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Talent Management: Getting the Most from Your Employees

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Overview

What are the *few significant* skills (as opposed to the trivial many) that a manager should have as a package to get the most out of his or her employees – to manage their talent to achieve the maximum efficiency and productivity possible for the department?

We believe that a solid understanding and consistent application of these four particular areas of knowledge – *motivation, performance analysis, coaching, and counseling* – are a good place to start. These will provide an excellent foundation for a manager to build upon as he or she gains more experience in their organization and begins moving forward in their career.

Here is why we think so:

- ✓ If a manager is able to define his or her performance expectations in clear, measurable terms for employees, then they can create an environment that provides the motivators for the employees to achieve them.
- ✓ An understanding of performance analysis will provide the feedback necessary to monitor that desired performance.
- ✓ If they are meeting their goals, they can be coached to extend or enhance their performance. If they are not, the manager must first find the reason for the performance deficiency before attempting any remedial actions.
- ✓ Once the problem is identified, corrective action can be taken, and counseling may be one of the corrective tactics necessary to reverse a downward performance spiral.

Intended Audience

The intended audience for this course is new supervisors or managers, those who have been in management for a while and want to expand their skills, or those who aspire to a management position in the future and want to be as prepared as possible when the opportunity is presented.

Learning Outcomes

Students taking this course will learn to:

1. Define the term “motivation”
2. Apply the concept of motivation in the workplace and daily life
3. Identify motivational opportunities that lie within events at work
4. Discover what will motivate their employees individually
5. Answer the unspoken question employees ask themselves when the managers assign a task
6. Identify who *determines* where the employee works between the “commitment” and “compliance” gaps during any assignment
7. Identify who *influences* where the employee works between the “commitment” and “compliance” gaps during any assignment
8. Identify for whom an employee really works while being employed
9. The value of observing their employees, not just looking at them
10. Five important questions to ask their employees as part of analyzing the department’s talent
11. Determine their employees’ most effective method of learning
12. Determine measurements for “hard skills”
13. Determine measurements for “soft skills”
14. Where the fault lies when employees are not sure of their performance expectations
15. Use a performance problem flowchart to methodically eliminate possible reasons why employees are performing as expected
16. Identify at least three values of setting measurable goals
17. The critical elements of setting effective performance goals
18. Determine whether an employee’s activity is productive or just busy

Preparation

While it sounds like a simple proposition – “appraising the talent available” – we believe it entails a much bigger picture than just looking at your employees as they are now. Our experience tells us that you should also consider what they *could be doing* if they were working at their full potential, assuming they are not doing so currently. So before we start talking about appraising the talent within your department or workgroup, we feel a few minutes talking about *why they may not be doing as much as they could* will be worth your time.

Understanding Motivation

Before you can begin to manage effectively the talent you currently have, it is important to understand that regardless of how much you try to control an employee’s output, he or she still controls the final extent of their effort. It is about their “commitment” (doing all they can) versus their “compliance” (doing the least they can to get by). Another way of saying this is, “What is their motivation to apply their maximum talent for you?”

Essentially, motivation is the unspoken answer people hear when they ask themselves, “**Why would I want to do that**” or “**What’s in it for me?**” **THINK ABOUT THIS:** When you were in school, did you know the *least you could do to get by* and not get in trouble at home? How did you discover this?

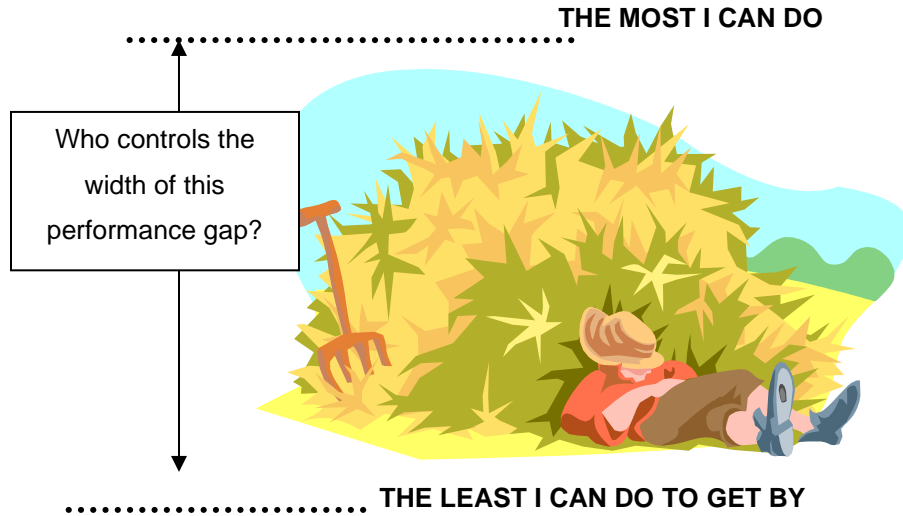


“WHEN YOUR EMPLOYEES GET WHAT THEY WANT, YOU’LL GET WHAT YOU WANT!”

---Zig Ziglar Motivational speaker

The trick here is to discover *what your employees, as individuals, want!*

Who determined whether you did the least you could do to get by or the most you could do? (You controlled that decision based on your needs and wants, i.e., your internal drivers.)



Why is this question important to you?

The “authority figure” such as parents, teachers, or bosses can only influence the width of this work performance range. The employee controls where they work within it.

Take a moment to look back to the statement, “Essentially, motivation is the unspoken answer people hear when they ask themselves, “**Why would I want to do that**” or “**What’s in it for me?**”

What is the source of that “...unspoken answer people hear ...?”

It is their internal voice responding to their needs based on their experiences. The things that motivate you may not be the things that motivate me. Therefore, it only makes sense that the more I consider the situation *from your perspective*, the better the chance I have that you will respond in the manner I want.

Suppose you really love ice cream and would do nearly anything for it. (Your motivator is “It makes me feel good!” or “It brings back pleasant memories of childhood.”)

You want someone to do something for you, and you offer ice cream as an incentive. However, what if they do not like ice cream as much as you do? What is their motivation then?



The point here is that we all have our internal motivators, and a smart leader will learn enough about us through talking, listening, and observing to provide us with the chance to achieve those motivators *when he or she wants us to do something for them.*



CAN YOU MOTIVATE SOMEONE WITH THREATS?

No. They still make the internal decision whether to act in the way you want them to. They may decide that protecting their income is more important than telling off the boss if he or she says they **HAVE TO WORK LATE**. The boss did not motivate them to work by saying, “If you don’t show up, you’ll be fired,” he just forced them to decide. (What would they say if they had just won the lottery and did not need the job?)

Sometimes it is easier to get answers by asking more questions. Here are a few you can ask.



WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER AS OPPOSED TO SOMEWHERE ELSE?

(If you are not able to detail why you work for your employer instead of doing the same job for someone else, you may not be the best example of a leader for your employer and employees. The best leaders know why they work for their employers, and their example shows it. How can the inability to explain your own motivations affect your ability to influence others?)



WHY WOULD YOUR EMPLOYEES WANT TO WORK FOR YOUR EMPLOYER AS OPPOSED TO SOMEWHERE ELSE?

(The better you understand the world from your employees’ perspective, the better you will be able to lead them.)



WHY WOULD YOUR EMPLOYEES WANT TO WORK FOR YOU INSTEAD OF SOMEONE ELSE?

(You first must know your strengths and weaknesses before you try to lead others. This way, you can work on improving your strengths and minimizing your weaknesses.)



WHY SHOULD YOU BE ASKING THESE QUESTIONS?

The more you ask yourself these questions about yourself and your employees, the more you will begin to SEE the world around you, instead of *just looking* at it. The more you see it, the more you begin to think of things from perspectives outside of your own.

The more you do this, the greater the potential for realizing that the best way for you to get what you want is by helping your employees get what they want!

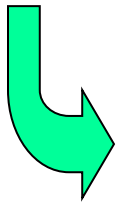


“MANY SURVEYS HAVE SHOWN THAT MOST EMPLOYEES DO NOT STAY WITH (OR LEAVE) THEIR EMPLOYERS, THEY STAY WITH (OR LEAVE) THEIR SUPERVISORS.” WHAT DO YOU THINK?

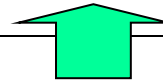
Have you ever heard someone describe a boss who is an absolute dictator, and you thought to yourself, “You could not pay me enough to work for someone like that?” On the other hand, someone describes a boss who was “an angel,” and you thought to yourself, “I would give anything to get to work for someone like that!”

A Reality Check

Take a few minutes to complete this question with your answers in the left column.



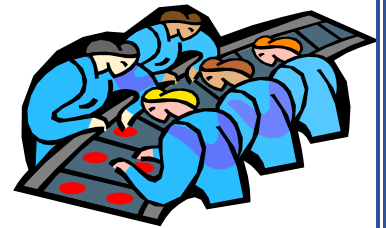
“Life Would Be Great IF My Employees Would Only...”	



