Chapter Five
Performance Analysis

Instructor Information

DURATION 60 minutes

EQUIPMENT Chalkboard, marker board or flip chart; markers or chalk; laptop computer and SVGA projector, or overhead projector; VHS videotape player and monitor

TOOLBOX Required: Trigger Video—What Do You Think? (in three segments)
Activity—Factors in Establishing Performance Expectations
Suggested: None
Optional: None

OBJECTIVES 1) Present the procedures for identifying performance problems
2) Encourage the development of reasonable performance expectations
3) Relate the importance of customer satisfaction and continuous improvement

TASKS 1) Define terms and explain concepts relating to performance: analysis, tasks, behavior, expectations, standards, levels, goal setting, organization culture, actual-versus-expected (desired), reasonable and realistic, customer satisfaction, risk taking, and acceptance of failure.

2) Explain the principles and procedures connected with the “Performance Analysis Flowchart using transparencies and handouts to “walk the participants through” the topics and steps.

3) Show “trigger video” segments and discuss pertinent issues with the participants, inviting them to share their related experiences.

4) Explain the principles involved in developing realistic performance expectations

5) Relate customer satisfaction and continuous improvement to performance analysis.
RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Overview

Where Chapter 4 presented techniques to turn effort into performance, Chapter 5 brings judgment to bear on that performance. Now that our crew is performing, how well are they performing? Are they achieving a realistic level of production? If not, how do we improve?

The goal is to help the participants understand that analyzing worker performance is a vital aspect of improving worker performance. The “Performance Analysis Flowchart” shown here in your Manual and in the Participant’s Workbook was developed to assist supervisors in identifying possible areas causing performance problems. The sequence of the flowchart is important. Since performance analysis is an almost continuous activity, data collection should be part of the normal functions of a supervisor. When the data are analyzed, the resultant calculations indicate whether the crew is performing better than planned, as planned, or worse than planned. When the performance is below the expected, corrective action is needed. The improvement of performance is tied into a continuous process of analysis and adjustment.

Key Issues

1) Basic management functions—they need to be presented here, but this is more of a stage-setting appearance for Chapter 6. Present them as the basis or reason for performance analysis and they will be covered in detail in Chapter 6.

2) Performance Standards—they are usually written as statewide standards; specific conditions may cause unexpected performance results.

3) Continuous Improvement and Customer Satisfaction—together they are the implementation and goal of performance analysis.

Preparation

1) Read through the chapter and make any notes or changes you feel are needed to customize the presentation for your audience.

2) Prepare a recap/transition from Chapter 4 to Chapter 5.

3) Review the “What Do You Think” videotape and discussion questions. The scripts from all three segments are included at the end of this chapter for later reference.

4) Review the “Performance Analysis Flowchart” and its description. In can be confusing when trying to match the description paragraphs to the flowchart the first time through. Make sure you understand it and can lead someone through it, before you try to take the class through it.

5) Complete the “Factors in Establishing Performance Expectations” activity on your own to be better prepared for any confusion the participants may have.
INTRODUCTION

Where Chapter 4 presented techniques to turn effort into performance, Chapter 5 brings judgment to bear on that performance.

Now that our crew is performing, how well are they performing? Are they achieving a realistic level of production? If not, how do we improve?

Determining expected performance, measuring and analyzing actual performance, and then comparing the two to identify performance problems are important steps in motivating workers to improve their performance.

In this part of the course we’ll look at the procedures for performance analysis. We’ll also examine the setting and adjusting of performance standards that establish performance expectations. Customer satisfaction and continuous improve will play a big part as well.
Highway maintenance supervisors are responsible for effectively and efficiently maintaining a portion of their agencies' highway systems. This requires the supervisor to perform the basic functions of a manager: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling.

Planning involves determining what is to be achieved (what is the desired performance). This is really a process of goal setting. Once the goals or desired performance is identified, supervisors organize resources, assign workers, give direction, and control the work process so that the actual performance equals—or is as close as possible to—the desired performance.

