Organizational Performance Improvement

The Human Element

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INCENTIVE SERVICES, INC.
Maximizing Performance Through People

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introduction

per•form (per-fôrm′) *tr.v.* **1**. To accomplish or bring to completion; execute; meet the requirements of.

The definition says nothing about attitude, pride, desire, vision, persistence or excellence. Yet, for most of us, the word performance or performer is highly charged. Our society not only respects top performance but almost idolizes people and organizations who set high goals and achieve them.

If the goal is to improve, to become a top performance team, how do you elevate the culture, behaviors and results? How difficult is it to elevate an organization? We can gain perspective by reflecting on our personal experience in making the smallest positive change. Most of us want to maximize our performance. If we truly feel this way, why is it so difficult?

Reflecting on our personal struggles, think how difficult it is to elevate the thought process, behavior and results of a group of 100…1000…10,000 people whose culture and comfort zone has evolved over many years. After spending many years in the business of performance improvement and trying to understand what drives personal

and organization improvement, we're convinced that the success or failure of an organization is dependent on understanding and committing to the following **three elements:**

1. **Leadership**
   Setting high expectations and measurements for personal leadership and responsibility at all levels of the organization.

2. **The Human Element**
   Understanding how people view their lives in relationship to the organization.

3. **The Sequence for Success**
   Understanding and committing to the components that constitute the performance improvement sequence for success.

These elements must be viewed sequentially. If an organization does not have good leadership, don't bother going to steps two and three. If the organization doesn't understand the human element, save the money budgeted for the performance improvement strategy. Your people won't buy in.

If the first two elements are in place, a sound performance strategy will synergize your organization and almost guarantee an elevation in performance.

Today, organizations must continually improve and we need to understand that **Organizational Improvement is dependent on the people in the organization**. Nothing happens without them. They are the key to initiating, implementing and managing correct systems, connecting with customers and creating the edge necessary to win.

Performance improvement involves a personal and organizational transition in mind and spirit. The starting point is understanding the simple fact:

> *"If you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting!"*

Understand that most people will resist change every step of the way. They don't like it. It can be threatening and always takes extra effort.

The difficult process of letting go of the old situation, suffering the confusing in-betweeness, and launching forward toward your future vision takes courage, tenacity and strong leadership. The bottom line, though, is in today's competitive market we don't have a choice. If you don't commit to improving your organization you will quickly be passed by.

Organizational transition is like launching a boat from a riverside dock to cross to a landing on the opposite shore only to discover in mid-stream that the landing is no longer there, and when you look back you see that the dock you left just broke loose and is drifting downstream.

The difficult process of letting go of the old situation, suffering the confusing in-betweeness, and launching forward toward your future vision takes courage, tenacity and strong leadership. The bottom line, though, is we don't have a choice. If you don't commit to improving your organization, you will quickly be passed by.

leadership centered management

Overview

We've all spent years learning to read, write, calculate, use a computer, and learn historical facts. This education is obviously important to our overall success in life but is generally limited to task completion, skill development and understanding facts. What happens when we have to work with others or advance our role? The unfortunate answer is that most of us fall short.

The tools to communicate effectively, manage professionally, and lead, are puzzles at best and affect every personal and professional relationship in our lives.

If you are going to positively leverage your strengths and dreams, you must be able to work with and through others. Personal leadership sets the foundation for every successful team and must emerge from all levels of the organization if you hope to maximize performance.

Let me tell you a story that helped open my eyes to leadership within an organization.

Inez's Story

We have worked with a nationwide food distributor for many years and one day had a call from a divisional manager asking if we could put together a program to get everyone enthused, motivated and more productive. "We need to get people back on the positive track."

I said we would like to be involved but before any recommendations wanted to meet with ten of their best line employees and not include supervisors or managers. He set the meeting up and following is a summary of a two hour heated discussion:

- Do I really want to do "Our supervisors are lousy managers." "They don't direct us and only talk to us when there is a problem." "Now we try not to communicate with them because, no news is good news."

- "We're the core group that built this company into what it is today. Now supervisors and managers spend all their time with new employees who come and go and generally don't care about the company."

- "We used to enjoy working here. People were friendly. We

were proud to contribute to the company's success." "We were proud to be associated with the company." **"It's no longer the same place."**

- "We don't have glamorous jobs. We don't wear a suit and tie, have an office or a lot of perks, but we do feel we **should be appreciated and professionally recognized for our contribution."**

After listening I asked if there were positive elements and specifically if any of the supervisors were good. The group unanimously agreed that one of the twenty-two supervisors was outstanding. I asked, "What did he do that the others didn't?" They responded, "first of all, the supervisor is a she not a he. Her name is INEZ." The following is how they described her.

- "She **is interested in each employee**. She knows who we are about. She knows the names of our kids and our interests."

- "We **can trust her**. If you tell her something in confidence, it stays between the two of us."

- "She **knows what needs to be done** on the job and communicates ahead of time what the expectations are. This allows us to plan our day and utilize our time effectively. When crunch time hits we're prepared and can adapt our schedules."

- Her group doesn't have much turnover because she **treats everyone with respect**. This makes everyone's job easier because people have experience and know what to do."

- She **makes things fun and concentrates on the positive**. We're constantly measuring our performance and recognized as individuals and as a team.

Inez's story is a great example of personal leadership within an organization. It's like a beacon of light to those it touches. People want to participate, to be a part of the team, know they are respected and appreciated. Think of how successful an organization could be if there were "Inezes" at every level.

Without personal leadership it is impossible to maximize personal or organizational performance. Leadership is the cornerstone of every successful endeavor.

Following are eight cornerstones of personal leadership. As you review, think of how INEZ exemplified each one and reflect on your commitment to each ideal. We are convinced that you can be a change catalyst, a 'transformer' in your organization.

Cornerstones of Transformational Leadership

Overview

Leadership is at the very center of Performance Improvement. It is crucial that leaders develop and harness the skills necessary to communicate effectively, manage professionally, and lead securely. These attributes ultimately determine the success or failure of the people you are leading. In order to positively leverage your strengths and vision you must be able to work with and through others. Personal leadership sets the foundation for every successful team and must emerge from all levels of the organization to maximize performance.