Now in the right column, write some reasons **WHY THEY WOULD WANT TO DO THAT**. (Please note that simply saying, “Because it’s their job!” does not mean you will get the performance you want. They may give you the least they can to get by: i.e., compliance.)

If you cannot think of any reasons why they would want to do that besides it’s their job, what does that tell you about their performance? (You may not be getting as much as you could be.)

Have there been times in your life when you did not see the value in doing something and did not do as good of a job as possible if you had seen something of value in it for you?



Set your responses to this question aside for a few minutes as we get into the next section.

Appraising the Available Talent

Although we must provide employees with equal opportunities for success, we must also remember they are a collection of individuals with unique talents, strengths, interests, and weaknesses. The more you, as a manager, understand the extent of the talent you currently have working for you, the better the chance you will be able to *influence* its development to its maximum potential. Much of talent appraisal can be done through simple observation and by asking each a few basic questions.

We want to make this course as practical and user friendly as possible. To achieve that end, we suggest the use of simple resources that you have in the office, such as a notebook and a pen or pencil.

Step 1 - For the initial observations, we suggest that while you are walking around the department doing your normal activities, try noticing a few things about each employee and make notes of what you see. This is a way to help you gain skills in *observing*, not just looking at things.

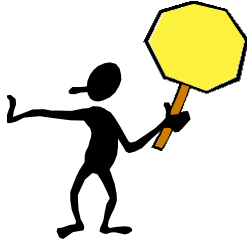
What is unique about each person and seems to be their natural tendency? (Note: This isn't what you think they *should do* but what they *naturally do* without your intervention.)

1. What seems to be their strengths?
2. What events or situations seem to trigger those strengths?
3. Do they work best alone or as part of a group?
4. Are they more energized early in the day or later on?
5. Do they seem to be driven from inside working all out all the time, working at a steady pace over time, or do they work in spurts?
6. Do they seem confident or tentative in their work? Do they frequently have to ask you or others for help or guidance?
7. How do they seem to learn?
8. Do others come to them very often with work-related questions?
9. Where would you place them in the office network: centrally located, at the fringes, or nowhere in it?
10. Do they seek faster or more efficient ways of doing things or always follow existing policies?
11. What else have you noticed?

After you have noted the characteristics about your employees, take an overall look at the work the department performs. In an ideal situation, every employee is making full use of his or her talent and skills while the entire department's skills and talents fit together like a big jigsaw puzzle. Efficiency and productivity reign supreme! What about yours?

Five Important Questions

Step 2 - While you are observing the points above, give each person these five questions to answer (or better yet, meet with them individually to ask and record their answers).



A note of caution here: asking these questions, regardless of how innocent your intent may impact on your employees' work adversely as they wonder what is going on with you. This is especially likely if you have never shown much interest in them beyond their work before.

We suggest you put their fears to rest before you begin by saying something like, *"I want to make sure that your working here is as beneficial for you (put them first) as it is for (the organization or the company).*

To do that, I want to ask each of you a few questions that may help me structure your work and potential rewards for that work to your specific interests as much as possible." [After you have completed this course and understand more about the topics presented here, you will be more confident about composing the right question that will work best with your particular workforce.]

Talent Appraisal Question #1

Complete this sentence in the table **once for yourself** and then ask each of your employees. Be sure to keep your responses separate from your employees’.

“When the best boss I ever had did this (column A), it had this impact on me (B) and this effect on my work (C).” (Try to get several answers from each person. Here is an example)		
Column A What the best boss did	Column B The impact on you was...	Column C The impact on your work was..
She defined what she expected from me and then left me alone to work unsupervised.	It made me want to do the best I could so she would continue to leave me alone.	Always did such a good job that she soon had me teaching others.



WHAT RELATIONSHIP DO YOU SEE BETWEEN HOW YOU WANT YOUR EMPLOYEES TO ACT AND THE IMPACT ON YOU AND YOUR WORK BY THE BEST BOSS YOU EVER HAD?

(This should help you realize that the way the best boss you ever had treated you had a great impact on your motivation and work product.)

Why do we ask this question at this point in the course? (To help you realize that your behavior as a leader has a major influence on your employees’ actions.)

Now go back to the Reality Check on page 7 and compare what you said about your employees when you completed the sentence and your behaviors when your best boss did what he or she did with you. **Can you see the employees’ behavior is a direct result of their relationship with their boss (you)?**

Suppose you get an answer like this from an employee, *“When the best boss I ever had let me learn from my mistakes instead of jumping all over me, I gained more confidence in my work, learned how to do it correctly, added a few techniques that no one else was doing, work more efficiently and productively, and teach others what I had learned.”*

This employee has just given you a key insight into how they learn (trial and error), they can think in a non-routine fashion which is necessary for breakthrough discoveries, and that they like to teach others.

If allowing them a trial-and-error approach won't impact on their current work too much, why not let them do it? Also, if they can discover some process improvements and teach others, that creates "bench strength" for you and gives any newly hired employees someone to ask for help instead of coming to you all the time.



WHAT CAN YOU START DOING DIFFERENTLY RIGHT NOW THAT CAN HELP YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES' BEHAVIOR?

Take a few minutes and list some things you will start doing differently with your employees.

Talent Appraisal Question #2

Unless you are paying incentives for performance above the minimum, the employee usually earns the same amount, whether they do an outstanding job or just enough to stay on the payroll. How then can you encourage them to work toward the higher level of the performance gap (refer back to page 3) than remain tied to the lower? One simple and very effective way to do this is by *just asking them*. Not by phrasing it as, "What would it take to get the most out of you?" but with a little more subtlety.

"What are the three or four things I can give you that would have the greatest value to you?" (You may have to remind them you can't hand out spot bonuses or preferred parking spots.)

Before you cynically answer for some nameless employee, ask yourself that question and put your replies here:

The few things that my leader could give me that would have the most value are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Now look back at them and circle each one that involves a budgetary consideration such as cash incentives, gift certificates, and the like. But, if you are like nearly every other person the course author has ever asked to do this, you may have as many as two budgetary items listed but will have several non-budgetary items like these:

Give me...

- Clear directions and a chance to perform
- Trust
- Respect
- An opportunity to grow and learn new things
- A chance to learn from my mistakes and share my knowledge with someone else.
- Work that has meaning to me, not just to the employer.
- A feeling that you value me on your project or in your department.
- The benefit of a doubt when things do not always go right.
- Some flexibility in my work schedule so I can watch my son play T-Ball one afternoon.

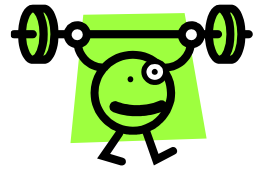
Do you realize what a powerful gift the employee has given his or her leader if they are smart enough to ask that simple question? It is as if the employee has said, *“Here, boss, are the buttons for you to push to get the most out of me. They won’t cost you anything, and you’ll reap tremendous payoffs!”*

Do you understand better why we included Zig’s powerful statement in this course?

“WHEN YOUR EMPLOYEES GET WHAT THEY WANT, YOU’LL GET WHAT YOU WANT!”
---Zig Ziglar Motivational speaker

Talent Appraisal Question #3

We asked you earlier to observe them looking for their strengths. Here, we want you to ask them using this question: *“What was the best day you’ve had at work in the past three months? What made it special for you?”*



Their best day was more than likely a time when they were able to make the most use of their strengths. Compare their answer to your observation about their strengths and think about why you were accurate (if you were) or why you were not correct. Once again, this is also a chance for you to build your observation skills.

The reason we want you to identify their strengths is so you can help them increase them and make the most out of them. Help them be the best they can be using their strengths! As their strength in the skills increases, their self-confidence grows, which has a direct and positive impact on their productivity.

Remember, the more skillful they become, the greater their contribution to the organization, the better it makes you look!

Talent Appraisal Question #4

If we are going to identify someone’s strengths, we should also know their weaknesses. This is not so we can help them strengthen their weaknesses but to make sure we do not put them into a position that would detract from their strengths.

For example, if their strength is data analysis, but a weakness is making presentations of their findings from the data to executives, then **do not waste their time trying to make them better presenters!** Use that time to help them become better at data analysis and leave the presentations to an employee who may be a great presenter but a poor data analyzer!



The successful manager puts together the talent puzzle available to make the best “picture” of productivity possible. Don’t waste time trying to force the puzzle pieces to fit where they obviously do not.

The question to ask here is the opposite of the previous one: *“What was the worst day you’ve had at work in the past three months? What made it so painful for you?”*

Talent Appraisal Question #5

“What is the most effective way for you to learn a new skill?” Some people learn best by watching others, then trying it. Others want to do some research first before attempting it, and a third type just jumps in and corrects as they go.

