



CHAPTER ONE

THINKING PERFORMANCE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In this chapter you will learn about

- A new performance-centered framework and how it can be used to address performance deficiencies, needs, and solutions
- How the criteria for an effective training and performance process can be used to influence the client's desired results
- The three most frequent barriers to performance and why we must address them

Performance Is Our Business

During the last seventy-five years or so, many experts have contributed to the task of linking the training profession to performance by developing concepts, processes, methodologies, and tools to create and deliver our products and serve our clients. We have made significant progress because of these pioneers. Some of their processes and models have been updated several times and are still in use by training professionals today. These processes and associated behavioral and learning theories and applications were influenced by people such as B. F. Skinner, Kurt Lewin, Benjamin Bloom, Geary Rummeler, Malcom Knowles, Thomas Gilbert, Joe Harless, Jim and Dana Robinson, Robert F. Mager, Dave Meier, and Robert Gagné. Evaluation models and methodology have been influenced by Donald L.

Kirkpatrick and Jack J. Phillips. We owe much to these and other trailblazers for originating or improving these concepts, applications, and processes.

As a result of my experience over twenty-five years, I have been in a unique position to see our training processes from the inside out and from the outside in. I have seen the successes of the fruits of our labor as well as the hard knocks and disappointments in the performance results. Our profession is not entirely broken—it just needs a little help to catch up with and respond to today's demands. What is being presented in this book does not take away from the great work of these pioneers, but adds to it.

It is vital that training professionals understand performance in order to identify needs and design, develop, and deliver training solutions. Even more important, we must be performance experts in order to influence clients and other stakeholders as to why the preferred design of a training program should not be compromised. In a consultative way, we must be able to demonstrate to others what *will* and *will not* work when implementing projects and programs to influence the desired performance in the work setting. If the training process does not play a role in influencing people to apply what they have learned to the work setting, then our function should not be funded.

This chapter focuses on viewing our training products and processes through a different lens. A performance-centered framework is proposed that will lead to a more results-centered design and delivery of the training product. This begins a journey that continues throughout the book to address the most significant issue we face as a profession: why do so many people complete training successfully and fail to apply what they learn to the work setting? The natural follow-up question is, what can we do about it? We will begin to address both of these questions now and proceed throughout the chapters to show how we can succeed.

Performers Do Have a Choice

The first thing we must recognize about performance is that, more often than not, people are in a position to choose whether they will perform specific tasks or comply with specific job behavior requirements and how they will go about doing so. I am not referring here to poor performers or to overall performance. I am referring to the daily routine of executing the myriad of tasks and providing services to get business results. Consider the following:

- Managers do not watch over their team every moment of every day. Nor should they.
- Performance monitoring techniques, or controls, are not always in place to detect whether and how people are doing what they should be doing.

- Knowledge workers often work alone or unsupervised and have great latitude in getting the work done.
- Even when monitoring or controls are in place, it can be weeks or even months before the specifics of an individual's performance become known.
- When the organization provides new or upgraded technology to people, they sometimes (without being discovered) underuse the technology, continue to do what they have always done regardless of the technology, or simply find ways to shortcut the technology. Consequently, in either of these situations we often do not realize the cost savings or other benefits that proper use of the technology should deliver.
- When training is provided, even when people have a need, dozens of factors in the work setting can derail the appropriate or timely job execution of what was learned, so that the intended result is never realized.

The point is that we can fund a training program, new technology, a new HR procedure or program, or any other organization initiative to achieve some end in mind. But unless we follow the right processes to design and deliver the solution, people may choose to ignore what the program or intervention is designed to help them achieve in the work setting. We should design our training solutions with the end in mind and within the right parameters to achieve alignment and results. We should have a strategy to help clients understand the meaning and value of this alignment and how it is achieved. That strategy begins with our own rethinking of our processes and how we apply them.

