Improving Workplace Performance

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By Roger Chevalier

It has long been known that measurement is one of the keys to improving workplace performance. This was stated eloquently by William Thomson, later known as Lord Kelvin, in addressing a group focused on quality improvement: "If you can not measure it, you can not improve it." (Thomson, 1893).

The process of performance improvement begins by identifying the present level of performance in measurable terms and then describing in the same measurable terms the desired level of performance. What is described by these two endpoints is the performance gap, the difference between the present and desired levels of performance as depicted in Figure 1 and would include measurements for such things as quantity, quality, time, and cost. Once the performance gap is clearly defined, the next step is to systematically identify the underlying causes.

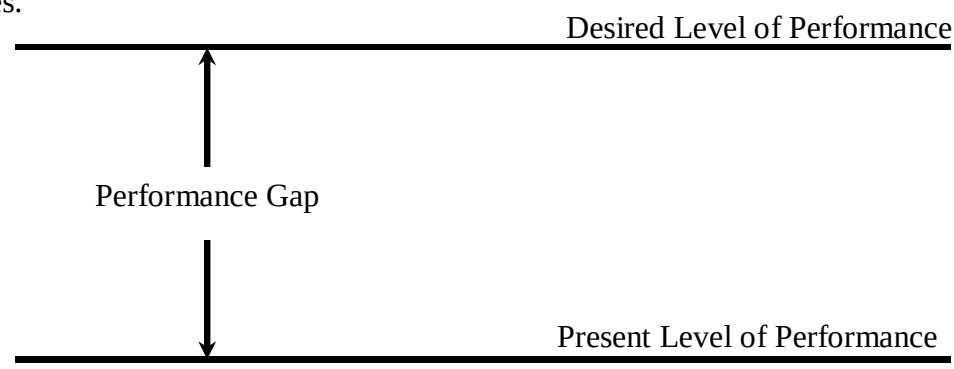

Figure 1: Performance Gap Analysis

The gap can cover a short time frame, such as a month, or can be a much larger time frame, such as five years. Particularly with time frames that exceed a year, it is a good idea to establish a milestone in the form of a reasonable goal that will measure progress in closing a performance gap as shown in Figure 2. For example, few people are motivated by a five year goal so a reasonable goal that has measurable results for a shorter period, no longer than a year , will be seen as more reasonable to those who will have to work to make it happen.

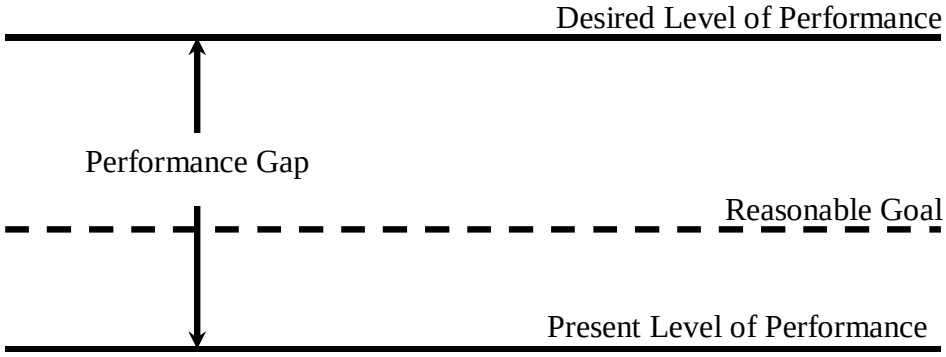

Figure 2: Performance Gap Analysis with a Reasonable Goal

SETTING A REASONABLE GOAL

The starting point for gap analysis is to determine the present and desired levels of performance, and then to set a reasonable goal or milestone with which to measure progress in terms of such measures as quality, quantity, time, and cost. At the most basic level, our measurable results can be set for such issues as productivity, waste, sales, service, or customer service. At an intermediate level, our measurable results can be set for such issues as reliability, calls on warranty, customer retention, or customer referrals. At the business outcome level, our measurable results can be set for profitability and market share. The reasonable goal serves to show progress in closing the performance gap.

Another useful aspect of setting a reasonable goal is that it may serve to better motivate the people who will do the work to close the performance gap. As an example, an organization would like to grow its domestic market share from their present level of performance of 10% to a desired level of performance of 15% in the next five years. Senior managers may be motivated by such a large performance gap but the people on the line will not be able to grasp how a gap of that size can be closed. By asking line people to participate in setting a reasonable goal for one year, they will have ownership of this short-term goal, for example, 1% over the next year, and will therefor work harder to close it.