Once you know how they learn, you can match the training methods to their styles like this:

⇒ **The Watchers** – Role playing methods or a step-by-step approach will not help much because these learners look first at the big picture, not the components. Match them with someone who is very adept at the skill and who can identify the critical component parts of it.

Suppose you want them to learn how to make a good presentation. Let them watch someone who does a good job of it while reviewing a checklist of the components such as eye contact with the audience, confidence in the topic, hand gestures, posture, grooming, etc. Then the trainer goes over the components with the student explaining why each is critical to the big picture.

Another technique that is useful when teaching a manual skill is called **triplication**. Suppose I want to teach you how to set up a printing machine to run a batch of bank statements. We would go through the steps three times (the “triplication”) in a specific sequence:

1. **I do – I say** [I perform] the tasks in sequence while (I am) explaining what I’m doing.
2. **I do – you say** [I perform] the tasks in sequence while (you) explain what I’m doing.
3. **You do – you say** [You perform] the tasks in sequence while (you are) explaining to me what you are doing.

If this group was trying to assemble a toy during the holidays, they might be more comfortable watching someone else assemble one first. If that’s not available, they will read a little of the directions, assemble that piece, read a little more, and put together that piece, and so on.



⇒ **The Researchers** – Give this person as much information about the topic as possible and as much time to prepare as possible. Detailed notes in class, role-playing exercises, plenty of time to prepare for their “flying solo” because they hate to make mistakes. They do not learn much from mistakes because that only reinforces their fear of failure, and that forces them to prepare that much more the next time.

They would read through directions several times before starting on the toy.

⇒ **The Fearless** – This group is 180° different from the Researchers. They are not afraid of failure as they see trial-and-error as part of the learning curve. They quickly grasp what is involved and would probably be bored with role-playing and lots of notes. Their most powerful learning occurs *during* the event. Give them a picture of a piece of the overall outcome, and when they master that, allow them to expand their skills until they achieve the big picture.

This group typically assembles toys by building to the picture on the box instead of the step-by-step directions. If everything doesn't fit in the end, they'll quickly back up and (maybe) consult the directions if the solution isn't obvious.

Performance Analysis

We are ready to take **Step 3** (**Step 1** was on page 8 and **Step 2** on was page 9). Let's assume you have recorded a lot of observations about your employees and collected several responses from each to those two questions: "*When the best boss you ever had did this*" (page 10) and "*What are the three or four things I can give you*" (page 11). Many of their statements should add validity to your observations.

Now we will look at them in relation to the work that needs to get done. (Here's where we try to fit them all together into that giant jigsaw picture of efficiency and productivity.) These are simply samples of what you may find.

1. What seems to be their strengths?

- a. They work quietly and alone well, without much interaction with others. [If an opportunity exists to expand your department's work into another location or another shift, and you need someone who can work well without needing frequent contact, consider them.]
- b. They seem solution-focused when problems occur instead of worrying about blame. [A possible future leader for your group?]
- c. Looking for the best way to do something as they frequently come up with ideas to reduce work or waste. [A leader of a team to improve efficiency?] **Please note:** An employee that frequently complains about the way things are done may be a good candidate to lead an initiative to find a better way. Consider using their complaint against them by saying something like, "*Well, what do you suggest we do instead?*" The worst that could happen is the situation remains the status quo, while the best is they may accept the challenge and actually find an improvement.

2. **What events or situations seem to trigger those strengths?** The reason you want to know this is because if the situations or events are common, you can adjust your routines to capitalize on them. If they are rare, you can still identify them as the “go-to” people others can contact if you are not around. This means the work has less chance of disruption in your absence.
3. **Do they work best alone or as part of a group?** This can give you an idea on possible team rearrangement.
4. **Are they more energized early in the day or later on?** Typically, people do better work when they are more energized. Try to adjust their work requirements, so the greatest need for quality matches their energy levels.
5. **Do they seem to be driven from inside working “all out” all the time, work at a steady pace over time, or do they work in spurts?**
 - a. Working “all out” all the time – Ask them what inner drives keep them going. If you can provide other motivators for them, you may be able to channel that drive into other areas where you need productivity, also.
 - b. Working at a steady pace – Do you think they are letting the work expand to fill the time available, or are you comfortable with their productivity?
 - c. Working in spurts – What creates those work spurts: short attention spans, they are overqualified for the work and possibly bored, co-workers distracting them, they are just so social that they must be talking with someone while they work?
6. **Do they seem confident in their work or tentative? Do they frequently have to ask you or others for help or guidance?**
 - a. If confident, would they be a good mentor for new hires or to do some cross-training in the department?
 - b. If tentative, do they lack self-confidence, have they had enough training to be confident, have they had past experiences when a boss verbally attacked them, or made a public example of their mistakes? (This is worth getting to the root of the problem because they may never get better, and you have a permanent drag on the department’s productivity.)

7. How do they seem to learn?

- a. Trail-and-error Some people need to see the big picture first and then figure out how to get there. They look at the picture, set the directions aside, and try to assemble it. They are fast learners and not afraid of failure: that's just one assembly attempt that they won't try again! They aren't afraid to attempt the unusual to achieve the end. (They would be useful for discovering new ways of doing things or problem-solving. Try not to place them in work situations requiring a very repetitive and methodical procedure.)
- b. An analyzer – They carefully read the directions thoroughly, match up the pieces with the pictures in the directions, and then methodically move ahead. They will get it right the first time but only in the approved sequence. (Do not put them into a situation requiring originality or non-traditional procedures. They are very risk-averse and will not perform well.)
- c. An observer – They learn by watching others. These people will not be innovators but, once they have watched a competent person demonstrate it, they will do well with it. Make sure the person who teaches them is doing the job the way you want it done.

8. Do others come to them very often with work-related questions? These people should be the core of your work team as they share knowledge and insights.

9. Where would you place them in the office network: centrally located, at the fringes, or nowhere in it?

- a. If centrally located, they are in a very influential position within the department's network because knowledge is power. Not only knowledge about the work to be done but all the gossip and part of the company grapevine. If you don't have time to tell everyone (and can trust them with the message), this person can get the word out for you. Also, if you have ever thought about a departmental newsletter or regular communication with others, consider this person as a key player.
- b. Whether at the fringes or nowhere in it, it is worth a little more investigation to find out why. If they intentionally do not want to participate, it may be part of their nature, and they work better alone. They may seem like a drag (or a stabilizing influence) to more

socially adept team members. If it seems like others don't approach them, it may be worthwhile to encourage some of the more outgoing ones to approach them and try to include them in the departmental community. A sense of "belonging" may improve their spirits and work performance.

Defining the Expected Performance

The sequence of topics presented so far in this course began at a high level to help you understand more about the talent management "big picture." We discussed the fundamentals of motivating employees, and then presented a way to conduct a reality check to help clarify your work world a little more, and finally, to lead you through an appraisal of the existing talent you have available.

Now we are ready to begin defining the performance that we want from our employees. It is important that your performance expectations do not resemble Alice's journey. If you cannot clearly define your performance expectations in measurable terms, it is YOUR FAULT, not your employees' that they do not reach them.

One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. "Which road do I take?" she asked. "Where do you want to go?" was his response. "I don't know", Alice answered.

"Then", said the cat, "it doesn't matter. When you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."

(Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass or the Adventures of Alice in Wonderland*)



The next section will help you create measurable performance expectations that will make managing the talent available much easier for you. We call the creation of a performance range the "Report Card Model" because it is based on what we had in school. At the beginning of the year, the teacher told us what it took to achieve a particular grade. Then they gave us back our graded tests, homework, and classwork ("performance feedback") and told us to keep track of the scores so we would know what our grade would be.

As the time arrived for the report cards to go home, the teachers simply averaged our numerical scores (the same numbers we had), converted them to a letter grade, and put them on the report card. There were no surprises and very few arguments!

Our experience has shown us this same model will work easily in the workplace.

The Value of Setting MEASURABLE Goals



What value do you think there is in having measurable goals?

(Specific measurables – in terms of Quality, Quantity, and Time – make it easy to monitor progress toward their achievement.)

What are some sources of stress in your work life?

What are some measurable goals in your work life?

What are some sources of stress in your home life?

What are some measurable goals in your home life?



Do you think there are significant differences between *work pressure* and *work stress*? If so, how would you describe them?

(Many times, work stress comes from “undefined” sources or vague expectations. For example, if your boss tells you to complete a financial proposal within a week, but you do not know what he or she expects in it or what it should look like, you will be stressed trying to meet his vague expectations. Even after you turn it in, you still worry because you do not know whether he will like it.

