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14 No-Cost Ways to Improve Project Productivity

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Course Overview

If you were to ask a group of project management professionals for suggestions on improving project team productivity, there's a good chance you would hear about Gantt Charts, the latest versions of software applications that track nearly everything as long as you maintain its database (the old 'garbage in – garbage out' model), or Quality-oriented topics talking about Six Sigma or LEAN models.

This course will not take you into those more esoteric – and possibly expensive - regions of project management. Instead, we will present fourteen proven topics about *improving individual project team member performance*. As we see it, if every member of the project team is working a little more efficiently and productively, then their collective efforts will have a positive impact on the project.

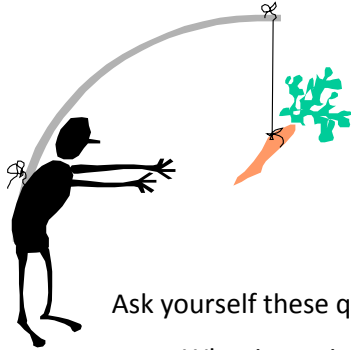
We had long-term projects in mind – those with greater than eighteen months' duration – when we developed this course and some, such as #13 "Developing a Future Leader's Program" may not be useful simply because you won't have the time on your next project for it to mature sufficiently to produce positive results for you.

If you are facing a situation like that, we suggest that you take a long-range viewpoint with the individuals that you may have on this and future projects. If there is a chance you will work with some of them again in similar capacities on future projects, your Future Leaders Program *can happen over the course of multiple projects* and you will have the pleasure of seeing them mature along a structured path and become even more productive and valuable in the future.

All of these suggestions can easily be implemented with the assistance of your HR project support. We suggest you share these ideas with them and ask them to use this as a guideline to help your project team members become more productive and increase their value to the project stakeholders.

#1 Increase Their Motivation to Perform

What is “Motivation”?



“To provide with an incentive; move to action; impel.”

--The American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd Edition

Ask yourself these questions:

- What incentive do I have to work for my project manager/employer?

(If you are not sure why you work for your specific employer instead of doing the same job for someone else, you may not be the best example of a leader for your project and its team members. The best leaders know why they work for their leaders and their example shows it.)

- What incentive does each of your project team members have to work for your project team/employer?

(The better you understand the world from your team members' perspective, the better you will be able to lead them.)

- What incentive does each of your team members have to work for you?

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

Why should you be asking those questions to your project team members?

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?

(Hint: Have you ever heard someone say, “You couldn’t pay me enough to work for him/her?” Or, “I’d never leave him/her unless I couldn’t afford to stay!”)

Complete these sentences based on your current work situation.

“LIFE WOULD BE GREAT IF MY PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS WOULD ONLY.....”

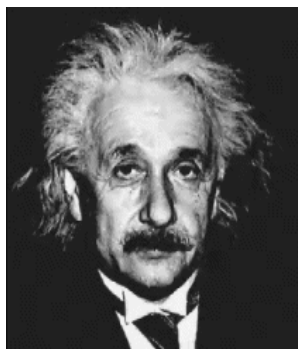
(Sample) ...Just do the work we pay them to do!

“WHEN THE BEST BOSS I EVER HAD DID THIS (specify what it was they did), IT HAD THIS IMPACT ON ME AND MY PROJECT WORK (specify the impact)”

When the best boss I ever had on a project did this...	It had this impact on me and my project work performance....
<i>Defined her expectations of my work in terms of quality, quantity, and time</i>	<i>It increased my confidence that I knew what she wanted. That allowed me to improve my productivity because I did not have to guess at what she expected.</i>

What relationship do you see between how you want your team members 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 team members’ actions)*



Albert Einstein said once, *“Insanity is doing things the way you always have and expecting different results.”*

What can YOU start doing differently RIGHT NOW that can help you get what you want from your team members’ behavior?

How does his statement apply to your relationship with your team members? *(You cannot expect them to change their behavior without you changing the way you act toward them first!)*

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?



WHO DETERMINED WHETHER YOU DID THE LEAST YOU COULD DO TO GET BY OR THE MOST YOU COULD DO?



“What is the difference in productivity between a top-performer and a below average performer at the same pay-grade?”
(Answer =100%+)

“What is the difference in their pay?” (Answer = Between 5-10%)*

1998 American Compensation Association “Attracting and Retaining Critical Talent Conference” A survey of 2,000 managers

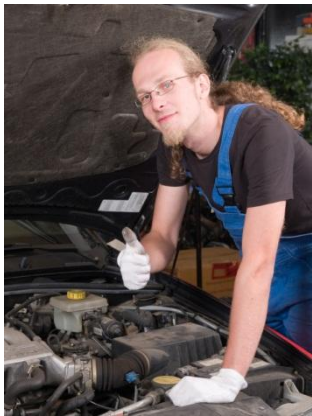
What does this statement mean to you as a leader on your project?

(It means there must be something more than just pay motivating top performers if their productivity is over100% more than below average performers but they only make 5-10% more salary.)

QUESTION: If people were paid 10% more, do you think they would they provide 10% more project productivity? Yes or No

If you think so, how long would they sustain that increased productivity? How long would YOU?

QUESTION: When in your career has your project work productivity increased with an increase in pay **AND STAYED AT THAT HIGHER LEVEL?**



List here what it would take RIGHT NOW for you to have a sustained increase in your productivity:

How could you get those items that you listed?

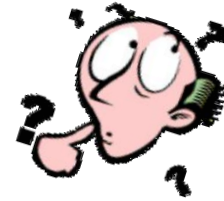
If you asked this same question to your team members, how do you think they would answer?

What is keeping you from asking them? (We will talk more about this in a few pages.)

The Components of Motivation

There are five basic elements of motivation regardless if people are members of a project team or simply doing volunteer work in their community. The more of these that are present in a situation, the greater the motivation for the person.

1. Tell me what you expect of me in measurable terms (quality, quantity, time or Q, Q, T) that reduce the risk of my confusion.

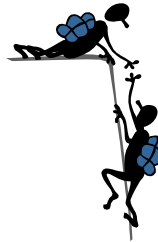


2. Give me a chance to perform (and learn from my mistakes, too.)

3. Let me know how I am doing as I go along... (Do you remember the report cards you got in school every 6 weeks? You did not have to wait until the end of the year to learn if you had passed or failed the grade.)



4. Give me help and guidance when I need it.



5. Reward me with pay or praise when I succeed.



Think about the movie, MY FAIR LADY. What was the story about?

(A speech teacher that taught, coached, and encouraged a common “flower girl” in Victorian London to act like and pass for a member of nobility.)

How could the premise of that story apply to your project?

(The talent you are looking for may be hidden in your project awaiting discovery, teaching, and encouragement by you.)



Think of two of your current team members:

Your top performer



and your lowest performer.



Fill in this table as honestly as you can about what may be their impression of you. Use a rating scale from 1= Lowest to 5=Highest

Component of Motivation	How would <u>your</u> <u>TOP PERFORMER</u> RATE YOU?	How would <u>your</u> <u>LOWEST PERFORMER</u> RATE YOU?
My supervisor tells me what he/she expects of me in measurable (Q, Q, T see page 13) terms.		
My supervisor gives me a chance to perform.		
My supervisor lets me know how I am doing.		
My supervisor gives me help and guidance		
My supervisor rewards me with pay or praise when I succeed.		

Is there a difference in their scores?

If there is a difference, what could these differences in scores tell you about your relationship with them?

What could the difference in scores tell you about opportunities for motivation?



WHAT WOULD MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS?

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

---Zig Ziglar, (Late) Motivational speaker

Ask your team members what you could give them that would have the most value for them. Tell them to keep in mind that you cannot hand out spot bonuses, private parking spaces, etc. (The author received comments like these from his team members: “A chance to learn more about what you do”, “a chance to lead some departmental meetings”, “public speaking opportunities”, “help me develop my career.” **Nearly everything they mentioned did not cost money!**)

While they are doing that, ask the same question about yourself. Compare the answers from you and your team members. Are you surprised?

What do your team members want in a work situation?	Does it cost money?	What do you want in a work situation?	Does it cost money?

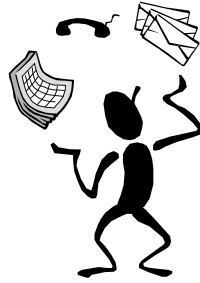
WHAT IS KEEPING YOU FROM GIVING THEM THE FREE ITEMS TODAY?

