Unfortunately the ADVISOR 3.5 review by Bhavani Sridharan is an unfair assessment of ADVISOR 3.5 capabilities. It is superficial and inaccurate for the following reasons:

- Review was based on the demo version. Although we offered a complete package (which includes a user guide), the reviewer opted for a demo version downloaded from our web site, which explains his statement “…the software does not come with the documentation about how to use the software”.

- ADVISOR 3.5 is not targeted to “top-level management”. Although senior executives can base their decisions on ADVISOR 3.5 results, the software is targeted to performance consultants, instructional designers or course managers responsible for making decisions on the right blend of delivery methods. Therefore, ADVISOR 3.5 users are expected to have basic knowledge of factors that should be considered in the media selection process or at least attend the one-day ADVISOR 3.5 workshop. This may explain the following comments by the reviewer:

  “It is also not very user friendly, at times the user will get lost as it does not tell the user how to proceed further”

  “… navigating the ADVISOR 3.5 is not as easy and user friendly as it claims to be. It is also found that it has some impediment in terms of manoeuvrability through the program as it gets stuck at time. For example, if one chooses the course analysis section and enter the values and it does not tell what should be done next?”

  “Top-level management community will not have very much tolerant or time to really learn the software”

- ADVISOR 3.5 runs on Windows 95, 98 NT 4.0 (both standalone and Network), Windows 2000 and Windows ME. Not only is ADVISOR 3.5 running on these operating systems in our offices, thousands of existing clients are using ADVISOR 3.5 on these platforms. Although we strive to have a smooth and hassle free installation, like any software tool, a number factors that are beyond BNH’s control (such as downloading the files over the internet, unzipping the program during installation, bad sectors on hard disk, programs running in memory during installation, configuration of Windows NT etc.) may cause an occasional error similar to the one encountered by the reviewer “… not a valid Windows NT image”. Since the reviewer was able to navigate through the system, conduct analysis and review results, it appears that the problem is due to a corrupted ADVISOR 3.5 image (perhaps on main menu); and as a result, the error appeared each time the menu page was selected. It is unfortunate that the reviewer did not attempt to contact our technical support to resolve this problem – which compromised the performance of ADVISOR 3.5 and perhaps influenced his judgement. He jumped instead to the wrong conclusion.

- BNH follows strict quality assurance procedures. All our software programs are thoroughly tested in-house and externally. Each input field has a specific format such as alphanumeric, numeric, currency, date, etc., and the system automatically filters out characters not supported by the field. Although the user may type characters in a numeric field, they are automatically removed as the user advances to the next field – which may explain the reviewer’s comment “… allows invalid characters to be entered in the course analysis section”.

- The reviewer neglected to mention a number of key features in ADVISOR such as the Wizards that allow the user to quickly perform an analysis or the Preferences that allow the user to customize (or simplify) the analysis by eliminating delivery options not supported by the organizations and excluding modules that are not relevant to the analysis.

- Over the past several years, ADVISOR received excellent reviews from several publications including “Training in Multimedia”, “Computers in Nursing”, “Multimedia and Internet Training Newsletter” and “Editors Choice Software Review” as well as positive comments from users and experts in the field. Brandon-Hall, Editor of Multimedia and Internet Training Newsletter summed it up best “ADVISOR is a very powerful, useful tool for making decisions about which medium is right for training. A significant contribution to the training industry”.

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I do not wish to discredit or undermine Bhavani Sridharan knowledge. However, it appears that a number of factors have influenced the review process including lack of user guide, minimal knowledge of the subject matter, mistaking the intended target user, as well as problems in installation.

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