

The Training Clinic

The “Oh So” Method to Analyzing Performance Problems

*I need team building training for my department. NOW.
I have 15 people and we're free the second Tuesday of next week for 4 hours. I have only \$500 budgeted, it has to be online and I've already invited everyone!
This just HAS to be good.*

Does this sound all too familiar? Madness like this happens on a daily basis. In fact, we're probably one of the only departments in the organization that receives these regular requests/demands telling us who to train, what to train, how to train, how long to train, when to train and how much we can spend. Wait – training is OUR area of expertise, right? We don't want to appear unsupportive but we've got a nagging feeling that there's something else brewing that won't be solved by a training session.

Enter Performance Analysis!

What is it and what are the benefits of doing one? The purpose of conducting a performance analysis is to identify the cause of poor performance so appropriate corrective action can occur. More specifically, is the issue or problem caused by a skill deficiency? If so, then a training solution would be appropriate. If the issue or problem is not a skill deficiency, then a non-training solution is the better fit. It's appropriate to conduct a performance analysis before any other type of needs assessment since the issue may not require a training solution. Most other forms of needs assessment involve developing information about the task and the target population. If training is not an appropriate solution, conducting a performance analysis first will save time and resources.

A performance analysis allows us to “put the brakes” on the madness and engage in a conversation in order to uncover the reason why desired performance isn't taking place. Here are just a few of the benefits of doing a performance analysis:

- Values learners time off the job
- Saves money by not holding needless training
- Pinpoints the real reason for the non-performance
- Identifies barrier to the performance
- Educates our stakeholders
- Helps the organization more quickly reach its performance goals

Need we say more?

Whenever a request is made to conduct a training program, ask the client requesting the training what the training is intended to accomplish. It is critical that you agree to help the client reach an outcome, rather than agree to conduct a training event. Performance analysis can be used to identify whether conducting training will help the client reach the performance objective.



There are several types of performance analysis you can conduct – each with a bit more structure and depth than the first. We'd like to introduce you to the most simple version of performance analysis we like to use as an initial conversation. It's called the "Oh – So" method and consists of a few informal questions. This approach has proven time and time again to be helpful and serves as a way to decide whether or not you need to take a deeper dive into performance analysis. Here's how a typical conversation might go using this method:

Manager: My group needs team building training.

Trainer: *Oh?* Tell me a bit more about what's going on.

Manager: Well, we had a number of new people who joined the department that aren't up to speed yet and this is our busiest season. We just aren't meeting our quotas. You know – we need team building.

Trainer: So, are the longer termed employees productive?

Manager: Yes, they know what they're doing and they're doing a great job!

Trainer: So, it's just the new people that aren't up to speed yet?

Manager: Yes.

Trainer: So maybe we need to look at providing the new folks some additional tools and coaching to get them up to speed quicker?

Manager: Uh.... Well – yes!

Trainer: I'd love to help you figure out what is needed. Let's set up a time for me to come down on the floor and help you determine exactly what they need to get up to speed quicker.

Manager: Awesome – How about Friday at 10?

Trainer: Perfect. See you then!

From this brief conversation, the trainer has led the manager through a series of questions to identify and narrow the performance problem. Notice how the trainer took the T-word (training) completely out of the picture and focused on performance. Also note how the trainer checked for understanding and then gained agreement on next steps which were, again, not training! Further information must be developed to fully grasp the problem. Training might be part of the solution...or it might not, depending on what is discovered during the floor observation.

We've gotten tremendous feedback from trainers who have used this tool over the years. It helps put the brakes on providing reactive training AND focuses on what's important – the performance!

We encourage you to use this technique next time you are bombarded – which will probably be this afternoon!



We look forward to your feedback, ideas and discussions!



Team M&M:

Melissa Smith and Maria Chilcote
Managing Partners, Owners, The Training Clinic
www.thetrainingclinic.com
info@thetrainingclinic.com

We are the trusted partner of choice for learning and performance professionals worldwide.

With over 35 years of experience, we specialize in the design, implementation, evaluation, coordination and management of training. We provide the full range of train the trainer workshops and certifications along with facilitation, instructional design and performance consulting services.