The reasonable goal should also be stated in terms that the people doing the work can control. If the overall goal is to improve profitability, the reasonable goal for manufacturing line people can be set in terms of productivity and quality. While improvement in these areas should positively affect profitability and market share, production people are better motivated by the things that they actually control.

TREND ANALYSIS

Another important aspect of gap analysis is found in establishing trends in performance before the intervention is made. Too often, evaluation begins by determining the present level of performance as a single point in time. The impact of the intervention is then determined by the change from that point after the intervention as shown in Figure 3. The results could be misleading if the performance trend before the intervention is not known (Chevalier, 2010).

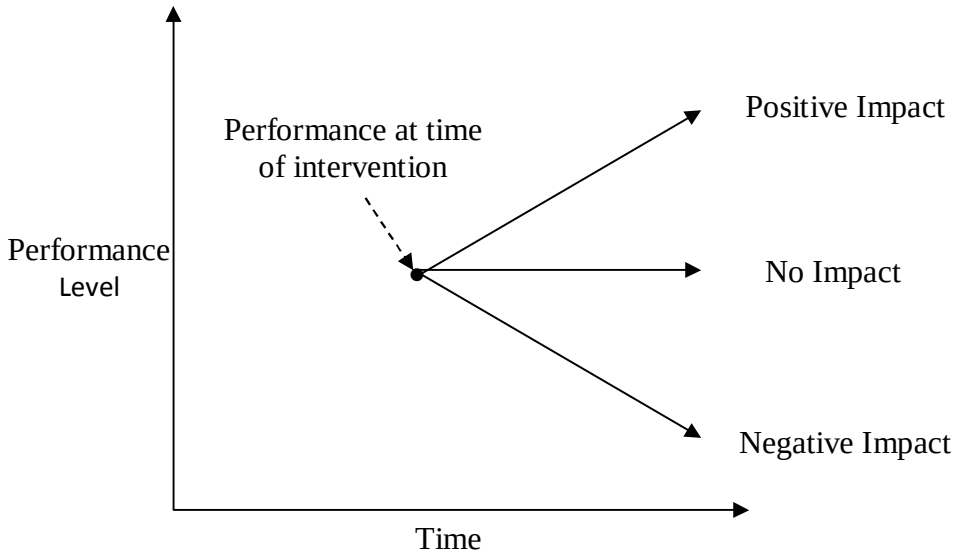

Figure 3: Performance improvement measured from a single point

But how does the evaluation of the result of the intervention change when we know the trends in performance that existed before the intervention? Was performance declining, steady, or already improving? Did the intervention positively increase the trend that was already there?

