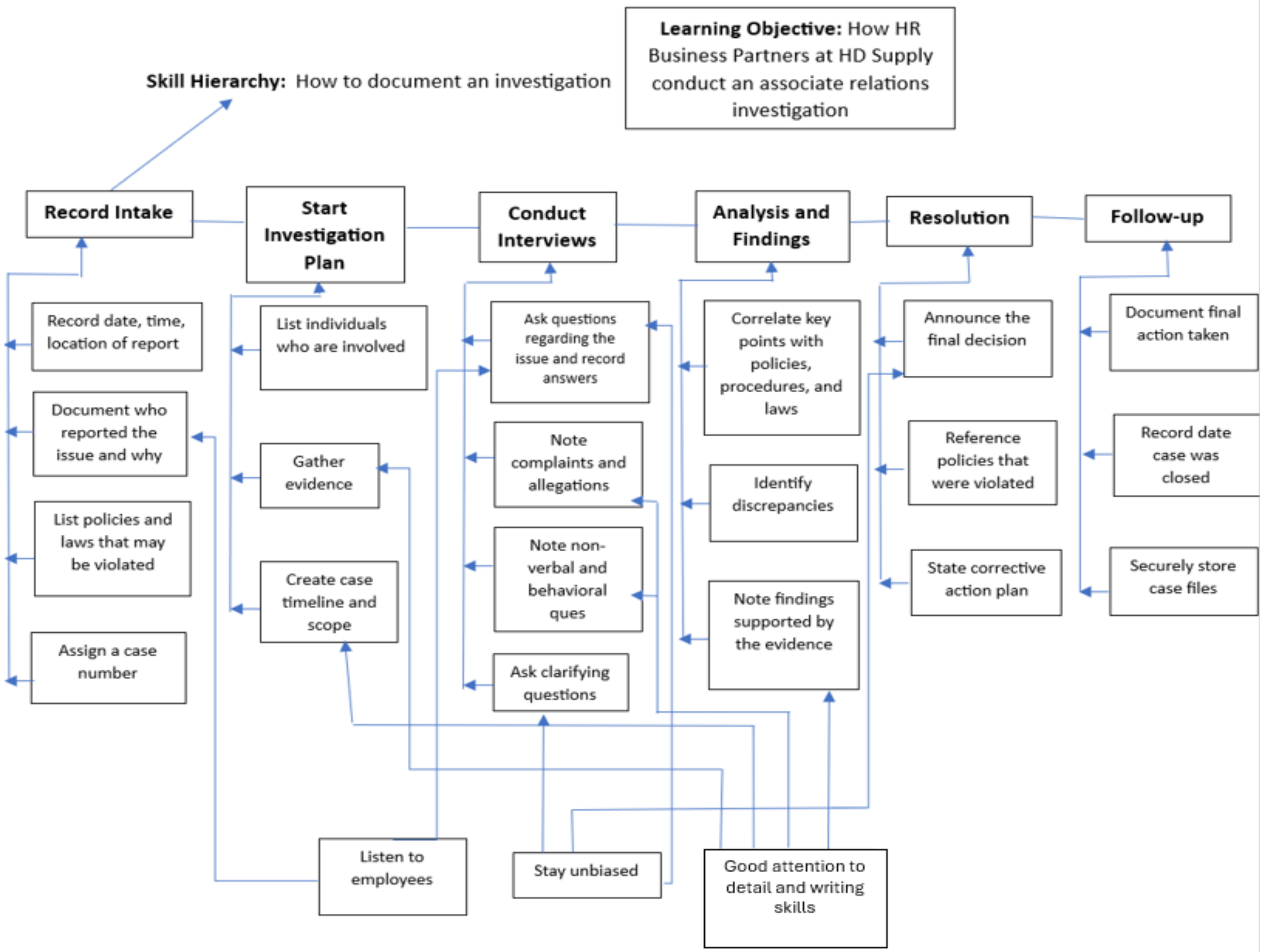
Criteria	Findings
Employee Tenure and Experience	The performance gap affects both new hires and current associates within the HR Business Partner role. This indicates a diverse range of tenure, from those recently joining the organization to those with longer experience.
Training History	There is no formal organization-wide training and standardized frameworks on how to conduct effective associate relation investigations. New hires and current associates are currently trained through informal methods, such as conversations with peers and/or peer-generated materials.