Management is a continuous activity. To manage effectively, supervisors must be able to identify performance problems. What is a performance problem? It's a deviation or difference between the actual performance and the desired or expected performance. For example, if a crew of workers is expected to patch the pot-
holes in a 5-mile section of roadway in 5 days—or 1 mile per day—and at the end of the second day the crew has completed less than 1 mile of the work, there is a performance problem. The supervisor must investigate to determine the causes of the poor performance, and identify and undertake actions that will restore performance to the desired level.
WHAT IS PERFORMANCE?

But before we go any farther, I need to explain what I mean by "performance." Performing an activity consists of both tasks and behaviors.

First, an activity like bituminous (or asphaltic) pothole repair calls for completing several tasks, such as preparing a distressed area, placing the right amount of material in the hole, and compacting the material.
Activity: Bituminous Pothole Repair

Behaviors:

- Come to work on time
- Be willing to work
- Be able to work
- Work in a safe manner
- Maintain equipment
- Produce quality work

Talk about behaviors—what they are and how they relate to performing activities.

[If you are using the PowerPoint presentation, this is a two-part build.]

It also takes many behaviors by an individual to successfully complete the activity. Behaviors are single, independent actions by a worker, such as coming to work on time or working in a safe manner. A behavior is something a worker does or does not do, while a task has different levels of performance.
Performance Standards

- People need to know how they are doing and what is expected of them
- Standards allow workers to judge how they are doing
- Standards must be reasonable—not too high nor too low

People need to know how well they are doing. If they know what’s expected of them, and can keep track of themselves, they will be more motivated to do well. Performance standards allow workers to judge how well they are doing on the job. A standard is an accepted basis of comparison, an approved model. We compare things to a standard to see how they measure up.

Performance standards must be reasonable. If they are too high, they are impossible to achieve and workers are not motivated to try to meet them. On the other hand, if they are too low they are too easy to achieve and also give workers little motivation.

Most highway maintenance agencies have written performance standards, or at least guidelines that establish what’s expected of work crews in performing the various maintenance activities.

When we use the terms “standards,” “expectations,” and “goals,” or “standard,” “expected,” and “desired”—we’re really talking about the same thing. They all contrast with “actual.”
Behavior Standards

- Absenteeism
- Lateness
- Complaints
- Willingness to work
- Response to call-outs

There are a number of behaviors for which both written and unwritten behavior standards can be developed. Some examples:

- Absenteeism
- Lateness
- Complaints
- Willingness to work
- Response to emergency call-outs

Most organizations establish written standards to cover certain key behaviors. For example, the employee manual usually has a policy that if workers arrive so many minutes late for work, they are docked an hour’s pay. Typically, there are also standards covering the number of unexcused absences allowed before discipline is applied, or what happens when workers fail to respond to emergency call-outs.

While an organization’s personnel or human resources department is usually responsible for determining the official behavior
standards, it is the supervisors who play a major role in establishing the *culture* of the organization.

For example, supervisors may believe that highway maintenance work is extremely important and is very valuable to the area’s residents. They convey this belief to their workers by helping them to feel important and to understand that what they do impacts society—whether it be by keeping ditches and culverts open so that rainwater doesn’t back up and cover road surfaces, or by repairing holes and bumps in pavements to ensure safer and more comfortable driving. Stressing workers’ importance has a positive influence on their self-image. They believe in what they do and take great pride in it.
With workers believing that both they themselves and what they do are important, supervisors can develop the team philosophy that all the workers are important together. They stress the interrelationships among all crew members and strive to develop attitudes that coming to work late or not coming to work at all lets the other members of the crew down; that failing to respond to a call-out means that someone else will have to respond to it.

When the supervisor creates such a culture within the agency, the workers become internally motivated to not let the crew down and to take great pride in what they do so that they do it efficiently. This culture relies more on internal than external rewards.

**Behavior Standards**

- Absenteeism
- Lateness
- Complaints
- Willingness to work
- Response to call-outs
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Segment 1

Intro this video, telling the class Nick is going to attempt to apply these principles.

Show the first segment of the trigger video, What Do You Think? (consisting of three segments overall). It runs for 2 minutes.