But, if you have done many financial proposals for him or her in the past, you still may feel some work tension and job pressure until you finish. However, once you turn it in, you are relieved because it is finished, and you know you did a good job.)

List some activities associated with your job that you wish were defined more clearly regarding what your leader expects you to do.

How does this lack of clarification affect you and your work?

What risk does this lack of clarification mean to your employer's perception of your value to the organization?

What will you do about this after you finish this course?

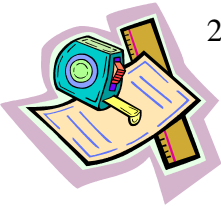
The Elements of Effective Performance Goals

An effective goal requires at least these elements:

1. **Realistic** (in the mind of the person doing the work) – The person must feel they have some chance of success, or they will not bother trying.



2. **Quantifiable** – It must tell the person HOW MUCH (Quantity), HOW WELL (Quality), and BY WHEN (Time). This knowledge helps them gauge their own progress toward the ultimate goal. We will abbreviate this to “QQT” in this course.



3. **Job Related** – He/she must understand how his/her personal goals the goals of the department, which support the goals of the project. Otherwise, they will think, “why am I doing this?”



4. **Doable** – They must involve his/her doing something that they can observe and measure. A goal that calls for “Understanding how workflows through the Highway Department” is useless because you cannot measure UNDERSTANDING.

It only becomes useful if he/she must do something that demonstrates his/her understanding such as, “explain in writing the complete workflow of a request from a citizen for a safety sign on his street until it is installed.”

Practice Activity #1

Describe an activity associated with your job that <u>is clearly defined</u> and contains “quantity, quality, and time” components.		
The Quality component is:	The Quantity component is:	The Time component is:

How does **this clear definition** of your leader’s expectations affect your personal satisfaction and your work performance?

How do your work performance and personal satisfaction regarding this clearly defined task compare with the task you identified earlier that is not defined as clearly?

How can you use this comparison of two of your tasks with your employees and some of their tasks? (It may give you some insight into why they are not working to your expectations.)

Goals and Tasks

Do you think a person can be very busy but not very productive?

How could this happen? (There could be a lot of rework or false starts involved.)

Tasks are not always productive. Sometimes people are just “busy.” When you focus a task with the three critical performance standards that define “how much,” “how well” and “by when” (QQT), you establish goals and become productive.



The light bulb in a lamp is physically the same as a laser beam.

However, the laser has all of its energy narrowly focused upon a particular point that gives it incredible power. How could you compare parts of your workday to the light bulb and the laser beam?

When do you feel more satisfied with your work: when you are acting like a light bulb or a laser beam?

Which condition ultimately makes your job more enjoyable and your work more productive?

How can you use the light bulb and laser beam example in a discussion with your employees?

Why would you want to do that?

Practice Activity #2

Are these situations productive or busy?



Read each situation and put a checkmark under the appropriate “Productive” or “Busy” column. Remember, we define “productive” as having all three elements of **how much (quantity)**, **how well (quality)**, and **by when (time)** present in a situation.

The situation	Productive	Busy	If “busy,” what is missing?
Grant has been pushing the cart loaded with statements up and down the hall for the past 45 minutes.			
Logan has processed 200 documents in the past 3 hours.			
Murphy has the machine running items at a speed of 375/hour and a reject rate of .82%			
Cindy completed 3 hours of classes at night school this past quarter.			

Describe a typical activity of yours that is busy but not productive because you have not been told the three components of productivity: quality, quantity, and time.

Which of the three components is missing?

What will you do about it?

- ✓ Grant is just busy. Nothing has been accomplished. What is the “quality” measurement?
- ✓ Logan has processed 200 documents, but are they the correct ones? Were they processed accurately? There is no QUALITY component.
- ✓ Murphy has been productive. The quality component is the “reject rate.”
- ✓ Cindy completed the courses, but what was her grade? If she failed, there is no productivity. If she received an “A,” she was more productive than if she received a “C.” We don’t have enough information to determine if she was productive or just busy.

Establishing Effective Performance Goals

Select one of your current employees and write two effective performance goals for them. Put the words “how much,” “how well,” and “by when” in parenthesis behind the proper element within your goal. Use this as a sample:

Sandy will complete the night school Accounting 101 class (“how much” = 1 class) within 6 months of today (“by when”) with at least a grade of ‘B’ (“how well”).

My employee is _____

Their performance goal #1 is:

Their performance goal #2:



Think
about...

Three possible situations can happen when **setting performance goals**:

1. You set them; your employee takes them and tries to meet them.
2. Your employee sets them; you accept them and hope they can meet them.
3. You and your employee set them together and track progress together.

Which do you think is a better situation and why?

Measuring “Hard Skills”

We usually describe easily observable and/or measurable activities as “hard skills.” Defining skills must always focus on the behaviors associated with the skills. We must define *what we expect them to do at different performance levels* as part of the measurements.

Measurements, *to be effective*, must contain references to:

- **Quality** of performance (How well they perform.)
- **Quantity** of performance (How many they must produce.)
- **Time** of performance (The deadline for when production must be completed.)

We will abbreviate these three elements in this course as **QQT**.

For example, suppose we were defining the job functions of a filing clerk. Their job deals with accurately (“**accurately**” is a quality element) filing stacks (“**stacks**” is a quantity element) of documents by a specific deadline (“**deadline**” is a time element.)



In addition to describing the three elements (QQT) of effective measurements, we must also identify a performance range that allows the employee and supervisor to monitor the work progress and determine their appropriate compensation for the work performed. This is like the grading system used in schools where A, B, C, D, F provide measurements for academic productivity.

It is easy to develop a performance range if you will start in the middle - the “least they can do to get by” performance description. This is like the grade of “C” in school.

Then you can go up and down the scale easily to cover the range of performance that can occur.

The elements of quality, quantity, and time give us great flexibility in determining the performance range. We can define the filing clerk’s duties in a variety of ways.

We will use a simple 1.0 – 5.0 scale to demonstrate this practice where 1.0 is “worst” and 5.0 is “best behavior”.

The elements of quality, quantity, and time can be manipulated to place greater emphasis on which of the three is most important for a specific job.

Table 1 – Quality is emphasized

Table 1 - Filing Clerk Performance Range – Quality emphasis	
5.0	File >30 documents per hour with no mistakes
4.0	File >20 - 30 documents per hour with no mistakes.
3.0	File at least 20 documents per hour with no mistakes.
2.0	File <20 but more than 15 documents per hour with no mistakes or any amount with 1 mistake.
1.0	File < 15 documents per hour with 1 mistake or any amount with 2 or more mistakes.

Table 1 shows that greater scores (“better work”) are directly tied to increased filing of documents as long as there are no mistakes. The 2.0 score (like a “D” grade in school) can be either fewer documents with NO mistakes or even more than 30 documents with just one mistake. The time element remains the same.

Table 2 - Productivity is emphasized

This table shows that we will tolerate a small number of mistakes as long as productivity is up.

Table 2 - Filing Clerk Performance Range – Productivity emphasis	
5.0	File >40 documents per hour with no mistakes.
4.0	File >40 documents per hour with <2 mistakes.
3.0	File at least 30 documents per hour with <=3 mistakes.
2.0	File at least 30 documents per hour with 3-4 mistakes or <30 with any mistakes.
1.0	File < 25 documents per hour with any amount of mistakes.

Table 3 - Time is emphasized

Table 3 - Filing Clerk Performance Range – Time emphasis	
5.0	File >40 documents with no mistakes in less than 1 hour.
4.0	File >40 documents with no mistakes within 60-75 minutes. .
3.0	File at least 30 documents with no mistakes in 75-90 minutes.
2.0	File at least 30 documents in 75-90 minutes with <3 mistakes
1.0	File < 30 documents or take longer than 90 minutes or make 3 or more mistakes.

Some tasks do not allow much manipulation of the three elements because of the nature of the job.

Suppose government regulations required we process **all** the loan documents we received **accurately** within **72 hours**. We cannot control how many we receive: we must simply process them “all”. Every document must be accurate because people’s money and property is involved, and we have a “\$1,000 error-free guarantee” in our advertising that gives us a marketing edge and drives a lot of business our way.

We will divide the inbound work into equal piles for the clerks available. Since the government requires accurate processing within 72 hours, we can use that as our grade of “C”. We know we cannot process less than all that came in nor can we drop the quality level. Therefore, the only variable we can use as an incentive for employees is **time**.

We can manipulate the time it takes to finish their share of the work as an incentive to finish early. That also gives us a chance to have some early finishers available to help slower ones if needed (after we document the files of the early finishers –and they know we did - as a reward) so we do not break the departmental deadline to finish all the work that came in.