We have identified eight cornerstones of personal and transformational leadership:

1) **Self-Assessment**

2) **Toughen Up**

3) **Be Trustworthy**

4) **Put Others First**

5) **Prioritize Importance - Minimize Urgency**

6) **Set Deadlines**

7) **Accentuate the Positive**

8) **Commitment to Excellence**

Cornerstones of Transformational Leadership
1. Self Assessment

*"The way we see leads to what we do,
what we do leads to what we get."*

Looking In

Self-assessment is the first cornerstone of leadership. It involves deep personal honesty. It prompts us to start where we are – no illusion, no excuse. It forces asking and answering difficult questions:

- Where am I trying to go in my personal and professional life?
- Do I really want to do it?
- Am I willing to pay the price?
- Do I have the strength to do it?
- Am I willing to sacrifice for success?
- Do I have the willpower to do it?
- Am I striving for excellence or settling for mediocrity?
- Am I blaming others for my inability to set and achieve goals?

Self-assessment gives substance and meaning to WHO WE ARE, where we want to go and how to get there. Looking inside affects the decisions we make, the way we view the world, how we spend our time and the way we interact with others.

True leadership dictates proactive self-assessment. Most of us don't confront critical issues unless there is a wake-up call. These wake-up calls seem to occur at the worst possible times, and when they do, it's usually too late to make a successful adjustment. The goal is to **"Get OUT IN FRONT"** with our lives and prepare for challenges that are sure to come when overwhelming pressure isn't staring us in the face.

Looking Out

Team organizational assessment allows Leaders to uncover the critical business issues and related performance issues. We call this process gap analysis (reviewing existing strategies, programs and procedures, to determine what is working, what is not working, and what needs to change for the organization to maximize success.)

We all struggle with gap analysis because it clarifies the gaps between the vision of "WHAT CAN BE" and current reality. This vision focuses on what is possible (knowing it cannot be reached unless we elevate the organization's culture, behaviors and results), and allows leaders to establish the blueprint for the future.

Cornerstones of Transformational Leadership
2. Toughen Up

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Looking In

Many people believe that stress and tension should be reduced and ultimately eliminated if they are to be happy. In reality tension and stress are absolutely essential in having a full and productive life.

The fact is insufficient stress creates all sorts of problems. When insufficient stress becomes the norm, boredom, laziness and depression often emerge. A person loses mental toughness because there is too little stress.

Leadership creates additional stress. You must be willing to step forward, make decisions and be responsible for the results.

Knowing that leaders can't avoid stress, the goal is to find a strategy to toughen up and handle more stress. Emotionally tough does not mean emotionally hard or insensitive; it simply means being in control as opposed to being controlled. It means you are in control of your emotions rather than the other way around.

When building your capacity for stress/tension, the goal should be to mentally and emotionally become stronger, more flexible, more responsive and resilient. As your range increases you toughen up, you can manage more stress.

Being a leader guarantees additional stress, it's not easy. Plan to be uncomfortable and understand it's a necessary part of success.

Looking Out

People are put into leadership positions to elevate the performance of the team, not to maintain the status quo.

Understand that change is difficult for most people. Many will fight you every step of the way.

Being aware of the dynamics created by change can help leaders deal with the additional stress created by the commitment to performance improvement. This is a normal and necessary part of the process. It's important to view the additional tension and stress as a positive change catalyst.

Cornerstones of Transformational Leadership
3. Be Trustworthy

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

Looking In

People are smart. They generally know where they stand in the minds of others. One of the strange things in life is that others can usually see our strengths, weaknesses, honesty and fairness, and yet it's difficult for us to comprehend our transparency.

We can work side by side forty hours a week for years and think that our co-workers won't pick up on manipulation, brown-nosing, put-downs and the myriad of self-serving activities.

The only way to earn trust is by being TRUSTWORTHY. Trust is not inherited – it's earned every day through strength of character. The way you truly feel about yourself translates to everyone around you.

It sets the foundation for true relationships. If you are confident in who you are and what you stand for, your positive energy will uplift everyone you work with and allow others to build a real trust-based relationship with you.

Looking Out

Today, **TRUST** is in short supply. Leaders in every walk of life have fallen short. We all tend to look for the worst rather than accept the best. With this cynical environment it's even more important to be trustworthy.

TRUSTWORTHINESS lays the foundation for true leadership. Who you are and how you treat others will determine your relationship with others.

"What you are speaks so loudly in my ears I can't hear what you say."

Pyramid of Influence

15%
What You Say

35%
How You Treat Others

50%
Who You Are
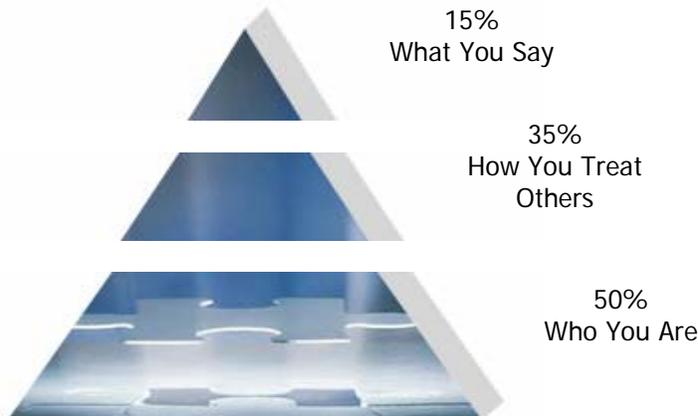
4. Put Others First

"You can get anything in life you want if you will just help other people get what they want."

Looking In

Why is it so hard to get beyond ourselves? The correlation between being highly motivated and being self-centered is very high. Most assertive people hesitate involving others in planning and decisions for fear of confusing the issue, contaminating their own thinking or having to compromise their position. Leaders need to understand that putting others first does not compromise their vision, it adds to it. Being a selfless leader means respecting other people, their ideas and contributions.

Putting others first means putting your ego in-check, understanding and respecting the perspective of others and thinking WIN/WIN.

Personal leadership dictates that we progress with our relationships and life. We've all been hurt and in some cases buried personally or professionally. Don't let problems from the past hold you back. It's a rare person who can set the course, back it up with effort and resolve, and put others first. A person with these attributes is recognized as a leader.

Looking Out

Being a selfless leader sets a foundation for maximum team commitment and performance. Putting others first stimulates the desire in others to **Go Above and Beyond.**

It takes character to give others credit for success or take personal responsibility for poor results. Others recognize and appreciate and respect a leader's selfless attitude.