WHAT IS KEEPING YOU FROM GETTING THE FREE ITEMS TODAY?

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO GIVE THEM THE ITEMS THAT ARE NOT FREE?

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET THE ITEMS THAT ARE NOT FREE?

CONFIDENCE leads to **PERFORMANCE** which leads to **ACHIEVEMENT**



Confidence grows when team members:

- Feel they have value
- Know what you expect of them in measurable terms (Quality, Quantity, & Time)
- Know what they expect of themselves.
- Know their strengths.
- Know their weaknesses.
- Know where to get help.
- Constantly measure their own project performance against their own goals.
- Expect that rewards will follow achievement. (Rewards can be praise and recognition – it doesn't always mean money.)

Put the names of three of your team members (your best, average, and poorest performers) into this table and rank each one "L" (low), "M" (medium), "H" (high) based on your perception of them in each category. On what do you base your answers? What would be the impact on you if you could rate them all HIGH?

Elements of Competence	Best	Average	Worst
Does he/she know your MEASURABLE EXPECTATIONS of them?			
Does he/she know what they expect of themselves in MEASURABLE TERMS?			
Does he/she know their strengths?			
Does he/she know their weaknesses?			
Does he/she know where and how to get help?			
Does he/she constantly measure their own performance against their own goals?			
Does he/she expect that rewards will follow achievement?			

Look at how a person's confidence in themselves influences performance and achievement. How do you think the free things your team members would value from the previous page would influence their confidence and subsequent achievement?

Tell Me What You Expect of Me



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

(Specific measurables – in terms of QQT – make it easy to monitor progress toward their achievement.)

work life?

What are some measurable goals in your project 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 project **work pressure** and project **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 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.

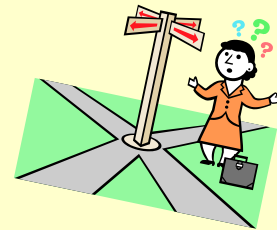
However, if you have done many financial proposals for him in the past, you still may feel some work tension and job pressure until you finish. However, once you turn it in, you are relieved because it is finished and you know you did a good job.)



List examples of project WORK PRESSURE in your life	List examples of project WORK STRESS in your life

How can measurable goals reduce stress in your project work life (and personal life)?

List some activities associated with your project 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 leader's perception of your value to the project?



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

Give Me a Chance to Perform

In theory, this is very easy to do. **JUST GET AWAY FROM THEM AND LEAVE THEM ALONE!**

Many people, however, find this hard to do in practice. First, make sure you are satisfied that:



- They can do the job to the level you expect.
- They are willing to do it.
- You have clearly defined your expectations in terms of **quality, quantity, and time QQT**.
- They understand your expectations because you have asked them to tell you *in their own words* what you want. (Be careful here that you do not offend them by implying you do not believe they understood you. Say something like, “*I want to check to make sure I did a good job of explaining what I want. What do you think I was trying to say?*”)
- You have reminded yourself that the desired outcome is more important than *how they do it!* (Resist the temptation to insist they do it the way you would. Give them a chance to put their “stamp of ownership” on it.)
- They have adequate resources to accomplish the task.
- You have convinced yourself to *give them the chance to fail so they can learn*. For many people, a trial-and-error approach (called ‘experimental learning’ by others) is the best way to learn. As a leader, you must find a balance between allowing them that opportunity to learn by failing yet not let them fail so badly it neither harms the project, their career *nor yours!*

Let Me Know How I Am Doing As I Go Along

It is essential there is a way for the team member to get feedback on his or her project performance as they go along. Ideally, the method should be something where the leader does not have to keep telling them.



For example, if you were a production team member and had to produce **25 items an hour with zero defects** (remember **quality, quantity, and time**), would you prefer to learn that you were under performing by reading an instrument on the machinery or having your boss tell you?

Or, when you were in grade school, was it easier to manage your performance by keeping track of your test scores and homework grades as you went along or would it have been better to get nothing back and wait until the end of the grading period to see how you did?



The more your team member can self-discover his or her project performance results and make corrections as needed without the boss' intervention, the more reliable and motivated they will become. (Naturally, the boss needs to be aware of the ongoing production because he or she is ultimately responsible for the business unit and needs to step in before disaster occurs. However, as long as the performance is above minimum standards, we recommend the leader not look over the shoulder of the team member unless it is to praise them.)

The only way team members can monitor their on-going performance is if their leaders provide a mechanism to do that just like you had in grade school.



Look at your team members' work environment and ask yourself, "How could they tell *at any given time* how they are doing *in every aspect of their expected performance* without me having to tell them"?

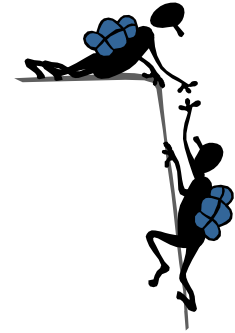
If there is no apparent method, then they cannot self-monitor themselves! It is very important to consider the terms *every aspect of their performance*. You pay the team member to

do the entire job – not just part of it. Therefore, you must not be satisfied with measuring only the easily observed (objective) behaviors such as calls taken per hour but must also measure the harder-to-define (subjective) behaviors such as customer service.

That is a major problem for many project leaders but not for those taking this course. We will show you later in this course how to do it.

Give Me Help and Guidance When I Need It

There are several ways you can provide help and guidance to team members without eliminating their professional development opportunities. These will take a little time but are worth the effort. Consider these:



- *Take time to help them understand the “why” of something and let them figure out the “how” for themselves.* This gives them a chance to explore their imagination, display their initiative, and maybe find a new way to do something. An additional advantage is helping them discover a problem-solving process that works for them. This is more important than making them dependent on you for answers.
- *Make sure they have adequate resources, and then ask what effort they made to find the answer before coming to you.* ‘Resources’ can be reference books, on-line glossaries or tutorials, procedure manuals, training materials, etc.

When they learn your first question to them is “what did you do to find the answer”, and their answer is, “I came to you”, they will discover that you expect them to be problem solvers, *not problem passers*.

- *A good way of providing guidance while helping them to grow is by doing a role reversal when they ask for help.* Try asking, “If someone were not here to answer your question, what would you do? What options for action do you have? What are the risks associated with each? If your first attempt did not work, then what?”

Your intent here is to get them thinking of themselves as “empowered” to solve their own problems as long as it does not violate any project rules or policies. The more they discover they are capable of finding their own solutions, the less dependent they are on their leaders or peers. And the faster they develop professionally!

Reward Me with Pay or Praise When I Succeed

People love to be recognized! It does not have to be an expensive recognition! A simple pat on the back with a sincere, “Nice Job” from you can mean the world to a hard-working, diligent, and reliable team member.



Here are some effective *and inexpensive* ways to provide pay or



praise. (The cost is not always most important to the team member. An inexpensive departmental birthday party often means so much to team members and their work team. Everybody likes to take a break from work and have some fun.)

- A \$10-20 gift certificate for a restaurant, a store, or for personal services such as haircut, nails, or car detailing
- A ‘team member -of-the-month’ picture on the wall next to a plaque.
- Public recognition of their achievement at the next departmental gathering
- An inexpensive 1st place trophy that can rotate among team members for placement beside their workstations for top productivity that month

An Internet search can provide many titles of books containing hundreds of great suggestions for inexpensive and effective ways to motivate team members.

#2 Set Measurable Goals

We touched on these topics earlier when we identified the elements of motivation. One was, “TELL ME WHAT YOU EXPECT OF ME.” It is useful to review a portion of that section because it leads into a critical aspect of protect team member work performance – *the discussion of busy vs. productive*.

So, please indulge me as I ask these questions again.

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

(Think back to when you did reports for a teacher in school. When you *clearly knew the expectations*, you were able to work confidently even though you were under pressure to complete it. But, when it was turned in, you were relieved and could forget about it *because you knew you met the expectations*. This situation would be **work pressure**. However, *when you were not sure of the expectations*, you constantly worried whether you were doing it correctly. When you finally turned it in, *the worry probably stayed because you were not sure whether it was correct*. This inability to have confidence in your performance or to get closure when you finished is an example of **work stress**.)

How can measurable goals using references to **quality, quantity, and time** reduce stress in your personal and work life?

What would goals like that do for your self-confidence?

Why?

What would that do for your project work performance?

Why?

The Difference between Busy and Productive

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

How could this happen?