If they can finish their share of the work accurately sooner than 60 hours since it came in, we will give them the highest score of 5.0 (an “A” for their work). Then, as an example, we can make 60-65 hours as a 4.0 (a “B”) and 66-72 hours as the 3.0 (a “C”).

Next, we will look at examples of how more technical skills could be developed into a performance range for an **on-call software-programming technician**

(This heading would be at the top of the performance assessment form.)

“On-call Responsiveness is based on problems being resolved within the established time frames set by the On-Call Policy, barring any obstacles encountered due to problems dialing in; the availability of the network or other circumstances outside of the control of the person responding to the problem.”

Note: Expectations should be evaluated based on the individual’s job description and special considerations may need to be made for new employees or employees that are assigned applications that they do not support on a daily basis, such as groups that have combined on-call personnel for multiple applications or when an employee transfers to another application.

Able to resolve problems on your own and within the established time frame set by the On-Call Policy

5	Consistently (98 - 100%) able to resolve problems on your own and all problems resolved within the established time frames.
4	Most of the time (90% - 97%) are able to resolve problems on your own; however some assistance is needed from other team members on difficult or complex problems. All problems are resolved within the established time frames.
3	Occasionally (80% - 89%) needs assistance to resolve problems that are unfamiliar; you are able to resolve most problems on your own; most of all problems are resolved within the established time frames.
2	Needs to improve; assistance is needed from other team members to resolve problems which are not complex.
1	Needs to develop; assistance is needed from other team members to resolve most problems; problems are not resolved within the established time frames.

Client Problem Resolution

5	Consistently (98-100%) problems are fixed the first time; solutions do not cause additional or new problems; no business unit, application, or system performance impact and no customer impact.
4	Most of the time (90-97%) problems are fixed the first time; solutions do not cause additional or new problems; no business unit, application, or system performance impact and no customer impact.
3	Occasionally (80 -89%) problems are not fixed the first time; solutions did not cause additional or new problems; minor business unit, application or system performance impact occurred; no customer impact
2	Needs to improve; problems are not fixed the first time or solutions have caused additional problems; customer, an occasional business unit, application or system performance impact occurred
1	Needs to develop; problems are not fixed the first time or solutions have caused additional problems; customer, business unit, application or system performance impact occurs frequently.

Section Review

Use a 1.0 (worst) to a 5.0 (best) scale to define a performance range for any task associated with one of these technical functions.

Be sure to include considerations of quality, quantity, and time.

- A technician at a fast oil-change business
- A customer service representative in a phone center
- An emergency medical technician
- A haircutter in a barber/stylist shop
- A bank teller

Measuring “Soft Skills”

If we typically call easily observed and/or measurable activities as “hard skills,” we refer to skills not as easily defined and measured as the opposite or “soft skills.” These are usually more universal and expected of all team members regardless of their specific job functions.

How can you put a measurement on these typically “soft” topics?



Quality Service



Teamwork



Written Communication



Oral Communication

It is easy to measure if you will do this:

1. Work with your employees to define jointly the **behavioral traits** that demonstrate the topic. (It is critical to the success of this measurement process that you include those whose behavior you expect to measure. Their “buy in” is essential for this process.)

For example, if you wanted to measure “PRIDE IN WORK,” you first identify **behavioral traits** that indicate *they have pride in their work*. You and your employees may come up with a list like this:

- There are no spelling errors.
- It is always on time or before.
- She always uses the proper format for the report.
- Her data is always accurate.

2. Establish a scale with a range of values for use with each trait. [This is a *Likert Scale*.]
 - 1 = I never see this (Do not get overly concerned with the definition of “Never.” The scale will work as long as you and the employees agree closely on what frequency it means,)
 - 2 = I occasionally see this (Do not get overly concerned with the definition of “occasionally” .The scale will work as long as you and the employees agree closely on what frequency it means,)
 - 3 = I always see this (Do not get overly concerned with the definition of “Always.” The scale will work as long as you and the employees agree closely on what frequency it means,)
 - X = Does not apply

CAUTION: Professionals such as engineers, surveyors, and accountants are used to working with specific data and may be uncomfortable with this concept. They should remember that we are measuring impressions and attitudes that may be vague at best. Asking a customer to rank satisfaction along a scale from “Not satisfied,” “Some satisfaction,” Very Satisfied,” or “Does not apply” is more useful than asking them, “are you 43% or 52% satisfied?”

3. Then create a scale that converts the average of the trait scale (#2 above) to your performance assessment system.

Joan Smith’s <i>Pride in Work</i> Evaluation (“Pride in Work” is the <u>behavior</u> we are evaluating)	Scores
There are no spelling errors.	3
It is always on time or before.	2*
She always uses the proper format for the report	2*
Her data is always accurate	2*
Average score for the observation period →	9/5= 2.8
<p><i>*A wise leader will have documentation of the times when the employee did anything that would result in a less than perfect score. You can expect them to ask for proof they did not earn the top score.</i></p> <p><i>Also, their morale is improved if you put the burden of proving they <u>did not</u> get the max score on you instead of putting the burden of proof <u>on them</u> they did earn it. This would be like a teacher in school telling you at the start of the year “Everyone has an “A” in this class until your scores show otherwise.” The result from a grade standpoint is probably the same but the attitude of the students is much more optimistic, and they <u>may</u> score better!</i></p>	

These four “behavioral traits” from part #1 define the behavior “Pride in Work.” You can ask your work team how they want to be measured on their “teamwork” skills.

Some **“TEAMWORK”** traits that they may suggest:

- Demonstrates willingness to help others when finished with own work without being asked.
- Demonstrates willingness to help others with less experience or confidence
- Demonstrates willingness to give credit to others when praise is given
- Demonstrates willingness to carry his/her fair share of the workload (and more at times if asked)
- They are reliable and can be counted on to carry their share of the workload

You should consider accepting any traits that satisfy them and still fall within your general bounds of what the topic should cover. They feel more bound by their community standards than your outsider standards.

Employees Rating Each Other: Good or Bad Idea?

If TEAMWORK is one of the topics on your performance assessment, you may want to consider allowing the team members to assess how each other support the goals of the team. Obviously, they are in the best position to know who actually works while the boss is not around and who only works when the boss is present.



“Employees rating each other: good or bad idea?” Ask that question among a group of supervisors and managers, and you will get many reasons for and against it. We believe that it is a good idea only when *the group doing the rating has the maturity to understand the benefits it offers*. Here are some issues for consideration about the argument for those who have not attempted it before.

- Teamwork is important to the success of our group. (No one will argue that fact.)
- There are only two ways to evaluate individual performance contributions by members of the team: *the leader can do the evaluation* or *the fellow team members can*.
- The leader is not always present while the team is working. Frequently there are duties unique to leadership that require him or her to be elsewhere, such as attending meetings, working in the office planning, scheduling, budgeting, reporting, etc.
- There may be team members who work more diligently while the leader is present than they do when the leader is absent.
- Other team members frequently have to pick up that slack to meet the group’s production goals.
- Since the leader was periodically absent and not able to observe performance at all times, there is a distinct possibility the slacker will get a performance rating that is higher than deserved when the leader does individual performance assessments on group members.

This is unfair to those who had to pick up the slack to meet the group’s goals.

- The group's members can solve this problem by doing anonymous assessments of each other if they choose to act objectively. The leader can use these for the individual's performance scores under the "teamwork" category.
- Some group members will object, saying that assessments are the job of the leader. While that is true, it is also true that the frequently absent leader cannot evaluate individual performance within the group as often as other members can.
- The group can choose to score itself anonymously and be very accurate or insist the leader do the scoring and admit there may be undeserved scores. They cannot have it both ways unless the leader gives up some leadership duties. However, if the leader stopped doing those leadership duties, he or she would not remain a leader very long.
- The possibility of groups of team members giving those they do not like lower scores (or friends higher scores) than they deserve can be defeated if you use the Olympic judge technique of discarding the highest and lowest scores. Or you can require specific examples to be included for the highest or lowest scores to count.
- If a project team is willing to self-score, work production will increase because the slackers can no longer "get away" with their games: ***they know it, and the team members know it.***

Analyzing Performance Problems

As this course gets longer, it's important to stop periodically and review where we have come from so far. We started at a high level to help you understand more about the talent management “big picture.” Then we discussed the fundamentals of motivating employees, leading you through an appraisal of the existing talent you have available, and then how to define the performance that you want from our employees. Now we will look at performance that does not meet our expectations

Before getting into this analysis tool, we must first have a universal understanding of what we mean by “problem behavior” and how we determine whether we should do anything about it.

