

Creating a High-Performance Culture

Sheila Brevard

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Organization Information

TSJ Investigations, Inc. is an organization whose primary goal is to deliver quality assessments that are reliable and provide detailed knowledge obtained through thoroughly conducted background investigations. Our aim to provide excellent customer service includes the delivery of detailed and accurate written reports of investigation. A component of our goal to provide excellent customer service is to provide appropriate case coverage in accordance with tiered national security investigative standards and develop facts as outlined by case type requirements that are necessary to provide a full understanding of each case and address national security and foreign relations challenges that are most critical. We strive to improve the cultural climate

Purpose and Values Defined

TSJ Investigations Inc. is dedicated to hiring personnel whose individual and unique purpose and values translate into our company culture. These values include respecting each other, maintaining accountability for individual and team actions, demonstrating a high level of integrity, and achieving success through innovation and mission focus, as well as driving results through individual and team commitment. TSJ Investigations, Inc. believes in being socially responsible and is dedicated to driving change through local and national social engagement and meaningful possibilities for all citizens through our cooperation with civic organizations. We support community projects which includes our employees and their families in maintaining well-being through positive and healthy lifestyles.

We are also committed deeply to honoring the service of our military veterans and their families. As part of our mission to improve the communities in which we are both employed and

reside, TSJ Investigations promotes the sustaining of our environment through partnerships with organizations that focus on the reduction of waste and greenhouse gas emissions, including fossil fuels, in addition to the promotion of energy efficiency. Sustaining our environment will include initiating achievable and measurable activities that focus on techniques to save energy, reduce consumption of paper, establishing a recycling program and becoming certified in leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

Performance Expectations Defined

At TSJ Investigations, Inc., our defined values drive the daily behavior of employees including employee interaction with all clients as well as all peers and partners. Employees are expected to be respectful and abide by set ethical standards. Each job duty is expected to be performed with professionalism, integrity and in compliance with the laws and regulations of the United States. Should any legal or ethical issues arise, TSJ Investigations, Inc has a variety of reporting options, including the option to report anonymously and confidentially through our ethics helpline. In accordance with whistleblower regulations, employees are free to honestly report suspected violations in good faith without the fear of retaliation, as TSJ Investigations, Inc. will never retaliate against any employee for reporting information as described. All employees are expected to maintain integrity and if misconduct is discovered, the employee will be held accountable.

Hofstede's Value Dimension Components and Six Sigma

Culture has been defined in various ways in literature. However, Geert Hofstede's, one of the most noted pioneers in the field, created a definition that is most recognized. Culture is defined by Hofstede (1980) as the distinguishing of members of one group of people from

another according to the collective programming of the mind. This model examines how cultural preferences that are overridden diverge transversely and shows the importance of merging the varying preferences of different people. In Hofstede's model, there are four core dimensions of national culture which are: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance (Qamar, Muneer, Jusoh, & Idris, 2013). The fifth dimension is long versus short term orientation, which was developed in 2001 in response to criticism regarding the applicability of his model in Asian cultures.

In 2010, Hofstede developed an additional sixth dimension, indulgence versus restraint. This addition is a direct reflection a captured dataset via a survey by World Values (Minkov, 2018). The six dimensions of Six Sigma provide a clear definition of roles and responsibilities, improved structure and concentration and also focus on changes that will improve upon current goals as well as develop additional strategic goals. In addition, Six Sigma's approach, including the systematic technique for improvement of processes, i.e. define, measure, analyze, improve, and control (DMAIC), is structured as it pertains to activities designed for quality improvement which are likely to initiate changes in organizational culture (Cronemyr, Eriksson & Jakolini, 2014).

Interventions and Expected Challenges

Miscommunication can occur as a result of cultural differences that influence different beliefs and behaviors, in addition to expectations between individual employees and groups (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010 as cited in Al-Bayati, Abudayyeh, & Albert, 2018). Ensuring that the identified cultural and demographic differences are understood contributes to the success of the organization (Maeso, 2011). Changes in this area may be successful, as a culture of understanding will be created through diversity training and facilitated understanding

of the differences. The implementation of a mentoring program is expected to yield positive results, as the satisfactory production statistics are expected to improve and a reduction in deficiencies in production is expected. In addition, the number of case correction requests is expected to decrease. Mentors will continue to assess mentees, identifying challenges early on. A rewards program will be implemented, and it is expected that employees will become motivated to earn rewards and recognition based on positive production statistics and as a result of the outcomes from Six Sigma and relative accomplishments. Refresher training will be implemented for all employees which is expected to result in a 25% decrease in low quality and deficient reports, with improved financial standing and organizational development credibility.

Additional trainers are needed in order to reduce the student to teacher ratio, and a separate evaluation of learning styles is necessary to determine the gap between the provided information and employee understanding. The timeline needed to obtain additional trainers who have successfully completed the necessary training is lengthy. In addition, the need to further train supervisory staff in effective team management remains. The Knowledge, Attitude, Skill, and Habits (KASH) tool, which is used to identify areas both personal and professional, that are in need of change, i.e. behavioral issues, poor habits and attitudes, culture, and personal mindset (Salmon, 2017) will be administered. However, accurate results will depend solely on the honesty of the employee's self-assessment.

Conclusion

The leadership of TSJ Investigations, Inc. continuously seek to improve the culture of the organization and ensure that the roles and responsibilities that have been defined within the organization are measurable. With the management of Six Sigma, the drive for innovation increases within the organizational culture and is beneficial to TSJ Investigations, Inc., as the

current culture of continuous progress is combined with Six Sigma's elements (He, Deng, Zhang, Zu, Antony, 2017). As a result, areas in need of change have been identified and with statistics and verified data, leadership is equipped to make better decisions regarding achieving the desired goals of the organization. In addition to the expectation of obtaining quantifiable financial returns and stronger leadership, the success of Six Sigma is connected to the change in culture and as additional methodologies for cultural and organizational improvement are introduced, the achievement of high performance is expected to be further perpetuated (Marzagão & Carvalho, 2016).

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Critically Analyzing Performance Improvement

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Theoretical Framework

Dedicated to promoting positive change in the performance of analysis process, the Human Performance Technology (HPT) uses both holistic and systematic approaches which have been verified and recognized as effective. As a critical foundation of performance improvement, through the analysis of the performance gap, HPT addressed the issues affecting performance by presenting the reasons and causes for the gap, in addition to ways to reduce the performance gap with performance excellence as the end goal (Abaci, 2015).

While measuring the rate of efficiency, as a performance measure, the return of investment (ROI) reflects the relation between investment costs and net profit while measuring the rate of efficiency. It is the favored metric for investigating profitability economically while determining the results of expenditures and actions (Nemec, 2018). Providing a critical analysis of a case study using both the human performance technology and the return of investment is the purpose of this paper is addressing the issues of performance impacting the cost management of the organization.

Research Questions

The performance issues appearing frequently at the front end of the validation process at ABC Company were related to the validation process. These issues impacted the compliance with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards and the economic goals. It was determined through closer examination that the validation process was monotonous and hard to understand. In addition, there was a lack of accountability stemming from the lack of both proper documentation pertaining to work and a lack of direction. Process modification, job aids, and

rewrites of procedure were the three non-training interventions that were identified by the validation process engineer and consultant to resolve the errors ranging between 60% to 80%. It is the goal of Senior Management to ensure that the process improvement efforts will eliminate FDA penalties and result in long term cost reduction.