Do you promote yourself or others?
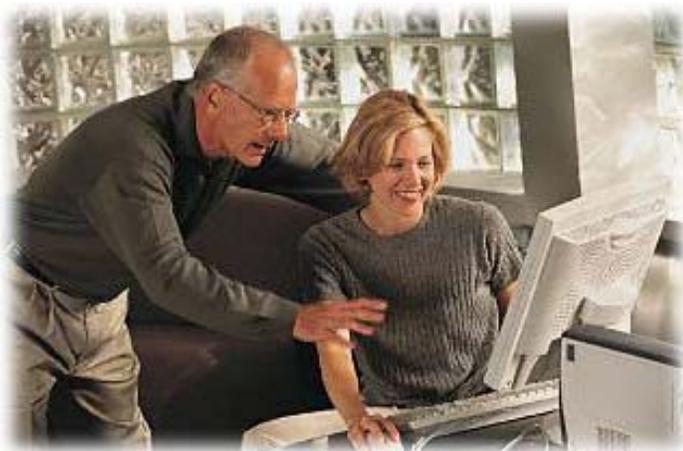
5. Prioritize Importance –Minimize Urgency

"The most important thing is to keep the most important thing, the most important thing."

Do you have the urgency addiction?

Looking In
You're not leading if you're more concerned with what's urgent rather than what is important.

Some of us become addicted to the adrenaline rush of handling crisis situations and become dependent on the sense of excitement and energy that it creates. We've termed this the **urgency addiction**.

How does it feel? On the negative side it feels stressful, pressured, tense, and exhausting. On the positive side it feels exhilarating. We feel useful, successful, validated. It brings instant results and instant gratification. We get a temporary high from solving urgent and important crisis situations. Then when the important part of the crisis isn't present, the urgency fix is so powerful we are drawn to do anything urgent, just to stay in motion.

Busyness is where we get our security. It's a good excuse for not leading with the first and most important things in our work and professional lives.

Realize that urgency itself is not the problem. The problem is created when urgency becomes the dominant factor and importance is not. We are so caught up in doing we don't stop to ask if what we're doing really needs to be done.

Understand that most of the IMPORTANT things (VISION and LONG TERM STRATEGY) don't tend to press us with urgency. Even though they are the most important, they are not prioritized because they are not urgent.

Looking Out
This most important thing is to keep the most important thing the most important thing.

Evaluate your goals, maximize the important and minimize the urgent.

Cornerstones of Transformational Leadership
6. Set Deadlines

> *"As I get older I pay less attention to what a person says,*
> *I just watch what they do."*

Looking In

One of the benefits of getting older is a better understanding of the limitation of time. We're all terminal. Understanding our mortality should be a positive force rather than a depressing fact. We're running out of time. Now is the time to put urgency into those things that are most important in work and life.

Each of us lives in a finite world for a finite period of time with an infinite imagination. We're not going to have time for all of our dreams. There are only twenty-four hours each day. We won't be given extra hours. We have a limited time to accomplish our goals and dreams.

To be successful we need to direct our energy toward our purpose and goals. We need to remove the fillers. If you're serious about achievement, lock in the deadlines and measure the results.

Looking Out

The same is true with organizational leadership. Once the plan is in place and the priorities established, deadlines must be set.

One of the primary inhibitors to the action plan is the "perfection syndrome." It's irrational but it is how many organizations operate. There is fear of committing to a new strategy, stretching comfort zones and maximizing performance because of the concern of doing things perfectly the first time. Unfortunately, the only way to do things perfectly is through experience and experience is the name we give to making mistakes.

Set the vision, develop the strategy, set deadlines and "DO IT!" Adjustments can be made when the strategy is in play.

Cornerstones of Transformational Leadership
7. Accentuate the Positive

"Your attitude almost always determines your altitude."

Do you focus on the positive or dwell in the negative?

Looking In

Know it or not, others will view you as uplifting, a non-connect, or, a "downer." In our experience, we have never met anyone who would rather be criticized or ignored than praised or recognized. People are attracted and uplifted by **POSITIVE** encounters. They want to have their contributions and commitment validated. In reverse fashion, negativity curtails open communication, engagement, and a passion for WIN/WIN relationships.

Do you focus on the positive or negative? Apparently most people are clueless that they affect everyone they meet. The conclusion – work daily with everyone you meet to accentuate the positive.

Looking Out

It's impossible to maximize organizational performance without positive personal leadership. It is the cornerstone of every long term successful endeavor.

Leadership carries the constant challenge of overcoming the negative. Whether leading a company, department or family you need to deal with negativity even when you're successful. Don't allow it to affect your positive attitude. **"Looking inside" affects how we "look outside."** Positive personal leadership influences those around you and will transform the organizational environment.

Negative Restraining Forces

Positive Driving Forces

SOCIOLOGIST KURT LEWIN developed a "FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS" model in which he described any current level of performance as a state of equilibrium between driving forces that encourage upward movement and the restraining forces that discourage it. Driving forces are positive, reasonable, logical, conscious and economic. Restraining forces are negative, emotional, illogical, and unconscious. BOTH SETS of forces are very real and must be taken into account in dealing with change.

8. Commitment to Excellence

"Going far beyond the call of duty, doing more than others expect — this is what excellence is all about."

Looking In

It's easy to be ordinary or mediocre. It takes character and courage to strive for excellence. Not many people are willing to focus and commit to being the best.

The commitment to excellence comes from striving, maintaining the highest standards, and going the extra mile. It means making a special effort to do more.

It takes courage to stand by your convictions when those around you don't have convictions. It takes courage to try to be the best when others around you settle for mediocrity.

The fact is we can all strive to be better. Most of us have far more talent than we give ourselves credit for. When tested, we find ways to accomplish things we never thought possible.

What's your **VISION**? (Average, Good, Excellent.) Rest assured that your result will not exceed your vision. Don't sell yourself short.

Looking Out

A commitment to excellence is the foundation for organizational improvement. Leaders must constantly be challenging themselves and their team to focus on their vision of excellence. True leadership means elevating the bar for yourself and those you work with. Others will immediately recognize your commitment.

Have you mentally "Raised the bar"?

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Leadership Centered Management
Evaluation & Action Steps

It's impossible to maximize personal and organizational performance without personal leadership. It is the cornerstone of every successful endeavor. "Looking Inside" affects the choices we make and the way we prioritize our time. It affects how we "Look Outside".

When you know who you are and where you're trying to go, people will clear a path allowing achievement of your goals. Personal leadership influences those around you and transforms the organizational environment.

On the following pages evaluate your personal leadership, how you think your associates view your leadership, and your opinion of leadership in your organization.

Upon completion of the leadership evaluation, list action steps that can elevate yourself, your associates and the organization.