The easiest, most universally relevant question to ask when trying to determine if we have problem behavior in the workplace is, **“DOES THAT BEHAVIOR IMPACT THEIR WORK OR SOMEONE ELSE’S?”**

If the answer is “yes,” then go after it. If the answer is “No” or “Not sure,” then take some time to think about it some more. *If the behavior just irritates you but does not affect your work, it may cause more trouble dealing with it than any gains from ignoring it.*

For example, suppose you are a manager who thinks there should be a lot of teamwork in the department, and everyone should be very friendly with each other. You want your employees to eat lunch with each other and do other social things that would create a lot of interaction.



However, your highest-producing employee is a loner, and not a participant in the department's socializing. Should you counsel with them about being more of a “team player” and trying to socialize more or leave them alone?

We suggest you ask yourself, “Does their lack of socialization hurt theirs or anyone else’s productivity?” If it does (and you could measure it if necessary, so people will not think you are just harassing them), you should use this flowchart to find out why they are not socializing.

However, if you cannot show how productivity is harmed, you would be better off by leaving them alone to be productive even if their behavior goes against your “teamwork” philosophy. You risk upsetting them, so their production drops, and they still may not want to socialize!

This flowchart will prove to you that 90% of the reasons for employee performance problems have their roots in systems controlled by management. Work your way through these ten steps, and you will see what we mean.

Before you begin
Ask yourself, “Is this issue worth pursuing?”



Question: How do you know if it is worth pursuing?”

(If it interferes with work, it is worth pursuing!

If it is only a nuisance or aggravation, but does not interfere with work, it may be best to leave it alone.)

If so, go to STEP #1. If not, you are done!
Remember, you can stop anytime the problem is “**sufficiently solved.**”

(This means it is not worth the time, effort, or expense to “fix it better”.)

STEP #1
Ask yourself, “Are my expectations clear?”



Question: What do you ask your employee here?

(I want to make sure I did a good job of explaining. Please tell me what you think I expect you to do.)

If so, go on to the next step.
↓
not, what should you do?

STEP #2

Ask yourself, "Are their resources adequate?"

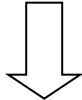


Question: What do you ask your employee here?

(Do you have everything you need to do what I expect?)

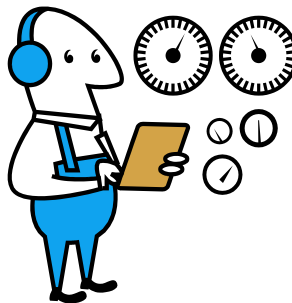
If so, go on to the next step.

If not, what should you do?



STEP #3

Ask yourself, "Do they get fast and frequent feedback on their performance?"

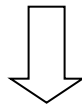


Question: What do you ask your employee here?

(How do you know how you are doing?)

If so, go on to the next step.

If not, what should you do?



STEP #4

Ask yourself, "Does the desired performance seem punishing?"

(Hint: What do you usually do if they finish early and others have not finished yet?)



Question: What do you ask your employee (or yourself about the situation) here?

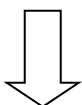
(If their "reward" for finishing early is you give them the work the slower people have not finished, you will soon have no one finishing early.

You must praise the ones who finish early, let them know you documented their file that they finished ahead of the others, and ask if they will help the slower ones.

This way they do not feel that the slackers are getting away with anything)

If so, what should you do?

If not, go on to the next step.



STEP #5

Ask yourself, "Is poor performance rewarded somehow?"

(Hint: What do you usually do if they have not finished yet, but others have?)



Question:

What do you ask your employee (or yourself about the situation) here?

(This is the opposite of above. If they are behind, let them know you documented their file that they were behind, and you asked a faster worker to help pick up their slack.)

This way, they realize they are not getting away with anything.)



If so, what should you do? If not, go on to the next step.

STEP #6

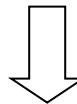
Ask yourself, "Is there any penalty for not doing it right?"



Question: What do you ask your employee (or yourself about the situation) here?

("Is there any penalty for not doing it right?" If there were no penalty, why would they stop doing it?)

If so, go on to the next step.



If not, what should you do?

STEP #7

Ask yourself, "Is their non-performance a genuine skill deficiency?"

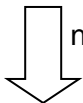


Question:

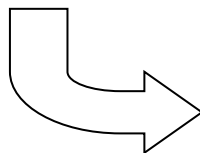
What do you ask your employee (or yourself about the situation) here?

(Can they not do it or can they do it but just do not want to.)

If so, go on to the next step.



not sure, what should you do?



Question:

Have they ever done this in the past?

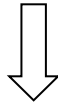
*(If so, give them practice to refresh their skills)
If not, continue to the next step.*



STEP #8

Ask yourself, “Can the task be made easier?”

If so, do it. If not, go to the next step.



Question:

What do you ask your employee here?

(Can you think of any easier way you can do this?)

STEP #9

Ask yourself, “Are there any other obstacles that keep you from doing what we want?”

Question:

What do you ask your employee here?

(“Can you think of anything keeping you from doing this?”)

If so, what can you do?

If not, go to the next step.

STEP #10

Ask yourself, “Does the person have the desire to change?”



Question: What do you ask your employee here?

(Do you have any plans to change your behavior?)

If so, train them to the desired skill level!

If not, REPLACE THEM!

Have you noticed that every step, except #10, is a factor controlled by management?

This means there is a 90% probability that an employee’s performance problem is caused by something controlled by management!



Coaching and Counseling the Talent

Managers make the best use of the traits of effective communication (we'll talk more about this in a few minutes) through two very common, yet sometimes confused, behaviors; **coaching** and **counseling**. We will use these definitions to clarify them for this course:



- ⇒ **Coaching** is the *passing along of information, setting performance standards, or working with employees to improve their performance* (coaching deals with behaviors).
- ⇒ **Counseling** deals with *addressing problems between team members, levels of understanding, or attitudes toward the job* (counseling deals with attitudes).

When employees have what are broadly termed ‘attitude problems,’ it’s necessary for a manager to get as close to the root of the problem as possible before trying to change the employee’s behavior.



These steps can provide a general guideline on resolving attitudinal (emotional) issues before trying to change behavior.

1. **Ask them to describe objectively the event that upset them.** (For example, focus on what the co-worker said, not the tone (how) in which they said it.) Encourage them to avoid accusations and focus on specific data or evidence.
2. **Focus on their feelings and resultant behavior, your reaction, and possible consequences.** (“I can understand your crying about that - it must have made you feel very bad. However, I need to make sure we are able to meet our goals today and wouldn’t want you to add to your problems by missing work because of something thoughtless someone else did.”) Although you understand they are upset, there is still work to get done, and you are counting on them to do their part.

3. **Focus on solutions.** Don't get into who is right or wrong, but what can the employee do (their part of the situation) to get past this?

Although we are not pretending these few steps will help you deal with all the problems that will arise in the workplace, we do know the model will cover many situations until you gain enough experience to “branch out” with other approaches.

Communications when Counseling

There are many ways we can communicate with our employees, but unfortunately, we are not always as effective as we would like to be. Very often, the message that is received isn't always the intended one.



This has always been a problem with traditionally spoken and written communications and has geometrically increased as technology allows us to bombard each other with emails, instant messaging, voicemails, call waiting, text messages, and faxes. Unfortunately, the sheer volume of communication makes it difficult to digest each one sufficiently so we can reply appropriately. *Technology cannot change the fact that effective interpretation still depends on the personal relationship between the sender and recipient.*

If we are not always as effective as we would like to be with the high volume of messages that we send daily, we can try to be a little more aware of what we say and how we word it especially when we are trying to counsel an employee about attitudinal problems.

Although it may take a little effort at first to master the process, the long-term gain is less time spent clarifying previous messages and trying to mend relationship fences inadvertently damaged by misunderstandings.

Here are some traits that will help your counseling message get through as intended:

Communication Trait		Sample
1	The message is aligned with the situation vs. non-aligned	An honest message where the statement matches thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. “Your behavior really upset me” is honest while “What? Me upset? Of course not?” is clearly not honest and frequently continues the bad feelings between the two.
2	Be specific – Not General	“You interrupted me three times during the meeting” is much more specific and useful than saying, “You were very rude in that meeting.”
3	Be problem not person focused	“You have to fix those errors you made in that form” is more direct than saying, “Can’t you do anything right?”
4	Make it sequential, not disjointed	“Following up on what Joe just said,...” helps people track the conversation more easily than just bringing in something unexpected that has no relation to the previous conversation.
5	Take ownership – do not avoid the issue	“I have decided to deny your request” instead of “They denied your request.”
6	Make it directed at the problem and not the result	“What time were you supposed to be here?” focuses them on the problem while asking, “Why are you late?” invites them to make excuses.

A little review and some other tips for effective feedback when counseling an employee include these:

- Focus on observations instead of inferences
- Talk about the person’s behaviors, not the person
- Speak about descriptions (as objectively as possible) instead of evaluations
- Deal with the present, not the past that we cannot change
- Try to share ideas and relevant information – not give advice
- Feedback that is valuable to the receiver is more useful than feedback that provides an emotional release
- Timing is important, and you should consider when the recipient will be most able to listen and consider it – not when it’s only convenient for you.