Qualitative methods of research which highlighted the attitudes and individual experiences of surveyed participants were utilized. The multi-level Phillips ROI methodology, as shown in figure 1, was chosen as a primary measurement tool, as it measures changes in behavior relevant to the job which may also include application of knowledge and/or skills that are specialized and also learned in training. This method consists of five different metric levels which reveal the entire picture as it relates to the potential gains achieved (Czeropski, 2010).

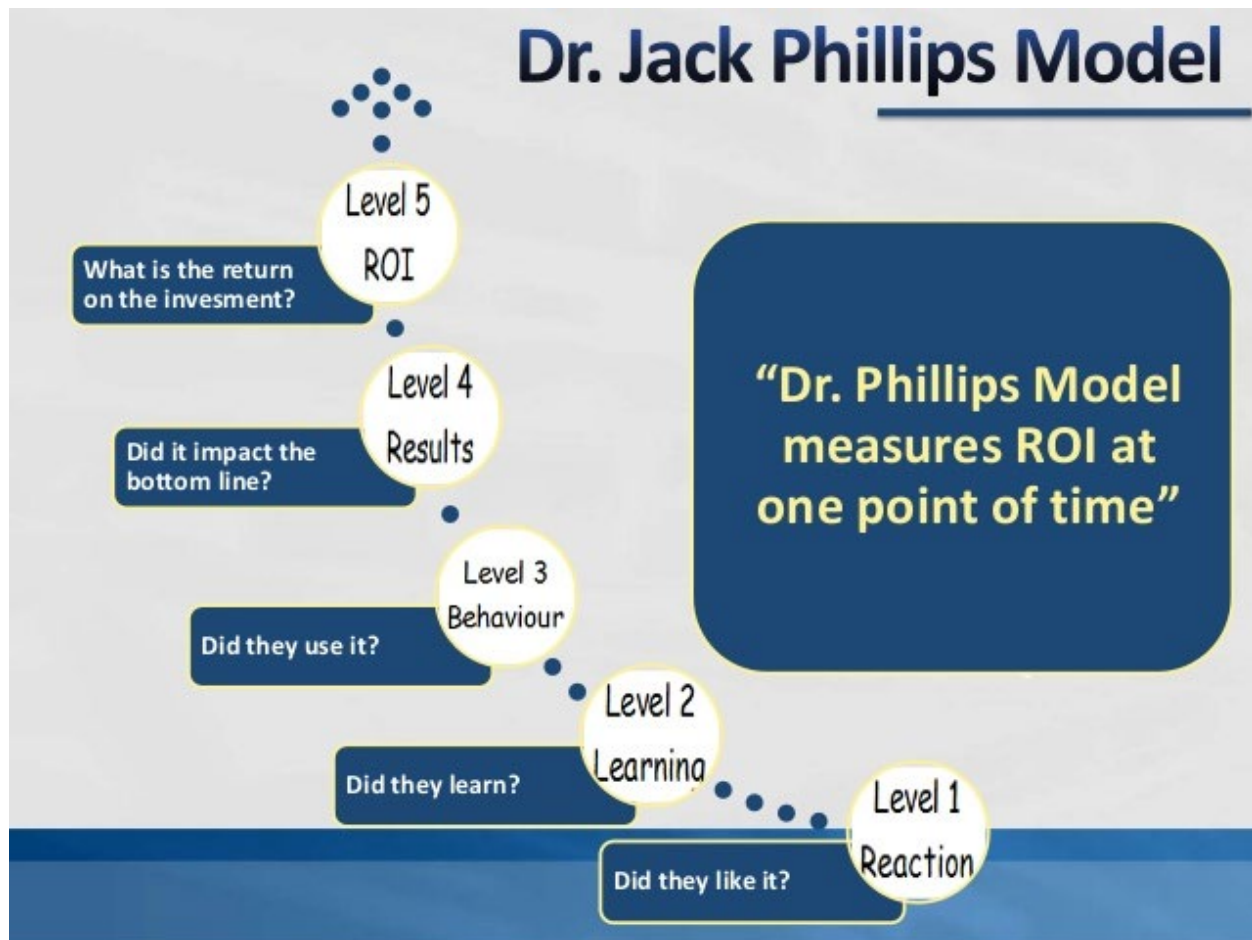


Figure 1 (Source: Fernandez, 2013)

While levels one and two focus on measuring the reaction to all of the interventions that were implemented and the acquired knowledge achieved through the strategic training interventions, Levels three and four examine the data to determine to what extent the acquired knowledge and skills are transferred to the workplace as well as to examine the impact of the business. The fifth level specifically addresses the return of investment (ROI) for every dollar invested. Assumptions are that the provided data will show both the effectiveness and frequency the on-the-job application (Phillips, Phillips, & Schell, 2015).

Isolation techniques were utilized for the efforts of validation improvement to show how impactful the solutions taken while isolating factors which may affect the production of the

performance results that were needed to guarantee that there the interventions directly and collectively impacted the process (Markham, 2013). The data collection plan, as shown in figure 2, which follows Phillips and Phillips' five-level evaluation framework, consisted of scores from a survey, pre-test, and post-test after the e-course, process observations, post-process change, and company record data (Czeropski, 2010). There were two specific audiences for the data source participation, the process users and the validation process guardians, which were separated based on those with or without process knowledge. An essential goal for senior management was to address the silo mentality.

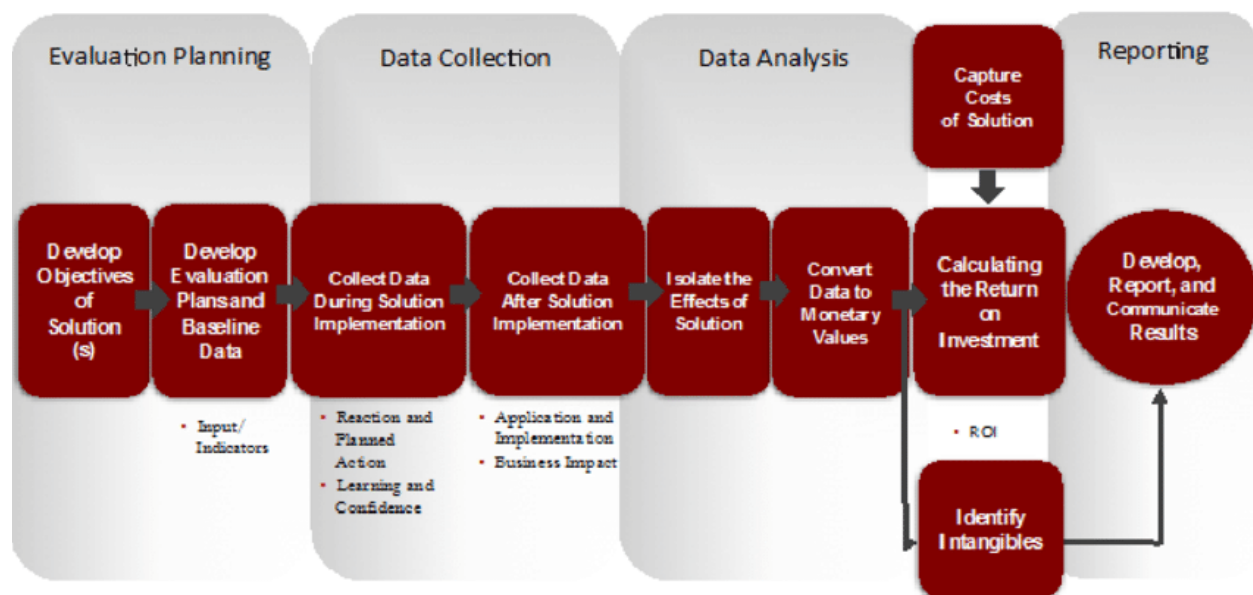


Figure 2 (Source: Phillips, 2016)

