



TRAINING MEDIA REVIEW: REVIEWING AND REVIEWERS

Training Media Review Background

Training Media Review (www.tmreview.com) is a kind of Consumer Reports for training products. Product awards and contests in training are compromised by commercial conflicts of interest and poor quality control. Since 1995, we have used a practitioner reviewer model. TMR gives practitioners a voice. We do not ask vendors to pay for reviews or solicit consulting from them. Both are common practices for firms in the industry that give product recommendations.

Most reviews are done for no fee, with the reviewer keeping the product, receiving a free open-ended subscription to the Training Media Review site, and of course getting published. Reviewers retain copyright to their work and can use it wherever they like. TMR has the right to edit and publish your review. We ask that you not republish the review on a commercial site for 90 days after we publish.

We do pay for reviews that involve a significant time commitment, such as authoring tools, multiple online courses, and video series. However, the money any single reviewer can make in a year isn't large. We pay up to a \$50 honorarium for book reviews, and the reviewer keeps the book.

If there are training products you would like to review, please let us know. We can obtain copies of most training-, learning-, and management-related books published in the US and copies of or access to videos, online content, and software. When we request a free review copy of any product, we make an implicit promise to publish a review.

TMR provides a review template and, for some software products, a vendor information sheet. You can download review templates [here](#). The editorial contact for reviewers is Bill Ellet, owner and editor of TMR. He can be reached at wellet@tmreview.com or 617-447-4623 (mobile). We like a review submitted a month after it is begun. We will edit the review, send you any questions, and notify you when we have posted it. Vendors do *not* have the right to approve reviews before publication. They can submit corrections of fact to TMR and we pass them along to the writer for review and approval. Sometimes vendors will also

argue for a change in the evaluation. We provide their reasoning to the reviewer, who has the final say.

Information and Guidelines for Reviewers

Training Media Review has very few rating and editorial guidelines. We want you to feel free to rate a product according to your best judgment. The simplest standard is this: if someone asked about the product you are reviewing, what would you say?

The TMR audience consists of inside trainers and HR specialists, consultants, academics, and managers. Most of them use TMR as a starting point in their search for particular types of content or products. Over the years, TMR has earned a reputation for being honest and accurate. We don't charge vendors a fee for a review. We never publish reviews to curry favor with a vendor, e.g., to smooth the way for a consulting relationship.

If you have a business relationship with a vendor whose product you have been asked to review, please let us know. Generally, we avoid that situation because of the potential conflict of interest.

Review Ratings

We need to be alert for grade inflation. Average (2.0) and Above average (2.5) are not shameful ratings. About a third of all our product ratings are "Above average" and below. That means two-thirds are "Good" or better. We tend to review products that have something to recommend them in the first place so our ratings will probably be skewed toward the higher end of the scale. Still, we urge you to look closely at the star ratings definitions below.

Star Ratings

Every Training Media Review evaluation ends with an overall rating. We furnish you with a Word template for the review. It includes evaluative categories appropriate to the product. We use a seven-point scale. The midpoint is "Above average."

Rating	Number of Stars	Definition
Outstanding		Excellent if not completely flawless. For anyone with the relevant need. Quartile: Top of first (highest) quartile of all similar products.
Very good		High quality with minor issues. Quartile: In top quartile of similar products. Rates well in all categories.
Good		High quality with a major issue or two. Quartile: Low in top quartile to high in second. Rates well in most categories.
Above average		Could be a good fit, depending on the specific strengths or weaknesses. Quartile: Low to midrange of second quartile. Rates highly in one or two categories or low in one or two.
Average		Quality is compromised by one or two major drawbacks or an absence of strengths. Quartile: Top of the third quartile. Rates at that level in most of the categories.
Below average		Major flaws with few compensating strengths. Quartile: Anywhere in the third quartile.
Poor		Compromised quality all the way around. No reason to buy. Quartile: Anywhere in the fourth quartile.

Review Template

We have review templates for different media: books, software, video, online content, and live events. Each review template includes an outline and a percentage of total words per section. The structure of a review is description,

evaluation, and recommendation. We email the appropriate template to a reviewer.

Use your personal experience whenever it's relevant.

We don't have a house style—don't stifle your own voice.

The TMR audience is diverse. It consists of individuals on all points of the experience spectrum. Address the concerns of specialists and experienced professionals, but try to do so in a way that's understandable to nonspecialists and novices.

Brevity is appreciated. The web isn't a good medium for long articles. The suggested minimum length is around 500 words and the maximum (for a single product review) is around 1,500.

Mechanics

Please try to observe the following text conventions:

She or he, he or she, he/she, his or her, her or his, his/her?

When referring to a hypothetical person with a pronoun, we favor two options: using the plural to avoid the gender issue, or vary the gender from one usage to the next.

Numbers

Please spell out numbers from one to nine and use figures for 10 and up. A phrase like “in lessons one to 12” can look strange, but it is clear.

Proper names

Refer to a person the first time by the full name and the last name thereafter-- unless you know the person. In that case, use the first name.

Space after period

Put only one space between a period and the first character of the next sentence.

[Review template download page](#)

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