Communications when Coaching

Remember, coaching deals with observable behaviors, not attitudes. We can teach and change behaviors externally, but attitudes have to be formed and modified from the inside. This coaching section is only about employee behavior.

Effective coaching starts with CATCHING THE EMPLOYEES DOING WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO... THEN **REWARDING OR REINFORCING IT!**

Think about your employees. Some do the right things *all the time* and you hope they continue. Others do *mostly* the right things and you wish they would change to do right things all the time. (If they *rarely* do the right things, you should have terminated them a long time ago and would not be considering coaching. We will discuss termination strategies later in this section) List below two of your employees, and their behaviors you want to see continued or changed. (The same employee may be in both situations.)

Employee	I want them to continue doing this...	I want them to START doing this...

Getting people to STOP doing the wrong thing does not mean they will automatically START doing the right thing! They will only stop doing wrong things, so you do not punish them.

If you want them to do the right things, you must make sure they know what right things are and then praise them.

“YOU GET WHAT YOU REINFORCE.”

What are you REALLY seeing?

Coaching must focus on *observed performance* – what people are actually doing – and not on our **impression of what we think they are doing.**

Read these situations and decide what you think is happening.

1. Jennifer is arriving for work again at 8:30, which is 30 minutes later than the rest have to be here. *(If you thought she was late, you are wrong. She has a work schedule different from yours.)*



2. Mike is just standing next to that desk and staring out the window.



(Mike is not wasting time but waiting for a print job to finish. He is thinking about the next report he has to write.)

3. Mary is sitting at her desk reading a magazine again while the rest of us are still working. *(She is not wasting time but looking at a tech journal trying to figure out how to get her system running again.)*



The point of these three situations is that we do not always know the meaning behind what we are seeing. The wise leader will not assume what they think is happening but will ask the person what they are doing. That way, it may save some embarrassment for the leader, may avoid offending the employee, and provide an excellent coaching opportunity to continue that performance if you like what you are seeing.



“He just doesn’t take pride in his work!” Does this statement reflect the objective behavior of the employee or an impression of their attitude about their work? (Our impression of his attitude.)

How could you reword the statement more effectively? (“His running over the hose with his lawnmower indicates he does not pay attention to what he is doing.” He may or may not be proud of doing that.)

What risk is there for **you** if you cannot separate an employee's behavior from **your opinion** about that behavior?

(Your boss or Human Resources may think the problem lies within you, not the employee and you may have difficulty getting their support for a possible termination.)



Coaching To CONTINUE Desired Performance



It is more effective from a coaching standpoint to focus your employee's attention on the things they are doing right instead of reminding them of what they are doing wrong. Think of the Little League baseball coach shouting to his pitcher, "***Be sure to cover home plate on a passed ball, so the runner on 3rd doesn't score!***"

What message do you think he is unintentionally sending between his words? (*I expect you to throw a wild pitch, so cover home plate in an attempt to lessen the damage you are going to cause!*)

What do you think is the inevitable outcome of his "coaching" of the pitcher? (*There is a high probability there will be a wild pitch!*)

What *should he be saying*? (Hint - What does he really want the pitcher to do? "***Hit the catcher's glove! Throw it across the plate!***")

There is a simple yet very powerful method an effective leader can use ***in less than 30 seconds*** to help employees focus on what they are doing right. Also, it will increase the likelihood they will keep doing it! This is how it works:

1. Draw his/her attention to the desired performance you want.
“**You’ve finished your work early AGAIN! That is great!**”
2. Get him/her thinking about what he did by asking how he did it.
“**Please tell me how do you achieve that EVERY DAY!**”
3. Listen carefully to his/her description to check whether it was an intentional act or random chance. (If random, review with them what they need to do to make it happen consistently.)
4. Give him/her a chance to continue doing the right thing by asking what else you can provide to make sure it keeps happening. “**Is there anything I can do to help you keep finishing early?**” (If their suggestion is reasonable, consider doing it. If not reasonable, you are not obligated to do it and explain why you cannot.)
5. Reinforce the moment and wrap it up with an encouraging phrase.
“**You have certainly made our department look good! Keep it up!**”

Just remember the word **P-A-C-E-R** (**P**erformance – **A**sk – **C**heck – **E**lse – **R**einforce) to take you through the steps easily.

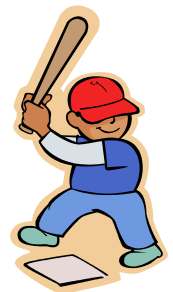
Here is an example of how it works. Imagine you are a Little League parent, and your player got a base hit. After the game or as soon as you can, you run up and congratulate him. After learning this technique, your conversation will go like this: (This will take about 30 seconds!)

Parent: “Great hit, son! That ball really took off! How did you hit it so well?”
(This calls his attention to the performance you want repeated.)

Player: “Well, I held the bat like you taught me, stayed relaxed, and watched the ball. When I thought it was close enough, I turned my hips into the ball and whipped my hands around.

Then followed through, and the ball took off!” (You ask what he did and check to make sure it is correct. If he says, ‘I just closed my eyes and stuck the bat out there,’ have him repeat what he **should have done!**)

Parent: “What did it feel like when you hit it? Was it exciting hearing everyone screaming?” (These questions help him relive the moment and create a desire to do it again.)



- Player:** “It was great! This is the best baseball day I’ve ever had!” (*This is more reinforcement of the moment.*)
- Parent:** “It sure is! Is there anything else we can do to make sure you keep getting great hits like that?” (*Asking ‘what else’ gives them a chance to offer any ideas they may have. Remember, you do not have to act on them if they are unreasonable.*)
- Player:** “I can keep doing what I’ve been doing. And we could start going down to the batting cage!”
- Parent:** “OK! You keep swinging correctly, and we will go to the batting cage some more, too! Son, you are doing great! We are very proud of you! Keep it up!” (*This is the ‘reinforce’ by praising him.*)

Some Additional Thoughts

Here are some other considerations when using the **P-A-C-E-R** model. We will continue with the Little League example to explain.

“How did you hit it so well?” Be sure you do not say this with a tone of *disbelief* – as if you never expected him to succeed. Be *amazed* at how successful he was and how he made it look so easy: Never *act surprised!*

“What did it feel like when you hit it? Was it exciting hearing everyone screaming?”

This helps him recall the feeling and sounds of success. The more you involve all of his senses in the recall, the greater the impression on him.

Especially involve his emotions. The more he recalls his emotions to imprint further the *feeling* of achievement, **“How proud did you feel? Was it exciting?”** “The easier you make it to relive the moment means, the greater the stimulus to keep practicing properly. (This works for adults as well as Little Leaguers!)

Goals: Achievement or Failure

We are using the model described earlier on page 24, **Establishing Effective Performance Goals** as a guide to establishing the measurable goals for the employee.

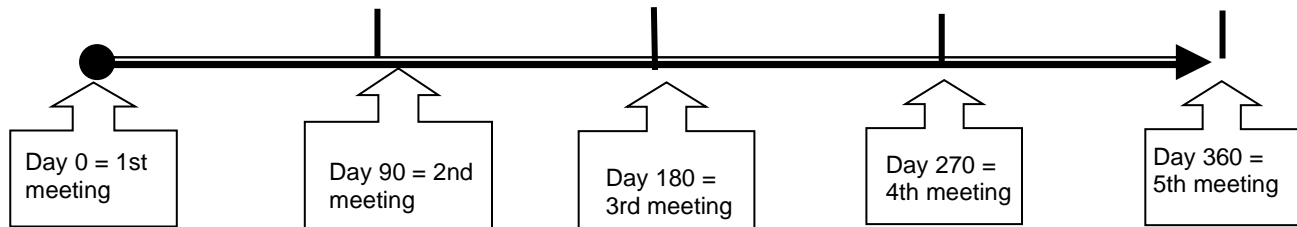
Now think back to when you were in school. Did your teachers ever have to tell you how you were doing in class, or did you know? (You probably knew as a result of getting back your test grades, homework, class assignments, etc. how you would do on the report card based on the schedule given at the beginning of the year. The schedule refers to A = 90+ average; B = 80-89; C – 70-79’ D = 60-69; F = <60 average)

How much stress do you think the teachers experienced at “report card time”? (none) Why? (Giving the students feedback on classwork scores allowed them to track their own grades. There were no surprises because the students knew just as well as the teachers. The work was already finished by report card time.)

Why should that experience from school be any different from your workplace? If you can do an effective job of working with your employee to set measurable performance goals, you can effectively shift the weight of the performance assessment from your shoulders to the employee’s. This also controls whether you have a stress**FUL** or stress**FREE** time doing performance assessments!