Performance History	The current practices on associate relation investigations are inconsistent and ineffective, where similar cases are handled differently, critical details are sometimes omitted, and documentation varies in format. This lack of uniformity makes it difficult to ensure accuracy, fairness, and increases potential compliance and legal risks. Additionally, it limits the HR Compliance Team's ability to monitor case outcomes and enforce accountability among HR partners.
Attitudes and Biases	There is a general sense of positive acceptance toward a potential training intervention, particularly among Corporate HR Business Partners. Corporate and Field staff are advocating to their leadership for the program to ensure that investigations are conducted consistently and to promote a sense of fairness. While there may be some initial pushback from more seasoned HR partners who are accustomed to their own methods, the overall reception is expected to be positive. The senior directors' support and communication will be critical in managing resistance within their respective teams.
Technology Use	Since HR Business Partners are located across the United States and Canada, the training would have to be conducted virtually. HD Supply uses Webex as a virtual meeting platform and the target audience has experience and is comfortable using Webex for the potential training.

Task Analysis

This task analysis is conducted to define and standardize the new associate relations investigation process used by Human Resources (HR) Business Partners. Previously, investigation documentation was unstructured and did not consistently follow procedures, creating a need for a more compliant approach. The process begins by developing a preliminary list of investigation-related tasks through interviews and direct observations of HR Business Partners in their day-to-day work. These observations help capture the range of tasks performed, along with the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) applied. Once the task list is compiled, it is validated by subject matter experts (SMEs), including HR Business Partners and their managers, through surveys or questionnaires. This step ensures the process is accurate, practical, and aligned with training needs, while also highlighting potential performance gaps. Following the task analysis, a skills hierarchy is created to break down the specific skills needed for accurate investigation documentation. This hierarchy shows how the skills build on one another to support a successful associate relations investigation documentation process.

Skills Hierarchy



Program Design

Based on the findings from the needs assessment, we recommend a three-hour virtual Webex training program for HR Business Partners. This virtual format ensures accessibility for teams located across the nation while providing an engaging and collaborative learning environment. The training will focus on strengthening participants' knowledge and skills in conducting workplace investigations and effectively applying investigation processes across various real-world scenarios.

Prior to Training

To maximize learning outcomes and ensure employees are prepared, a structured pre-training phase will happen one month before the live training session. During this phase, upper management will distribute the materials to HR Business Partners to build awareness and encourage buy-in. The materials will include a slide deck outlining the training purpose, objectives, agenda, and outcomes, along with summaries of investigation policies, process flowcharts, and case examples. Participants will be encouraged to review the content in advance by documenting their reflections on prior investigations and identifying specific questions or challenges to discuss during the training. This preparation will help promote participants' active engagement and help relate the training directly to their experience of conducting workplace investigations.

Learning Objectives

1. Explain HD Supply's new standard investigation framework and process. Also, its alignment with the company values and legal compliance, and fairness standards across all business units.
2. Identify each stage of the new investigation process, including recommended layouts on how to do intakes, collecting supporting documents, documenting, and case closures.
3. Develop a comprehensive investigation plan that includes identification of relevant stakeholders, evidence sources, potential confidentiality risks for a workplace complaint scenario.
4. Analyze interview data to accurately distinguish factual information from opinions or biases, and organize findings into the standardized investigation template and identify gaps that require follow-up.

Training Agenda

Time (EST)	Learning Objectives	Topic & Instructional Activities
1:00PM – 1:15PM	O1	**Welcome & Introduction** ● Present an overview of the goals for this investigation training. ● Give a brief overview on investigations and some challenges that are present during the investigation process. ● Share a strong message from senior leadership on the importance of fairness and consistency when conducting investigations for all associates.
1:15PM – 1:45PM	O1	**HD Supply's New Investigation Framework** ● Present the new investigation process model. ● Start the conversation by using an interactive poll on common challenges that are faced by HR Business Partners.
1:45PM – 02:30PM	O2	**How to Conduct an Effective and Formal Investigation** ● Go over the new Five-step process: 1. Intake 2. Planning 3. Interviews 4. Review 5. Closing and Submitting the case. ● Review the substeps for each of the investigation's five step processes: 1. Start to document the initial alertline/complaint promptly in Navex. Get clarity on the issue, determine scope/depth of case, and log the case while maintaining confidentiality.