It is because task requirements are not always well defined. Sometimes people are just “busy” because they were not told all three elements of productivity. But, when you focus a task with the three critical performance standards of productivity that define “how much” (**quantity**), “how well” (**quality**) and “by when” (**time**), you establish measurable goals and they 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 project work more enjoyable and your work more productive?

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

Why would you want to do that?

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. (Answers are given below.)

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 project 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.			
<p>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.</p> <p>Which of the three components is missing?</p> <p>What will you do about it?</p>			

Grant is just busy. Nothing has been accomplished. What is the QUALITY measurement?

Logan has processed 200 documents but are they the correct ones? Where they processed accurately? There is no QUALITY component.

Murphy has been productive. The QUALITY component is the “reject rate”.

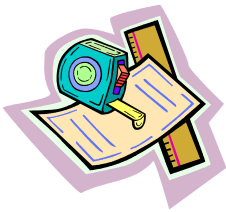
Cindy completed the courses but what was her grade: i.e., the QUALITY of her participation? If she failed, the quality is below acceptable: i.e. a waste of time or negative productivity.

If she received an “A”, she was more productive than if she received a “C”.

The Elements of Effective Goals

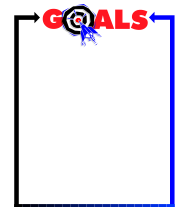
An effective goal requires at least these elements:

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.



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.

Job Related – He/she must understand how his/her personal goals support the goals of the department, which support the goals of the division.



Do-able – They must involve his/her doing something that they can observe and measure. A goal that calls for “**Understanding how work orders flow 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”.

Defining “Hard” and “Soft” Measurables

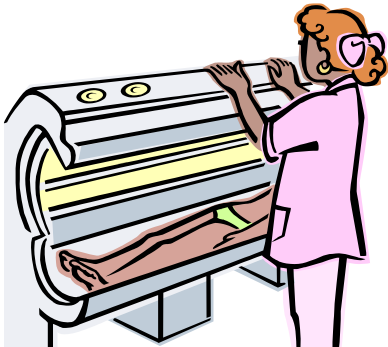
We broadly consider there are two kinds of measurables in the project:

- “**Hard**” measurables are commonly associated with tangible items or specific behaviors such as processed documents, lines of programming code produced, or the speed of a pitcher’s fastball.
- “**Soft**” measurables, which are just as important but less tangible, are typically attitudes or non-specific behaviors like customer service, teamwork, oral communications, or professionalism.

The elements of QUALITY, QUANTITY, and TIME are critical in each case and can be measured with a little creativity.

Defining “Hard” Measurables

Production environments are the easiest to classify using “hard” measurables that contain the three critical **QQT** (**Q**uality, **Q**uantity, and **T**ime) elements.



She is pressing pants at a rate of 25 pairs per hour with no wrinkles.

What is the **QUALITY** element in this situation? (No wrinkles)

What is the **QUANTITY** element in this situation? (25 pairs)

What is the **TIME** element in this situation? (“Per hour”)

Describe an activity associated with your project job that is clearly defined and contains “quantity, quality, and time” components.

The Quality component is:	The Quantity component is:	The Time component is:

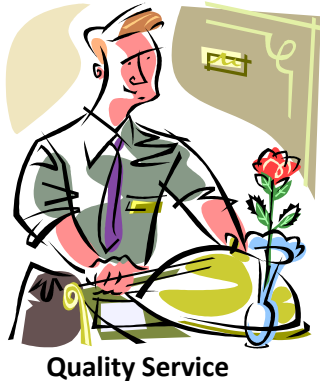
How does **this clear definition** of what your leader expects affect your personal satisfaction and your project work performance?

How does your work performance and personal satisfaction regarding this clearly defined task compare with the task you identified on page 15 that is not defined as clearly?

How can you use this comparison of two of your tasks with your team members and some of their tasks?

(Hint – if you were confused about some of your tasks, there is a good chance your team members are confused about some of theirs, too.)

Defining “Soft” Measurables

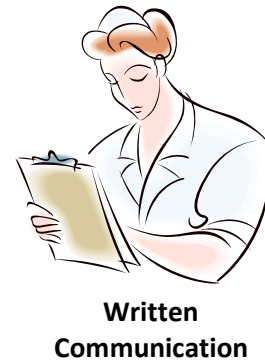


How can you put a measurement on these topics?



They become easy to measure if you will do this:

1. Identify the **behavioral traits** that demonstrate the topic. For example, if you wanted to measure “PRIDE IN WORK”, you first identify **behavioral traits** that indicate they have pride in their work.
 - a. There are no spelling errors.
 - b. It is always on time or before.
 - c. She always uses the proper format for the report.
 - d. There are no smudges or “white outs” on the form.
 - e. 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
 - 2 = I occasionally see this
 - 3 = I always see this
 - 0 = Does not apply
3. Then create a scale that converts the average of the trait scale to your performance assessment system.



Joan Smith's <i>Pride in Work</i> Evaluation	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*
There are no smudges or "white outs" on the form.	3
Her data is always accurate	2*
Average score for the observation period	12/5= 2.4
* A wise leader will have documentation of the times when the team member did anything that would result in a less than perfect score because they will certainly ask about it.	

The XYZ Corporation's Employee Performance Scale

Performance scale ranges from 1.0 – 3.0:

1. < 2.0 requires probation
2. 2.0 – 2.3 = Satisfactory performance with lowest merit increase
3. >2.3 – 2.5 = Above satisfactory performance with medium merit increase
4. >2.5 = Outstanding performance and maximum merit increase



QUESTION: Why would you want to include your department team members in developing a performance scale for use on the annual performance assessment? (If they help develop the scoring system that you will use on them, they are more inclined to trust it.)

What risks are there in doing this? (They may say, “That’s your job, boss. We do not want to!” The leader can counter this by saying, “Would you rather have some say in the way you are evaluated or just take a chance on what I come up with?” They will usually want to participate if that is the alternative. Or they may want to use standards that are too low. It is up to the leader to make sure the expectations cause them to stretch their efforts.)

Define some “Teamwork” traits that you and your department could use on your organization’s annual performance assessment.

“TEAM WORK” traits that you want to see may be:

- 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).
- “Positive outlook” because he/she always tries to say something, friendly or encouraging and never participates in gossip or negative comments about other employees.

Do you think these are realistic traits?

What traits would work in your work place?

An example of how to obtain team member scores on this survey is on the next page.

Performance Assessment sample using a Likert Scale

Send a survey with a cover memo like this to team members with whom your team member works on a daily basis.

“John Smith is due for a performance assessment of his last 12 months of work. Part of **our company’s annual** Performance Assessment form requires an assessment of **TEAMWORK**. He needs your help in determining his effectiveness in this portion. Please rate him based on your experience with him during this past assessment period and send it to me by (date).

Your name will be helpful if I have questions about your response BUT IT IS NOT REQUIRED. If you will feel more comfortable returning it anonymously, you may do that.”

Please rate these situations from a 1-10 using this rating.	
<p>1 = I <u>never</u> see that trait 2-3 See it <u>rarely</u> 4-7 See it <u>about half the time</u> 8-9 See it <u>very often</u> 10 = I <u>always</u> see that trait X = I do not know well enough for an opinion.</p> <p>(Use your own definitions for “rarely”, “half the time”, and “very often”.)</p>	
The trait we are looking for...	Your rating
Willingness to help others when finished with own work without being asked.	
Willingness to help others with less experience or confidence.	
Willingness to give credit to others when praise is given	
Willingness to carry his/her fair share of the workload (and more at times if asked).	
“Positive outlook” because he/she always tries to say something, friendly or encouraging and never participates in gossip or negative comments about other team members.	

When you get the replies, average the scores and assign a value according to the system you have developed **with your team members**. (Use the guidelines starting on page 27 as a refresher.)

An additional note: do not worry about how they define “rarely”, “half the time”, and “very often”. The numerical score is more important than the actual definition. As long as they select a number between 4-7, for example, for “about half the time”, we really do not care how they define it!

Here is something you can do back at work with your project team.

List Five Traits That You Would Want to See Displayed for

QUALITY SERVICE

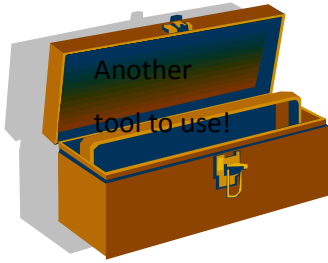
List Five Traits That You Would Want to See Displayed for

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

List Five Traits That You Would Want to See Displayed for

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Tools to Use



Put the names of three of your team members (your best, average, and poorest performers) into this table and rank each one “L” (low), “M” (medium), “H” (high) based on your perception of them in each category.

