

Executive Summary:

Managers and supervisors do their best to identify performance shortfalls and determine the underlying causes. It's time that we provide them with the human performance technology models and tools they need to better identify and remove barriers to effective performance. By doing so, tactical performance problems will be resolved by managers and supervisors freeing the performance technologist to work on strategic performance issues.

This article provides an example of a completed Performance Analysis Worksheet that systematically and systemically defines a performance gap and sets a reasonable goal in measurable terms for quantity, quality, time, and cost, as well as identifies, describes, weights, and displays the underlying causes. While managers are the target audience for the new job aid, performance consultants may find that it is a useful tool to use as well. Based on updated and industry-specific versions of Thomas Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model, the job aid works best at the at the work and worker level.

Analyzing Performance: An Example

Roger Chevalier, CPT

I received many requests for the Microsoft Word version of the Performance Analysis Worksheet published in the November/December 2008 edition of *Performance Improvement* (Chevalier, 2008). I also received a number of requests for an example of a completed worksheet that would demonstrate defining a performance gap and setting a reasonable goal in measurable terms for quantity, quality, time, and cost, as well as identifying, describing, weighting, and displaying the underlying causes. The following case study and analysis is in response to these requests.

Managers and supervisors do their best to identify performance shortfalls and determine the underlying causes. It's time that we provide them with the human performance technology models and tools they need to better identify and remove barriers to effective performance. By doing so, tactical performance problems will be resolved by managers and supervisors freeing the performance technologist to work on strategic performance issues.

THE SITUATION

You are in charge of performance improvement for an independent mid-sized insurance company that services your city and the local communities. The head of customer service has asked you to do a performance audit of her department to identify the causes of the performance shortfalls. The customer service department has 20 customer service representatives. She tells you the following information:

1. The results of a survey done by a respected customer services and sales analysis company indicated that your customer service representatives received an average score of 3.2 on a scale of 1 to 5. The average for other similar sized companies is 4.1.
2. Customer's perceptions of the products that you offered were rated slightly above the industry average at 4.5 with the industry average at 4.3.
3. She further indicates that she is most concerned with the results of question that is an indication of whether the customer's intend to renew their policies in which only 72% indicated that they would while the score for similar companies is 83%. She explains that this is a reflection of the actual renewal rate for the past three years that has been around 75%.
4. Your company has managed to grow in business with a very aggressive marketing and sales team that has added enough customers so that the company has experienced a 5% growth in overall customers during the same period.
5. Turnover has been very low although one of the better performers left to work for a competitor about three months ago.
6. She reveals that senior management is aware of the situation and that they want to see performance improved in the next two years to at least the industry average. Long term, they would like the customer service department to be an industry leader by providing service that is rated at least 20% higher than the industry average with at least 85% of customers planning and actually renewing their policies.
7. She also tells you that she has not used the performance management system to its full potential. She revealed that many of the members of the department did not receive performance reviews in the past two years. Only those personnel who were recommended for pay increases received performance reviews that offered little insight as to why they should be paid more.

You interviewed several key members of the department and learned the following information:

1. They are a nice group of people that work independently of each other as they are responsible for servicing about 100 customers each. The only time they work with each other's clients is to cover vacations or extended sick time.
2. The average time that they have worked in the department is about four years. None of them entered their jobs with previous customer service experience and learned their jobs by working with the more experienced customer service representatives.

3. Expectations for performance are unclear. The manager rarely observes performance or provides coaching to improve. While there are measures for group performance, individual performance is not systematically measured or rewarded. While there are excellent guides for responding to customers, no priorities have been set so that the customer service representatives know what procedures have priorities.
4. The customer service representatives have the necessary equipment they need to do their work. Multiple customer service requests may come in at the same time overwhelming the individual customer service representative. There is no clearly defined process for dealing with multiple requests. There are no safety issues and the overall work environment appears to be acceptable.
5. There are no measures or rewards for individual performance. There were some attempts in the past to reward the customer service team as a group, but these were abandoned as group performance did not change. The only recognition system that is used is company's "employee of the quarter" recommendations but none of the customer service representatives has ever received this recognition. The jobs are enriched allowing the customer service representative to identify with their customers and use a variety of skills although feedback on performance is rarely given.
6. Customer service representatives appear to be "trading time for money" with no desire to improve their performance. They are living up to the expectations of their manager to "just do their jobs".
7. You believe that most of them have what it takes to learn and do the job but that they've had little guidance or incentives to do so.
8. They have the necessary knowledge to do their jobs but not how to improve their performance. Since they work independently, they have little opportunity to learn from each other. Opportunities and funding for training exist but no one has taken a training course in the past few years since it puts the customer service representative further behind in servicing clients.

THE ANALYSIS

The following Performance Analysis Worksheet depicted as Figure 1 shows how this information is systematically identified, described, weighted, and displayed.