		2. Create the investigation plan, and identify stakeholders, evidence, interview order, and timelines to ensure there is a structured layout for the investigation. 3. Conduct a fair, confidential, and unbiased interviews with involved stakeholders using open-ended questions and accurate, factual note-taking that follows chronological order of events. 4. Compose findings into the standardized template, ensuring to clearly separate the facts from opinions and ensuring completeness and confidentiality. 5. Summarize conclusions and indicate whether the claim is substantiated or not, and then review with the legal team as needed. Also, communicating outcomes appropriately, and securely close the case in Navex.
2:30PM – 3:00PM		**Break**
3:00 – 4:10PM	O2, O3, O4	**Case Study Session** Intake (13 mins): ● Present a realistic workplace complaint scenario to all participants. ● Facilitate a conversation for participants to identify key information needed to file an initial alertline: complaint details, parties involved, date/time, and initial confidentiality considerations. Planning/Preparing for Interviews (25 mins): ● Divide participants into breakout rooms of 5-7 people each. Using the scenario presented, groups will develop a comprehensive investigation plan. Groups must identify and document: ○ Stakeholders ○ Evidence ○ Interview order ○ Timeline for completing the investigation ○ Confidentiality & risks

		◦ Interview questions - prepare 5 open-ended questions to ask during interviews • Lead a debrief where a few groups share their investigation plan. Review (20 mins): • Participants will receive an interview transcript from the scenario investigation. In the same breakout rooms, groups will analyze the interview data and organize it into the standardized investigation template. • Invite groups to share examples of how they categorized information and discuss challenges encountered. Closing & Submitting the Case (12 mins): • Guide a discussion on the scenario, touching on the following questions/points: ◦ What needs to be included in a conclusion? ◦ Is the complaint substantiated, unsubstantiated, or inconclusive? ◦ Confidentiality vs. transparency
4:10 – 4:30PM		**Session Closeout** • Present key recommendations and common mistakes to avoid when conducting investigations. Reminder of available resources: templates, Navex access, etc. • Open the floor for questions about the process, scenarios, or using Navex. • Poll participants on their confidence level in conducting investigations and briefly discuss results. • Conclude by reminding participants that they will take a brief knowledge assessment at the end of the training.

Facilitation Guide: Case Study Session (Intake & Planning only)

Mode

Online (Webex)

Materials

1. Presentation slides:

    a. Session Agenda
    b. Case Study Scenario
    c. Step Guidance
2. Case study scenario document (shared through HRBP Toolkit Sharepoint)
3. Pre-assigned breakout rooms

Purpose

This session allows HR Business Partners to apply HD Supply's investigation process to a realistic workplace complaint, moving through each phase: Intake, Planning, Interviews, Review, Closing and Submission.

Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Develop a comprehensive investigation plan that includes identification of relevant stakeholders, evidence sources, potential confidentiality risks for a workplace complaint scenario.
2. Analyze interview data to accurately distinguish factual information from opinions or biases, and organize findings into the standardized investigation template and identify gaps that require follow-up.

Steps & Time	Session Flow & Facilitator Steps (Trainer/Facilitator)
Introduction to the Case Study Session (3 minutes) **Slides/materials:** • Session agenda	• WELCOME participants back to the Webex session. • EXPLAIN that the session is transitioning from learning to practice, where participants will apply the five step investigation principles to a realistic HR scenario. • DISPLAY the session agenda slide.
Intake (10 minutes) **Slides/materials:** • Case study • Sharepoint link to case study	• SHARE the case study slides and distribute the SharePoint version for participants to view and edit during group work. • READ the case study aloud or INVITE a volunteer to read it. **Case Study:** *On October 6th, the HR Business Partner team received a report outlining concerns about three internationally published articles and blog posts that contained several references to both employee, John Smith, and HD Supply work product. These external publications have*

	the potential to impact both the individual and the organization's reputation, prompting consideration of an investigation. *In this case, HR must determine the appropriate next steps to ensure compliance with company policy, maintain confidentiality, and mitigate risk to the organization throughout the process. This case invites readers to think critically about the appropriate next steps within the investigation process.* ● LEAD a group discussion to identify key details required for an initial alertline intake using these guiding questions (on slide): ○ *What investigative actions should be prioritized to gather facts while protecting the integrity of both the employee and the organization?* ○ *What approvals are required before any employee participates in interviews or communications with external media outlets?* ○ *How should HR coordinate with Legal or Corporate Communications to assess potential risk?* ○ *What, if any, corrective action(s) should be delivered to John Smith based on the investigation's outcome?*
Planning and Preparing for Interviews (25 mins) **Slides/materials:** ● Webex breakout rooms **Reminders:** ● Ensure that breakout groups are pre-assigned to save time. ● Confirm everyone has	● EXPLAIN that participants will now move into breakout rooms (5-7 people per group) and work in groups to create an Investigation Plan. Time allocated for group work is 15 minutes. ● CLARIFY deliverables before sending participants to breakouts. Each group must identify and document: Stakeholders, Evidence, Interview order, Timeline for completing the investigation, Confidentiality & risks, and prepare 5 open-ended questions to ask during interviews. ● After 15 minutes, RECONVENE and INVITE 2-3 groups to share their investigation approach. **Look for the following responses:** ○ ***Stakeholders:*** *Identify all key individuals and groups directly or indirectly involved in the case. Consider both internal and external stakeholders, and document their roles, level of influence, and potential bias. Examples may include:* ■ *Primary individuals involved in the incident (e.g., John Smith, reporters)* ■ *Managers and executives at HD Supply who were impacted*