Elements of Competence	Best Team Member	Average Team Member	Worst Team Member
Knows your MEASURABLE EXPECTATIONS of them			
Knows what they expect of themselves in MEASURABLE TERMS			
Knows their strengths			
Knows their weaknesses			
Knows where and how to get help.			
Constantly measures their own performance against their own goals.			
Expects that rewards will follow achievement.			

Earlier, we mentioned the movie, “My Fair Lady”. It was about a language professor who takes a bet from a friend that he could transform an unrefined, dirty, commoner flower girl into a lady, and fools everyone into thinking she really is one, too!

He does by coaching her, demonstrating his expectations, praising her when she succeeds, and letting her practice. She rose to his expectations of her and *her expectations of herself*.

How could the premise of that story apply to your assessments above? Think about this: “Is your **best team member** your best just because of their performance or *in response to how you treat them?*”

Conversely, is there a chance you treat the other like your **worst team member** and they have simply dropped to the level of your expectations? And what can you do for the “average” one?

YOUR TEAM MEMBER'S VIEW OF HIMSELF / HERSELF

Use the same table for them to rate themselves. Compare your score for each team member with their score of themselves and discuss any differences in scores.



Put them at ease by saying ***you are trying to see their world though their eyes*** and are trying to become a better leader for them.

WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU TO DO THIS?

.....

Your Name _____ Date _____

Your Supervisor _____

Put a "L" (low), "M" (medium), or "H" (high) in the column at the right to describe your confidence level in understanding these items:	
Knowing the <u>MEASURABLE EXPECTATIONS</u> your supervisor has of your work performance ("You must complete X tasks, within Y time, and a quality level of Z")	
Knowing the <u>written</u> MEASURABLE EXPECTATIONS you have of your own work performance ("I will complete X tasks, within Y time, and a quality level of Z")	
Knowing your work performance or knowledge <u>strengths</u>	
Knowing your work performance or knowledge <u>weaknesses</u>	
Knowing where and how to get help.	
Knowing how to measure your work performance against your goals	
Your expectation that rewards will follow your achievement.	

Effective Performance Goals Practice

Select one of your current team members 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 team member is _____

Their performance goal #1 is:

Their performance goal #2:



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

You set them; your team member takes them and tries to meet them.

Your team member sets them; you accept them and hope they can meet them.

You and your team member set them together and track progress together.

Which do you think is a better situation and why?

#3 Develop Feedback Systems



Earlier, we asked you, “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?

How did you know how well you were doing **in school**?

Did you have to wait until the end of the year to discover whether you had passed to the next grade?



How did you know how well you were doing **on the project**?

How long do you have to wait until you know how you are doing?

What did you have as a child in school that helped you self-correct your behavior that you may not have as an adult at work?

Corrective Feedback

CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK must have these two components to be effective:

1. **Be sure the team member knows how to do the performance before you try to it.** (There is a 90% chance that the team member is not doing what you want because of reasons controlled by management! We will talk more about this later starting at page 38.)
2. **Behavior** (not attitude) **focused**



For example, telling children in a pool to “be careful” (an attitude) is not as effective as saying; *“Stay in the shallow end, wear eye goggles, and rest at the edge when you get tired”* (all behavioral instructions).

Here is an example of how an effective leader can review with a team member the expected measurable goals and contrast them with the performance.

Leader asks: *“How many were you supposed to produce without errors in an hour?”*

Employee responds: *“I am supposed to make 10 in an hour.”*

Leader: *“How much have you made?”*

Employee: *“I have completed seven.”*

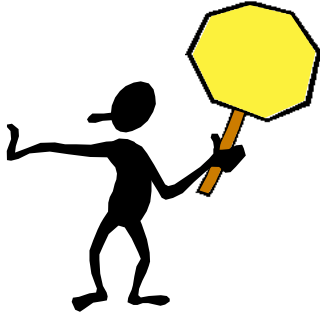
Leader: *“Why the gap between expectations and performance?”*

Employee: (Whatever they think is the correct answer.)

The leader does not say anything about the team member’s attitude such as “unmotivated, slow, disinterested, apathetic, uninspired, lazy, etc.” He or she just allows the team member to state they are not meeting productivity expectations and to provide an explanation. The leader just listens objectively.

We will help you devise a strategy later for dealing with the inevitable evasiveness or blame-shifting when you confront them on their unacceptable performance.

Coaching To Change Performance



How does this statement credited to Albert Einstein, “*You cannot do things the way you always have and expect different results*” apply to getting people to change performance?

Can you recall trying to do something the same way over and over and expecting different results? How does this situation apply to your workplace or your personal life?

Einstein would have asked, “**What may have led your team member to the wrong performance?**” because he *knew that outcomes flow from inputs*. (This section is based upon *Analyzing Performance Problems*¹ and *Why Employees Don’t Do What They’re Supposed To Do*²)

You cannot begin to coach for a **change in behavior** without first addressing the **CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM**. Otherwise, the problem will never be resolved!



REMEMBER, YOU MUST *DO SOMETHING DIFFERENTLY* IF YOU WANT A DIFFERENT OUTCOME!

¹ *Analyzing Performance Problems or You Really Oughta Wanna*, Mager and Pipe, 3rd Edition, 1997

² *Why Employees Don’t Do What They’re Supposed To Do and What To Do About It*, Fournies, 1988

Performance Problem Flowchart

Here is a series of questions that will help you isolate the source of the team member's performance problem. Use this series to make sure you have eliminated any possible reason why your team member does not perform.

Before you begin

Ask yourself, "Is this issue worth pursuing?"



Questions: 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 ignore it regardless of crazy it makes you.)

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 "solve it better".)

STEP #1

Ask yourself, "Are my expectations clear?"



#1 Question: What do you ask your team member 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 your expectations are clear, go on to the next step. If not, what should you do?

STEP #2

Ask yourself, "Are the resources adequate?"



#2 Question: What do you ask your team member here?

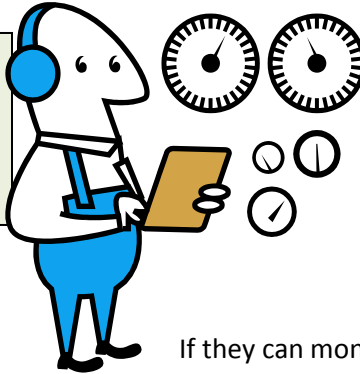
(Do you have everything you need to do what I expect?)



If they have everything, 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?”



#3 Question: What do you ask your team member here?

(How do you know how you are doing?)



If they can monitor their progress, 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?**)



#4 Question: What do you ask your team member (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 you are inadvertently punishing their behavior, 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?)



#5 Question:

What do you ask your team member (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 you are inadvertently rewarding poor performance, 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?"



#6 Question: What do you ask your team member (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 there is a penalty, go on to the next step.
If not, what should you do?



STEP #7

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



#7 Question:
What do you ask your team member (or yourself about the situation) here?

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

If it is a genuine skills deficiency, go on to the next step. If not sure, what should you do?

#7A 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?"



#8 Question:
What do you ask your team member here?

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

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



STEP #9

Ask yourself, "Are there any other obstacles?"

If there are, what can you do?

If there are not, go to the next step.



#9 Questions:

What do you ask your team member here?

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



STEP #10

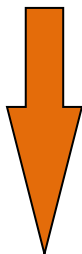
Ask yourself, "Does the person have the potential to change?"

If they have the potential and desire to change, go to the next step.

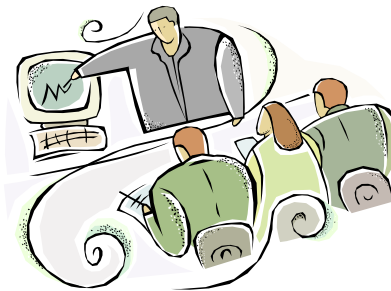
Question: What do you ask your team member here?

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

If they do not, **REPLACE THEM!**



Train them to the desired skill level!



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

This means there is a 90% probability that a team member's performance problem is caused by something controlled by management!