Research Results

Both a pre-test and post-test analysis was conducted to obtain whether the changes were significant that were observed in the performance levels after the training. The passing score was set at higher than 85% and participants took both the pre-test and post-test. The composite

learning gain index was set at higher than 60%. The results were easily understood and not only described participant details but also the mean values of the study and the correlational attributes within the two instruments. The Phillips ROI methodology showed cost benefits of \$162,648 and the total of the projected costs were \$36,532.75. The benefits to costs ratio (BCR) showed as 4.5 to 1, meaning that for every dollar spent on the validation process, the potential return was \$4.50 and the possible return was \$3.45. These numbers exceeded the ROI forecast of 168%.

Summary of Findings and Limitations

The importance of user consumer education as well as the validation process, learning of validation engineers, teamwork, and education was stressed and characteristics of a healthy working environment. The benefits of the validation project included an increase in both teamwork and collaboration, decrease in levels of stress between the process engineers and validation, credibility with management teams increased, demonstration of the process knowledge showing an understanding and appreciation for regulatory requirements of the FDA, an improvement of meeting dynamics, and also a possible reduction in unexpected audits from the FDA. This article suggests additional research in this aspect and suggestions for optimum growth and cohesion for the incorporation by the company and its future leaders. It is possible to develop a training curriculum that is able to meet the needs for a diverse learning community of users and also result in a validation process that is more streamlined and results in project timelines that are shorter. The project was successful due to the success of the HPT consultant

and the validation engineers collaborating and also the importance of having a well-structured intake method Czerpowski, 2010).

The consultant acted as a validation customer and was involved in the validation process from the beginning of the project. Validation engineers recognized the pedagogical elements that were needed in order to translate the more technical terms, including flowcharts, requirements, design specifications, and regulatory traceability of validation into simpler terms that can be easily understood by everyday validation users. An understanding of learning styles and principles was achieved by the engineers, which also helped with the understanding of the perceived difficulty of validation as a business process (Dean, 2017).

In reviewing this case study, several limitations were identified which include (1) little is known about the survey participants, including length of employment with the organization, education level, and number of years of experience in the field. (2) The sample size is not clearly defined and depending on the size, different results may have been produced. (3) There is no mention of participants who have limited computer skills, which would impact the online training delivery. The survey was given six months after the online training and may have significantly impacted both the retention of detailed information as well as the training results.

Analysis of the HPI Model

HPT also referred to as human performance improvement, is rooted in the science of learning and programmed instruction (Wachter & Yorio, 2013). Scholars in the field of HPT agree that the knowledge-informed and systematic approaches for understanding and addressing issues that are performance-related is well documented in literature and is recognized as the nature of HPT. According to Kang (2017), elements of research and development, as well as

organized data collection and analysis, should be practiced daily by HPT professionals. HPT scholars recommend quantitative and qualitative data analyses and techniques that are descriptive and inferential, which are used to understand information collected from a variety of performance improvement situations.

As a component of the Human Performance Technology model, the front-end analysis (FEA) is a systematic approach used to attain critical indicators that prove to be successful for individuals and the organization as a whole. Various interventions, including those adapted from other disciplines, such as quality management, behavioral psychology, organizational development, human resources, instructional systems, and process improvement (Abaci, 2015). The basis for formulating a process roadmap with clear instructions is provided by the front-end analysis and as proven, when started early, saves time and money (Dean, 2017). The front-end analysis also identifies performance problems within individual employees and within the entire organization and recommends tools and solutions for improvement purposes. If successfully implemented, recommended solutions will more than likely result in satisfying customers with the changes needed to propel the organization to a position of excellence and increase its earning potential.

A front-end analysis that is well executed achieves the project necessities as well as portrays the performance that is desired and expected to adhere to project requirements and recognize options that are acceptable (Markham, 2013). According to Phillips and Aaron, 2008 as cited in Czeropski, 2010, Trend lines are beneficial to approximating the program impact prior to it being implemented. Both the front-end analysis and trend-line analysis were conducted as

an element of the ABC Company's process improvement efforts and proved to be critical to gap identification in the validation process.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study and Design

A platform to streamline stakeholders' needs and expectations is purposely provided in this model along with user-friendly and self-guided training offered by the e-learning modules. The e-learning modules gave participants the opportunity to obtain a more extensive knowledge base regarding the validation process. As a result, a clear understanding provided a straightforward, user-friendly effect on e-learning, which was related to the process improvement needs of validation. Isolation strategies maintained the fidelity and enhanced the validity of the process. However, the unclear parameters regarding the sample size and details of those with or without process knowledge were the most limiting portion of the study. There was no mention of the criteria needed to be considered as having process knowledge or which of the levels of process knowledge indicated proficiency.

Implications of Culture

According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010 as cited in Al-Bayati, Abudayyeh, and Albert, 2018, miscommunication within the workplace can adversely affect workplace behavior and performance due to certain expectations or beliefs and behaviors that are different due to cultural differences between individuals and groups of individuals. Once differences are identified within organizations, to include demographic differences, it is imperative to the organization's success to ensure the understanding of any differences (Maeso, 2011). One way of creating a culture of understanding, whether it's Employee to employee or manager to employee

interaction, is to incorporate diversity training that facilitates the understanding of cultural and generational differences. Phillips and Phillips, 2002 as cited in Nemec, 2018, suggest that it is worthwhile to invest in training even though all problems are not solved with training alone. However, acknowledging the benefits as a result of the implementation of sound training is important.

The approach used in this paper impacts organizational culture and human resources and provides an empirical method to test and validate claims that training programs have a positive effect regarding measurable outcomes (Nemec, 2018). This approach created a pathway to minimizing process costs and improving productivity and mission efficiency through statistical techniques and with the senior team intentionally working collectively towards a performance goal, the organizational culture can be shifted considerably with the reduction of the silows of separation and the creation of mentoring space for employees with extensive knowledge to coach those with less experience. HPT as the performance measurement system continuously encourages the implementation of the strategy which allows the collection of feedback used to evaluate and conduct planning efforts while measuring the efficiency of the process and validating the selected business process improvements. Managers are given the ability to recognize top performances that promote the practice to achieve the goals of the organization.

Recommendations

Examining the pattern of completion through participant feedback can improve the validation process, including the use of survey instruments and the Training Impact Questionnaire and survey participants are more likely to be transparent and truthful in an environment that is safe and non-punitive. The purpose of this study was primarily to produce an

effective and consistent measure to assess the placement of e-learning and process validations with the expectations of the organization and also the stakeholders. Clearly defining the knowledge and experiences within a larger sample group of survey participants should be considered by future researchers. Doing so may produce different results between participants who are technologically advanced and participants who have limited technological experience, including e-learning and level of computer usage.