Leadership Evaluation

Score 0 (Low) to 5 (High) in each category

Cornerstones of Leadership	How do you rate your leadership?	How do you think your associates rate your leadership?			How do you rate your organization's leadership?
		Manager	Peers	Those you Manage	
Self Assessment					
Toughen Up					
Be Trustworthy					
Put Others First					
Prioritize Importance					
Set Deadlines					
Accentuate the Positive					
Commitment to Excellence					
TOTALS					

	Scoring System
You are leading	30-40
You are following	16-29
You need to get out of the way	0-15

Leadership Action Steps

We are convinced that each person can be a change catalyst, a transformer, in an organization. It does take belief in yourself and require vision, persistence and most of all courage.

Determine the immediate action steps you can take that will positively influence your personal leadership ability, the leadership of your department and the leadership of your organization.

What cornerstones can you focus on to improve your personal leadership?

What cornerstones can you focus on to better synergize your team?

What steps can you take to align your team's goals with the vision and mission of your organization?

the human element

Overview
"I love humanity, it's the people I can't stand."

Group dynamics are difficult, people are complicated and can be hard to understand.

The "Human Element" presents the biggest challenge to effective leadership. Understand that a leader will ultimately be measured on the success and effectiveness of their team. The key is to maximize the engagement level of each employee.

High engagement is the cornerstone to maximizing team performance. Highly engaged people bring passion and purpose to the team vision. The shared vision is the cornerstone that provides the focus and energy to be the best. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

One plus one equals three. Two people creatively cooperating can produce far better results than either one could independently. When each person's focus and energy is channeled correctly, it will multiply many times the efforts of each individual.

The following are eight insights to help understand organizational behavior.

Insights to Organizational Behavior

Insights to Organizational Behavior

1) The Need to be Noticed

2) 15 – 70 – 15 Rule

3) The Comfort Zone

4) Simplify your Objectives

5) The Circles of Influence

6) Generational Influences

7) Tangible Awards vs. Cash

8) Leaving a Legacy

1. The Need to be Noticed

> *"The deepest principle in human nature is
> the craving to be appreciated."*

Regardless of who you are or what you do, whether you are a man or a woman, young or old, each of us wants to be recognized for who we are and what we contribute.

Call it whatever you want... recognition, glory, honor, pride, self esteem... it's very basic – the inner desire to have one's achievements noticed.

In some cases, a pat on the pack will do the job. In others, it will be a simple pin or plaque. Whatever it is it represents that you are important and your efforts are appreciated – you're a winner, a performer.

Knowing we all have this need, how do we appeal to each person to raise their expectations and performance?

First, we must establish goals and objectives to aim for. In many cases, the competition is with themselves. The goal could be to overshadow previous performance.

Regardless of where the competition comes from, the reinforcement for greater effort should be visible, tangible and measurable.

We have learned that the more noticeable the reinforcement, the harder the individual will work to attain it.

Studies on the impact of money have concluded that money's ability to motivate diminishes as a person progresses from physiological needs to self-actualization.

Have you capitalized on people's NEED TO BE NOTICED?

Money As Influencer

Recognition As Influencer

Self-Actualization

Esteem

Social

Safety

Physiological

Abraham Maslow's Pyramid of Human Needs
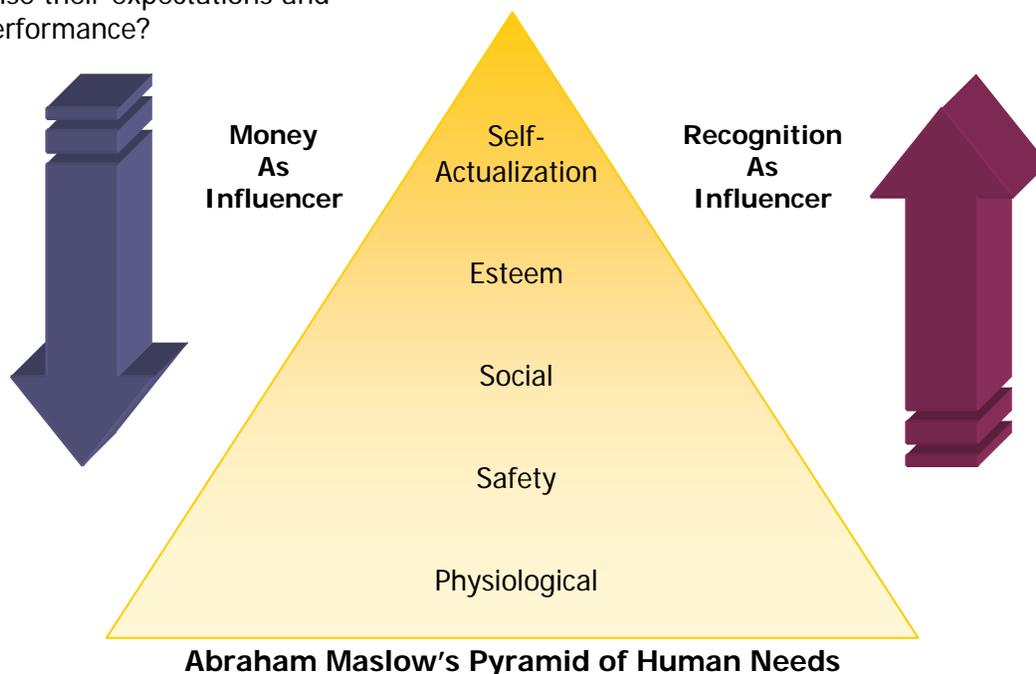
2. The 15-70-15 Rule

> *"In the long-run, people hit only what they aim for, therefore…
> they better aim for something high."*

Are you focusing on the middle 70%?

Take aim at the heart of your workforce. In order to maximize performance, it's important to understand the cross-section of a typical work force. It's common for a normal group to have 15% of its employees in a top, elite group. On the other hand 15% are disengaged or problem employees. This leaves the bulk of your work force (70%) in the middle.

The group at the top consists of self-motivated, talented employees. Most of these people are experienced and take it upon themselves to do the job in the best way possible. This elite group produces outstanding results whatever the motivational factors may be.

On the reverse side the bottom 15% are generally unmotivated and irresponsible. This bottom percentile does not have experience and most likely will never obtain it as they bounce from one job to the next. These people more than likely will not be with you in the future.

The group that makes up the major portion of your work force is the middle 70%. **The results, records, and dollar savings of your organization are dependent on whether this middle percentile can be**

motivated and trained to improve. The individuals within this middle group must feel they have an obtainable goal and will be recognized for improving their personal performance. It is unrealistic in their mind to be better than the elite employees.

When structuring a Performance Program it's important to focus on this middle 70%. Programs that only highlight the top 15% spend money on people who will probably accomplish similar results independently. The focus should be on the portion of the work force that will bring the biggest return. Every employee in the middle 70% should feel they have the ability and opportunity to achieve pre-set goals.