Viewing Training Through a Different Lens

As we go about conducting our business of identifying training needs and designing, developing, and delivering training for our clients and our organization, we focus on the learning requirements. After all, that is what we should do. We are the experts in learning and training delivery for the organization. It is what we are paid to do, and it is our mission and passion. But the underlying reason clients come to us is not just to check off the training box so they can say it has been done. Well, yes, maybe a few managers and even a few participants *are* just checking the box. And some are checking the box with regard to compliance training. But the underlying reason we are asked to deliver most training comes back full circle to job performance. So we are not just in the training business; we are also in the performance business. We are the ones responsible for how clients and others perceive us and whether or not they view us as helping to check the training box or helping them with performance issues.

How we frame something can serve as a key to our understanding, and it guides our decisions, communication, and actions we take. It also *limits* our view, our decisions, our communication, and our actions. I suggest that training professionals should adopt a different thought pattern and a different performance framework that will allow us to see and communicate training and performance in a more results-centered way. This will also give us a better avenue to discuss performance with our clients and stakeholders and to clarify their role in the process.

Client-Friendly Performance Framework

Many in our profession (perhaps most) have adopted Donald L. Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation as a standard for how to conduct evaluation activities (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Kirkpatrick developed these levels in the late 1950s as an approach to evaluation. By default or as a matter of choice, many training professionals also use Kirkpatrick's levels to express a framework for levels of performance. The four levels of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model are

- Reaction (Level 1)
- Learning (Level 2)
- Behavior (Level 3)
- Results (Level 4)

Jack J. Phillips has added a fifth level of evaluation to Kirkpatrick's model, which he calls Return on Investment (Level 5) (Phillips & Stone, 2002).

For those in our profession who have been using the four levels as a performance framework, I offer a more useful alternative. The four levels limit our thinking about nontraining performance factors and transfer of learning issues. The four levels simply do not present the proper framework to encourage outside-the-box thinking regarding performance.

The elements of the Performance-Centered Framework described in Table 1.1 are linked relationships that help to establish alignment in achieving desired results from training programs and other performance interventions. They are also the key to viewing performance issues when conducting needs assessment activities and making decisions about training and performance solutions. Each element is actually a type of analysis. They are presented here in the context of needs assessment.



TABLE 1.1. STONE'S PERFORMANCE-CENTERED FRAMEWORK

A Twenty-First-Century Frame of Reference for Linking and Aligning Training and Performance Solutions to Achieve Expected Business Outcomes		
P E R F O R M A N C E	Element Focus	Element Context: Type of Analysis
	Business Outcome Execution in the Work Setting	Identifies the desired business or organizational result. Identifies what a specific population should be doing or not doing, and how individual or team performance may influence the status of business outcome measures.
R E A D I N E S S	Performance Readiness	Identifies individual or team compatibility, ability, confidence, and willingness to execute in the work setting. Also identifies ineffective habits and the influencing factors of Active Management Reinforcement (AMR) and how they affect execution in the work setting.
	Preferences	Identifies client and population's preferences regarding design and delivery of the solution, (examples: likes, dislikes, wants, learning style preference, delivery preference, operational constraints).

The Performance-Centered Framework is used with the Performance Alignment and Linkage (PAL) process, which will be covered in Chapter Three. The performance framework is a guide to help training professionals:

- Think about performance in the proper context
- Frame the right questions for analysis
- Identify the appropriate type of data to gather to determine performance requirements and analyze needs within each element of the framework
- Identify the proper objectives and measures for each element of the framework
- Communicate with clients and gain their support
- Create the most appropriate results-centered Training and Performance Design and Solution

This is a contextual performance framework that is client friendly and makes it easier to discuss performance in a context that clients welcome and understand. It can be used to address current performance, performance needs, and desired performance. More important, this framework allows us to visibly link the key

elements of performance so that we can discuss performance with the end in mind and address all of the influences to get the desired result. Let's address the performance-centered framework one element at a time, beginning with business outcome.

Business Outcome

Every business, including non-profit organizations, has a list of desirable outcomes that keep the business viable. When these outcomes do not measure up to requirements, it compromises the ability to operate the business, sustain funding and financial strength, remain competitive, serve customers, hire and retain competent and committed employees, and accomplish the organization's mission.