Rewarding Feedback



Coaching starts with CATCHING THE TEAM MEMBER DOING WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO. THEN **REWARDING** OR **REINFORCING** IT!

You may have to look hard with some people to find something positive to reinforce. They are like a campfire that is nearly out. All that remains is a small glowing ember.

You have to gently fan the ember to nurture it back into a flicker of flame and then on to a roaring fire. Some people are the same way!



Think about your team members. Some do the right things all the time and you hope they continue.

Others do mostly right things and you wish they would change. List below two of your team members and their behaviors you want to see continued or changed. (The same team member may be in both situations.)

Team Member	I want them to continue doing this...	I want them to start doing this...

There are tips on the next page for following up on what you have put into the box above.

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.

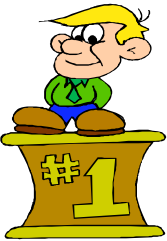


If you want them to do the right things, you must make sure they know what right things are and then praise them.

“YOU GET WHAT YOU REINFORCE.”

What Talent is Available?

Think about your team members. Categorize them according to their performance on the job.

Coaching Your Stars

<p>SUPER STARS</p> 	<p>AVERAGE STARS</p>  <p>(Remember, this “average” group can move either way. It depends on their leadership!)</p>	<p>FALLING STARS</p> 
<p>Get them involved with as much planning and decision making as possible</p>	<p>Build their confidence by increasing responsibilities.</p>	<p>Look in the table we did just above.</p>
<p>Delegate extensively AND DON'T MICRO-MANAGE!</p>	<p>Give frequent and accurate performance feedback.</p>	<p>Do any of these team members have traits that you listed in either the “super” or “average” category?</p> <p>If so, focus on positively reinforcing that trait as much as you can. They may respond positively and pull themselves up out of this category.</p> <p>If they have no traits in the “super” or “average”, take them through the performance flow chart on page 36 for guidance to determine if anything is preventing them from performing like you want.</p>
<p>Encourage them to teach others when possible.</p>	<p>Encourage them to ask others they look up to (your super stars) for help when they need it.</p>	
<p>Help them develop themselves with presentation, speaking, and writing courses.</p>	<p>Teach them how to set small goals initially and gradually make the goals bigger or more aggressive.</p>	
<p>Let them fill in for you while you are out. (Individually or share your tasks among them.)</p>	<p>Catch them doing something right and praise it.</p>	
<p>Challenge them with goals “above and beyond” normal expectations.</p>	<p>WHAT ELSE?</p>	
<p>Celebrate their successes with them.</p>		
<p>Frequently tell them how proud you are of their development.</p>		
<p>Spend time with them asking for their thoughts on departmental challenges.</p>		
<p>Promote them (if they are seeking promotion). Do not hang on to them just because they make your life easy!</p>		

#4 Develop Performance Support Systems

We will review some key issues that can help develop a performance support system by asking some relevant questions:



If team members in your organization would like to know how well they are doing at work at any given time, how would they find out? (Look back at “Feedback” on page 17.)

If a team member in your organization wanted to try some new ways of doing their existing work, what kind of support or encouragement would they typically receive? (Look at the Five Components of Motivation starting on page 5.)



How confident are you that every project policy and procedure manual upon which your team members must rely is current, accurate, and available easily to everyone that needs it? (Are there inherent organizational obstacles that prevent team members from doing their best? Review the performance flowchart starting on page 38.)

Does your organization have a mentoring program that encourages team members with less experience to learn informally from more experienced ones without formal intervention of the organization?



How often does your organization offer “refresher” training or informal “lunch-and-learn” sessions to help team members stay current with skills or knowledge that may not be used every day?

If team members make mistakes, what is the typical reaction of management? (Look at the Five Components of Motivation again.)

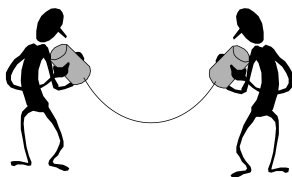


Attack the offender



OR

Find out what led to the problem



If a survey were conducted today of team members in your organization, how would they rate the quality and frequency of communication between levels?

(A sample survey is on the next page.)

How would they rate the consistent application of organizational rules and regulations for **everyone**?



Does your organization provide training to team members about how to analyze workflows looking for **measurable** opportunities for efficiency and improvement?

(There should be a course on this website called “Managing Productivity and Maximizing Profits” that teaches line team members and first-level supervisors how to do that.)

If opportunities for improvement are discovered, does your organization teach your team members how to prepare effective financial requests for senior management so those discovered opportunities could be implemented?



A Sample Employee Job Satisfaction Survey

An anonymous survey about YOUR JOB at _____

Our management team wants to see the workplace through the eyes our team members. This survey is designed to help them understand your viewpoint. Please be thoughtful as you help us make this a better place to work.

PART I: I am assigned to (Manager’s name): _____

Asking for the manager’s name is not an attempt to figure out who responded to the survey but a way to discover areas where things are good and where they need improvement.

PART II: RATE YOUR AGREEMENT WITH THESE CONDITIONS

Use any number from 1 to 10 that represents your feeling!

1 (disagree very much) **2-3** (disagree some) **4-5** (maybe not) **6-7** (maybe so)...

8-9 (agree some) **10** (agree very much)

Typical Project Job Conditions	Your Rating
I am appreciated for the project work that I do.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I am kept informed about what is going on in the project.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I get appropriate help on work related problems.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I receive on-going training to expand my professional skills.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I earn a fair salary and benefits in exchange for my work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I do project work that keeps me interested.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Opportunities are available so I can meet my career objectives.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Management keeps private any information I may share in confidence.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The project work environment is clean and safe.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The project work requirements are enforced in a fair, consistent, and confidential manner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The person to whom I report tells me what he/she expects of me in <u>measurable</u> terms (measurable terms include examples of “HOW MUCH”, “HOW GOOD”, “BY WHEN”).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The person to whom I report gives me a chance to perform	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
The person to whom I report frequently lets me know how I am doing.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Note: This simple question is an excellent way to learn the extent of team member satisfaction with the organization.

“Would you recommend our project as a place to work for a friend looking for a job?”
 Yes ____ (why) No ____ (why) No Opinion ____

#5 Establish Self-Managed Professional Development Opportunities



What professional development opportunities are available for highly motivated team members in your project that want to take maximum control of their careers?

Why would it be important to have these in place?

What kind of career-path consulting or advice is available from Human Resources or the Training Department for team members who want to plan a future with your organization after this project?



What kinds of training does your organization's leadership *at all levels* receive in helping team members explore various career paths?

What is the unspoken attitude within your organization about helping employees develop their professional skills?

"Why train them if they may leave and go somewhere else?"

Or is it

"Employee training is an investment that *may* encourage them to stay with us."

Which is worse: run the risk of training your employees and have them leave or **keep them untrained and have them stay?**



How does your organization find leaders to support its planned growth in the future? Does it **grow them internally** or **rely on recruiting them from the outside**?



Which choice results in greater loyalty and personal commitment?

Why?

Which has the greatest return on investment? Why?

#6 Align Incentives and Consequences

Studies have shown that rewards, especially tangible ones, can improve performance **up to 40%**.

What efforts do your project leaders, at all levels make on a regular basis, to determine what is important to their team members so they can offer meaningful awards when team members perform above normal levels?

What Would Motivate Your Employees?

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

---Zig Ziglar

What do your team members want in a work situation?	What does it cost ?	What do you want in a work situation?	What does it cost ?

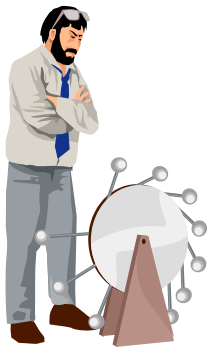
Do not waste time trying to guess what your team members want, **WHY NOT JUST ASK THEM?**

What is keeping you from giving them the free items today?

What is keeping you from getting the free items today?

What do you have to do to give them the items that are not free?

What do you have to do to get the items that are not free?



If a team member discovers a process improvement that saves your organization “*a lot of money,*” what reward does the team member get?

What is the threshold that defines “a lot of money”: \$10,000, \$25,000, or have you never defined it?

What policies, practices, or procedures exist in your project or organization to make team members think it is worth their time to look for ways to improve work processes? (If there are none, would that be a clue why they do not suggest anything?)

Why would a team member care about improving work processes in your project or organization?

Why would you?

#7 Eliminate Counter-Productive Job Interferences

Many job interferences are remnants from activities in the past when management reacted to an event.