To validate the study results, researchers should consider using a larger number of participants if replicating this study. Also, the blended learning approach with e-learning and classroom learning should be considered, in addition to the level three evaluation of e-learning, as a blended learning environment that incorporates e-learning and face-to-face instructor-led training provides an approach that may benefit all learning styles. Establishing a mentor program where employees that are completely trained and more experienced are utilized as mentors. The ideal use of all staff members can help to improve personal skills, communication, and the engagement level of employees through provided training. (Stewart & Harrison, 2016).

Another suggestion is to present the survey twice within the six-month period following the completion of training, either at month one and six or at month three and then again at month six. Doing so may yield more in-depth responses and suggestions for training improvements. In addition, a Level Four and Five assessment will determine the return on investment, if any. Therefore, the consultant may recommend additional post-training evaluations between the six and twelfth months

Conclusion

The field of performance improvement and front-end analysis are important components of business operations and organizational success within many industries. The assistance of HPT professionals to perform an FEA is often sought to help redefine organizational requirements and performance expectations. According to Tamez (2016) when a performance analysis is conducted, the current performance versus desired performance within an organization is thoroughly examined which allows the organization to address any gaps in performance and needs to achieve the goals as set by the organization.

Consultants who take on the role of subject matter experts, equip organizations not only with tools that are needed but also useful tools as the goals to achieve excellence are pursued, using resources that are credible and evidence-based, including the ROI to satisfy the needs of clients. The strength of a collaboration process improvement strategy is shown in this case study, using both subjective and objective lenses of internal employees who are closely involved with the organization's process improvement needs and those of consultants.

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Figure 2. Data Collection Model from

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Diagnostic, Process, and Holistic Approaches to Performance Analysis

Sheila Brevard

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According to Tamez (2016), conducting a performance analysis allows an organization to not only examine the current performance versus desired performance but also to address the needs and gaps in performance as needed to achieve the desired goals of the organization.

Performance analysis is also the first step in human performance technology (HPT), which aims to solve performance problems and improve performance within an organization by creating a record of performance that is both valid and reliable through a series of systematic observations. In conducting a performance analysis, the skills, experiences, behavior, and knowledge of an individual are all incorporated along with the culture of the organization and standard practices within management.

The use of different approaches such as diagnostic, process, and holistic based approaches to analyze performance are dependent on the desired achievement of organizational goals. These approaches were developed as a result of the research, knowledge, and experience of each of the researchers and/or practitioners and serves as the foundation for addressing both the needs and gaps in the performance of employees and organizations as a whole (Tamez, 2016). While there are numerous notable contributors, this paper will focus on the following: Joe Harless' ADDIE (analysis) approach, Donald Kirkpatrick's evaluation approach, and Geary Rummler's process method.

Analysis Approach

The ADDIE approach is a support tool used in Harless' performance improvement plan which according to Harless, 1994 as cited in Ripley, 2016, focuses on implementing interventions developed through a strict analysis, design, and testing process to increase the quality of performance for new and existing employees within the organization. The ADDIE

approach consists of five phases: (1) Analysis, (2) Design, (3) Development, (4) Implementation, and (5) Evaluation, as shown in Figure 1 (HPT Manual, n.d).

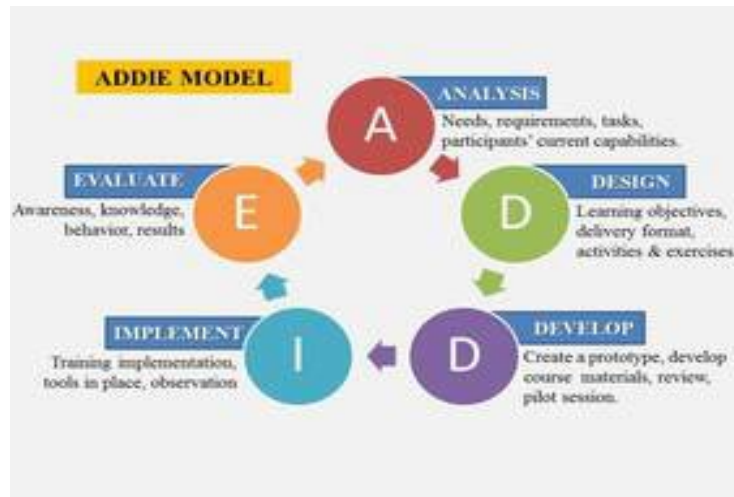


Figure 1 (Source: HPT Manual, n.d.)

Phase one of the ADDIE model is the analysis stage and deals with what the organization needs. It is in this stage that the series of questions asked, help identify objectives. This stage helps determine if training will address the issues that need to be resolved. Phase two deals with determining the type of training needed and building the structure around the identified objectives. Phase three deals with how the training will be delivered and involves building the training along with job aids, projects, and other learning activities. Phase four is the implementation stage and involves presenting the training with all course material and supplies needed, as well as ensuring that all material is covered. Phase five is the evaluation stage and involves assessing and evaluating the learners. This stage also determines if the learners have met course objectives and observing or measuring any changes in the workplace, in addition to analyzing the evaluation data to determine if any revisions are necessary for the instructional course.

Critics of this approach such as Erickson (2018) conclude that ADDIE is rigid and linear, which leaves the user with the risk of not being able to fully evaluate due to limited time and resources. Torrance, 2014 as cited in Erickson, 2018 suggests that a linear approach also prevents the pensive implementation of information learned since shifting from the standard flow of the project within ADDIE, would create the need for additional funds once it has proceeded past the stage of implementation. ADDIE is beneficial as tool as it focuses on the need to plan prior to designing and according to Branch and Merrill, 2011, ADDIE was meant to be flexible and repetitive.

Evaluation Approach

Donald Kirkpatrick developed the Kirkpatrick approach, which is an evaluation model consisting of four levels. The four levels are reaction, learning, behavior, and results, as shown in Figure 3 (Rimon, 2017).

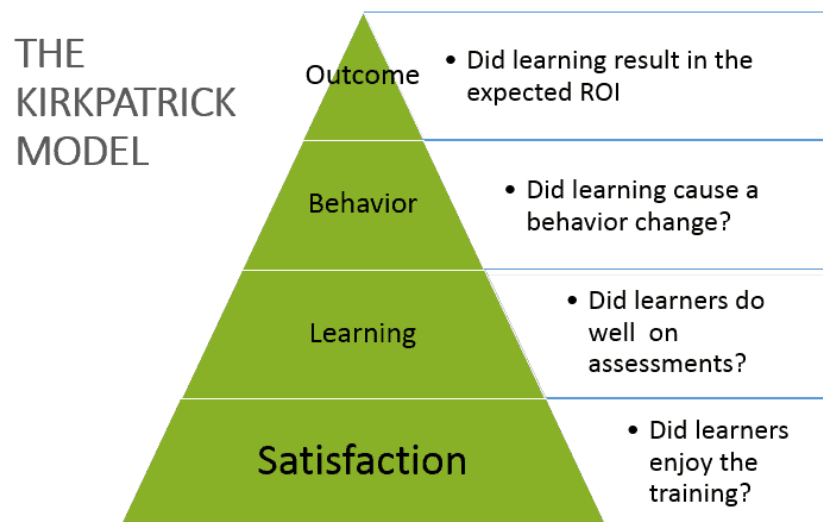


Figure 2 (Source: Rimon, 2017)

The reaction level measures the response of learners to the training received. In this level, the learners are asked how well the training process went. The learning level examines what was

learned and what new information was gained from the training. In the behavior level, training participants are observed to determine whether or not the information obtained via training is used to improve his/her performance and/or create a change in conduct. Lastly, the results level measures whether or not the changed behavior or improved performance resulted in reaching the desired goal of the organization.