[Be sure to stop the tape before segment 2 begins.]

Being the excellent crew leaders you are, (and of course that makes you excellent mentors for our friend) you have now passed on these pearls of wisdom to Nick. Nick, being Nick, decided to apply them immediately.

Lets see how he has done.
Discuss the video, being sure to cover the following points:

What observations can you make about this situation and the way Nick handled it?

The proposed solution will probably solve the problem, but...

What did Nick Steele fail to find out?

- Did Alex know the policy on attendance?
- Would he be able to make alternative arrangements when Ed wasn’t working?

How will the proposed solution help the crew?

- Nick won’t have to discipline a crew member.
- Alex may feel more accepted by the crew.

What will Nick need to do next?

- Check to be sure Alex improves his timeliness.
- Remember to thank Ed and to compliment Alex on his improved timeliness.
Segment 2

Show segment 2 of the trigger video, *What Do You Think?*, being sure to stop the tape before segment 3 starts. Segment 2 runs for 1 minute and 30 seconds.

*Let's give Nick another opportunity.*

*Discuss the situation it depicts and the issues it raises.*

*What observations can you make about this situation and the way Nick handled it?*

*The proposed solution will probably solve the problem, but…*

*What do you think of Nick Steele's solution?*

- Not treating everyone equally; others have also made sacrifices to respond to call-outs. Solving this problem may have created others.
- Steve has responsibility for setting his schedule with snow watch. Nick will need to follow up and assure himself that Steve has done this. Steve has lacked initiative in the past.
- Could have required him to first call when he is available.

*(continued next page)*
How will the proposed solution help the crew?

- Steve pulling his own weight on call-outs will reduce the time required by others.
- Better knowledge of Steve’s availability will reduce the conflicts at home (having his children cover for him) and at work.
- Nick learned about his employee.

Point out that one component of Nick’s problem is that once he identifies an issue he jumps to a quick solution and doesn’t look at the bigger picture. He’s trying, but Nick could use some more help.

Use this to bridge to the next topic—the “Performance Analysis Flowchart.”
A supervisor must be able to tell if there are performance problems and, if there are, find their causes. The “Performance Analysis Flowchart” shown in your Workbook can help you isolate performance problems. This is also the next “Tool” in your Toolbox.

1. Performance

Performance is the completion of a maintenance activity within a specified time period—such as the placement of X tons of patching material in a day, or the repair of a particular bridge deck in a week. The completed units of work must provide the minimum level of service (or quality) required by the organization. It is important that performance be defined as X quality units completed within Y time period.
Performance Analysis Flowchart

1. Choose Activity
2. Gather Actual Performance Data
3. Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected?
   - yes: Are You Satisfied?
   - no: Were There Uncontrollable Events?
     - yes: Revise Strategy
     - no: Were There Organizational Constraints?
       - yes: Improve Job Management
       - no: Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill?
         - yes: Improve Selection, Training & Assignment
         - no: Are Workers Adequately Motivated?
           - yes: Apply Motivational Techniques
           - no: Is The Performance Expectation Realistic?
             - yes: Revise Expectations
             - no: Change Methods or Technology
4. Is The Activity Complete?
   - yes: Performance
   - no: Revise Strategy

Instructor’s Manual
Tools for Peak Performance
2. Performance Data

Traditionally, performance has been measured in terms of the resources or input (workhours) needed to produce a measurable quantity of output (tons, acres, linear feet) over a definite time period, usually a day or a week. “Performance data” has been defined as information about the completed activity, such as workhours used, elapsed time, dollars spent, lane-miles of cracks sealed, acres of grass mowed, tons of patching material placed, and so on.

Increasingly, however, today’s maintenance managers are working hard to get away from measuring “outputs” alone and instead are measuring “outcomes”—particularly in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and citizen (“customer”) satisfaction. You might say that “outcomes equal output plus quality.” In the case of mowing, for example, an outcome-based performance will provide feedback not only on how many acres were mowed per day, but also whether the mowing was done in a timely manner and if the final result satisfies the traveling public.