Perhaps the leaders declared that there must be an addition to an existing report or a new procedure enacted to deal with the crisis at hand.

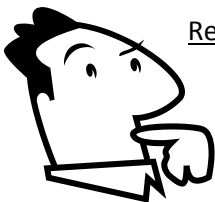
The problem arises when management fails to “turn off” these temporary adjustments when the crisis has passed. Therefore, organizations gradually accumulate bureaucratic “barnacles” that slow the workflow. Inevitably, we saddle our team members with non-productive tasks using the rationale, “that’s how we have always done it!”

Do not hesitate to ask your team members if there are parts of their job that makes them wonder, “Why am I doing this?” You may discover some barnacles that way, too.

You can also identify some of these by asking yourself, “*What does their job description say they are paid to do?*” and list **only** the activities that **add value to your organization**.

Do not list activities such as writing reports and attending meetings unless that actually adds value to the organization!

“Wait a minute!” you say. “How else will I know what they’re doing if they don’t fill out reports?” or “How can they be informed about new developments if they don’t attend meetings?”



Reports should only be used to provide data for making decisions. If you just collect the data because your department (or that position) has always done it that way, ask yourself whether you still need to collect it.

- If the answer is “NO,” stop collecting it.

- If “YES,” ask yourself *and the team member* if there may be other ways to collect that same data without the team member having to do it. Also, take time to explain to the team member why that information is important to *the team member’s job*. (**Why would it be important to make sure the team member understands why the information is important to the team member’s job?**)
- If you are not sure, STOP COLLECTING IT FOR A WHILE and see if anyone misses it. (If someone does, ask how he or she uses it because there may be other ways of collecting it. If no one does, you have your answer.)



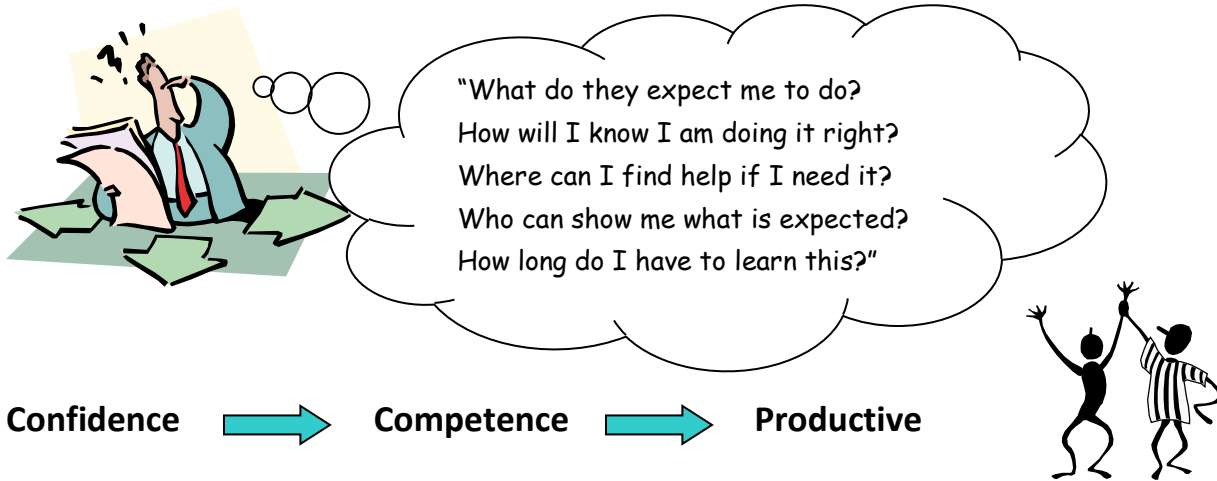
Be sure you understand the difference between **productive** and **busy!**

Activity that contains measurable elements of **quantity** (how many), **quality** (how well), and **time** (by when) is considered **PRODUCTIVE**. Activity that does not contain all of those elements is only **BUSY**. (Remember, we pay team members to be productive, not busy!)

REVIEW:

- **Cindy attended a business class last quarter at the local junior college.** Do you think this is busy or productive?
(**Busy** – there is no “quality indication” – a grade – to make the time productive.)
- **Logan processed 350 project forms today.** Do you think this is busy or productive?
(**Busy** – We do not know if they were processed accurately or even if they were the correct ones for processing! Both are “quality” issues.)
- **Grant completed his project on time, met all of the client’s expectations, and was 5.6% under budget.** Do you think this is busy or productive?
(**Productive** – This has all three elements of quality, quantity, and time to be a meaningful goal.)

#8 Develop Structured Training for New Team Hires



Confidence → Competence → Productive

Here are at least four excellent reasons you would want a structured training program in place for new hires in every department in your organization.

A structured training program for new project hires can provide:

1. *New hires with a clear understanding (**based upon measurables**) of what their employer expects of them and what they can expect from their employer*
2. *Management with a method to **document objectively through testing** whether the new hire understands what is expected and you have prepared them as much as possible to be productive (not busy).*
3. *Management with a method to **measure objectively** whether the new hire is making satisfactory performance progress so that termination, if necessary, could be supported.*
4. *Every department with a **systematic, objective, and fair process** to meld new people smoothly into a fully functioning department with a high degree of confidence in their ability to perform*

(Outsource Training.biz LLC offers a course called “How to Develop a Training Program for New Hires” that teaches managers and supervisors how to do that. Contact the author through this website.)

#9 Create Performance Reinforcement Systems

When team members in your organization do the right thing, what typically happens?



- *Nothing. They are expected to do the right thing!*

Or is it this...

- *We are free with disbursing pats-on-the-back, praise, and recognition. Our leaders know how to coach them to sustain desired performance. That way, the department head is assured the team member knows how to intentionally repeat the desired behavior, not just randomly stumble across it.*

Which of those behaviors has the greater potential for sustained desired performance on your project?

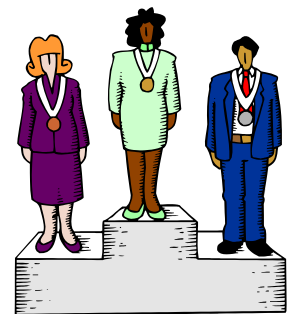
(See the motivation section again starting on page 9)

How do you capitalize on one team member’s desired behavior as a method to spread that behavior among his or her coworkers? (Review the Reward Me with Pay or Praise When I Succeed on page 20.)

“People repeat activities that are reinforced and rewarded.”

What team member behaviors does your organization especially need to have done correctly all the time?

What practices does your organization use to reinforce those desired behaviors to increase the chance they will continue occurring?



#10 Strengthen Existing Training

How effective is any of your existing training?

How do you know?

Has it become **more or less** effective in the past year: by how much?

How do you know?



What practices are in place to ensure participants get the most out of a training class when they attend?



What practices are in place to ensure they *apply any learned skills back on the job after class*?

What is the cost of training, in terms of **materials, wages, and lost productivity** while people are in class?

What development activities do you require of your instructors to make sure they are as capable as possible?

What productivity measurements do you link directly to your existing training?

What is the **ROI** (return on investment) of your existing training?

If you are not sure about the answers to these questions about your project's or organization's training, why do you continue committing resources to it?

Tips for Strengthening Existing Training

These refer to the questions on the previous page.

1. How effective is any of your existing training?

(Hint: If you do not know the answer or how you would find it, there is a strong possibility your existing training is more about being “busy” than productive.)