Critics of this approach, such as Alliger and Janek (1989) assert that the levels are not arranged in an ascending order, are not linked causally, and are inter-correlated positively. In addition, Bushnell, 1990 and Hayes, Scott, Braczinskas, Scaccia, Stout, and Wandersman, 2016, as cited in Reio, Rocco, Smith, and Chang, 2017 suggest that Kirkpatrick's approach is not useful in terms of an influential evaluation or process of training as a whole since it only observes what happens after training. Other criticisms according to Kraiger, Ford and Salas 1993, as cited in Reio, Rocco, Smith, and Chang, 2017, include that the needs assessment in addition to the planning and implementation are not included in the training processes.

Also, Kraiger, Ford and Salas, 1993 as cited in Reio, Rocco, Smith, and Chang, 2017, suggest that Kirkpatrick's approach fails to specify the changes that can be expected or what techniques used to assess and evaluate each level of learning. However, according to Paull, Whitsed, and Girardi (2016), the Kirkpatrick approach is beneficial in that it provides diverse audiences with a straightforward approach that is rather easy to implement. In addition, it allows for preparation in advance and the development of structures that are simple with no distraction from learning.

Process Approach

Geary Rummler's process method consists of three levels of performance: (1) organizational, (2) process, and (3) job/performer level as well as three levels of performance

needs such as management and design, in addition to goals, as shown in Figure 2 (HPT Manual, n.d).

The Three Levels of Performance	The Three Performance Needs			
		Goals	Design	Management
	Organization Level	Organization Goals	Organization Design	Organization Management
	Process Level	Process Goals	Process Design	Process Management
	Job/Performer Level	Job/Performer Goals	Job/Performer Design	Job/Performer Management

Figure 3 (Source: HPT Manual, n.d.)

Together these levels form the nine-performance variable model which consist of the following quadrants: organization (goals, designs, management), process (goals, designs, management), and job (goals, designs, measurement). The organizational level examines the organization itself, including its overall strategy, overall goals of the organization, and any external variables that factor into the organization's performance. The process level examines the main work of the organization, providing a closer look at the processes established by the organization that are instrumental in the production of work. The job/performer level observes how the performers work and his/her contribution to the established processes.

According to Rummler and Brache, 1990 as cited in Muller and Pfleger 2014, the Rummler approach's main objective is to evaluate the organization as it is. Based on the results, the aim is to increase the performer's skill level and capabilities to be able to perform the work as required, and to eradicate deficiencies through outlining the organizations' stages of maturity. This approach allows the practitioner to understand the performer's contribution to the process as well as identify what changes may be required to support changes needed in the process.

According to Rosenberg et al, 1992 as cited in Wilmoth, Prigmore, and Bray, 2002, this approach represents the belief that analysis determines that different solutions are required in order for an organization to produce organizational excellence and ensure the successful performance of individuals within the organization.

With the Rummler approach, the application of systems thinking is applied to the organization as a whole and the performance is not limited to human performance only but also as it relates to the performance of the entire organization. Critics of the Rummler approach assert that it collects data more from upper management and/or at the organization level instead of an equal collection that includes data from individuals at the level of performer and also there is a substantially small number of tools provided at the performer level that are more likely not implemented due to a large amount of time needed to do so (Wimbiscus, 1993).

Conclusion

Choosing a diagnostic, process, or holistic approach to analyze the performance of individuals and/or an organization is largely dependent upon the established and desired goals of the organization. In reviewing the Harless (ADDIE) and Rummler approaches, it is evident that training instruction will not solve every organizational or individual performance problem. However, these two approaches examine the needs of the individual as well as the organization and rely on the analyzation of performance problems to determine both the cause and possible solutions. Further, both approaches emphasize the performance of the organization and the impact on the future success of the organization. While both the Rummler and Harless (ADDIE) approaches include an evaluation aspect, the Kirkpatrick approach differs, in that it focuses solely on evaluating the reactions and response to training. According to Santos, Vicente, and Monteiro (2012), the Kirkpatrick approach favors issues that are associated with how the

individual responds to training, including the satisfaction level, and also the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are utilized in a specific situation. The choice of approach chosen by the organization depends on the desired results in accordance with specific goals set by the organization and the choice may include one or even a combination of the available approaches (Erickson, 2018) to make informed decisions regarding its future success.

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Evaluating the Use of Performance Improvement Solutions
to Improve Gender Equity in Education

Sheila Brevard

October 6, 2019

Gender roles, impacted by cultural and societal beliefs, create a disparity with regards to the treatment of females and the levels of education obtained between females and males. With the extension of gender roles beyond households and educational institutions, it is necessary to train educators to tackle the disparity through the development and implementation of pedagogy that deconstructs and debunks culturally assigned gender roles (Spear & Da Costa, 2017).

According to Nurlu (2017) introducing students to roles in reverse of cultural beliefs is based on the gender stereotype scale towards mathematics of individual teachers and results in achievements that are greater amongst female students. In addition, females that receive encouragement typically excel in math. Spear and Da Costa (2017) posit that the deconstruction of gender-based inequalities in education is instrumental in allowing teachers and school administrators to focus on educational equality for all students.

Gender-responsive pedagogy encourages the involvement of students to assist in redefining cultural and societal expectations regarding gender roles in education. Also, female and male students who engage in discussions that are open, share the values and beliefs that enable the positive reinforcement of gender stereotypes (Muasya & Kazungu, 2018). Gender-responsive pedagogy is one of the tools used to establish a pathway to deconstruction, as well as reverse stereotypes and inequalities experienced by individuals at a young age in early education (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). The establishing of deconstruction leads to pedagogy transformations that involve introducing students to themes, ideas, and concepts that encourage the reversing of stereotypes concerning roles that are gender-based as well as foster limitations in learning (Spear & Da Costa, 2017). Strategically addressing the issues through a performance intervention solution is imperative to introduce changes to pedagogy that result in the reversal of cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes within educational systems, as gender-responsive pedagogy is

essential to changing the beliefs and patterns of behavior that challenge barriers to females receiving equal education (Spear & Da Costa, 2017).

According to Nurlu (2017) introducing students to roles in reverse of cultural beliefs is based on the gender stereotype scale towards mathematics of individual teachers and results in achievements that are greater amongst female students. In addition, females that receive encouragement typically excel in math and Spear and Da Costa (2017) posit that the deconstruction of gender-based inequalities in education is instrumental in allowing teachers and school administrators to focus on educational equality for all students. Gender-responsive pedagogy encourages the involvement of students to assist in redefining cultural and societal expectations regarding gender roles in education. Also, female and male students who engage in discussions that are open, share the values and beliefs that enable the positive reinforcement of gender stereotypes (Muasya & Kazungu, 2018).