document access before splitting into groups. ● Post instructions in the chat for quick reference.	▪ *Witnesses and bystanders* ▪ *The news outlet and its personnel* ▪ *Consumers or audiences affected by the published articles* ▪ *Support functions such as HR, Legal, Communications, or Compliance teams at HD Supply* ○ ***Evidence:*** *Determine what evidence is available to support the investigation and document both hard and soft evidence. Organize evidence chronologically to reconstruct key events, and assess each item for credibility, reliability, and authenticity. Individuals should also identify how they will verify each piece of evidence and maintain a clear record of its source to ensure accuracy and integrity throughout the investigation. Examples include:* ▪ *Written articles, news reports, and press releases* ▪ *Video interviews or media coverage* ▪ *Comments, social media reactions, and public statements* ▪ *Internal communications about the article's impact on HD Supply* ▪ *Screenshots, email threads, meeting notes, HR reports, or prior complaints* ○ ***Interview Order:*** *Organize interviews based on importance, relevance, and information flow to ensure the investigation proceeds efficiently. Begin with fact-finding interviews (those closest to the event) and then move to contextual or decision-making interviews. Make sure to note how each conversation builds on the last. The recommended order is:* ▪ ***John Smith*** *– to gather firsthand context and perspective* ▪ ***Managers and Executives at HD Supply*** *– to understand organizational impact and decision-making context* ▪ ***News Outlet Personnel*** *– to assess motives, accuracy, and media process* ▪ ***Witnesses and Bystanders*** *– to validate and cross-check information* ○ ***Timeline for Completing the Investigation:*** *A clear and practical timeline that ensures due diligence in the investigation process without unnecessary delays. A sample structure should look like:*

	■ ***Day 1:*** *Review intake details and confirm scope of investigation.* ■ ***Day 2-3:*** *Conduct interviews (prioritizing key witnesses first).* ■ ***Day 4:*** *Analyze evidence, cross-check information, and draft findings.* ■ ***Day 5:*** *Submit final report to HR leadership and Legal for review.* ■ ***Day 6:*** *Once the case is approved, share the outcome with applicable stakeholders, conduct any action items, and then finalize and close the case in Navex.* ○ ***Confidentiality & Risks:*** *Associates should identify and discuss confidentiality protocols and potential risks. Points that should be mentioned:* ■ *Limiting case access to essentials only for this case, HRBPs, Legal, Compliance, and relevant leadership.* ■ *Maintaining secure, encrypted document and anonymized notes when appropriate in Navex, Email, and OneNote.* ■ *Acknowledging potential risks like premature disclosure, reputational damage, or retaliation.* ○ ***Interview Question Examples:*** *The associates should come up with open-ended, non-biased, and fact-based questions to encourage full unbiased responses.* 1. *What interactions occurred between John Smith and any external media representatives?* 2. *How did the article's release impact your team or HD Supply's reputation?* 3. *Were there any internal discussions before or after the articles were released?* 4. *Is there anything else you believe is important for HR to understand about this situation?* 5. *Can you walk me through what you observed or were told regarding the published articles?* ● HIGHLIGHT varied strategies and reinforce best practices in confidentiality and stakeholder communication. ● SUMMARIZE key takeaways before transitioning to the next phase (Review and Closing & Submitting the Case).

After Training	**Additional Recommendations**
• ***Purpose:*** Reinforce learning and ensure participants can apply the investigation framework. • ***What Happens Next:*** • **Knowledge Check & Reflection:** HR Business Partners completed a brief knowledge check and reflection worksheet to assess understanding of the new investigation framework and surface any areas needing clarification. • **Application Within Two Weeks:** Managers encourage participants to apply the five-step process in a mock or real investigation. Participants submit a short summary describing how they used each step. • **One Month Follow-Up Discussion:** A structured discussion is scheduled to review progress, address challenges, and share best practices across teams.	• ***Sustainment & Continuous Development*** • ***Ongoing Enablement Tactics:*** • **Central Resource Hub:** Create a dedicated SharePoint or Teams page to host all investigations tools, templates, job aids, and FAQs. • **Quarterly Mirco-Refreshers:** Schedule brief refresher sessions to review common issues, legal updates, or areas where teams need reinforcement. • **Data Trend Monitoring:** Track investigation metrics and patterns to identify potential policy, training, or process adjustments. • **Peer Case Review:** Incorporate structured peer case review discussions to promote shared accountability and strengthen investigation quality across the HR Business Partner community.