2. Has it become **more or less** effective in the past year: By how much? How do you know? What has changed about it that makes it more or less effective? *(See the answer above.)*

3. What practices are in place to ensure participants get the most out of a training class when they attend?

- *Supervisors and team members should be working together to create an **team member’s professional development plan (PDP)** that will help the team member increase their value to the organization (and their employability).*



- *This PDP will help them select training that will increase their professional development. This way, they do not waste time going to classes that are not part of this plan unless it is a required class of the organization such as a civil behavior topic, or a compliance class.*
- *Since the supervisor knows ahead of time why the class is important to the team member, the supervisor is motivated to make sure the team member applies the new skills on the job after class (**improved productivity makes the supervisor look good**) and the team member is motivated to apply them because that increases their value to the organization. (**In tough economic times, organizations try to retain their most valuable team members.**)*

4. What is the cost, in terms of **materials, wages, and lost productivity** while people are in class of your training? (We will suppose this is an all-day class (8 hours) of 20 team members who are paid an average of \$25,000 year.)
- a. Wages typically cost an additional 28-35% for the cost of benefits, payroll taxes, and anything else unique to an organization. For this example, we will use 35%. Employees making \$25,000/year are actually costing their employer an additional 35% more or \$8,750 bringing their total wage expense to \$33,750.
 - b. If this is a salaried team member working a 40 hour week, that equates to 2,080 hours per year (40 hours week x 52 weeks) or \$16.23 per hour.
Therefore, 20 team members in class x 8 hours of class time at an average wage expense of \$16.23 = \$2,596.
 - c. Add to that, the value of the work that is not being done while people are in class.
 - d. Also, add to that, the cost of any overtime that may be paid to team members who have to do the work not completed by the people in class.
 - e. Add to that the cost of the instructor whether on staff or a contractor.
 - f. Add to that the cost of the room if you had to go off-site for it.
 - g. Add to that the cost of the materials used. For example, if a 20-page flip-chart pad costs \$8.95 (including tax), each sheet used costs \$.045

Headings A-G are the total cost.

What productivity measurements do you link directly to your existing training?

(You can get a feel for the productivity value of the training by sending a survey to people who took a course. Send it 60-90 days after. Devise a Likert Scale that measures usefulness of the particular skills taught to actual work needs. [Suppose the class taught how to identify and measure “soft skills” such as teamwork, oral communication, or customer service.](#) A survey could look like this:

Please rate each question based on your experience in the workplace.

1. *How useful is the method taught of defining the traits of a behavior that you want to measure?*
0 = Not useful 1-2 = Little useful 3 = Somewhat useful 4-5 Very useful X = No chance to use the skill

Also, provide an opportunity for comments so you can learn unexpected information.

Please tell us anything else about your training experience that will help us improve future courses. You may get comments such as:

- “Shelly, the instructor, was very patient with us and made sure we could use it on the job.”
- “My team members are much more focused and happy with their work since I’ve learned how to identify my expectations and tie a performance range to them.”
- “The course was great. I think it would be even more useful if you added a section on doing performance assessments.”

Feedback from a survey like this provides valuable information on the quality of the trainer, the materials taught, and its direct application to the workplace. Obviously, high scores would show executive management that this training is an excellent investment in developing the professional skills of the department leaders and their team members’ productivity.

#11 Develop a Mentor Process



Mentoring programs offer an inexpensive, yet highly effective way for projects and organizations to enhance their team members' individual growth and on-the-job effectiveness by fostering their ability to adapt and develop.

Benefits Of A Corporate Mentoring Program

- **Recruitment.** A mentoring program sends an important message to prospective team members that the organization values a team member's personal and professional development and that communication is a priority.



- **Retention.** Mentoring programs can develop a team member's sense of loyalty to a company.



According to the 1999 Emerging Workforce Study, team members with less than one year of service are twice as likely to seek employment elsewhere if there is no mentoring at their current workplace.

- **New Team Member Orientation.** Mentoring can help facilitate a new team member's entry into the organization's culture by helping the protégé negotiate his or her organizational role.

- **Diversity.** Mentoring programs can help organizations provide a level playing field for women, minorities, and other groups.



Important Elements of a Mentoring Program

Mentoring programs are as diverse as the organizations that host them. However, there are some features that successful programs have in common:

- **Leadership Buy-in.** The most critical element of an effective mentoring program is a supportive project and organizational climate. In order for team members to feel that the workplace encourages their growth, senior management must be visible, frequent, and on-going program advocates. One way of achieving this is to include mentoring as part of the corporate strategic plan.
- **Program Orientation.** Potential mentors and protégés may be interested in the idea of mentoring but not know much about it. Possible orientation activities include presentations that describe what effective mentoring looks like, mentoring self-study materials, informal coaching for mentors and protégés, and the circulating of examples of effective mentoring. These activities can help get people acclimated to the mentoring concept and to avoid unreasonable expectations.
- **Clear Expectations and Goals.** Both mentor and protégé should begin the mentoring relationship with a clear understanding of the other's expectations. These expectations not only include the projected outcomes of the relationship, but also how the relationship will work (regular meetings during office hours or lunches away from the office, for example), how much time each party can commit to the relationship, and the duration of the relationship.



- **Evaluation.** As is true for any program, mentoring programs need a mechanism for evaluating effectiveness. Methods may include interviews, questionnaires, or informal feedback. Some mentoring programs encourage protégés to complete a personal development plan that can be used throughout the mentoring relationship to measure progress. However it is accomplished, protégés should be encouraged to give feedback on the effectiveness of the program to enhance its value for all participants.



Mentoring Program Structure

There is considerable discussion in the mentoring literature about formal versus informal mentoring programs. In a formal mentoring program, mentors and protégés are assigned to each other based on their positions within the organization or the outcome the organization wishes to achieve.

In an informal program, participants volunteer for the effort depending on the outcomes the participants wish to achieve. It should be noted that "informal" does not mean unstructured. An effective informal mentoring program has a great deal of structure but is flexible enough to allow the participants to accommodate their goals, preferences, and personal styles.

Research on the outcomes of each type of program, while somewhat inconclusive, suggest that protégés in formal mentoring relationships report receiving less career-related support from their mentors than do protégés in informal relationships, while protégés of informal mentors perceived their mentors as more effective.

Mentoring programs can support a variety of organizational goals, especially in a work environment that is evolving as rapidly as health care. Pairing protégés with mentors to guide, shape, and direct current workers and future leaders is a smart idea.

#12 Strengthen Performer Selection Systems



It is a truism of hiring that a poor job of selecting performers usually results in poor performance on the job. The cost of turnover is too high for employers to take this critical process too lightly. We describe a method that can help improve the process for you.

(Also, there are many excellent reference resources on the Internet if you want to pursue this farther.)

We must clarify some terms before we begin to make this easier to understand:

Professional Skills

We use this term to describe the skills and training they have taken to gain their *professional status*. For an engineer, he or she received the professional technical training in college and has tested to earn the P.E. designation.

Functional Skills

These skills deal with ‘functioning’ at a particular workplace using the professional skills. The applicant develops *functional* skills on the job by learning how to *function with* the particular software used; the office politics to *function* successfully on the team; or how they want our proposals written (the *writing function*).

Attitude



We define an attitude for the purpose of this section as *the observed behavior that leads us to form an opinion about a person*. (We do not claim this definition is clinically accurate but, then, this is not a medical course, either.)

A team member, whose observed behavior results in errors on forms, smudges on drawings, or delays in meeting schedules would *lead us to think he or she “does not have a desirable work attitude”*.

The “Southwest Airlines” Approach

Southwest uses a philosophy of “*hire for attitude – train for skill*” which, they claim, has been very successful in finding the kind of people with the customer service attitude that exemplifies southwest.

(If you have ever flown on Southwest, you will see that it works!)



This approach requires employers to focus primarily on the *behaviors* (attitude) desired for the job and trust internal training programs to teach the desired *functional* skills needed for job success. It can be said, “*You can teach brain surgery, but you can’t teach a comforting bedside manner. You are either born with compassion or you are not.*”



For example, an employer looking for an engineer to work on a project with an important client would focus on selecting someone with a strong “teamwork attitude”.

This means the *desired behaviors* could be the ability to say ‘No’ to client without harming goodwill, able to add value to a relationship with a client, and offer help or willing to go beyond expectations without being asked. The client would not focus as much on the technical (professional) skills because possession of a diploma or registration implies the skills are present.

Questions that would help discover these desirable traits in an interview would be:

- “*Can you tell us about a time when you had to say a significant “No’ to a client without damaging goodwill?”*”
- “*Can you tell us about a time when you did something to add value to a relationship with a client?”*”

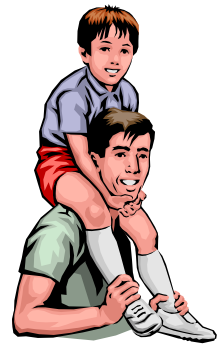
Focus on the desired attitudes you want and rely on new-hire training (page 53) to provide the functional skills. (The initial screening process determines if they have the professional skills.)

#13 Develop a 'Future Leaders' Program

We realize that a single project may not have the duration to support a Future Leader's program by itself. However, if an organization frequently has projects happening somewhere in the organization and there is a strong likelihood of projects going on into the future, a Future Leader's program can be established within the umbrella organization allowing the participants to gain developmental experience working on various projects.