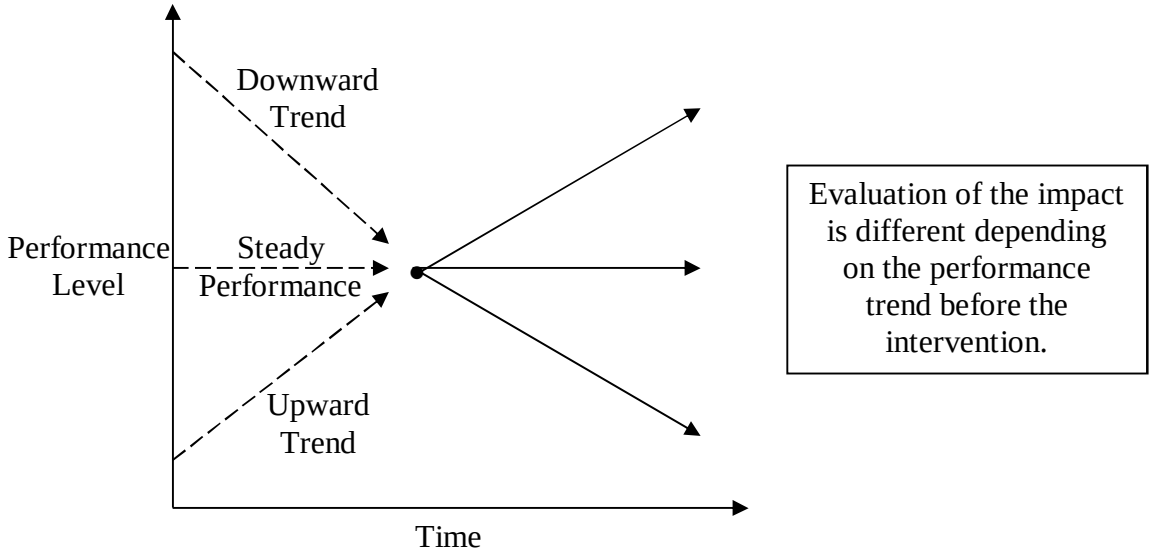

Figure 4: Performance improvement measured from performance trends

Depending on the trend before the intervention, the various outcomes have different values. A simplified view of performance trends is shown as Figure 4. If there was a downward trend before the intervention, an upward performance is desirable but leveling the performance downturn may also show a measure of success. If there was steady performance before the intervention, then only upward performance would indicate that the intervention was successful. If there was an upward trend before the intervention, continued upward performance may not necessarily be an indication that the intervention added value since performance was headed that way anyway.

The best way to ascertain the trend that precedes the present level of performance is to use existing business metrics. These metrics are inexpensive to use since they are already in place to measure performance. They will demonstrate trends over time, can account for seasonal variance, and are already accepted by management as indicators of performance.

DETERMINING UNDERLYING CAUSES

Every day, managers and supervisors identify performance gaps, the difference between the present and desired levels of performance. Unfortunately, they typically jump to solutions relying on their past experience or the experience of others. What they need is a systematic approach to determining the underlying causes of the performance gaps they face.

The Behavior Engineering Model (BEM) developed by Gilbert and presented in his landmark book, *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance* (Gilbert, 1978, p. 88), provided a systematic and systemic way to identify the underlying causes of performance shortfalls. The BEM, as depicted in Figure 4, distinguishes between a personôs repertory of behavior, that is, what the individual brings to the performance equation, and the environmental supports, that is the work environment factors that encourage or impede performance.

Behavior Engineering Model

	Information	Instrumentation	Motivation
Environmental Supports	*Data* 1. Relevant and frequent feedback about the adequacy of performance 2. Descriptions of what is expected of performance 3. Clear and relevant guides to adequate performance	*Resources* 1. Tools and materials of work designed scientifically to match human factors	*Incentives* 1. Adequate financial incentives made contingent upon performance 2. Non-monetary incentives made available 3. Career-development opportunities
Person's Repertory of Behavior	*Knowledge* 1. Systematically designed training that matches the requirements of exemplary performance 2. Placement	*Capacity* 1. Flexible scheduling of performance to match peak capacity 2. Prosthesis 3. Physical shaping 4. Adaptation 5. Selection	*Motives* 1. Assessment of peopleôs motives to work 2. Recruitment of people to match the realities of the situation

Figure 4: Behavior Engineering Model, *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance*, 1978, p. 88.

Perhaps Gilbertôs greatest contribution was this separation of underlying causes into those related to the individual from those related to the work environment. Most managers and supervisors are predisposed to *fix the individual* when the real underlying cause may be the work environment. Organizationally, training has become the *drug of choice* as the means to fix individuals. But training efforts will fail if not supported by the work environment from which the trainees have come and to which they will return,

In presenting the Behavior Engineering Model as shown in Figure 4 in the International Society for Performance Improvementôs (ISPI) *Principles and Practices* program, I have learned a lot from the participants that led me to update the model. Presenting the program at a high tech company that was moving from training to performance gave me insight into ways in which the model could be made more comprehensive as well as scalable from the individual to a small organization.

As displayed in Figure 6, I have adapted some of the terms used by Gilbert to reflect the way managers typically speak about performance and numbered them to identify the order in which the causes are identified and remedied.

Environment	1. Information	2. Resources	3. Incentives
Individual	6. Knowledge	5. Capacity	4. Motives

Figure 6: Updated Behavior Engineering Model Cells

I then adapted the BEM to provide a more contemporary vocabulary for troubleshooting performance to determine the underlying causes (Chevalier, 2003). Like the original model, the updated model shown in Figure 7 serves as a diagnostic tool for determining the underlying

causes of performance shortfalls. It is important to remember that cause analysis does not direct us to the best solutions for correcting the problem, but rather provides a framework for discovering underlying causes at the individual and environmental levels,.