Impact of Pedagogy on Gender Equity in Early Education

According to Muasaya and Kazunga (2018), pedagogy in early education is instrumental in establishing gender equity and what a teacher believes, regarding the female student's ability to thrive in roles, will influence male and female students alike (Nurlu, 2017). A gender-responsive pedagogy is instrumental in dispelling myths regarding male-dominated roles, especially as it pertains to areas in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), which are generally considered male-dominated. Perceptions about gender roles in early education, ultimately determine how educators engage with students. As a result, in a classroom setting, young female students are assigned activities considered to be free of aggression and calm while male students are assigned activities that are considered to be aggressive, rough play. Spear and Da Costa (2017) posit that teachers who are able to balance cultural beliefs either on

his/her own or with training, will encourage male and female students to reverse pre-defined gender roles into roles that are instead determined by a student's ability to understand, learn, and apply the information necessary to successfully balance his/her individual cultural beliefs. In order to provide equal opportunities for both male and female students, it is recommended that six-sigma be incorporated as a strategy for performance improvement and as a pathway to establish gender-responsive pedagogy. An institutional performance model where at the macro level, issues are examined is required (Bernandez, 2009).

Defining Six-Sigma

One method to address the issue of inequality in pedagogy is to apply the Six-Sigma method. It is observed that in early education, gender inequity is greatly impacted by both culture and parental beliefs in developed and underdeveloped nations. Biraimah (2016) asserts that within a patriarchal society, the topic of female education is governed by cultural beliefs. Balancing cultural and parental beliefs with the concept of equality can be achieved through the method of Six-Sigma. Humphress and Berg (2006) describe Sigma as being a methodology of process improvement which provides businesses with the tools needed to improve the competence of their business procedures. Having a shared platform that enhances its level of effectiveness with strategic practices, quality resources, and knowledge, Six Sigma echoes similar traits as Total Quality Management (TQM) as a result of its likelihood to produce positivity where finances and customer satisfaction are concerned. For this reason, Six Sigma is significantly recognized throughout multiple sectors (Marzagão & Carvalho, 2016). Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control (DMAIC) are the five steps of Six-Sigma used in the systematic technique for process improvement. Traits that distinguish Six-Sigma from other improvement models include decision making based on statistical methods and data that are

verifiable, efforts to obtain financial returns that are quantifiable, and leadership that is strong (Marzagão & Carvalho, 2016).

The implementation of Six-Sigma in the healthcare, service, and manufacturing industries is documented well. However, usage in the education sector is limited and found only as it relates to higher education (LeMahieu, Nordstrum, and Cudney, 2017). With the possibility of frequent and random factors involving the habits, knowledge levels, experiences, and attributes (social and personality) incarnate in the performance of individual employees, Six-Sigma may be viewed as ill-fitting for primary and secondary education systems as a performance intervention. However, Yu and Ueng, (2012) posit that Six-Sigma's philosophies and methodologies are accomplishable in the field of education, although generally applied in industrial service fields, as one of the major goals of the education sector is to improve the performance of students by ensuring that educators and administrators are providing an opportunity for equality through pedagogy (Walton-Fisette, 2018).

Best Practices Taken from the Vicksburg Warren County, Mississippi School District

The Vicksburg Warren County, Mississippi School District (VWCMSD) was recently chosen to enter a partnership with Ford Next Generational Learning (FNGL), which is a collaborative community impact organization. The FNGL administered the Six Sigma process and assisted VWCMSD by addressing issues amongst educators and school administrators to close any gaps with reaching set goals and achieving outcomes resulting in a stronger talent pipeline that includes students being better prepared for college, careers, leadership, educational equity, increased community and prosperity shared by all (Salmon, 2017). Six Sigma uses DMAIC, which is the primary feature of its framework and the use of DMAIC highlighted the significance of defining issues so that changes occur, and issues are resolved.

The results of the DMAIC process were used to create a handbook for VWCMSD personnel in addition to several tools that were successfully implemented, such as charts and diagrams to determine the root causes of the issues, outline processes, and to ensure that the project direction is understood, as well as several other tools that included analyzing the following elements to achieve goals: specific improvement target area, measurable improvement progress, clearly assigned individual or group responsibility, and timing of results. In addition, brainstorming techniques were used, and also the Knowledge, Attitude, Skill, and Habits (KASH) tool, which helps individuals to identify personal and professional areas where changes can occur pertaining to culture, poor attitudes and habits, and personal mind-set (Salmon, 2017). It was determined and accepted that utilizing the tools provided as a result of Six Sigma will potentially impact educators as well as transform leadership within the district's education system and provide a pathway to achieving equity in education.

Conclusion

School districts that utilize Six Sigma and implement gender awareness workshops help to transform leadership, change behaviors, and equip educators with the necessary tools to transform cultural beliefs and learning experiences, pertinent to challenging gender inequality within the education sector. Deconstructing cultural beliefs and stereotypes that have been deeply ingrained from early childhood is necessary to creating a more diverse student population as it relates to STEM and contributes to the successful reversal of cultural expectations that hinder diverse educational development and growth. The development and implementation of pedagogy that is gender-responsive provides opportunities for gender equality and displayed excellence in all areas of education. The use of Six Sigma within the educational sector provides a framework for administrators to purposefully focus on the achievement of perceptible changes

within society that contribute to developing more confident educators and students that are equipped with the knowledge necessary to become leaders that create positive changes within the educational system (Stone-Johnson, 2014).

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Performance Assessment and Intervention Recommendations

Sheila Brevard

November 3, 2019

Rooted in the science of learning and programmed instruction, Human Performance Technology (HPT) is also referred to as human performance improvement (Wachter & Yorio, 2013) and according to Kang (2017), elements of research and development, as well as organized data collection and analysis, should occur regularly as a daily practice by HPT professionals. In order to identify areas in need of improvement within TSJ Investigations, Inc., the HPT model was used in conducting the front-end analysis. With regards to meeting set organizational goals, FEA outlines and provides detailed instruction confirmed to save money and time with early intervention (Dean, 2017). An analysis of TSJ Investigations, Inc. from the perspective of a performance improvement strategy is featured in this paper. The specific performance metric from TSJ Investigations that will be considered is:

- a) Ineffective case coverage pertaining to lack of complete issue resolution

A thorough examination of this performance metric will serve to identify the problem areas and also any interventions to improve and/or correct employee performance.

Organization Information

TSJ Investigations, Inc. is located in the southwest, United States and began operations in early, 2010. It is an organization whose primary goal is to deliver quality assessments that are reliable and provide detailed knowledge obtained through thoroughly conducted background investigations. TSJ Investigations, Inc. aims to provide excellent customer service which includes the delivery of detailed and accurate written reports of investigation. A component of TSJ's goal to provide excellent customer service is providing appropriate case coverage in accordance with tiered national security investigative standards and develop facts as outlined by

case type requirements that are necessary to provide a full understanding of each case and address national security and foreign relations challenges that are most critical.

Organizational Analysis

As an organization, the goal of TSJ Investigations Inc. is to thoroughly conduct tiered background investigations in support of national security and to deliver to the client, detailed written reports containing the accurate and reliable information obtained. In doing so, optimum customer service and satisfaction is provided to the client, resulting in increased profits. TSJ Investigations, Inc. is focused on providing excellent customer service by using appropriate case coverage as well as developing facts in line with the outlined requirements necessary to present a clear understanding of each case, in addition to addressing any issues of national security and/or challenges regarding foreign relations. According to Dean (2017), with regards to meeting set organizational goals, conducting a front-end analysis will outline and provide instructions that are detailed and confirmed with early intervention, to save money and time.