In a typical organization incentive dollars and manager's time are directed incorrectly. Most of the time and resources are spent with the low achievers who will not be with the organization in the future while most of the incentive budget is spent on the high achievers who would have accomplished similar results independently.

Typical Allocation of Resources

■ High (15%)   ■ Middle (70%)   ■ Low (15%)

Management Time
- 5%
- 15%
- 80%

Training Time & Budget
- 2%
- 8%
- 90%

Recruiting Budget
- 10%
- 20%
- 70%

Recognition Budget
- 90%
- 10%
- 0%
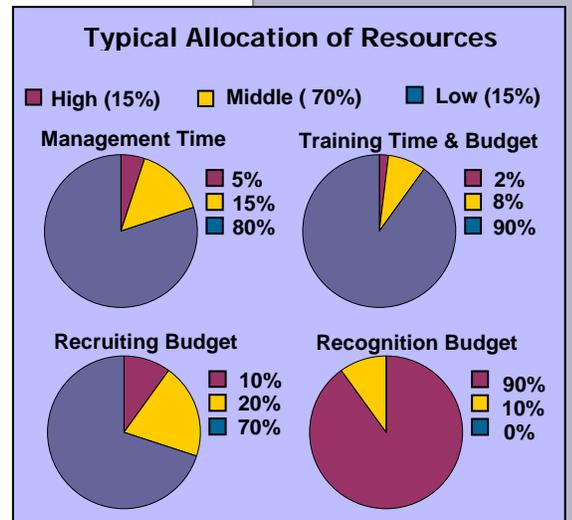
3. The Comfort Zone

> *"It's easier to go down the mountain rather than up,*
> *but the view is best from the top."*

Based on the 15-70-15 Rule, the lower 85% of your organization is in their comfort zone.

The comfort zone is that area of thought and action where a person feels comfortable. Anything we haven't done or thought often enough to feel comfortable doing lies outside the parameters of our comfort zone. When we do or think these things (basically anything new), we feel uncomfortable.

When we consider elevating performance and moving toward our vision, the comfort zone conjures up the following negative consequences:

- If we choose we must let our other options go.

- When we choose we risk losing.

- When we choose we risk winning.

Defeat is part of most people's Comfort Zone. We are constantly dealing with the "fear of failure" and the "fear of success." **Most people program themselves to be happy with mediocrity**.

- Who does she think she is?

- He's a dreamer!

- You can't have your cake and eat it too!

- He has a chip on his shoulder!

- Don't Buck the System!

- That's the Way We Do It!

When we set higher performance standards we make mediocre people fearful and resentful.

Mediocre people (organizations) don't like to see others pursuing their dreams. It reminds them how far they are from living their own dreams. By talking us out of our higher vision they are talking themselves back into their Comfort Zone. So, get ready for disapproval.

We must learn to tolerate discomfort in order to grow, to maximize personal or organizational performance. Comfort Zones expand through discomfort.

Plan to be uncomfortable and understand that it's a necessary part of success. In fact, learn to be comfortable with discomfort.

Are you moving toward your vision? Or is your vision moving toward your current reality?

4. Simplify Your Objectives

> *"It's a simple task to make things complex
> but a complex task to make them simple."*

The goal of management should be to create a clear and unquestionable path as to how each employee can be most successful. This is accomplished by simplifying in each employee's mind their most important objectives and centering all measurements, training, communication, and reinforcement around the performance of those objectives. When this happens, employee productivity increases and organizations are able to maximize their potential.

Have you simplified your goals, measurements and action steps?
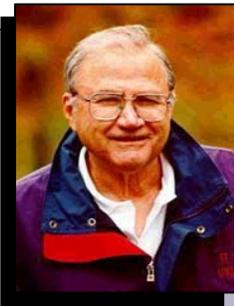
THE JOHN GAGLIARDI STORY

I experienced the purest example of the power of "Simplifying Your Objectives" when I played football in High School and College.

In High School I played quarterback for the largest Catholic school in the state. We were loaded with talent and coached by an X's and O's genius who incorporated more offensive sets and plays than five coaches could dream up. The offense included five color-coded sets (pro-set, single-wing etc..). I would call a play and hike number in the huddle. When we lined up, I would analyze the defense and call an audible. The first number in the audible determined if the play was to change or remain the same. If I called the hike number it meant the play was changed to the new play. If I called a non-hike number it would be a fake audible. At the time I assumed everyone on the team understood. Looking back, the best that would happen was indecision and the worst was chaos.

We had the talent and every play option imaginable, but were always confused. Our superior players could never perform to their potential and the win/loss record was mediocre.

Moving on to college, I was fortunate to attend Saint John's University and continue to play football for one of the best and most progressive teachers I have ever met. His name is John Gagliardi.

John's system was different. He was determined to eliminate unnecessary nonsense and focus every minute of practice on what would happen in the game.

- There were no pre-practice exercises and no full contact scrimmages. Why, because he didn't want to waste time and didn't want his best players injured during the week.

- The offense always hiked the ball on the same number. Why? He couldn't stand penalties and was determined never to go off sides.

- He didn't give out play books. Why? Because we couldn't look at a play book on Saturdays.

- He spent the entire practice running eleven against eleven (not splitting back and linemen for separate drills). Why? Because the key to good offensive football is timing and knowing how the other players move.

- During a game, if there was confusion in a lineman's blocking assignment, the orders were to tell the man next to you who you were going to block. Why? It's better that your opposition knows what you're going to do than you not being sure what you're going to do.

- He prepared the players during the week to call the shots during the game. Why? Because he knew that he would never make a block or tackle or catch a pass during the game.

I could not believe his system worked. It was just too simple. Won't the competition know what we're going to do?

John reached the pinnacle of coaching. His teams have won more games than any coach in the history of college football. Over 400 victories and several National Championships later we're all believers. He took the complex and made it simple. We all knew what we had to do and were measured on following the plan.

The goal in every organization should be to remove the doubt in every employee's mind. Simplify and measure the most important objectives and responsibilities.

5. The Circles of Influence

"Communication is the key to success, pass it on."

In our lives each of us has several circles of influence. The most common of these influences are family, peers and friends.

As managers, we may have used peer pressure to motivate our employees. Tapping into this circle of influence usually works well because most employees want to succeed when placed in a visible situation with their peers. When possible involve family and friends to validate a persons self-worth.

The goal of every performance program should be to include the employee's family and friends along with their peers. Creating visibility with all influencers highlights measurements and performance. We all like to take a bow and tell the world we're winners. When the measurements become visible we'll do almost anything to succeed.

Developing a structure that creates visibility of employee performance with peers, family and friends is the best way to maximize performance.

