
HPT: The Power to Change

by Roger Chevalier

As ISPI members, we are being drawn into the realm of Human Performance Technology (HPT) as our traditional roles as trainers and facilitators are being expanded as we become true change agents. While our attraction to HPT is found in the broader base of available interventions in our tool kits, our challenge is to move from participative interventions, such as providing training and facilitating group decision making, and to more directive change strategies, such as changing measurement and reward systems.

If there is a widely held bias within the training community, it is that if we change the knowledge of an individual or group, behavioral changes will necessarily follow. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. It's as though the systemic solutions available with HPT are pulling the pendulum of change back from the purely participative strategies we have embraced for so long.

Training and other forms of participative change are now used as parts of a more comprehensive performance improvement strategy. By focusing on work processes and systems, performance technology adds elements of a directive change strategy needed to ensure that performance improves.

The starting point for any discussion of change strategies is an understanding of what power is and how it is used to implement change. A very useful description of power comes to us from Amitai Etzioni who, in his book, *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*, divided power into two distinct areas: personal power and position power (Etzioni, 1961).

Personal power is the extent to which we gain the confidence and trust of others based on their perception of our personality, competence, and integrity. It is the basis for participative change. Position power is the authority to use rewards or sanctions and is the basis for directive change.

In training, participative change begins as we use personal power to deliver new ideas to an individual or group with the belief that if we can change their knowledge and attitudes, changes in behavior will necessarily follow. This strategy will be effective only with those who are ready to change and will return to an environment that will support the change. This is a “bottom-up” approach in which we use involvement to gain the commitment of those who must change.

Position power can be used to implement a directive change more quickly by communicating expectations and shaping behavior with new systems and work processes. The problem is that a directive change may be resisted. While management can quickly impact group and individual behavior with position power, the change may have little impact on attitudes. In other words, mandated change may lead to short term compliance, but not long term commitment. This is a “top-down” approach that must hold people accountable to ensure compliance on the part of those who must change. These characteristics of change strategies are described in Figure 1.

Change Strategies	
<u>Participative Change</u>	<u>Directive Change</u>
Personal Power	Position Power
Commitment	Compliance
Involve/Empower	Inform/Control
Gradual Change	Immediate Change
Evolutionary	Revolutionary
Bottom-Up	Top-Down
Sell/Guide	Tell/Structure

Figure 1. Characteristics of Participative and Directive Change Strategies.

Many effective change strategies involve the use of both position and personal power. The directive part of the strategy overcomes inertia and creates some movement toward the desired change, while the participative part of the strategy involves training the target group, adding new knowledge to affect attitudes. Many times these directive and participative change agent roles are played by different people, one who "turns up the heat" with position power and others who help to "put out the fires" with personal power.

An example of how participative and directive change strategies are used together can be seen in the attempts to have people use seatbelts in their cars. Despite expensive educational programs, seatbelt use was not the norm in many states until the laws were changed. The combination of education and sanctions was necessary to change the behavior of many.

Similarly, performance technology combines the use of participative change strategies (such as training and group decision making) with directive change strategies (such as changing work processes and management systems) into a more comprehensive change strategy to improve performance.

While its original source is unknown, Figure 2 was first published by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in their article "Change and Use of Power" in the January 1972 edition of *Training and Development* and is useful yet today in understanding how performance technology uses elements of participative and directive change to implement change (Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 1996).