We suggest you follow a schedule as the schools do of issuing frequent report cards. This gives the employee (student) feedback on how they are doing as the year goes along instead of having to wait until the end of the year to learn whether they are doing passing work or not.

What prevents you from having quarterly performance review meetings with your employees so you can effectively manage their talent to higher levels of performance or help them reverse a backward slide before it's too late?



Goal-Setting Meeting Questions to Ask

If you have revised the performance goals for your employees into clearly measurable characteristics that include quality, quantity, and time, you have gone a long way toward managing their talent because:

- If they clearly know what is expected, they can manage themselves
- Managing themselves means less stress on them and improved morale and teamwork
- Clearer expectations lead to less rework and reduced cycle time
- Reduced rework and cycle time means greater efficiency and productivity.

For proof of this, think back to school again. When a teacher assigned a project for which you clearly understood the expectations and requirements (let's say this is your fourth book report for her this year), you were able to work more quickly because you knew exactly what it should look like. And, when you were finished, you turned it in satisfied you had met the requirements, had a pretty good idea of the grade you would earn, and you could forget about it.

Contrast that experience with doing book reports for teachers when you weren't exactly sure of what was expected. When you turned it in, you were still a little uneasy because you had some reservations about whether it was as expected, and your grade was very uncertain.

The two critical questions you should ask at your first meeting, the goal-setting meeting for the year, are at least these (you can ask more, of course), and you just listen as they tell you. (Can

you see how this shifts the performance burden to their shoulders? Just like back in school, isn't it? You were responsible for your success. The teacher wasn't.)

- 1. What are your measurable goals for this year broken down into quarters?*
- 2. How can I help?*

The five critical questions to ask for meetings #2-5 are these (again, you can ask more than these):

- 1. What were your goals for this quarter?*
- 2. How did you do?*
- 3. How do you account for the gap whether more or less than you planned?*
- 4. What are your goals for the next quarter?*
- 5. How can I help?*

Meet The “Orp”-Person

Do you know the **ORP-person?** (The **O**rdinary, **R**easonable, and **P**rudent person is an individual who did not witness the event but may sit in judgment of your actions.) This could be your boss, someone from the Human Resources or Legal department, a representative from the local chapter of the Federal EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), a hearing examiner, or even a potential jury!



Any actions that you may take with an employee as a manager are always subject to review by a higher authority – especially if those actions could have a negative impact on the employee. We are not saying you should be afraid to act – just that you should act with the knowledge you could be called to account for your actions at a later time. The greater your skill in focusing on measurable behaviors and separating the individual from their behaviors [“*I don’t like what he did, but I am not saying I do not like him as a person*”] will improve the way the ORP-Person views you.

Knowing the existence of the ORP-Person, be sure to chisel this into your memory: **IF IT ISN’T DOCUMENTED, IT DIDN’T HAPPEN!** You want to become very skilled at describing measurable and observable behaviors in writing when you are coaching or counseling an employee.

Suppose your employee’s desk looked like this, which is very contrary to your sense of orderliness and what a professional environment should look like. Write a comment here as if you were putting an entry onto a disciplinary form.



(If you use words like “**messy**,” “**cluttered**,” or “**unprofessional**,” you need to improve your observation and documentation skills by focusing on objective behavior that would convince the ORPman that you are reasonable.

Saying “objects stacked on top of each other, or “no workspace available,” would clearly convey what you want to say because it focuses on observable and objective behavior.)

More Coaching & Counseling Questions

QUESTION: If you ask your employees at the beginning of the year, “*How much do you want to earn this year?*” what do you think they would say? Do you think it would be, “*I want to earn all I can?*”

Compare that question to your days in school if the teacher asked, “*What kind of an average do you want to end up with this year?*” and you said, “*I want to get on the Honor Roll!*” If you wanted to end the year on the Honor Roll, what part did the teacher play in your plans?

(Establishing the grading system and getting your scores back to you.)

Who carried the biggest part of the load of getting you on the Honor Roll? *(You did!)*

How does that situation in grade school compare to your department when an employee says, “*I want to earn all I can?*”? The burden on the manager is to work with the employee to establish measurable goals, then provide the resources necessary to achieve them and get out of their way.

QUESTION: What determines whether an employee’s behavior requires your intervention?
(The most universally applicable answer is, “If it impacts work!”)

What impression could these sentences give the **ORP-person** about the writer, and why could they give that impression?

- “She just doesn’t take pride in her work!”
- “His attitude toward customers is rude and very unprofessional.”
- “She is so loud and arrogant that no one wants to work with her!”

(The ORPman may think you have a grudge against them or there is something personal going on. You must always focus on observable, descriptive behavior, and not opinions unless asked specifically for an opinion.)

Rewrite them, so they do not give the impression you described above.

(Hint: How can you write them to focus on objective behavior and not your value system?)

“She just doesn’t take pride in her work!”

*Her lack of accuracy (**quality reference**) and tardiness in submitting the report (**time reference**) are performance problems. I do not think she takes pride in her work. (If you are compelled to refer to her ‘pride’, then precede it with behavioral references so the ORPman will know you have valid reasons for saying so.)*

“His attitude toward customers is rude and very unprofessional.”

*He keeps interrupting them, does not allow them to finish questions, and calls them “stupid” to their face. (**All specific behavioral references**) He is uncommonly rude and unprofessional to customers!*

“She is so loud and arrogant that no one wants to work with her!”

You can hear her talking several cubicles away. She is always correcting people, and usually, she is wrong! I have had a request from every one of her co-workers at different times for a transfer to another part of our department away from her so they could concentrate on their work.

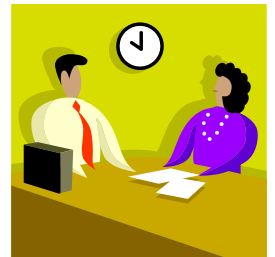
Conduct A Performance Assessment Meeting

This process uses the “Report Card” model we introduced on page 19 that presupposes you and your employee share a common understanding of performance required to achieve the various performance levels recognized by your organization. (These equate to your knowing what it took to be a “C,” “B,” or “A” student in school.)

This “common understanding” can only result from you teaching them what you have learned about objective performance measurements, motivation, and wanting them to take charge of their own careers.

Schedule the meeting. Give your employee sufficient notice *and invite them to bring documentation that supports the rating they think they should have.* (You were ready with your test scores and other grades to argue with your teacher at report card time in case you did not get the grade you expected!)

Conduct the meeting. Take an approach *that they are going to tell you how well they did on meeting their goals by presenting supporting documentation.*



In the meantime, you have prepared your view of what they have accomplished. (Remember that the teacher had her grade book, too.)

Compare the documentation of performance the employee provides to the goal setting worksheet’s definitions for success. (“Here is what you are paid to do, and these are the different requirements for a 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, and a 5.0 rating. Using our organization’s scale, what scores do you think you earned this period?”)

REMEMBER: Your teachers did not give you good or bad grades: you earned them. You showed your teacher what grade you wanted by the way you performed!

It can be the same way with your performance assessments: let your employees’ performance tell you the scores they want to see!

Note: The biggest obstacle many supervisors have with getting salary recommendations accepted (whether a big raise, medium raise, or NO RAISE) by the Compensation Department is **THEIR (the supervisor's) CREDIBILITY.**

If you are known as a supervisor who avoids conflict with employees by giving high and unearned or poorly documented salary increase recommendations, you will not be very successful in having them approved.



Likewise, if your reputation is that you are fair and objective and that your documentation proves the employee's achievement, you will be much more successful in having your recommendations accepted.

Your Human Resources Department will support your recommendations when you have built credibility with them over time. The more reason you give them to agree with you, the greater the likelihood they will!

Course Summary

Looking back over this course, we have identified a package of four skills a manager needs as a minimum to manage the talent in his or her department. Having identified them, we have attempted to present practical explanations and methods for applying them in any workplace.

Here is what we intended to cover and references to where you can find it:

1. If a manager is able to define his or her performance expectations in clear, measurable terms for employees, then they can create an environment that provides the motivators for the employees to achieve them.
 - a. **Understanding Motivation** – page 3
 - b. **Defining the Expected Performance** – page 19
2. An understanding of performance analysis will provide the feedback necessary to monitor that desired performance. See **Performance Analysis** that begins on page 16
3. If they are meeting their goals, they can be coached to extend or enhance their performance – page 43. If they are not, the manager must first find the reason for the performance deficiency before attempting any remedial actions. See page 35 for the beginning of the analysis flow chart.
4. Once the problem is identified, corrective action can be taken, and counseling (page 41) may be one of the corrective tactics necessary to reverse a downward performance spiral.

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