Have you involved peers, family and friends when recognizing achievement?

Circles of
INFLUENCE

6. Generational Influences

"The way we see (our paradigm) leads to what we do (attitude and behavior). What we do leads to what we get."

In trying to understand employee motivation and attitudes, we have explored diversity issues ranging from gender and type of work, to employee age and work environment. Although all of the issues have an affect, age (or more appropriately generational influence) may have the largest affect on perspectives and attitudes. Traditionalists (employees in the 60's to 70's) view the workplace far differently than Generation X'ers (30 to mid 40's). Understanding the four generations in today's workforce, and the attitudes and influences of each, will greatly help organizations develop strategies and programs that are meaningful to their employees.

The following information highlights influences, work attitudes and expectations of the four generations currently in the work force.

Traditionalists
(60's to 70's)

Influences: the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, The GI bill

Characteristics: patriotic, loyal, fiscally conservative, faith in institutions

- Build a legacy
- Institutions deserve loyalty
- Hard work is its own reward
- Job changing carries stigma
- On feedback, no news is good news

Baby Boomers
(mid 40's to early 60's)

Influences: booming birthrate, economic prosperity and recession, TV, Vietnam

Characteristics: idealistic, competitive, questioning authority, "me" generation

- Build a "killer" career
- Institutions deserve to change
- Money and title are the reward
- Job changing puts you behind
- Feedback once per year, need it or not

Generation X
(early 30's to mid 40's)

Influences: positives like Sesame Street, MTV, the PC, negatives like divorce, AIDS, crack, missing kids on milk cartons

Characteristics: eclectic, resourceful, self reliant, adaptive to change and technology

- Build a portable career
- Institutions are suspect
- Freedom is the reward
- Job changing is necessary
- On feedback, "so how am I doing?"

Millennials
(0 to early 30's)

Influences: the fall of the Berlin Wall, expanding technology and media, a mixed economy, violence, drugs and gangs

Characteristics: globally concerned, integrated, realistic, cyber literate, media savvy, environmentally conscious

- Global marketplace. An office in Europe or Asia? They have pals all over the world.
- Virtual is Reality...Virtual clients/office
- Realistic vs. skeptical in outlook
- Early entry into marketplace

Are you open to the ideas of different generations?

7. Tangible Reinforcement vs. Cash

> *"Get use to competition. You will be competing all your life.*
> *Set your goals and follow through until you achieve them.*
> *Don't be afraid to be a winner. Don't ever apologize for winning.*
> *Winning is the key. It gives you the edge, elevates you to peak*
> *performance and creates the enthusiasm to stay the course."*

Have you maximized the visibility of individual and team performance?

It has been proven time and again that cash in lower amounts does not elevate behavior or motivate higher performance. In fact, employees often see it as a negative. Tangible incentives on the other hand, allow you to maximize performance with the least amount of money.

■ **Tangible incentives are highly promotable**. Tangible incentives can be promoted throughout the year and raise excitement and anticipation among the participants. Cash, on the other hand, is a cold, inanimate object that can only be promoted in terms of what it will buy.

■ **Tangible incentives are permanent symbols of recognition**. Tangible incentives are there to be seen where it counts most… by family, friends, neighbors, and fellow employees.

■ **Tangible incentives have "memory value"**. Recipients of tangible incentives always remember how and where they obtained their awards. Cash gets spent, and the identity of the giver is quickly forgotten.

■ **Tangible incentives provide the very effective "want book"**. Award catalogs have strong family appeal because awards are often discussed and selected by the entire family. Every member feels important because each is included in the process reinforcing the participant's achievement.

■ **Tangible incentives do not disrupt the regular compensation plan**. More often than not, cash is viewed as something that is due to the recipients. If employees receive cash as an award, they often feel that the company can afford to pay the same in added salary or commission.

■ **Tangible incentives overcome the "guilt feeling"**. When people are given cash they often feel compelled to use the cash to pay off a bill. With tangible incentives there is no feeling of guilt.

8. Leaving a Legacy

> *"Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Choose your words for they become actions. Understand your actions, for they become habits. Study your habits, for they will become your character. Develop your character, for it becomes your destiny."*

You are creating your legacy. Are you happy with it?

When you look back and your journey is coming to an end, how will you feel? Did you get the most out of life?

I believe that every functional human being hopes and dreams that their life will make a difference – that their family, friends, company, country and the world in general is a better place because they were here.

We spend 40-50 hours a week, the most productive hours of our lives working at our job. It's important to be productive and fulfilled.

As a leader, it's important to understand that everyone has a similar dream. It may be well hidden with some people but know that it's there, that people want to be fulfilled and be part of a winning team.

Understanding this inner need allows you to more fully trust and empower people and to be a more effective leader.

The Human Element
Evaluation & Action Steps

We all struggle with the confusion created by multiple societal changes. It's important to remove the haze and focus on the constants. We call these constants "The Human Element". It can be defined as the need of every human being to be noticed and recognized for who they are and what they contribute.

Understanding the Human Element allows us to open our eyes to the good news that functional human beings want to find purpose in how they spend their time and what they do. We all want to be part of a winning team.

On the following pages evaluate your knowledge of the Human Element and how you use this knowledge in your personal life. Also evaluate your associate's perception of your insight and utilization of these concepts, as well as your perception of your organization's insights.

Upon completion of the Human Element Evaluator list action steps that can elevate you personally, your associates, and your organization.

The Human Element Evaluator
Score 0 (Low) to 5 (High) in each category

Insights of Organizational Behavior	How do you rate your insights and utilization of these concepts?	How do you think your associates rate your insights and utilization of these concepts?			How do you rate your organizations insight and utilization of these concepts?
		Manager	Peers	Those You Manage	
The Need to be Noticed					
15-70-15 Rule					
The Comfort Zone					
Simplify your Objectives					
The Circles of Influence					
Generational Influences					
Tangible Awards vs. Cash					
Leaving a Legacy					
TOTALS					

	Scoring System
You Understand Peoples Needs	30-40
You Understand Some of Peoples Needs	16-29
You don't Get It	0-15

The Human Element Action Steps

Determine the action steps you can take immediately that will positively influence your personal effectiveness, the performance of your associates and the performance and synergy of your organization.

What can you do personally to better understand the Human Element and utilize this knowledge to maximize your performance?

What can you do to better understand your associates and positively influence their performance?

What can you do to better align the goals and objectives of your team with the mission and goals of your organization?

performance improvement sequence for success

Overview

Most of us have spent a lifetime personally and professionally putting band-aids on problems. The band-aids may stop the bleeding for a while but they never seem to cure the illness.