Behavior Engineering Model

Environment	**Information** 1. Roles and performance expectations are clearly defined; employees are given relevant and frequent feedback about the adequacy of performance. 2. Clear and relevant guides are used to describe the work process. 3. The performance management system guides employee performance and development.	**Resources** 1. Materials, tools, and time needed to do the job are present. 2. Processes and procedures are clearly defined and enhance individual performance if followed. 3. Overall physical and psychological work environment contributes to improved performance; work conditions are safe, clean, organized, and conducive to performance.	**Incentives** 1. Financial and non-financial incentives are present; measurement and reward systems reinforce positive performance. 2. Jobs are enriched to allow for fulfillment of employee needs. 3. Overall work environment is positive, where employees believe they have an opportunity to succeed; career development opportunities are present.
Individual	**Knowledge / Skills** 1. Employees have the necessary knowledge, experience, and skills to do the desired behaviors 2. Employees with the necessary knowledge, experience, and skills are properly placed to use and share what they know. 3. Employees are cross-trained to understand each otherôs roles.	**Capacity** 1. Employees have the capacity to learn and do what is needed to perform successfully. 2. Employees are recruited and selected to match the realities of the work situation. 3. Employees are free of emotional limitations that would interfere with their performance.	**Motives** 1. Motives of employees are aligned with the work and the work environment. 2. Employees desire to perform the required jobs. 3. Employees are recruited and selected to match the realities of the work situation.

Figure 7: Updated Behavior Engineering Model, adapted from The Behavior Engineering Model *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance*, 1978, p. 88.

USING THE UPDATED BEM

As was the case for the original BEM, the updated model focuses our attention on the distinction between environmental and individual factors that impact performance. Environmental factors are the starting point for analysis because they pose the greatest barriers to exemplary performance. When the environmental supports are strong, individuals are better able to do what is expected of them. We look to environmental causes first because, in the words of Geary Rummler and Alan Brache, ñIf you pit a good performer against a bad system, the system will win almost every time.ò (*Performance Improvement*, 1995).

The support given by the work environment is divided into three factors that influence

performance: information, resources, and incentives. Information includes communicating clear expectations, providing the necessary guides to do the work, and giving timely, behaviorally specific feedback. Resources include ensuring that the proper materials, tools, time, and processes are present to accomplish the task. Incentives ensure that the appropriate financial and non-financial incentives are present to encourage performance. These apply to the worker, the work, and the workplace.

What individuals bring to the job include their motives, capacity, and knowledge and skills. Individual motives should me aligned with the work environment so that employees have a desire to work and excel. Capacity refers to whether the worker is able to learn and do what is necessary to be successful on the job. The final factor refers to whether the individual has the necessary knowledge and skills to do a specific task needed to accomplish a project or goal.

The Updated BEM gives us the structure we need to assess each of the six factors, *information, resources, incentives, motives, capacity, and knowledge and skills* that affect individual and group performance on the job. We should review these factors in the order described in Figure 6 since the environmental factors are easier to improve and have a greater impact on individual and group performance. It would also be difficult to assess if the individual had the right motives, capacity, and knowledge and skills to do the job if the environmental factors of information, resources, and incentives are not sufficiently present.

We will leverage our solutions based on the potential impact that a change would make and the cost associated with that change. Figure 8 provides a way to envision the relative strength of each intervention. (ISPI, 2000/2001)