Outcome measures provide a target to define desired business results. They are at the heart of the operation of the business enterprise, and they are influenced by many factors. Typical categories of outcome measures include but are not limited to the following:

- The *cost* of doing business
- The *profitability* of the business (quality of funding for nonprofits)
- The *quality* (effectiveness) of research, acquisition, design, development, delivery, and management of the organization's business products, processes, and services
- The *output* (quantity) of products and services
- The *time* (efficiency) it takes to complete tasks (output) and business processes, address and correct problem areas, and service the customer

There are additional categories of outcome measures and many measures within each category depending on how they are uniquely defined by each organization. Business outcomes are generated from the completion of the business cycle of acquiring, making, marketing, selling, fulfilling orders, delivering, servicing, receiving payment, and accounting for the goods and services.

Let's look at the next element of the Performance-Centered Framework so that we can gain a better perspective of how the work itself influences the ultimate business outcome and the outcome measures.

Execution in the Work Setting

Execution speaks to the activities that people routinely perform in the work setting to accomplish the mission of the organization. Execution and performance are synonymous. By definition, execution occurs in the work setting. It is what people

are expected to do. It is the performance of the work itself, the work processes, and how people go about doing it. The business outcomes addressed in the preceding section would not be possible without the performance of the human element. Every manager knows that his or her team influences the business outcome in their own work unit, which in turn contributes to the overall business outcome of the company, agency, or institution.

When outcome measures are not being met or are perceived to be in imminent danger of declining, attention immediately turns to the reason why. Work activities are immediately suspect as a possible contributor to the undesirable business outcome. So six types of questions are posed:

1. Are people doing what they should be doing?
2. If not, what is the deficiency?
3. Why are they not doing what they should be doing? (That is, what is contributing to the lack of this individual or team execution?)
4. How are the deficiencies in individual or team performance influencing business outcomes?
5. What else (internal and external influences) may be influencing the outcome?
6. What should be done to correct the situation and influence the outcome in a positive way?

Perhaps further questions should be, both now and in the future, Who or what is in a position to influence execution in the work setting? And how is this influencing the ability to achieve the end in mind—the desired outcome? Then we follow with the same questions just listed. It could be that faulty work processes or something external to the business is influencing the desired business outcome. Maybe individual or team performance is a secondary issue. If something else is driving the outcome, our needs assessment should identify this and focus on any recommendation in this regard.

If we are certain that individual or team performance is the problem, then we should focus on the root cause of that problem. Remember, when we identify what we believe to be a problem, it is often not the real problem. Often, the so-called problem is only a surface indicator. It may be the first sign that a problem of some type does exist. For example, poor work quality is a surface indicator. The real problem is whatever is causing the poor work quality. Our front-end research should identify the root cause of this deficiency in quality, and this should drive the remaining decisions. For example, maybe the team does not know how to execute the details of the work process, and this is causing deficiencies in quality. The root cause is the specific knowledge that the team lacks in the work processes.

So, for the remainder of our discussion in this chapter, let's assume that individual or team execution is the issue driving a deficient business outcome.

When we are seeking a specific business outcome, everything depends on execution. Execution can be something as simple as conducting a team meeting and communicating work priorities or other information. Or it can be as complex as a supervisor observing a team member's performance and providing feedback and coaching so that the team member can properly execute.

Execution is the most important aspect of getting business results.

Even when there are intervening external factors, we still have to execute in order to respond to them, whether reactive or proactive. If we do not execute, then the desired business outcome is left to chance. When we explore the reasons for lack of execution and we limit our exploration to the workers themselves, we may miss the true reason (or root cause) for the inappropriate execution or lack thereof.

So it is fair to say that, if we are looking for the *secret sauce*—the one thing that is fundamental to the business outcome results that we want—it is execution. It is the performance of the team and the individuals that make up the team. Let's illustrate with a couple of examples so we can connect the dots, so to speak. We'll use one example in private industry and another in higher education.