Performance Analysis Worksheet

Present Level of Performance: A customer service department that is performing well below the industry average (3.2 vs. 4.1) with a customer renewal rate of 75%

Desired Level of Performance: Within two years, have customer service department above the industry average (rated at 4.5) and a renewal rate of 85% that is benchmarked by others to determine why they are the industry leaders

Reasonable Goal: Within six months, have a rating of 3.8 and a renewal rate of 80%

Measures of Quantity: 80% renewal rate

Measures of Quality: Rating of 3.8

Measure of Time: Within six months

Measures of Cost: Within annual budget goals

Other Key Measures: 100% retention of top 10 performers

Improve all customer service representatives to a rating of at least 3.6 or replace them

Job or Task-related Information	Description of Factors Affecting Performance	Driving Forces				Restraining Forces			
		+4	+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3	-4
1. Roles and performance expectations are clearly defined; employees are given relevant and frequent feedback about the adequacy of performance.	Standards for individual performance are not clearly communicated or reinforced. Individual performance is not routinely observed and feedback given. Customer feedback is not gathered and shared with reps.					←			
2. Clear and relevant guides are used to describe the work process.	Excellent guides but priorities for dealing with simultaneous customer requests are lacking.					←			
3. The performance management system guides employee performance and development.	Individual performance is not routinely observed, feedback given, and documented by their manager.					←			

Resources	Factors Affecting Performance	Driving Forces				Restraining Forces			
		+4	+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3	-4
1. Materials, tools and time needed to do the job are present.	No changes necessary			→					
2. Processes and procedures are clearly defined and enhance individual performance if followed.	No clearly defined processes and procedures for handling multiple customers.					←			
3. Overall physical and psychological work environment contributes to improved performance; work conditions are safe, clean, organized, and conducive to performance.	Safe and organized work environment.			→					

Incentives	Factors Affecting Performance	Driving Forces				Restraining Forces			
		+4	+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3	-4
1. Financial and non-financial incentives are present; measurement and reward systems reinforce positive performance.	No financial or non-financial reward of group performance. No measurement or reward of individual performance.					←			
2. Jobs are enriched to allow for fulfillment of employee needs.	Jobs do require a variety of skills and have some autonomy but no feedback given.				→				
3. Overall work environment is positive, where employees believe they have an opportunity to succeed; career development opportunities are present.	Work environment is positive but little feedback given. No rewards for positive performance or possibility for promotion present.					←			
Motives	Factors Affecting Performance	Driving Forces				Restraining Forces			
		+4	+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3	-4
1. Motives of employees are aligned with the work and the work environment.	Presently "trading time for money". Hard for them to align with organization when expectations are not clear and feedback not given.					←			
2. Employees desire to perform the required jobs.	Reps appear to be living down to low expectations and lack of feedback.					←			
3. Employees are recruited and selected to match the realities of the work situation.	Unclear performance expectations may be affecting recruiting and selection process.					←			

Capacity	Factors Affecting Performance	Driving Forces				Restraining Forces			
		+4	+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3	-4
1. Employees have the capacity to learn and do what is needed to perform successfully.	Difficult to assess with unclear expectations. Lower performers may not be able to learn needed skills.					←			
2. Employees are recruited and selected to match the realities of the work situation.	Present reps may be a match for the present situation but may not be able to meet new expectations.					←			
3. Employees are free of emotional limitations that would interfere with their performance.	Present reps may be a match for the present situation but may not be able to meet new expectations.					←			
Knowledge / Skills	Factors Affecting Performance	Driving Forces				Restraining Forces			
		+4	+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3	-4
1. Employees have the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to do the desired behaviors	Difficult to assess with unclear expectations. With higher expectations, some change in knowledge and skills may be necessary.					←			
2. Employees with the necessary knowledge, experience and skills are properly placed to use and share what they know.	Little interaction between reps or use of more experienced reps to work with less experienced.					←			
3. Employees are cross-trained to understand each other's roles.	Not a factor.								

Figure 1: Completed Performance Analysis Worksheet

For a Microsoft Word version of the Performance Analysis Worksheet to use within the organizations you serve, please e-mail me at roger@aboutiwp.com.

References

Chevalier, R. (2008, November/December). The evolution of a performance analysis job aid. *Performance Improvement*, 47(10), 9-18.

Dr. Roger Chevalier, CPT is the author of the 2008 ISPI Award of Excellence recipient, *A Manager's Guide to Improving Workplace Performance*, published by the American Management Association (AMACOM Books, 2007). He is an independent consultant who specializes in imbedding training into comprehensive performance improvement solutions. He has personally trained more than 30,000 managers, supervisors, and salespeople in performance improvement, leadership, coaching, change management, and sales programs in hundreds of workshops. He can be reached at Roger@aboutiwp.com or 707 584 7160. His website is at www.aboutiwp.com.



Abstract:

This article provides an example of a completed Performance Analysis Worksheet that systematically and systemically defines a performance gap and sets a reasonable goal in measurable terms for quantity, quality, time, and cost, as well as identifies, describes, weights, and displays the underlying causes. While managers are the target audience for the new job aid, performance consultants may find that it is a useful tool to use as well. Based on updated and industry-specific versions of Thomas Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model, the job aid works best at the at the work and worker level.

Pull Quote:

Managers and supervisors do their best to identify performance shortfalls and determine the underlying causes. It's time that we provide them with the human performance technology models and tools they need to better identify and remove barriers to effective performance.