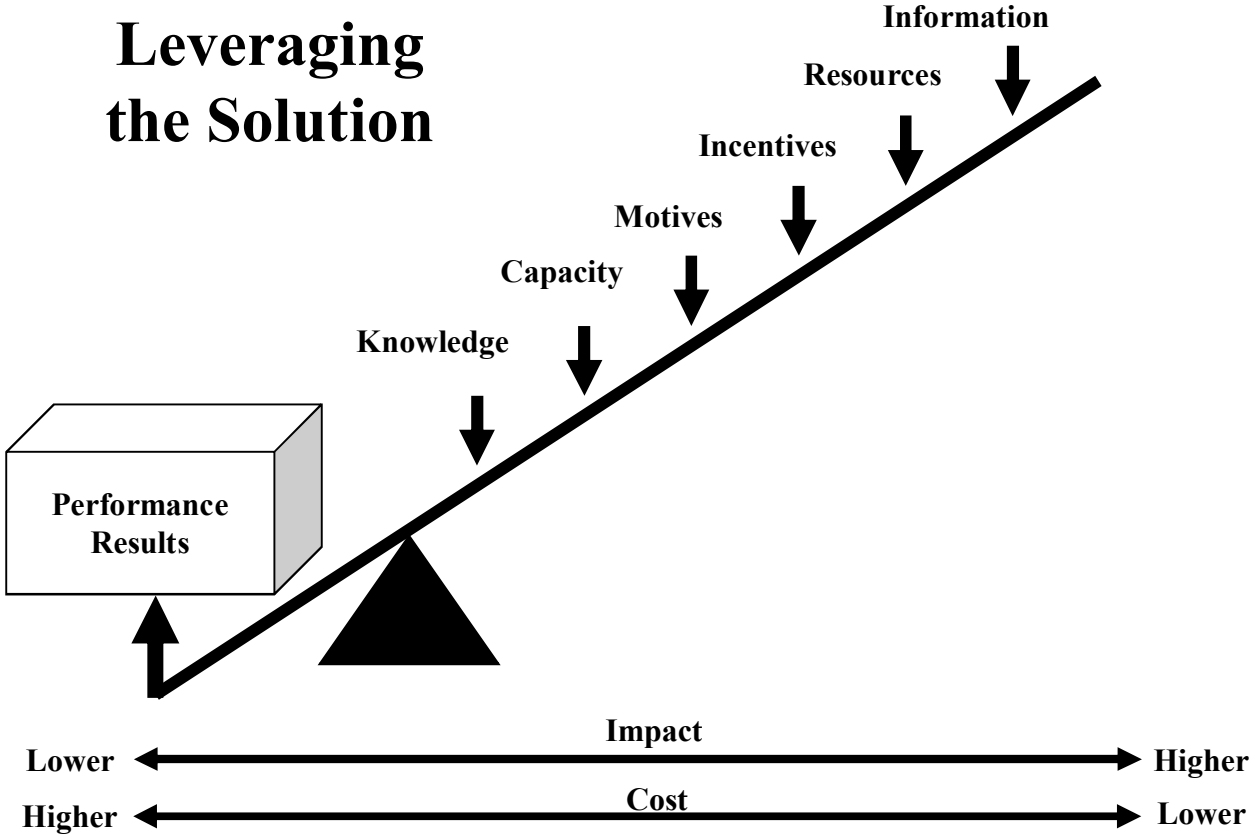

Figure 8: Leveraging the Solution, adapted from Figure 6.2. Performance Improvement Leverage Model in the ISPI Principles and Practices On-Line Participant Manual (ISPI, 2001, p. 6.3)

As noted in Figure 8, we can improve performance by addressing the information present in the work environment by communicating clear expectations, providing the necessary guides to do the work, and giving timely, behaviorally specific feedback. This can be done at relatively low cost and has a great impact on performance. Similarly, we can address shortfalls in the resources necessary to do the job by ensuring that the proper materials, tools, time, and processes are present. This is also relatively inexpensive and has a great influence on performance. We can see that if we work at the knowledge level of the individual, the solution will be expensive and does not have the impact that we get when dealing with the environmental issues.

CAUSE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Conducting a thorough cause analysis will help to better define the reasons why a gap in performance exists. The starting point in using the Cause Analysis Worksheet is identifying the individualôs or the organizationôs present level of performance, that is, where they are, and their desired level of performance, that is, where they would like to be. The difference between where they are and where they want to be is the performance gap. Another useful step is to identify a reasonable goal, something that can be accomplished in a short time that moves the organization in the direction toward where they want to be. This should be defined clearly with measures of quality, quantity, time, and cost delineated for the goal.

We next assess the impact of the environmental factors and then move to the individual factors in the order described in Figure 6. Environmental factors such as information, resources, and incentives are usually more cost-effective to fix than individual factors. Generally, motives, capacity, and knowledge are more costly to address and require greater effort. Even if we were to successfully change these individual factors, performance will most likely not improve if there are environmental factors that remain unresolved.

The process begins by asking questions to identify how each of these factors is presently impacting the performance gap. Developed by Kurt Lewin, force field analysis provides a methodology for identifying and weighting the relative strength of the factors that contribute to the present level of performance (*Lewin*, 1947)

Driving forces are those factors that are already working to close the gap between the present level of performance and desired level of performance. These are identified and evaluated as to their relative strength on a +1 to +4 scale. Restraining forces are those factors that are working against us as we try to close the gap between the present level of performance and desired level of performance. These are identified and evaluated as to their relative strength on a -1 to -4 scale. To graphically depict the forces we use opposing arrows for the driving and restraining forces as shown in Figure 9.