For every activity, there should be a performance standard establishing the expected level of performance. The supervisor and
Performance Analysis Flowchart

Choose Activity

Gather Actual Performance Data

Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected?
- yes: Are You Satisfied?
  - yes: Is The Activity Complete?
  - no: Revise Strategy

- no: Were There Uncontrollable Events?
  - yes: Performance
  - no: Were There Organizational Constraints?
    - yes: Improve Job Management
    - no: Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill?
      - yes: Improve Selection, Training & Assignment
      - no: Are Workers Adequately Motivated?
        - yes: Apply Motivational Techniques
        - no: Revise Expectations

- no: Is The Performance Expectation Realistic?
  - yes: Change Methods or Technology
  - no: Is The Activity Complete?
workers carrying out the activity should know what’s expected from their efforts. For example, a pothole patching crew should know the number of tons of patching material it should place in a day and the level of service (or quality) required.

As the activity is performed, performance data are gathered to indicate how well the activity is being carried out.

3. Actual Versus Expected Performance

The analysis of performance really begins with the question, “Is the actual performance as good as or better than the expected performance?” If the answer is yes, go to step 4. If the answer is no, go to step 5.

4. Satisfaction with Performance Level

If actual performance is as good as or better than expected performance, the next question is whether or not the supervisor is satisfied with the performance. It’s possible that the expected level of performance was too easily achieved and that performance could actually have been better. If the supervisor is not satisfied, go to step 6.
Performance Analysis Flowchart

1. Choose Activity

2. Gather Actual Performance Data

3. Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected? (yes/no)
   - yes → Are You Satisfied? (yes/no)
     - yes → Is The Activity Complete? (yes/no)
     - no → Revise Strategy
   - no → Were There Uncontrollable Events? (yes/no)
     - yes → Revise Strategy
     - no → Were There Organizational Constraints? (yes/no)
       - yes → Improve Job Management
       - no → Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill? (yes/no)
         - yes → Are Workers Adequately Motivated? (yes/no)
           - yes → Improve Selection, Training & Assignment
           - no → Apply Motivational Techniques
         - no → Is The Performance Expectation Realistic? (yes/no)
           - yes → Change Methods or Technology
           - no → Revise Expectations

4. Are You Satisfied? (yes/no)
   - yes → Is The Activity Complete? (yes/no)
   - no → Revise Strategy

5. Improve Selection, Training & Assignment

6. Apply Motivational Techniques

7. Revise Expectations

8. Improve Job Management

9. Change Methods or Technology
5. Uncontrollable Event

There are times when things happen that cannot be controlled by the supervisor or the crew, such as bad weather or accidents. When these events happen, the supervisor must determine what can be done to return the performance to the expected level and how these events—or their effects—can be avoided in the future. If there were no uncontrollable events, proceed to step 6.

To deal with the effects of uncontrollable events, the supervisor can change the method being used, change or increase the amount of resources, and/or plan alternative activities.

6. Organizational Constraints or Problems

If the actual performance is less than expected or not satisfactory, the next question is whether or not the work is free from organization problems. Examples of organization problems are poorly maintained equipment, the wrong equipment, or mishandling of the requisition for equipment, materials, or tools. Have things happened that prevented the workers from working up to the expected level? If the answer is yes, go to step 7; but if the answer is no, go to step 8.
Choose Activity

Gather Actual Performance Data

Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected?

yes
Are You Satisfied?

yes
Is The Activity Complete?

no

no

Were There Uncontrollable Events?

yes
Revise Strategy

no
Performance

no

Were There Organizational Constraints?

yes
Improve Job Management

no

no

Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill?

yes

no

Are Workers Adequately Motivated?

yes

no

Are The Performance Expectation Realistic?

yes
Change Methods or Technology

no

Apply Motivational Techniques

no

Revise Expectations

no

Improve Selection, Training & Assignment

no

Revise Strategy

no

Improve Job Management
A delay, for whatever reason, is the most common indicator of organizational problems. Workers may be delayed by not having information, tools, equipment, materials, or instructions. For example, in one study it was shown that a pothole repair crew spent about 40 percent of the time waiting for their leader to instruct them on what to do next. So, in this instance, the source of the organization problem was the crew leader.

