

# THE SMART APPLICANT'S GUIDE

to the 2013  
Training Top 125

USEFUL RESOURCES, COMMON SENSE ADVICE AND A FEW  
SURPRISES ABOUT THE LEARNING INDUSTRY'S LONGEST AWARD  
APPLICATION

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with Training magazine or the Training Top 125 Award.*

# The 8 Most Common Misconceptions Held by T125 Applicants

These are actual misconceptions I have had to clear up with clients while working on the Training Top 125 (and other awards). Okay, I may be paraphrasing rather than quoting them, but you'll get the idea. As I did for them, I want to save you time, worry and stress by debunking these myths.

## 1. Data must be precise or I will be struck down by lightning.

I have worked with a number of clients who have sweated over every last number. It's really not necessary.

Before you start thinking that this is heretical advice, allow me to expound. I don't mean that you should be sloppy or make things up (heaven forbid!). I mean you shouldn't drive yourself or your colleagues bananas about whether you provided 578 or 579 online courses.

The application process is not meant to be a wild goose chase for data, nor is anything on your application going to be fact-checked. It's true that most of the scoring is quantitative, so of course you want to be as accurate as possible. But like so many things in life, you have to pick your battles and where you want to expend energy and goodwill.

## 2. Corollary: I can't estimate program metrics as I am a mere mortal.

Yes you can. Let me give you an example. One time I was working with a professional services client to compile metrics for a particular leadership program that had been transitioned from face-to-face to online. This client told me that we couldn't provide Level IV figures (business impact) for the program. I begged to differ. A very useful thing I picked up in business school is that as long as you use reasonable assumptions and do the math correctly, you can employ estimates to make a point, surely a principle to be applied with integrity.

Here's what we did:

- a. Calculated average travel time to and from the previous program, based on where regional trainings were held relative to learners. (We settled on a very conservative three hours per roundtrip.)
- b. Tracked the number of learners and their average billing rate.
- c. Tracked the number of internal instructors, usually senior executives, and their average billing rate.

## Scoring Guidelines and Sample Feedback Report

Below are the scoring guidelines provided by *Training* magazine to 2012 applicants, which will again be used this year. If you applied in 2012, you should have received an e-mail with this information (and your own scores in the feedback report). They are provided here so that you can review them as you plan your submission. The qualitative scoring guidelines also appear within the workbook so that you can see them in context.

### Sample Feedback Report

The detailed breakdown of points for each component of the application is shown below. Your total score out of a possible 125 points determines your rank in the standings.

Carefully review your 2012 scores. Where you scored the maximum points, you may want to simply update the data and leave the rest as is. Where you scored low, focus your efforts.

Note: The numbers in the "Your Score" column are not from an actual company but they are realistic.

Question	Max Points	Your Score
<b>Quantitative Scores</b>		
<b>TRAINING PROGRAM SCOPE</b>		
2.2 Count (up to 13)	13	11.00
Best Practices and Initiative count	3	3.00
2.3 Training hours, scaled	2	1.00
2.4 Ratio of trainers to employees, scaled	3	1.00
2.6 Percent of payroll, scaled	4	2.00
Total for section	25	18.00
<b>TUITION REIMBURSEMENT</b>		
2.07 Does a program exist?	1	1.00
2.08 Tuition participation, scaled	2	1.50
2.09 Maximum reimbursement, scaled	3	2.00
2.10 Tuition conditions, scaled	4	1.45
Total for section	10	5.95
<b>TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE</b>		
2.14 Is infrastructure present?	3	2.00
2.15 % of employees trained, scaled	2	2.00