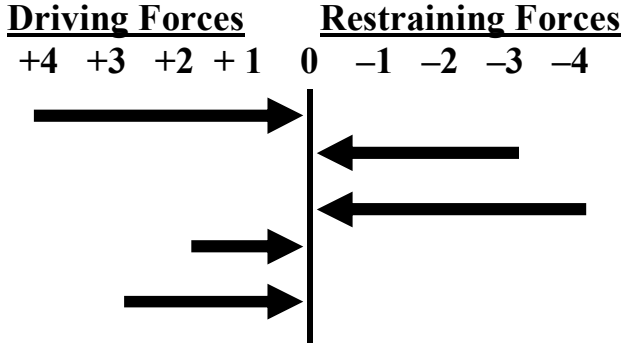

Figure 9: Force Field Analysis

Figure 10 depicts a one-page worksheet that brings together gap analysis, cause analysis, and force field analysis into a useful performance aid. Whether we are working with an individual or a group, the worksheet gives us the needed structure to guide our questions as we identify the driving and restraining forces. When the worksheet is complete, we have produced a picture of the performance gap and the factors working for us and against us in trying to close that gap.

Cause Analysis Worksheet

Present Level of Performance: _____

_____

Desired Level of Performance: _____

_____

Reasonable Goal: _____

_____

Factors	Driving Forces					Restraining Forces			
	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4
Information									
clear expectations	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
relevant feedback	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
relevant guides	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
performance mgmt system	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
Resources									
materials/tools	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
time	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
clear processes/procedures	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
safe/organized environment	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
Incentives									
financial	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
other incentives	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
enriched jobs	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
positive work environment	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
Motives									
motives aligned with work	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
employees desire to perform	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
expectations are realistic	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
recruit/select the right people	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
Capacity									
capacity to learn	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
capacity to do what is needed	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
recruit/select right people	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
emotional limitations	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
Knowledge/Skills									
necessary knowledge	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
necessary skills	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
proper placement	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.
cross trained	.	.	.	.		.	.	.	.

Figure 10: Cause Analysis Worksheet

An example is necessary to see how the Cause Analysis Worksheet is used. As you read the next pages, think about how you would define the performance gap, set a reasonable goal, and identify and weight the underlying causes. For the best learning, fill in the Cause Analysis Worksheet before you look at the completed analysis shown in Figure 7.

A CASE STUDY

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. Customerôs 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 customerôs 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 otherôs 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 companyôs ñemployee of the quarterò 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 ñtrading time for moneyò with no desire to improve their performance. They are living up to the expectations of their manager to ñjust do their jobsò.
7. You believe that most of them have what it takes to learn and do the job but that they have 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.

This information can be analyzed on a Cause Analysis Worksheet as shown in Figure 11.

Cause 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: *A customer service department that is benchmarked by others to determine why they are the industry leaders*

Reasonable Goal: *Within two years, improve customer perceptions and renewal rate to the industry average*