We all wish the QUICK FIX worked. We all know it doesn't. Short cuts are short-term. If we are going to improve long-term, we need to address and solve the system problems. All real growth (Performance Improvement) is made step-by-step following a natural sequence.

In the natural order, we understand the sequential step-by-step process. Children learn to turn over, sit up, crawl, and then walk. When building a house we begin with a blueprint, then build the foundation, followed by framing and finishing. Each step is important and no step can be skipped.

It's amazing that what seems obvious in the natural order is such a mystery in most organizations. **There are no short cuts in maximizing team performance**.

Following is the **Performance Improvement Sequence for Success**. There are three key steps. As you review each step remember they are sequential. Don't jump to the third unless the first two are in place.

Organizational Sequence for Success

1. ## Strategic Planning

   - Define business goals and issues
   - Define performance goals and issues

2. ## Strategy Design

   - Communicate
   - Train
   - Measure
   - Reinforce

3. ## Performance Management

   - Leadership engagement
   - Measurement analysis

Organizational Sequence for Success
Step 1 – Strategic Planning

"Whether you think you can or think you can't you are right."

Setting a clear vision is the cornerstone to maximizing organizational or personal performance. If we can't get beyond what we currently are, we have no chance of elevating performance.

If the vision is not in place, don't bother proceeding – you'll run out of band-aids and waste your money.

Clear vision stimulates clear thinking in an organization. People will want to participate in the solutions. They know their efforts will not be a waste of time.

The more efficient your company becomes at aligning its resources to achieve the right goals, the more productive it will become.

The organizational scan uncovers the critical business issues (the problems or opportunities that have direct influence on the well being of the business) and the related performance issues (behavior changes that lead to positive business results).

We call this process **gap analysis** (reviewing existing programs and procedures to determine what is working, what is not working and what needs to change to help your organization meet your goals.)

We all struggle with gap analysis because we are acutely aware of the gaps between the vision of "what can be" and current reality.

We call this gap "creative tension" and it can be discouraging or a source of positive energy.

To better understand creative tension, imagine a rubber band stretched between your vision and current reality. When stretched it creates tension. **There are only two ways for this tension to resolve itself:**

- Pull current reality toward the vision
- Pull the vision toward current reality

Understanding the dynamics of creative tension and allowing it to operate by not lowering your vision creates a positive active force. Motivated organizations use the gap between vision and current reality to generate energy for change. Maybe more important, vision affects the choices we make and how we prioritize our time.

Remember – visioning is picturing excellence – what the organization wants to create in it's best possible future. It is a description of what is possible if we reach but is currently out of our grasp. A vision is not "something out there" that is totally impractical but is a way of setting a compelling scenario. It answers the question, Where are we going?

Creating this image of the future requires the ability to expand one's sense of possibilities and then focus on what new initiatives can lead to success.

Have you defined your business performance issues?

Sharing the vision is critical in creating the focus and energy to be the best. When a synergized and committed management team is channeled correctly it will multiply many times the efforts of each individual.

To be successful long-term, the team must buy into the vision and mission of the organization and align their strategies accordingly. It's important to note that many people, if not most, have been scripted into negative and protective behaviors and do not know how to synergize. Understand that elevating individual and team attitudes is part of a continuous challenge. Don't allow the negative element to pull down the vision, focus, and enthusiasm of the team.

The Effectiveness Factor

Most of us hesitate involving others in planning and decisions for fear of confusing the issue with other options, contaminating our own thinking or having to compromise our positions.

When we realize that the result of any endeavor is dependent on both the quality of the idea and the commitment of the people involved, we are more willing to involve others on the front end. **By weighting the quality of the idea and the commitment of the team members and multiplying them, we determine the effectiveness factor**.

Let's take an example.

You develop a perfect quality strategy (10 out of 10) but the team members have a low commitment (2 out of 10). In this case your EFFECTIVENESS FACTOR would be 20 (quality 10 x commitment 2 = 20).

Unhappy with the poor result you decide to include all team members in re-evaluating the strategy. Because of their involvement, the idea is altered and the quality decreases to 8 out of 10. At the same time, because of everyone's involvement the commitment factor increases to 8 out of 10. The new effectiveness factor is now 64 (quality 8 x commitment 8 = 64).

The conclusion is that even though the quality is not weighted as high, the result should be more than three times more effective.

Shared vision and a synergized team create the chemistry to elevate the organization to new heights. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Now one plus one equals three.
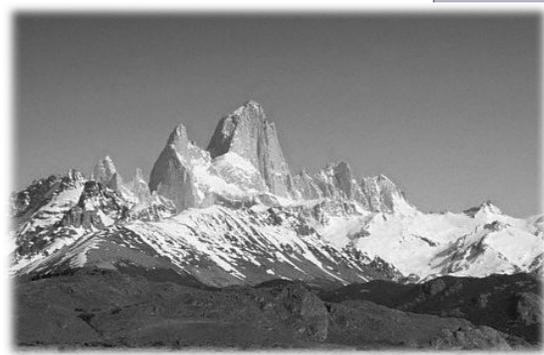
Do you involve others on the 'front end'?

"All thing are difficult before they are easy."

Setting the correct strategy design is more important now than ever before.

Today, the workforce has changed. Workers think, feel, and act differently. They are bombarded with information from all angles that can create concerns and confusion. The diverse lifestyles, the changing family situations and the constant re-defining of roles all affect employee attitudes and performance.

Add to the above the worker cynicism created from years of downsizing, merging, and in general, not being sensitive to the human element, and it's easy to understand the reversal of employee attitudes and loyalties to their employers. How does an employer deal with these obstacles and at the same time elevate performance?

The first step is to have your act together: set a clear vision, synergize the management team and treat your people the way you want to be treated. **The second step is to develop your performance strategy design incorporating the four cornerstones of performance improvement:**

- **1 - Measurements**
- **2 - Communication**
- **3 - Training**
- **4 - Reinforcement**

Each of the four elements must support the other three.

1 - Measurements

What is the vision and strategy of the organization? What are the objectives and responsibilities of each person in the organization to support that strategy? How do you measure performance?

Good employees want to be measured. Ineffective employees want to hide. It's important to determine visible measurements and goals for personal performance as well as team and top manager's expectations.

Remember, we want everyone aboard trying to do their best. We need to raise the performance level of the middle seventy percent to make an impact. Keep things simple. Determine the most important measurements and create visibility among peers, family and friends.

Are you incorporating the four cornerstones of performance into your strategy?

