
Evidence-Based Management Training Course: Using Research, Data and Experience in Decisions

11 – 15 January 2027
Vienna





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Programme Summary

Evidence-based management is the subject of this one-week training course for directors and senior managers, ending in an evidence brief on one live management decision. Many significant decisions rest on habit, fashion or the most confident voice. The programme moves from the principles of evidence, through diagnosis of weak claims and gaps, to the design of evidence gathering and a decision record, and then to application. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this evidence-based management programme for leaders from mixed sectors.

The Business Case

Leaders are offered a steady stream of confident claims about what works, from management fashions to vendor promises and internal anecdotes. Decisions taken on such claims are costly to reverse and hard to defend. Leaders who ask for the evidence, appraise its quality and weigh it against local data and stakeholder values make choices that are easier to explain and to correct.

- Cost of Reversed Decisions: Falls as weak claims are challenged early.
- Quality of Board Proposals: Improves as proposals state their evidence.
- Stakeholder Confidence: Strengthens as reasoning is recorded and open to review.

Principles and Evidence Base

- The four sources of evidence set out by the Center for Evidence-Based Management: Scientific literature, organisational data, practitioner experience and stakeholder values are weighed in Sessions 1 and 4.
- The six-step evidence-based process of ask, acquire, appraise, aggregate, apply and assess: It structures the sequence of Sessions 2 to 5.
- Critical appraisal of evidence, as discussed by Briner, Denyer and Rousseau: It supplies the tests applied in Session 2.
- Rapid evidence assessment: This time-limited review method structures Session 3.

Intended Participants

- Directors who must justify major decisions to a board.
- Heads of function who receive proposals backed by vendor or consultant claims.
- Strategy and policy leads who commission and interpret research.
- Senior managers who introduce new practices into their teams.

Typical participants come from human resources, strategy, operations, public administration and healthcare.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to distinguish the four sources of evidence and judge the weight of each.
2. Participants will be able to formulate an answerable question from a management problem.
3. Participants will be able to appraise a research study, a data set and a practitioner claim for trustworthiness.
4. Participants will be able to construct a rapid evidence assessment for a live decision.
5. Participants will be able to evaluate how well external research fits their organisation.
6. Participants will be able to justify a decision with a written evidence record that states its limits.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Evidence-Based Management Principles and Sources of Evidence

What counts as evidence for a management decision, and how much weight does each source deserve?

- Four Sources of Evidence Model
- Decision Bias and Intuition Traps
- Management Fashion Case Review
- Evidence Hierarchy for Practice Questions
- Personal Decision Habits Audit

Day 2: Asking Questions and Appraising Claims

How is a problem framed as an answerable question, and a claim tested for trustworthiness?

- Problem to Question Framing Sheet
- Critical Appraisal Checklist for Studies
- Organisational Data Quality Review
- Correlation and Causation Test
- Vendor and Consultant Claim Challenge

Day 3: Designing Evidence Gathering and Rapid Review

How is evidence gathered and combined within the time a decision allows?

- Rapid Evidence Assessment Protocol
- Search Strategy and Source Log
- Evidence Summary Table
- Local Data Collection Plan
- Stakeholder Values Elicitation Guide



Day 4: Applying Evidence to Decisions and Recording Them

How is combined evidence turned into a decision that others can inspect and challenge?

- Evidence Weighing Matrix
- Fit and Transferability Assessment
- Decision Record Template
- Pilot and Assessment Design
- Board Briefing Structure

Day 5: Applying Evidence-Based Management to One Live Decision

Is the evidence brief ready to support a decision at executive level?

- Applying the Session 2 Question Frame to the Chosen Decision
- Testing Session 3 Review Findings Against Local Data
- Using the Session 4 Weighing Matrix on the Options
- Rehearsing the Board Briefing
- Completing the Evidence Brief

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise method built on anonymised management claims, published research extracts and participant decisions. Participants appraise evidence in small groups, defend their ratings to peers who play sceptical board members, compare conclusions across groups, and receive facilitator feedback on each work product before it enters the evidence brief.

- Suggested activity: Rating three popular management claims against the four sources of evidence.
- Suggested activity: Appraising a short research extract with the critical appraisal checklist.
- Suggested activity: Drafting a one-page decision record for a recent choice.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes an evidence brief on one live management decision. It holds a framed question, a rapid evidence assessment summary, an appraisal of each source, a weighing of the options and a decision record that states its limits. The brief is used at work to put a proposal to the board and to set a review point for checking the result.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is evidence-based management suitable for managers without a research background?

Yes. Evidence-based management is taught from first principles and assumes responsibility for decisions, not training in statistics or academic research.

Which models does evidence-based management rest on in this programme?

Evidence-based management here rests on the four sources of evidence and the six-step process of ask, acquire, appraise, aggregate, apply and assess, with rapid evidence assessment for gathering research.

How is the evidence brief from evidence-based management used at work?

You use the evidence brief to put a proposal to the board, to record why a choice was made and to set a review point for the result.

How does evidence-based management differ from a programme on data analytics?

Evidence-based management centres on weighing research, local data, experience and values to reach a decision, while data analytics centres on techniques for processing and modelling data.