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Improving Organizational Performance

Improving Organizational Performance*Presented by:*
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About the Presenter

Elizabeth Bailey, MS, an STC Fellow and active member of ISPI, has managed documentation, training, and web development departments. She supports exploring technical communicators by teaching technical writing and editing classes at Richland College in Dallas. Elizabeth holds a BS in Management and an MS in Instructional and Performance Technology and is pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of North Texas.

Session Overview

This session is designed to provide you with an overview of Thomas Gilbert's Behavioral Engineering Model (BEM) and alternatives to his model, and a review of Hersey and Chevalier 's PROBE Model to assist you to identify elements that support and impact behavior within your organization.

Objectives

Identify the different parts to a person's behavior: a persons' repertory of behavior and the support environment.

Identify questions you can use from the sample questions within your organization to analyze needs.

What is the Behavioral Engineering Model?

In 1978, Thomas F. Gilbert developed the Behavior Engineering Model in his book, Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance. Gilbert is known as the father of performance technology, as an engineer who applied his understanding of the process of technological improvement to human beings. Gilbert believed that it was absence of performance support, not a person's lack of knowledge or skill that was the greatest barrier to exemplary, or worthy, performance. He believed it was most necessary to focus on variables in the work environment before addressing an individual's variables.

	Information	Instrumentation	Motivation
Environmental Supports	Data	Resources	Incentives
Person's Repertory of Behavior	Knowledge	Capacity	Motives

In 2003, Roger Chevalier updated Gilbert's model and he noted that environmental factors are the starting point for analysis because they pose the greatest barriers to exemplary performance." Chevalier added that in addition to tools and materials, you should ensure that there is also enough time for the action or decision to be made. He encourages us to ensure that the work conditions are safe, clean, organized, and conducive to the job at hand.

Within incentives, Chevalier recommends we also ensure the work environment is positive, where employees believe they have an opportunity to succeed and career development opportunities are present.

Within knowledge, he recommends that we ensure that the employees with the necessary knowledge, experience and skills are in the proper place to use and share what they know – and have an environment that is conducive to support this sharing.

Chevalier enhances the capacity area to include proper recruitment techniques being present to support hiring the right people and the motive area to ensure that the employee was recruited and selected to match the realities of the work situation.

	Information	Instrumentation	Motivation
Environmental Supports	Data	Resources safe and clean	Incentives positive
Person's Repertory of Behavior	Knowledge Properly placed	Capacity Proper recruitment	Motives people match realities

Creating Incompetence

The best example of the effectiveness of the model is to look at it from a different perspective. Let's look at its ability to negatively impact performance.

Data

- Don't tell people how well they are doing
- Provide misleading info on how they are doing
- Hide what is expected
- Don't guide performance

Instrumentation

- Design tools without consulting the users
- Keep developers or engineers away from users

Incentives

- Pay poor performers the same as good performers
- Punish good performers in some way
- Don't use non-monetary incentives

Knowledge

- Leave training to chance
- Let unskilled supervisors train
- Make training irrelevant to the job
- Make training difficult to get

Capacity

- Schedule work times for when people are not at their sharpest
- Select the wrong people for the job
- Don't provide job aids

Motives

- Design futureless jobs
- Arrange unpleasant work conditions
- Give pep talks instead of incentives

Alternative Models

Are there alternatives to Gilbert and Chevalier's work? Sure – there are variations, as Gilbert's work, based on B. F. Skinners' discriminative stimuli, responses, and consequences, is considered to be the best cause analysis tool available. What else is out there?

Six Boxes™

Carl Binder discussed his Six Boxes model as an adaptation of Gilbert's work, but using different terminology to focus client's attention to performance instead of behavior, as he felt this was a listening issue. He retains the six sets, as did Gilbert, but he labels them differently: Expectations and Feedback, Consequences and Incentives, Capacity (Selection and Assignment), Tools and Resources, Skills and Knowledge, and Motives and Preferences.

Within Tools and Resources, he adds reference documentation and environmental variables like heat and light. Gilbert focused reference documentation within Data, and Chevalier also added environmental factors here.