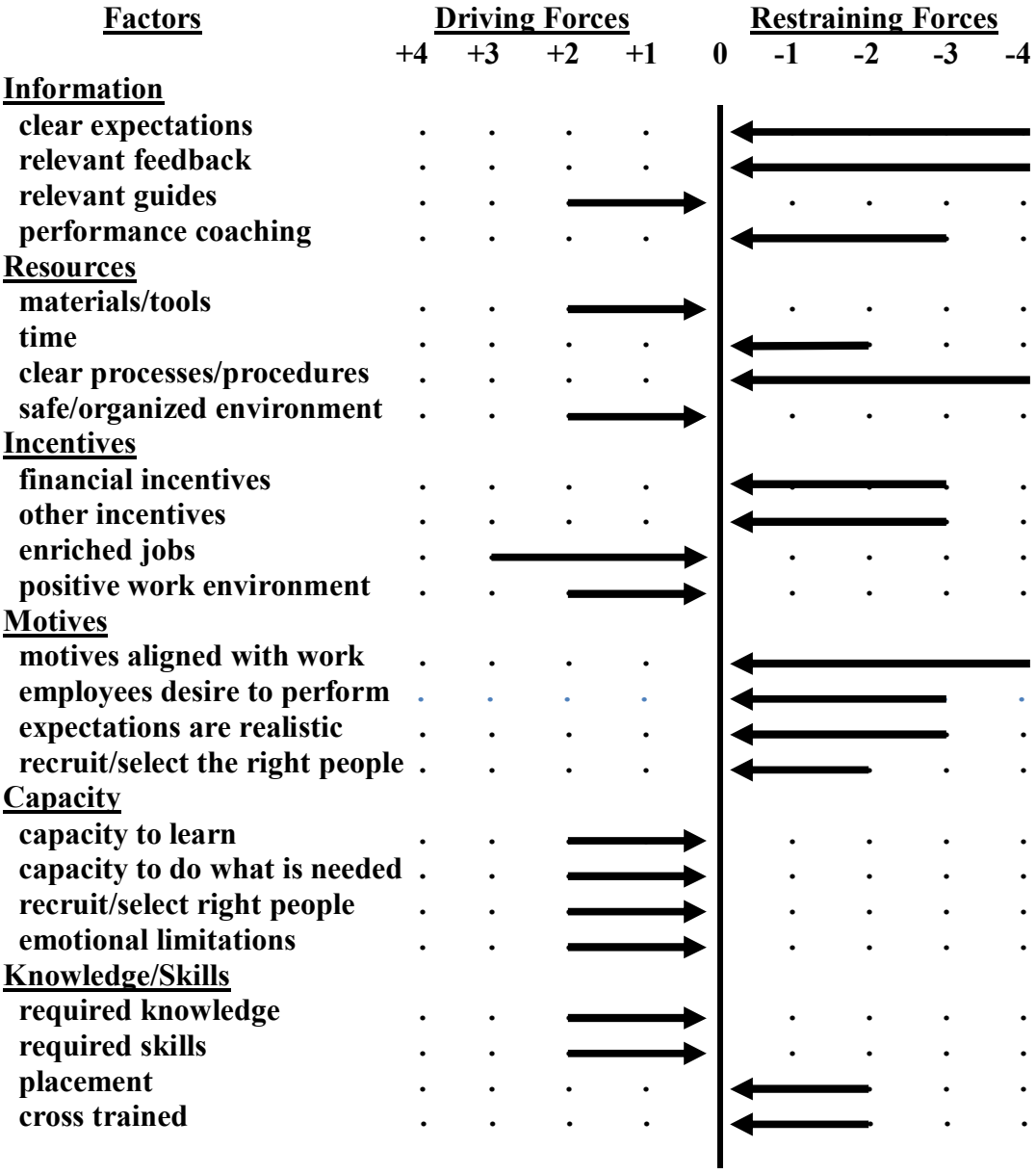

Figure 11: Completed Cause Analysis Worksheet

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

In presenting the Cause Analysis Worksheet at annual ISPI Performance Improvement Conferences, I realized that the worksheet worked well with managers and supervisors. But internal and external consultants expressed a need for space for documentation of what was observed. I resisted this because the form would grow to at least four pages. But in doing work with the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Performance Analysis Worksheet, shown in Figure 12, evolved (Chevalier, 2008).

While longer than the one-page Cause Analysis Worksheet, the new Performance Analysis Worksheet had the advantage of more complete descriptions of the various factors that can affect performance and provides space for recording what was observed. 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.

Performance Analysis Worksheet

Present Level of Performance: _____

_____

_____

_____

Desired Level of Performance: _____

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_____

_____

Reasonable Goal: _____

_____

_____

_____

Measures of Quantity:_____

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Measures of Quality: _____

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Measure of Time:_____

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Measures of Cost: _____

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Other Key Measures:_____

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Figure 12: Performance Analysis Worksheet

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.									
2. Clear and relevant guides are used to describe the work process.									
3. The performance management system guides employee performance and development.									
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.									
2. Processes and procedures are clearly defined and enhance individual performance if followed.									
3. Overall physical and psychological work environment contributes to improved performance; work conditions are safe, clean, organized, and conducive to performance.									

Figure 12: Performance Analysis Worksheet

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.									
2. Jobs are enriched to allow for fulfillment of employee needs.									
3. Overall work environment is positive, where employees believe they have an opportunity to succeed; career development opportunities are 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.									
2. Employees desire to perform the required jobs.									
3. Employees are recruited and selected to match the realities of the work situation.									

Figure 12: Performance Analysis Worksheet

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.									
2. Employees are recruited and selected to match the realities of the work situation.									
3. Employees are free of emotional limitations that would interfere with their performance.									
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									
2. Employees with the necessary knowledge, experience, and skills are properly placed to use and share what they know.									
3. Employees are cross-trained to understand each others roles.									