Evaluation Strategy

We recommend applying the Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Model of Training Evaluation to assess the effectiveness of our training program. We chose this model because it best fits the evaluation of our training program on our new workplace investigation documentation process.

Level 1: Reaction

The purpose of this level is to determine the degree in which learners were satisfied with the training program and identify areas for improvement.

To gauge participant satisfaction and identify opportunities to improve the three-hour training session on the new workplace investigation documentation process we suggest distributing an online survey to participants.

Suggested Survey Questions Should Address

- Quality of the training session:
    - How satisfied were you with the overall quality of the training session?
    - How engaging and interactive did you find the training session?
    - What aspects of the training were most helpful?
    - What areas of the training could be improved for future sessions?
- Instructor quality:
    - How clearly did the instructor explain the documentation process and related procedures?
    - Did the instructor effectively connect the training material to real workplace scenarios?
- Comprehension and ability to digest the program:
    - Was the pace of the session appropriate for your learning needs?
    - How confident do you feel in your understanding of the new documentation process after the training?

Level 2: Learning

This level aims to assess the degree to which participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills based on their participation in the training program.

Informal Evaluation of Learning

During the practical application / case study session, the instructor will assess learning by observing group deliverables and participants' responses during discussions and debriefs at each stage of the investigation process, and provide immediate feedback on their responses.

Formal Evaluation of Learning

Following the training program, participants will complete a brief online knowledge assessment to evaluate their acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the five-step investigation process. The test will specifically focus on their ability to explain the investigation framework and accurately identify each stage of the process.

Level 3: Behaviors

The purpose of this level is to measure how well participants apply the new knowledge and skills from the training to their actual work. This helps determine if the training led to real behavior changes in how HR Business Partners handle workplace investigations.

Evaluation Method

To measure behavior changes, we will gather feedback from participants and their leaders about how often and how well the new documentation process is being used. We will also review investigation files to look for consistent use of the five-step investigation framework and the new toolkit.

Data Collection

- Manager and Peer Feedback: Supervisors will complete a short follow-up survey 60 to 90 days after training to assess whether participants are correctly applying the new process in their daily work.
- Observation and Review: The HR Compliance or AR team will review a sample of investigation cases to evaluate documentation quality and adherence to the new standards.
- Self-Assessment: Participants will complete a brief self-assessment to reflect on their confidence, challenges, and use of the investigation tools since the training.

Timing

Behavior evaluations will occur 60-90 days after training to allow time for participants to use the new process in real situations. This approach ensures that any changes in work habits and application of skills are accurately measured.

Level 4: Results

The purpose of this level is to evaluate the organizational impact of the investigation training by assessing measurable outcomes aligned with HD Supply's needs, reducing rework, increasing documentation consistency, and improving investigation efficiency and quality. These metrics directly address issues identified during the needs assessment and reflect whether HR Business Partners (HRBPs) are effectively applying the new five-step investigation process.

- Investigation Quality Metrics: Analyze the number of cases requiring rework, AR Team, or Legal input to determine overall investigation quality.
- Timeliness of Investigations: Average completion time from the intake step to case closure.
- Compliance and Consistency of Documentation: The percentage of investigations completed using the new standardized framework and toolkit.

First Measure: Investigation Quality and Accuracy

Partnering with the Legal team for a monthly audit of investigation files. The AR/Compliance team will support the Legal team with an annual comprehensive audit to evaluate long-term trends and overall adherence to the five-step investigation process. The Legal team will report:

- The number of cases requiring additional clarification or correction.
- The number approved on first submission.
- Common issues or trends observed across HRBP submissions.

Second Measure: Timeliness of Investigations

Using data pulled from the Navex system, HD Supply compliance team will compare average investigation turnaround times before and after the training. Monthly reports from HR compliance will identify whether HR Business Partners are conducting investigations more efficiently while maintaining quality.

Third Measure: Compliance and Consistency of Documentation

Reviewed by the HR Compliance team through monthly documentation checks using a standardized checklist. Quarterly summaries will help highlight trends and provide insights for ongoing coaching. Each investigation report will be evaluated for:

- Use of the standardized framework and templates.
- Completeness and accuracy of documentation.
- Adherence to confidentiality requirements.