Within Consequences and Incentives, Binder is quick to bring out informal social consequences, both negative and positive.

Within Capacity, Binder includes the assignment level, which Chevalier also mentions, but also brings in personal qualities and things like social skills.

Like Gilbert, Binder believes that investing in Motives and Preferences, without managing the others, generally does not produce the desired performance outcome.

PROBE Model

While Gilbert offered a collection of questions to assist us with defining the state of data, instruments, incentives, knowledge, capacity, and motives, Paul Hersey and Chevalier updated these questions to support Chevalier's Updated BEM model. They added open-ended questions to generate conversation instead of defensive responses, allow you an even better way to implement this tool within your work environment.

Information

- Have clear performance expectations been communicated to employees?
- Do employees understand the various aspects of their roles and the priorities for doing them?
- Are there clear and relevant performance aids to guide the employees?
- Are employees given sufficient, timely behaviorally specific feedback regarding their performance?
- Does the performance management system assist the supervisor in describing
  expectations for both activities and
  results for the employee?

Resources

- Do employees have the materials needed to do their jobs?
- Do employees have the equipment to do their jobs?
- Do employees have the time they need to do their jobs?
- Are the processes and procedures defined in such a way as to enhance employee performance?
- Is the work environment safe, clean,
  organized, and conducive to excellent performance?

Incentives

- Are there sufficient financial incentives present to encourage excellent performance?
- Are there sufficient non-financial incentives present to encourage excellent performance?
- Do measurement and reporting systems track appropriate activities and results?
- Are jobs enriched to allow for fulfillment of higher level needs?
- Are there opportunities for career development?

Motives

- Are the motives of the employees aligned with the incentives in the environment?
- Do employees desire to do the job to the best of their abilities?
- Are employees recruited and selected to match the realities of the work environment?
- Are there any rewards that reinforce poor performance or negative consequences for good performance?
- Do employees view the work environment as positive?

Capacity

- Do the employees have the necessary strength to do the job?
- Do the employees have the necessary dexterity to do the job?
- Do the employees have the ability to learn what is expected for them to be successful on the job?
- Are employees free from any emotional limitations that impede performance?
- Are employees recruited, selected, and matched to the realities of the work situation?

Knowledge and Skills

- Do the employees have the necessary knowledge to be successful at their jobs?
- Do the employees have the needed skills to be successful at their jobs?
- Do the employees have the needed experience to be successful at their jobs?
- Do employees have a systematic training program to enhance their knowledge and skills?
- Do employees understand how their roles impact organizational performance?

Adapting the Model to Your Organization

When trying to adapt this tool to work in your environment, one of the first things you need to do is get everyone on the same terminology page. What does data or resources or environment mean to everyone involved?

When aligning your goals, define what is this analysis going to do for you.

Focus your objectives on the fact that the only thing that using one of these models or these questions does for you is collect facts. You must still review the responses and analyze them. Define this to all involved, so they know it is safe to say " I only understand compensation issues." or "I only know about environmental factors." or "I know what the training programs look like." In this way, you know you still need a player to help with the incentives and recognition aspects.

Defining your understanding of success for this activity may be tough. What deliverable will indicate you have successfully collected all the data you can and have analyzed the data? Defining specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely solutions makes it easier to evaluate the success of the selected interventions.

Succinctly defining those as measurable objectives means that you need to drive the analysis of the data to understanding how all of this fits together to influence behavior and what needs to be manipulated to change something else.

Make sure you heard what I just said? I mentioned identifying what needs to be manipulated to change something else. Yes, manipulation is a word with negative connotations. So, what does that tell you? Upon manipulation, something may change that you had not considered.

When performing your analysis and determining what needs to be changed, also consider the consequences of your changes. Identifying those will also go a long way to assisting you to select the right change to make as a result of your research.

Take away from this discussion that using the model assists you to identify elements that support and impact behavior. It is up to you to determine that plan that supports the desired behaviors both during the implementation of your plan and after the plan is in place and the workers are on the job months from now.

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