2 - Communications

Communicating the message is a critical element in all performance improvement endeavors. **People will not believe that an organization is committed to a strategy unless they are continuously reminded.** It's important to develop strong concepts and story lines that represent the message. Following are four alternatives that should be considered:

➔ Video

Video informs, persuades, and motivates when the message is clearly defined and delivered.

➔ Print

Whether it's brochures, booklets, instructional materials or a well-crafted video jacket, print materials are an important part of your communications program.

➔ Interactive Multi-Media

Consideration should be given to the creation of interactive programs that reinforce vision, measurements, training and success stories.

➔ Promotion or Logo Merchandise

Selecting appropriate identity items that enhance the vision and reinforce the performance improvement strategy have been very effective.

3 - Training

Training is a key element in performance improvement. Organizations may want to maximize performance but it is impossible if their people don't know how to execute. Elevating patterns of behavior involves three overlapping components:

- **Knowledge** (What to, Why to)
- **Skill** (How to)
- **Attitude** (Want to)

Proper training focuses on the first two components (knowledge and skill). Effectiveness can be learned, ineffectiveness unlearned.

Training options may vary depending on time and budget but experience has shown there are two elements in a successful training initiative.

1. Train the Trainer

The first step is to train the trainer. This accomplishes two things:

A. Trainers understand the information and can establish expectations for their team.

B. Trainers will be synergized. They will understand the vision and expectations of the organization.

2. Participant Training

Success should be measured on the knowledge and skill established with the lowest level in the organization. Two approaches have been very effective in accomplishing this goal.

Do your employees know what to do and why it needs to be done?

➔ Computer Based Interactive Training

When more of our senses are engaged in the learning process, information is absorbed more rapidly and retained longer. CBIT capitalizes on this fact by simultaneously presenting subject matter in multiple forms: text, audio, live action video, graphics and animation. Studies suggest this approach can train participants in half the time of instructor-led or text-based programs. Retention with CBIT is typically 75% or greater.

➔ Seminars & Workshops

Seminars and workshops provide employees with the specific skills, competencies and behavior they will need to move their organization's strategy into actions.

4 - Reinforcement/Rewards

Reinforcement is key in locking in the importance and appreciation of the goals and achievement. To maximize the motivational impact it is important that rewards have high perceived value and are interesting and fun for the people involved in the program. It's also important that the items can make an impact with the recipient's family and create visibility with friends.

We have learned that people want choices. They want options based on their wants and needs as well as trends in the marketplace. Following are options that create visibility with management, peers, family and friends.

➔ Merchandise Awards

Create multiple reward plateau levels catalog that encourages recipients to set goals. The plateau concept stimulates involvement of the family.

➔ Travel Awards

Travel rewards create sizzle to if the locations appeal to the recipients. Offer multiple locations (Disney World, Las Vegas, etc.) so that people can select the location that appeals to their interests.

➔ Corporate Apparel

Apparel products should be selected based on today's latest fashions. Embroidered corporate identity should be an option as it reinforces performance. It creates the connection to your company and the recipient's performance.

➔ Magazine Subscriptions

People enjoy earning subscriptions for their favorite magazines. This is a low cost and highly promotable supplement to a merchandise and travel offering.

➔ Recognition Awards

It is often appropriate to include custom recognition awards for Top Level performance. Items can include rings, plaques, crystal, sculpture, art, etc...and specially recognize the Top 10-20%.

Are you recognizing people for going above and beyond?

Step 3 – Performance Management

> *"Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."*

Are you truly committed to make things happen?

The third phase, Performance Management, is critical to insure success. Many organizations think that once the first two phases are in place the work is complete. They are wrong. People are smart. Most are good at reading signals correctly. They know if their leaders are really committed or just talking the party line.

We define performance management as the ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT of the leadership team in managing the behaviors of their managers and program participants to achieve the program goals.

We're not talking about "lip service." We're talking putting teeth into truly measuring behaviors and results about being totally committed to the process.

Making individual and team goal setting a part of an organization's permanent culture and holding top management accountable is imperative for the Performance Strategy to work.

The CEO and senior management need to make goal setting a strategic imperative and devote the time, attention and resources to make it happen. This commitment will create a core competency that elevates the corporate spirit.

The goals stated at the start of the program need to be compared with the outcomes. The ultimate test is the result and performance needs to be measured, communicated and reinforced.

The Performance Improvements
Sequence For Success
Evaluation & Action Steps

Most of us have spent a lifetime personally and professionally putting band-aids on problems. We wish those quick fixes worked. We all know they don't. If we are going to improve long term, we need to address and solve the systematic problems. All real growth "Performance Improvement" is made step-by-step following a natural sequence.

On the following pages evaluate your personal commitment to the Three Key Steps, how you think your associates view your commitment and your opinion of your organization's commitment.

Upon completion of the Performance Improvement Evaluator, list action steps that can elevate yourself, your associates and the organization.

The Performance Improvement Sequence for Success Evaluator
Score 0 (Low) to 5 (High) in each category

Steps to Organizations Performance Improvement	How do you rate yourself?	How do you rate your department?	How do you rate the organization?
Synergized Planning			
Strategy Design			
Performance Management			
TOTALS			

	Scoring System
You are maximizing your performance	10-15
The right direction, review the steps	7-9
You are in trouble	0-6

The Performance Improvements Action Steps

Commitment to the three steps of Performance Improvement allows you to maximize success in any endeavor.

Determine the action steps you can take immediately that will positively influence personal, team and organizational performance:

Three Sequential Steps:

1. Synergized Planning
2. Strategy Design
3. Performance Management

Personal Performance
Are you following the sequence for Success?   Is your plan in place?   What are you going to do about it today?

Team Performance
Are you following the sequence for Success?   Is your plan in place?   What are you going to do about it today?

Organizational Performance
Are you following the sequence for Success?   Is your plan in place?   What are you going to do about it today?

about the author

Joe Cronin is the founder, President and CEO of Incentive Services, Inc., a nationally recognized leader in the Performance Improvement industry headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He founded Incentive Services in 1981 with the goal of helping organizations implement strategies that maximize individual and team productivity and bottom line results.

His systems and motivational techniques have been developed over years of experience working with hundreds of clients ranging from fortune 100 companies to inter-city children. The objective is consistent: to help people maximize individual and team performance.

In 2002 he established Incentive Services University (ISU). ISU is the educational arm of Incentive Services and its purpose is twofold: to provide information on the psychology of people motivation and to educate management teams on the principles of Performance Improvement. These are core elements of Performance Improvement.

Joe's vision of the future incorporates proactive personal leadership at all levels, elevating the Human Element and understanding and committing to the components that constitute the Performance Improvement Sequence for Success.

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