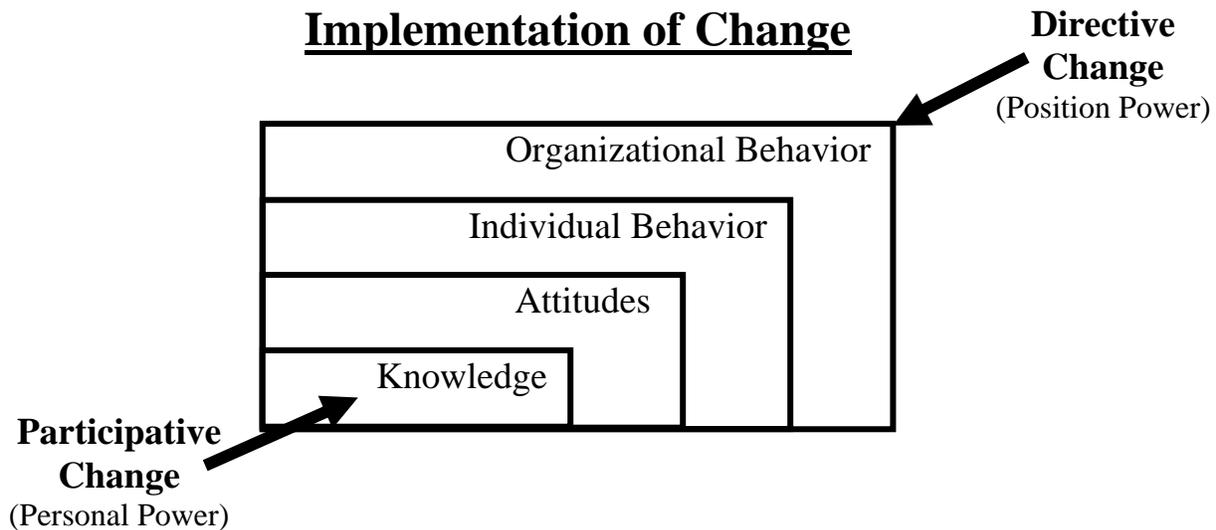


Figure 2. Implementation of Change Diagram.

This Implementation of Change diagram is the most valuable model of change I have found in my thirty years as a line manager and consultant. While I had been using the model in workshops and college courses for years, I did not realize it's full value until I used it as a planning tool to orchestrate a five year improvement strategy for a U. S. Coast Guard training center (Chevalier, 1990).

I had just received my orders to become the training officer (director of training) at the Coast Guard’s west coast training center when I met with my future commanding officer who had just received his orders. We drew up the Implementation of Change diagram on a bar napkin in the Holiday Inn in New London, Connecticut. Our goal was to transform a very primitive training organization into the pride of the Coast Guard training system in five years.

The plan was simple; he and I would become the impetus for change, ensuring that Instructional Systems Design methodologies were used to make the training more effective and efficient. New systems for performance management, course design, and most importantly, measurement of results, would need to be installed. To complement this directive change strategy, we began the process of identifying the people we would need to train and develop the staff.

The pay off was a recurring cost savings exceeding \$3,000,000 of \$9,000,000 in student salaries, instructor salaries, and direct training costs, while dramatically improving the quality of training provided as measured by surveys of graduates and their supervisors in the field. All of this from a diagram on a bar napkin.

Examples of Change Strategies	
<u>Participative Change</u>	<u>Directive Change</u>
Training	Work Processes
Coaching	Operating Procedures
Modeling/Identification	Performance Management
Shared Decision Making	Measurement/Evaluation
Focus Groups	Compensation/Rewards
Quality Circles	Restructuring/Reorganizing
Autonomous Work Groups	Resource Allocation

Figure 3. Examples of Change Strategies.
 As presented in Figure 3, examples of participative change include training, coaching, modeling, shared decision making, focus groups, quality circles and autonomous work groups. Examples of directive change include modification of work processes, operating procedures, performance management, measurement,

evaluation, and compensation and reward systems as well as restructuring, reorganizing or changing resources.

Conclusion

It is clear that Human Performance Technology uses elements of participative and directive change strategies to improve performance. While many of us have become masters of training and other forms of participative change, we have not always been successful in changing individual and organizational behavior.

The challenge for those of us who are making the move from training to performance is to become more comfortable in using position power. We must also become more skillful in integrating elements of directive change to overcome the inertia of the present “ways of doing business” and to add the needed systems to ensure that individual and organizational performance is improved.

Roger Chevalier, Ph.D., is an independent performance consultant specializing in integrating training into more comprehensive performance improvement solutions. With over 25 years experience in performance improvement, Roger is a former vice president of Century 21 Real Estate Corporation’s Performance Division and a former training director for the U.S. Coast Guard’s west coast training center.

Roger has earned a Ph.D. in Applied Behavioral Science as well as two master of science degrees in personnel management and organizational behavior. His previous education includes bachelors and masters degrees in English Literature. Roger is the Human Performance Technology Forum editor for ASTD’s *Performance in Practice*.

Roger may be reached at his home office at 924 Hudis Street, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, 707.584.7160 or rdc@sonic.net.

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