Performance Gap

A front-end analysis determined that the performance issue of ineffective coverage impacted the organization financially and the company risked losing client contracts. Performance gaps primarily occurred within the interview process of obtaining the required issue resolution necessary to fully resolve issues within the adjudicative guidelines. Issue resolution is a detailed interview process and not fully understood by new investigators overall. As a result, submitted reports were written improperly and identified as deficient and returned from client reviewers, which also impacted the organization's status of compliance with national investigative standards. A gap analysis was conducted as a vital component of TSJ

Investigations, Inc.'s drive to identify gaps and improve productivity (Markham, 2013), with the use of surveys and personal interviews, as well as direct observation via check-rides, investigative review of reports of investigation, and reviews of national investigative standards. The following performance gaps which are all classified as procedural deficiencies were identified as follows:

- Failure to provide effective coverage pertaining to full resolution of issues that fall under the adjudicative guidelines.

Data Analysis

The data collection consisted of personal interviews, surveys, a pre-test prior to the revamped training, and weekly statistics regarding status of submitted reports and check-ride evaluations. An in-depth examination of the data identified that 85% of deficient reports were submitted by newly trained investigators. The primary reason for the deficient reports was the inability to successfully complete full issue resolution. The analysis also showed that the training modules lacked detailed written explanations, real-life examples, and a practical role-playing component. When the newly hired investigators were surveyed regarding their knowledge of full issue resolution, 63.4% did not understand the process or the basic concept of the resolution interview process.

Cause Analysis

A review of the performance gaps along with the personal interviews, surveys, and reviews of supervisory observation reports regarding weekly statistics revealed the following potential causes:

- Newly hired investigators are not clearly understanding the coverage requirements pertaining to issue resolution. Investigators have emphasized that the in-classroom training was rushed, issue resolution for each of the adjudicative topics was not included in the training, and investigators are not obtaining the knowledge needed for sufficient case coverage.
- Investigators are not utilizing provided guides that outline case coverage requirements, as investigators have indicated that the provided guides are not outlined properly, and the information is not in order according to the typical flow of the security questionnaire, making it fairly confusing to read.

Cultural Perspective of Performance

According to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010 as cited in Al-Bayati, Abudayyeh, and Albert, 2018, miscommunication can occur as a result of cultural differences that influence different beliefs and behaviors, in addition to expectations between individual employees and groups. Ensuring that the identified cultural and demographic differences are understood contributes to the success of the organization (Maeso, 2011). According to Ramlan, et al., (2018), language barriers are often associated with cultural differences which pose additional problems and misunderstandings within the workplace, resulting in lower employee productivity and inefficiency. This attributes to the inefficiencies in obtaining proper case coverage, as investigators whose first language is not English and/or have limited command of or proficiency in the English language are unable to ask the appropriate or necessary questions during the interview process in a way that gleans the necessary information from the interviewee. According to Hwang (2013), the language barrier that surfaces is likely to occur during

interactive verbal communication that demands an immediate understanding and response to questions or comments in English.

Performance Intervention Recommendations

An all-hands meeting with open discussion, including all management staff and investigators was held concerning the levels of performance that are currently existing versus the ideal level of performance expected, as well as the importance of achieving the expected level of performance and benefits to all. The inclusion of all employees in the intervention process will help to reveal the knowledge/skill gaps pertaining to individual performance within the organization and determine if training is needed and if so, the best approach (Palmer, 2009). The following plan of improvement was recommended, discussed, and approved:

- The training modules will be revamped to include the adjudicative guidelines and full issue resolution, which all new investigators will be required to attend and exhibit a full understanding through practical exams that include role-playing regarding real-life issues. Students will also be required to form groups, create issue-related situations, and complete role-playing activities.
- To improve readability, all job aids will be reorganized to reflect the natural flow of coverage pertaining to the adjudicative guidelines in relation to the security questionnaire.
- The implementation of a post-training mentoring program to specifically address any coverage and cultural inefficiencies will be established. Experienced investigators, including those with an excellent command of the English language, will be paired with new investigators, including those less proficient in the English language. Mentors will

assess their mentees periodically, which will help to identify any areas in need of improvement.

- The implementation of a case support department, consisting of experienced investigators will be established for any questions pertaining to case coverage requirements and report writing. This case support hotline will have extended work hours until 8:00 pm, EST to account for investigators working in the pacific time zone who may need assistance.
- The implementation of a rewards program to boost morale and motivation. Investigators who surpass monthly expectations will receive a monetary bonus since performance outcomes will not be changed by training alone (Jaenke, 2013).

Performance Intervention Implementation

Newly hired investigators agreed to utilize all available resources to ensure that performance of their job duties are carried out to the highest level possible, achieving the production goals set forth by TSJ Investigations, Inc. As new methods of improvements are introduced, such as the mentoring and rewards programs, high-performance achievement is expected to be perpetuated further (Marzagão & Carvalho, 2016). In addition, the continuous periodic assessment of new investigators by their assigned mentors will prevent any delays in immediately repairing problem areas (Gibb, 2011). One other intervention method used to identify the areas that needed to be improved, including issues regarding behavior and poor habits, as well as poor attitudes, personal mindset and culture is the Knowledge, Attitude, Skill, and Habits (KASH) tool. The accuracy of this tool is based on the self-assessment of individual employees and if administered (Salmon, 2017), may result in obtaining more in-depth explanations and a better understanding of the cause(s) of individual performance issues. The KASH tool was implemented as optional only. The following interventions were implemented:

- Revamped training modules which included a full module for coverage of adjudicative guidelines and full issue resolution as well as a practical exam component that included role-playing regarding real-life issues and student group input regarding the creation of issue-related situations.
- Reorganized job aids which reflect the natural flow of coverage pertaining to the adjudicative guidelines in relation to the security questionnaire.
- A post-training mentoring program was implemented to specifically address any coverage and cultural inefficiencies, pairing experienced investigators, including those with an excellent command of the English language with new investigators, including those less proficient in the English language.
- A Case Support Department was established, consisting of experienced investigators to assist investigators with any questions pertaining to case coverage requirements and report writing.
- A rewards program is expected to be established within a six-month period, to boost morale and motivation.

Performance Intervention Evaluation

The response of training participants to survey questions was positive at 80% and revealed an increase in the knowledge and skills needed to complete full issue resolution. The post-test results revealed that the practical exam component of the training was pivotal in ensuring that investigators were well-versed in full issue resolution. The revamped training was understood well, and the practical component of the training was very informative and easily understood. Along with the reorganized job-aids, hands-on, real-life experiences were instrumental in the investigator's ability to understand the written information obtained from the training module and the requirements for case

coverage. An examination of the statistical data revealed that an improvement in the conducting of full issue resolution resulted in a 50% increase in client-approved reports within the first sixty days following revamped training.

It is estimated, based on the data reviewed that a further increase of 50% and a complete total of 100% will be achieved within the first 180 days. The establishment of the Case Support Department and application of the mentoring program was successful and resulted in a 65% decrease in reworked case reports. New investigators acknowledged that mentors were easily accessible, extremely knowledgeable, and contributed to a 50% decrease in overall errors and decreased report submission times. Cultural inefficiencies declined as investigators were able to engage one-on-one with the assigned mentor. Mentors reviewed real-life experiences which assisted investigators with improving communication techniques. Investigators also acknowledged that the Case Support Department employees were easily accessible and extremely knowledgeable as well and contributed to a 15% percent decrease in errors. However, investigators relied heavily on the one-on-one contact with the assigned mentor. As client satisfaction increased, the organization's credibility increased overall, and financial earnings improved with the decrease in deficient reports.