Example One: Snappy Telecommunications International: We have telecommunications facilities, equipment, and technology; management and staff expertise; internal operating work processes; business, community, and international partners; and political affiliations in place. Our major challenge is this: how efficiently and effectively can we execute the following:

- Maintain our telecommunications network and keep it operating
- Keep technology and relationships current
- Differentiate our products and services
- Maintain compliance in the eyes of regulatory agencies
- Establish customer leads and contact prospective customers
- Determine what customers need and sell them a profitable package to meet their needs
- Process and fulfill the orders through internal systems and processes
- Connect the services and render a satisfied customer
- Collect payments
- Conduct legal and ethical business operations

There is more, but you get the idea. The extent to which we can execute all of these items with efficiency and effectiveness will determine how well we can gain repeat business and new customers; sustain our targeted market share; attract and retain competent employees; sustain revenue, funding, and financial strength; remain competitive; continue to serve customers; and accomplish the organization's mission. All of these are outcome measures. The final step in the system is to track and account for the entire process so that we can replicate it and keep everyone satisfied—customers, management, board members, employees, stockholders, suppliers, business partners, and third-party interests. These are all outcome measures as well.

Example Two: World Class University: We have educational facilities; technology; administration leadership; faculty; administrative support; administrative and educational processes; business, community, regional, and international partners; and political affiliations in place. Our major challenge is this: how efficiently and effectively can we execute the following:

- Obtain funding from students, government earmarking and grants, donations, and other sources
- Maintain accreditation
- Develop, sustain, and deliver current and competitive curricula and programs of study in all colleges to differentiate ourselves and meet demand
- Complete research and development activities that contribute to the university's mission
- Attract, recruit, and enroll students
- Provide student services and address ongoing student needs
- Manage student satisfaction and attrition to acceptable standard
- Manage the graduation rate to acceptable standard
- Influence the employability and earning power of graduates
- Sustain the university's integrity, public standing, and image

There is more, but you get the idea. The extent to which we can do all of this with efficiency and effectiveness will determine how well we can continue to attract, enroll, educate, and graduate students; get adequate funding; maintain a viable educational product; maintain accreditation; sustain student services; attract and retain competent faculty and staff; and accomplish the university's mission. All of these are outcome measures. The final step in the system is to track and account for the entire process so that we can replicate it and keep everyone satisfied—students, the administration, the board, faculty and staff, funding agencies, alumni, partners, third-party interests, and the community. These are also outcome measures.

Without going into every detail, Table 1.2 uses the Snappy Telecommunications example to distinguish between outcome and execution and show how the two are linked.

The distinction is that execution is an activity and outcome is a *result* of the activity, even if the activity is indirect. For example, generating sales leads is an indirect activity to an actual sale; the direct activity is the sales call. In any case, all activities represent work processes that must be executed to contribute to a desired outcome. All of the support activities conducted by all departments that acquire, market, produce, and account for the products and services are indirect activities to the sale that must be executed properly. Without them, there may be no product to sell and no customer service to provide. If we can influence people to achieve the desired execution in all areas, all other things being equal, the business outcome should take care of itself.

Without execution, nothing else happens except that which happens by chance and luck.

**TABLE 1.2. SNAPPY TELECOMMUNICATIONS: LINKING
EXECUTION AND BUSINESS OUTCOME**

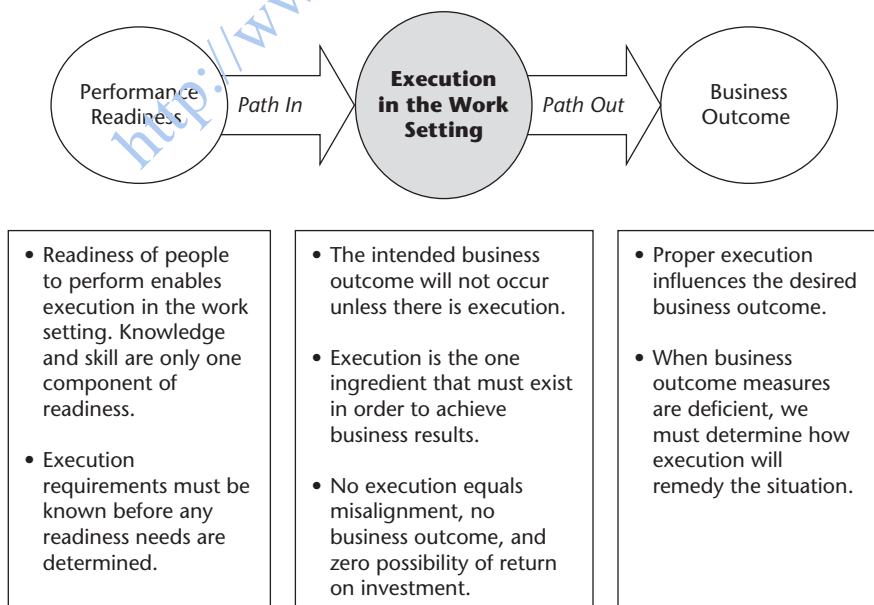
Business Outcome Measure	Execution
Operational availability of the network Cost of the availability	All upgrade and maintenance activities associated with the telecommunications network
Percent compliance with regulatory agency requirements Number of agency citations	All activities that management and employees execute, allowing Snappy to stay in compliance
Revenue from sales Revenue from repeat sales Revenue from cross selling	All activities that establish customer leads All sales calls executed and deals closed Processing and fulfillment of orders Execution of service connections Invoicing and collecting of payments
Profit from sales	All activities by all departments and the support infrastructure in the company that contributes to the ability to sustain sales and service and represents the cost of staying in business and doing business The quality of each sale and its contribution to recovering costs