Figure 12: Performance Analysis Worksheet

The Cause Analysis Worksheet provides sufficient structure for line-managers and supervisors to define performance gaps and the underlying causes of the tactical problems they routinely face. The Performance Analysis Worksheet allows for more complete descriptions of the factors affecting performance and may have greater application for more senior managers and performance consultants.

Managers and supervisors do their best to identify performance shortfalls and determine the underlying causes. It is time that we provided 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.

FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDY

The following completed Performance Analysis Worksheet depicted as Figure 13 shows how this information is systematically identified, described, weighted, and displayed. It is easy to see how much more rigorous the analysis becomes when compared to the completed Cause Analysis Worksheet as shown in Figure 11.

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	Driving Forces	Restraining

	Performance	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 ñtrading time for moneyò 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 asses 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 others roles.	Not a factor.								

Figure 13: 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.

CONCLUSIONS

While identifying the present and desired levels of performance is important, setting a reasonable goal to measure progress toward closing the performance gap can be just as important. A reasonable goal set in measures that the people who must do the work can control, can also serve to motivate them toward closing the performance gap.

It may not be enough to define the present level of performance as a single point in time. Trend analysis using existing records may be necessary to measure how much impact the intervention had on improving performance. Using existing business metrics is the easiest way to establish the performance trends that were happening before arriving at the present level of performance. After identifying the present and desired levels of performance and setting a reasonable goal, the next step in the performance improvement is to identify trends leading up to the performance gap and then systematically identifying the things already working for and against you in closing the performance gap. (Chevalier, 2003, 2008, & 2009).

If the starting point for performance improvement is a perceived opportunity, the performance gap that should be examined is found in the organizationôs long range plan. The value of the opportunity should be evaluated as to how it contributes to closing the gap between the organizationôs present and desired levels of performance as stated in the long range plan.

Once the performance gap is defined, the next step is to identify the underlying causes. Gilbertôs Behavior Engineering Model has been a valuable tool for systematically identifying barriers to individual and organizational performance. The Model is particularly helpful at the individual and work group levels. With some updating of the Model and the addition of a performance aids to guide its use, we have a more clearly defined process for identifying the causes that contribute to a performance gap. The Cause Analysis Worksheet brings together the concepts of gap analysis, cause analysis, and force field analysis into a job aid that can serve as useful tool to guide the assessment process for performance improvement professionals. The Performance Analysis Worksheet adds room for more complete description of each factor that may affect performance and room for documenting what was observed. These tools are particularly helpful in improving workplace performance.

Once the performance gap has been identified and the underlying causes have been determined, weighted, and displayed, the solutions become obvious. To improve performance,

a. add new and/or strengthen existing driving forces
b. eliminate or weaken existing restraining forces
c. do both a and b.

Measurement of success in improving performance is determined by assessing how much of the performance gap has been closed. This final step completes the process of identifying the performance gap, determining the underlying causes, selecting solutions, and evaluating the results.

The future of ISPI is with managers and supervisors. Our journals and conferences are focused on consultants and academics sharing what they have learned with other consultants and academics. There just are not enough consultants to sustain the society while there is almost an endless supply of managers and supervisors. At our peak ISPI had about 4,200 members but has contracted to our present level of 2,200 and less than 1,000 CPTs. Contrast this to the Project Managers Institute: ñIn 2012, PMI welcomed 90,283 new certification and credential holders (surpassing 500,000 active Project Management Professional, or PMP®, credential holders) and 148,948 new members.ò (PMI 2012 Annual Report, 2013).

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Every day, managers and supervisors are greeted at work by the difference between the present and desired levels of performance. Unfortunately, they immediately jump to implementing solutions without identifying the underlying causes. This article brings together the ideas, models, and tools found in several of my previous articles so they can be shared with managers and supervisors. The next steps can be found in my book, *A Manager's Guide to Improving Workplace Performance*.

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Pullouts:

1. ñToo often, evaluation begins by determining the present level of performance as a single point in time.ò
2. ñEvery day, managers and supervisors identify performance gaps, the difference between the present and desired levels of performance. Unfortunately, they typically jump to solutions relying on their past experience or the experience of others.ò
3. ñMost managers and supervisors are predisposed to *fix the individual* when the real underlying cause may be the work environment. Organizationally, training has become the *drug of choice* as the means to fix individuals.ò
4. ñDeveloped by Kurt Lewin, force field analysis provides a methodology for identifying and weighting the relative strength of the factors that contribute to the present level of performance.ò