Conclusion

The high-performance technology (HPT) model helped to identify the factors contributing to deficiencies and poor performance amongst employees and internally within the organization as a whole. In doing so, recommendations for improvement and any factors that needed to be implemented to influence employee behaviors and an increase in production stats were identified. As a result, the recommendations for improvement in addition to transforming organizational operations and preventing excessive training and development

expenses (Chyung, 2008) resulted in the completion of quality work, satisfied customers, organizational excellence, and an increase in profitability.

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Performance Improvement and Front-End Analysis

Sheila Brevard

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Performance Improvement and Front-End Analysis

As an organization, we strive to provide optimum customer service and satisfaction by conducting full background investigations and providing accurately written reports detailing the pertinent information obtained. All investigators must obtain investigative coverage that is sufficient to develop the necessary facts as required by case types in accordance with national security and investigative standards. In determining whether or not the goals of the TSJ Investigation Company have been met, employees have been evaluated as to whether or not he/she was successful in meeting the set goals of this organization (HR Zone, 2019). The front-end analysis included redefining requirements and expected performance, as well as providing specific instructions to successfully meet each goal while recognizing alternative methods proven to be successful to those provided (HR Zone, 2019). In addition, basic management functions including methods of planning, organizing, and staffing, as well as performance standards in terms of knowledgeability, weekly stats, requirements, expectations, and behavior standards such as lateness, absenteeism, and complaints were examined.

Human Performance Improvement

Rooted in the science of learning and programmed instruction, HPT is also referred to as human performance improvement (Wachter & Yorio, 2013) and according to Kang (2017), elements of research and development, as well as organized data collection and analysis, should occur regularly as a daily practice by HPT professionals. In order to identify areas in need of improvement within TSJ Investigations, Inc., the Human Performance Technology (HPT) model was used in conducting the front-end analysis. With regards to meeting set organizational goals, FEA outlines and provides detailed instruction confirmed to save money and time with early intervention (Dean, 2017).

As an element of the HPT model, FEA is a systematic approach to improving individual and collective organizational goal achievement. Within the FEA, the gap between work requirements, the performance of individual employees and outcomes expected are identified, compared, and corrected (Smartsheet 2019). The gap analysis reveals why employees fail to meet organizational goals and allow a closer examination of the gap between actual individual and organizational performance and perceived or potential individual and organizational performance.

According to Markham (2013), the FEA and gap analysis conducted as a component of TSJ Investigations, Inc.'s efforts to improve productivity were vital to identifying the gaps in the procedural process. The front-end analysis was successfully implemented and through employee surveys and interviews, check-rides, reports of review for submitted reports of investigation, and national investigative standard reviews, determined that additional self-paced/face-to-face training, job aids, instructional guides, mentoring, and the establishment of a case information support line, are tangible solutions that will lead to the meeting of organizational goals and national investigative standards.

Cultural Differences and Performance Analysis

According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010 as cited in Al-Bayati, Abudayyeh, and Albert, 2018, different beliefs, behaviors, and expectations that exist as a result of cultural differences between individuals and groups of individuals can lead to miscommunication with regards to workplace behavior and adversely affect performance. While there were no apparent cultural or demographical issues found within TSJ Investigations, Inc., as with any global company, it is imperative that employers are cognizant of the possibility that cultural and/or demographical differences exist and can affect the results of performance analysis. If cultural

and/or demographic differences are identified, it is crucial to the organization's success to ensure the understanding of such differences (Maeso, 2011). Whether it's employee to employee or manager to employee interaction, one way of creating a culture of understanding is to incorporate diversity training that facilitates the understanding of cultural and generational differences. Phillips and Phillips, 2002 as cited in Nemec, 2018, suggest that investing in training is worthwhile although it does not solve all problems. It is important to acknowledge the benefits that exist as a result of implementing sound training.

Performance Issues Identified

A front-end analysis (FEA) determined that TSJ Investigations, Inc. has issues related to ineffective coverage according to the assigned case types, lack of complete issue resolution, and improperly written reports. As a result, multiple reports identified as deficient have been returned from client reviewers, which impacts financial goals and compliance with national investigative standards. In-depth examinations identified that 85% of deficient reports were submitted by newly trained investigators. It was further discovered that required coverage was not fully understood by newly hired investigators, the on-site training received was rushed and there was no detailed coverage of full issue resolution for each of the adjudication topics in any of the training modules, new investigators were unable to obtain adequate assistance from assigned supervisors, as the supervisors are inundated with numerous requests for assistance. In addition, many of the supervisors lack the ability to lead their teams effectively.

Recommendations

A refresher training course is recommended for specifically identified employees. However, it is important for managers to identify and understand the learning styles of individual

employees within TSJ Investigations, Inc., as all individuals learn and acquire skills at different levels. While some employees flourish in an e-learning environment, others are more successful within an instructor-led training environment. With regards to case coverage, issue resolution, and report writing training, a blended learning environment that incorporates e-learning and face-to-face instructor-led training provides an approach that may benefit all learning styles. In addition, the instructor-employee class ratio should not exceed twenty students to one instructor and the class should be moderately paced to provide for more beneficial student-instructor engagement.

It is recommended that mentors continue to teach and guide new employees throughout their career. This will lessen the load with regards to the supervisors' ability to respond to requests for assistance. It is also recommended that investigators with serious performance issues and deficiencies in production report to an assigned mentor with all cases returned for correction prior to resubmitting any reports of investigation. Assigned mentors should continue to assess their mentees and identify the challenges that new employees face concerning any issues with meeting organizational goals. It is suggested that these assessments continue on a monthly basis, as this will allow the organization to continue tracking the performance of new employees, as well as the personal and organizational goal completion, and also determine the areas in need of improvement.

Mentors will be able to assist with identifying the gaps between performance goals and actual performance of employees. As a result, current methods for organizational success will be analyzed and a determination with regards to implementing new strategies will be made in an effort to achieve and maintain organizational success. Additionally, a Case Information Support Team (CIST) should be appointed and the case information support line should be implemented.

Employees are to be instructed to direct all questions regarding cases that have not been returned for correction to members of the CIST.

Also, Case Reviewers will be assigned to an individual mentor, rather than individual cases and work with the mentor to ensure that all reports contain the required information. Lastly, it is recommended that job aids and instructional guides that provide information that can be utilized while conducting fieldwork be provided. Implementing the recommended training will lead to the meeting of organizational goals and national investigative standards. assessing the performance of investigators in the field and indicating whether or not organizational goals have been met.

Conclusion

Performance improvement and front-end analysis are important components of organizational success. Organizations often seek the assistance of HPT professionals to perform an FEA which includes redefining requirements and performance expectations. The FEA identifies issues and inefficiencies within individual employees and the organization as a whole and suggests recommendations for improvement. As a result, it is likely that if completed satisfactorily, the recommended solutions will result in satisfying customers with quality work, thus propelling the organization to excellence and improving its earning potential.

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