So execution should be the focus of our attention. When conducting needs assessments, determining the root cause of performance issues, identifying learning needs, and designing and delivering training programs, we should focus on what it takes to achieve execution. In looking at execution, we should address training and nontraining factors with no bias about where the root cause may be. We should also look at potential external factors.

If a client truly wants results, we should not hesitate to ask her, “What are you willing to contribute to see this training succeed? How will the execution that you desire be reinforced?” If we do our research properly, we should be able to determine the answers, and we can offer these to her as a recommendation along with how and why it will influence the desired results. By focusing on execution, we can gain a clear line of sight into the other two crucial paths to results: the path leading up to performance and the path leading beyond performance. Figure 1.1 illustrates this performance alignment relationship.

We have discussed business outcome and execution. This leads us to the next important element of the Performance-Centered framework: performance readiness. We must answer the question, what needs to happen to enable the performers to execute (perform) in the work setting?

FIGURE 1.1. PATH TO ALIGNMENT AND RESULTS



Performance Readiness

Performance readiness represents the key components that exist in a given situation that enable the desired execution in the work setting. If we are going to design, develop, and deliver a training and performance solution (or any other type of intervention), then we must address all key components of performance readiness. The 80/20 rule applies here.

The 80/20 rule is derived from Pareto's Principle. In 1906 an Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, created a mathematical formula to describe the unequal distribution of wealth in his country. Through a mathematical formula, Pareto concluded that 20 percent of the people owned 80 percent of the wealth. In the 1940s, Dr. Joseph Duran applied the same concept to the quality movement when he concluded that 20 percent of defects cause 80 percent of the problems. This concept has been applied to almost every type of endeavor. Here we are saying that we should work on the cause or causes that represent the 20 percent responsible for 80 percent of the impact. It is a subjective approach, but it keeps us from stalling when we cannot solve every conceivable problem, or when a problem seems too large to tackle. Because of the dynamics of organizations, we can probably never realistically address all the components, but certainly we can address that 20 percent.

If someone is not performing, or if we want them to execute in a certain way, we must determine the execution requirements (what they should be doing) and how performance readiness is contributing to any deficiency. Certainly the knowledge, skill, and attitude of the performers represent one component of performance readiness, but this is not the only component.

There are five key components of performance readiness that we should explore when looking for root cause, determining needs, and recommending a solution to influence execution. One of them, *compatibility*, is a nontraining factor for the targeted population. The second, *ability*, is very much training related. Three more—*confidence*, *willingness*, and *Active Management Reinforcement*—could be training or nontraining related. Our challenge is to determine, using the 80/20 rule, the extent to which each is contributing to a lack of execution, why, and which components matter the most in a given situation. Execution is what we are trying to influence. Proper execution will in turn influence the business outcome.

Here are details on the five key components of performance readiness:

- *Compatibility*: An individual's compatibility to do the assigned work. This is not a knowledge or skill issue. It is a mental or physical challenge—the right person in the right job or assignment. It addresses an individual's reasonable mental and physical capability to perform a specific task or job.