A systematic process for identifying, selecting, and developing future leaders within your parent organization can go a long way to improving productivity in your projects by:

- Showing team members they can have a future in the company if they apply themselves diligently.
- The "ripple" effect of moving someone up into his or her first leadership position means someone will backfill for him or her. That 'someone' may perceive it as a step closer to a better position.
- Reducing the time lag (and expense) for newly hired leaders learning about your organization.
- Providing a 'mentoring opportunity' (see page 59) for senior or more seasoned team members to pass down what they have learned. This preserves the company's knowledge.



Here are some thoughts on what it should contain:

Objective:

- The Objective of the (company name) program is to develop first line supervisors from non-management team members who have the desire and motivation to learn how to lead.
- It will provide a logical and objective path of growth for all team members that have a desire to enter into a management position and have met the qualification standards of the program.

Application Process:

- All candidates must submit a written application to be considered for the program. It is strongly advised that each candidate visit with his or her manager or other senior manager before submission of the application.
- All candidates must submit an essay of why they should be considered.
- All applicants will be interviewed by a board of senior managers who will select the program participants
- Upon acceptance, the candidate will meet with the training manager and their manager. At this meeting, a program will be developed of activities, classes, etc. that the candidate is responsible for completing. (The program will consist of certain required courses, some elective courses, extra-curricular tasks, and at least one 2-week internship as a supervisor.)

Eligibility

- Some relative previous job experience
- Performance Rating - The successful candidate will have had a minimum score of ____ on their most recent performance review.
- Disciplinary Action - The successful candidate will have had no disciplinary action within twelve months of his/her application.
- Attendance - The successful candidate will have no more than “X” absence occasions or more than “Y” days absent in the last twelve months.

Extra Curricula Activities

(Each of these activities is designed to benefit the participant, to provide opportunities for them to learn new skills, to refine existing skills and to demonstrate these skills to management. This should take the guesswork out of whether or not the participant could perform certain duties that would be expected of a Supervisor.)

- Assume a leadership role in an external volunteer organization.
- Develop and administer an effort to help an external charitable or related organization.
- Develop a departmental promotion or theme

#14 Useful “Human Capital” Metrics

Many company executives love to demonstrate how much they value (or want to appear to value) their project team members by saying things like, **“Our people are our most important asset!”**

Have you ever wondered, though, just how valuable are they? Are they becoming more or less valuable? How do we know? Can we believe these numbers?



In an article in the January 2005 HR Magazine entitled “Blind Investment”, the author states, *“In fact, a variety of experts agree that as much as 80% of a company’s worth is tied to human capital.”*

The article goes on to discuss several different ways of measuring the value of their workforce that may be useful to your project and parent organization. [\(Please keep in mind that this is not a financial analysis course and the author does not pretend to be a financial analyst. These are offered as benchmark guides to use if your organization has nothing at all.\)](#)

- ▶ **Human Capital Return On Investment** [we will refer to it as “HR ROI”]
- ▶ **Revenue per Team Member** [RPTM]
- ▶ **Workforce Development Ratio** [WD ratio]
- ▶ **Profit per Team Member** [PPTM]
- ▶ **Labor Cost as a Percentage of Revenue**
- ▶ **Voluntary Separation Rate** [VSR]
- ▶ **Operating Efficiency Rating**

Please remember that *trends in scores* tell you much more than just a single measurement. These metrics are useful only to determine *trends* of things getting better, worse, or not changing at all. We suggest using any of these metrics *at least three times* to determine a trend.

Human Capital ROI [HC ROI]

The rationale for this is to illustrate the relationship between human capital investment, productivity, and profitability. HC ROI is the pre-tax profit an organization generates for each dollar invested in regular team member pay and benefits after non-human expenses are removed.



Also note the organization must separate compensation and benefit expenses from normal operating expenses for this calculation to work.

$$\text{HC ROI} = \frac{(\text{Revenue} - \text{operating expenses} - (\text{compensation} + \text{benefits costs}))}{(\text{Compensation} + \text{benefits costs})}$$

Sample

Revenue = \$23,432,819

Operating expenses = \$13,587,952

Compensation = \$2,975,218

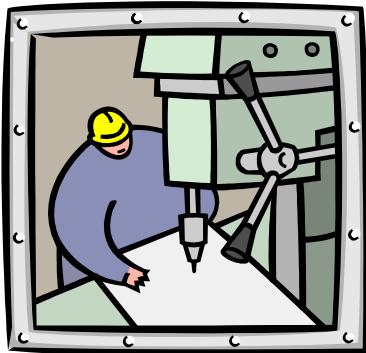
Benefit costs = 32% of compensation costs

$$\text{HC ROI} = (\$23,432,819 - \$13,587,952 - (\$2,975,218 \times 1.32))$$

$$\text{HC ROI} = \frac{(\$23,432,819 - \$13,587,952 - (\$3,927,288))}{\$3,927,288}$$

$$\text{HC ROI} = \frac{\$5,917,579}{\$3,927,288} = 1.506$$

Revenue Per Team Member [RPTM]



This metric allows a company to determine its revenue per team member (full time equivalent abbreviated as FTE using an Human Resources reference). This is widely considered a basic measure of a company's productivity.

When combined with the Workforce Development Ratio (page 69), it allows a company to determine the impact of Workforce Development initiatives on the bottom line.

For example, if your company's RPTM increased by 8.3% while the WD ratio has increased only 2.25%, it would indicate that you are getting a good return on your WD efforts.

$$\text{RPE} = \text{Revenue}/\text{FTE}$$

Sample

Revenue = \$23,432,819

FTE = 147 team members

PPE = \$23,432,819/147 = \$159,407 per team member

Workforce Development Ratio [WDR]

This identifies the ratio of the entire budget that is invested in workforce development.



It is more important that the factors a company uses to determine the WD factors be consistent than “philosophically pure”.

For example, whether a day spent in training class should be broken out as a WD expense or remain as a wage expense is less important than we *consistently* calculate it the same way every time!

$$\text{WDR} = \text{WD Expenses} / \text{Total Expenses}$$

Sample

Operating expense budget for this year = \$13,587,952

Compensation + benefits costs = \$3,927,288

Workforce Development budget = \$478,500

$\text{WDR} = \$478,500 / (\$13,587,952 + \$3,927,288)$

$\text{WDR} = \$478,500 / \$17,515,240$

$\text{WDR} = 2.73$

Profit per Team Member [PPTM]

This takes the pretax profit as organization generates and attributes this to each FTE. This metric provides an integrated picture of productivity and expense control efforts.

Like the previous metric, combining this with the WDR is another way of determining if WD efforts are having the desired results.

If our WDR has increased from 2.73 to 3.41 while our PPTM has increased by 9.74%, is that great news, good news, or no big deal?

(Obviously, the answer would be different with different companies but a question like that can help an organization tell if it is going the right way with its WD efforts.)

$$\text{PPTM} = \text{Revenue} / \text{FTE}$$

Sample

Revenue = \$23,432,819

FTE = 147 team members

Operating expense for this year = \$13,587,952

Compensation + benefits costs = \$3,927,288

Labor Cost As A Percentage of Revenue

This looks at the percentage of revenue dedicated to compensation and benefits costs for regular team members. It provides insight into an organization's benefits and compensation programs. Over time, this measurement can show if the organization is obtaining a higher or lower return on dollars invested in the workforce.

Combining this with the WDR, the RPE, PPTM is another way to determine if WD activities are positively impacting your organization.

If our WDR has increased from 2.73 to 3.41 while our PPTM has increased by 9.74%, RPTM has increased 12.76% and labor cost as a % of revenue has remained relatively steady, is that great news, good news, or no big deal?

$$\text{Labor Cost as a \% of Revenue} = \frac{\text{Compensation} + \text{Benefits Costs}}{\text{Revenue}}$$

Sample

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Labor Cost as a \% of Revenue} &= \$3,927,288 / \$23,432,819 \\ &= 16.7\% \end{aligned}$$

Voluntary Separation Rate [VSR]

This looks at the percentage of FTE that has voluntarily left the organization. High turnover may impact the organization's stability, profitability, and productivity.

Be careful *not to include* those who voluntarily left for non-workplace reasons such as relocation of a spouse or personal reasons unrelated to the workplace.

$$\text{VSR} = \text{Total Voluntary Separations} / \text{FTE}$$

Thank you for your time!

**This concludes the educational content of
this activity.**