- *Ability*: An individual's knowledge, skill, expertise or competence to do the assigned work. This involves information, awareness, principles, concepts, facts, processes, procedures, techniques, methods, and so on.
- *Confidence*: A personal comfort level stemming from a level of mastery and Active Management Reinforcement that will stimulate a performer to use new knowledge, skills, or exhibit a specific behavior in the natural work setting. Even when skill exists, or once existed, other factors can erode confidence and deter execution. For example, a supervisor can be overly critical of a team member and tear down the individual's confidence.
- *Willingness*: An individual's attitude or personal frame of reference—*I will or won't do it because . . .* As training professionals, we are interested in the willingness of an individual to
 - Learn and adopt targeted knowledge, skills, and behavior
 - Discontinue old ineffective habits
 - Execute in the work setting
- *Active Management Reinforcement*: AMR addresses actions of the performer's immediate manager to reinforce performance, reflect sponsorship, and be supportive of execution in the work setting. The components of AMR are
 - Advance communication of information and negotiation of *expectations*, such as goals and requirements regarding work roles, work load distribution, and responsibilities
 - Provision for and proper execution of performance *incentives and consequences*
 - Provision for and proper execution of *timely feedback, coaching, recognition, and support*
 - Provision for and maintenance of *adequate tools, equipment, technology, and resources*
 - Provision for and maintenance of *proper design of work space, job, tasks, policies, procedures, and processes*

The first four components of performance readiness address the individual and the fifth, AMR, addresses the carrying out of management responsibilities and support to influence performance. Historically to this point, training professionals conducting needs assessments have addressed the ability component (knowledge and skill) but often ignored the other components. As you will discover in Chapters Four and Five, tools are available with the Situational Needs Assessment process to help determine which components of performance readiness are lacking. Also, in the table on page 15 of this chapter, you will see how the training and performance design criteria account for all components of performance readiness, not just the learning component.

Preferences

Preferences address likes, dislikes, wants, and constraints regarding the design and delivery of the training and performance solution. Clients almost always articulate operational constraints when a training solution is delivered. For example, a client may want the training delivered only on Tuesdays to avoid heavy workload days. Or the client may state a lengthy time frame (the month of July) during which training cannot be accommodated due to many employees taking personal time off. A client may have delivery preferences, such as using web-based technology to avoid travel costs or to limit the time away from the job.

The participants may express a preference for desirable methods of learning or delivery that affect the design of the solution: self-study, case study, hands-on skill practice, expert coaching, action learning, web-based delivery, and so on.

To the extent feasible, client and participant preferences should be honored. However, cost issues or learning effectiveness factors may trump certain preferences—that is, money may be available only to accommodate a specific type of delivery. Or a specific competency may best be learned when it is facilitated because effective learning may be compromised if another delivery mode is used. When preferences cannot be met, it is the responsibility of the training function to demonstrate the compelling reasons and to negotiate a best fit.

The Training and Performance Process

To help us gain a better perspective and focus on performance, we should cease using the term *training process*. Using this term has helped condition our stakeholders to believe that training is either an event or a stand-alone process. Frankly, it has also conditioned training professionals in the same way. This is too confining for the demands of the twenty-first century. In its place we should consistently use the term *training and performance process*. Table 1.3 describes the criteria for an effective training and performance process.

This represents a shift in how we should think about training and how we should communicate with others about the training process. If we do this in the correct way, we will educate our clients about how a well-designed training solution that meets the criteria will influence the desired performance. This entire book is about helping clients and winning them into our camp of supporters. It is about working with them as partners to achieve the performance they want.

In upcoming chapters, we will address how this new training and performance process can serve us well as we identify needs, design, develop, propose, deliver, evaluate, and follow up on our training and performance solutions. You will also



TABLE 1.3. CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE PROCESS

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- A. Assessment, design, development, delivery, and evaluation of the training and performance process are results centered.
 - B. Some form of assessment is completed to identify performance requirements (what the population should be doing), performance gaps, and root cause.
 - C. Solution objectives and measures focus on root cause and are developed and communicated for performance readiness, performance execution, and business outcome.
 - D. The training and performance design addresses all components of *performance readiness*, not just learning.
 - E. The training and performance design addresses pre-engagement action.
 - F. The need for follow-up transfer action and strategy is assessed and implemented, or a compelling reason is provided for why it is not needed.
 - G. Participants identify and understand their responsibility to eliminate old ineffective habits and to execute and obtain results.
 - H. The execution role of Active Management Reinforcement (AMR) is addressed and, if needed, becomes part of the solution design.
 - I. Partnerships are established with key managers and clients, and a Performance Alignment Contract is negotiated.
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see some of the other approaches and tools in action, such as AMR (item H of Table 1.3) and the Performance Alignment Contract (referenced in item I).

The training and performance process spelled out in Table 1.3 is a guide for training professionals. If we truly want clients and others to see training through a different lens, then we must frame it differently for them and then help them to understand and appreciate that framework. We must address our processes openly, as the training and performance process is only the starting point in bringing performance clearly to the forefront. It gives us the opportunity to address training and performance in the same breath on a day-to-day basis.

Results are driven by the right processes applied by people in the right way.
You must commit to being process driven and then work your processes.

We must become experts at demonstrating to clients how a compromise in the training and performance process will affect the end result that they want to achieve. If we cannot do this, then perhaps we deserve whatever downfall comes our way. The remaining chapters are focused on how to avoid this downfall.

Top Three Barriers to Performance

Over the past twenty-five years I have conducted or been involved in several hundred needs assessments and follow-up business impact studies regarding the effectiveness of training solutions. As a result of these studies conducted in North America, Asia, and Europe, I can say with certainty that it is not unusual to see that 40 to 50 percent of the employees participating in training solutions do not execute as expected in the work setting. These data were collected from training participants using interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups. Additional research with training professionals collected responses in the same targeted areas.

Table 1.4 lists the three most common barriers ranked in the order selected by people participating in these systematic studies. Respondents were provided a list of six typical barriers to performance and a seventh choice labeled “other.” Some people providing data reported achieving good results after training even with the barriers, while some reported achieving partial results, and some reported achieving no results at all because of the barriers.

As Table 1.4 illustrates, old habits, ranked number two, are definitely something we should be concerned about as we strive to influence results with our training. The number one barrier selected, of course, is lack of reinforcement and support from the immediate manager. This is why the concept of AMR is included in the performance-centered framework in Table 1.1. Barriers should be sought out and identified during needs assessment activities, and their treatment should not be left to chance. We should purposefully discuss them in a positive way and address them in our training and performance design.

Both of the top two barriers in Table 1.4 indicate a lack of *readiness to perform*. The performer and other factors in the work setting are not in a state of readiness. We should not deliver training that provides a new skill or requires new behavior and ignore other factors that will influence the application of that skill or behavior.

TABLE 1.4. TOP THREE BARRIERS TO PERFORMANCE

Question: What are the significant barriers that limited your effective application of the skills/behavior at your job?

This question followed other questions related to use of skills on the job. The questions were asked several months after the program delivery, when enough time had passed to allow for an opportunity to implement the learning in the job setting.

- 1 My immediate manager does not reinforce/support my use of the skills/behavior.
- 2 It is difficult to break away from the way I have done it before (old habits).
- 3 I do not have enough time to apply the skills/behavior.

Learning should be treated as an isolated solution only when the evidence clearly supports it.

It is not only what the performers choose to do that is important in the readiness and performance equation; it is also the factors that influence them to make their choices. This means that other people and other factors in their circle of influence are also a part of the readiness and performance equation. This is why it is important to address AMR as a component of performance readiness.

Summary

The training process must be viewed through a different lens as we serve our clients in the twenty-first century. The way we have historically viewed training is too limiting. We must bring performance and learning transfer visibly into the picture. We must also operate our processes with a Performance-Centered Framework that keeps learning in focus and adds a broader dimension called *performance readiness*. This Performance-Centered Framework gives us a refreshing new insight to link readiness to execution and execution to business outcome. Execution is the key as we engage clients to address their needs. We cannot address learning without addressing execution in the work setting. If we can link learning and other components of performance readiness to execution, and if we can successfully address learning transfer, the desired business outcome will follow. We should also educate our clients on the training and performance process and how the training design can be properly executed to influence their desired outcome.

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