7. Improvement of Job Management

If there are organization problems, job management must be improved to eliminate them. Better management requires better planning, organizing, and scheduling of workers, tools, materials, and equipment. The goal must be to eliminate factors that prevent a worker from working when given the opportunity to work.

8. Ability, Knowledge, and Skills

If there are no organization problems, ask the question, “Does the worker possess the necessary ability, knowledge, and skill? If the answer is yes, go to step 10; and if no, go to step 9.
Performance Analysis Flowchart

Choose Activity

Gather Actual Performance Data

Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected?

yes → Are You Satisfied?

no → Were There Uncontrollable Events?

yes → Revise Strategy

no → Were There Organizational Constraints?

yes → Improve Job Management

no → Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill?

yes → Are Workers Adequately Motivated?

yes → Is The Performance Expectation Realistic?

yes → Change Methods or Technology

no → Improve Selection, Training & Assignment

no → Apply Motivational Techniques

no → Revise Expectations

Are You Satisfied?

yes → Is The Activity Complete?

no → Performance

Is The Activity Complete?

yes → Performance

no → Are You Satisfied?

Is The Activity Complete?
9. Improvement of Selection, Training, and Assignment

If a worker is unable to perform an assigned activity or takes much longer to perform it than other workers, it's possible that he or she doesn't have the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill. The same is true if the worker has to redo the work many times to get it right.

In general, it's unlikely that workers don't have the ability; they wouldn't have been hired if that were the case. However, because of injuries, illness, and the aging process, it's possible for workers to lose some of their abilities.

In some cases the hiring of personnel may be beyond the control of the maintenance division. Here the ability issue may be relevant. If the worker has the ability, the role of providing knowledge and skill falls to the supervisor to provide training opportunities or on-the-job training. The worker may need to be assigned to a different activity.

10. Workers' Incentive or Motivation

If there are no organization problems and the workers have the necessary abilities, knowledge, and skills, the next question is, “Are the workers motivated enough?” If workers have the neces-
Performance Analysis Flowchart

Choose Activity

Gather Actual Performance Data

Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected?

- yes
  - Are You Satisfied?
    - yes
      - Is The Activity Complete?
    - no
      - no
      - yes
        - Revise Strategy
        - Performance
  - no
  - no
    - yes
      - Revise Strategy
      - Performance
    - no
      - no
      - no
      - yes
        - Improve Job Management
    - no
      - no
      - no
      - yes
        - Improve Selection, Training & Assignment
    - no
      - no
      - no
      - yes
        - Apply Motivational Techniques
      - no
        - no
        - yes
          - Revise Expectations
    - no
      - no
      - yes
        - Change Methods or Technology
sary resources (there are no organization problems) and the necessary ability, knowledge, and skills, then the pace and quality of the work are determined by the workers. *They* determine the level of performance, which is a reflection of their incentive or motivation. If the answer to the question is *yes*, go to step 12, but if it’s *no*, go to step 11.

A lack of incentive or motivation is evident when workers take a lot of breaks, start work late or quit early, accomplish less than they should, and so on.

11. Change Motivational Techniques—Changes in Job Environment or the Job Itself

Incentive comes from the work itself or the environment or surroundings within which the work is performed. Incentive can be increased by making the job more interesting and challenging, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Job environment is everything surrounding the work: the supervisor, the coworkers, physical working conditions, reward systems, communications, and the like. Incentive can come from the job context under specific conditions. We’ll examine how to improve job environment in Chapters 6 and 7.
Choose Activity

Gather Actual Performance Data

Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected?

Are You Satisfied?

Is The Activity Complete?

Revise Strategy

Performance

Were There Uncontrollable Events?

Were There Organizational Constraints?

Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill?

Are Workers Adequately Motivated?

Is The Performance Expectation Realistic?

Change Methods or Technology

Improve Job Management

Improve Selection, Training & Assignment

Apply Motivational Techniques

Revise Expectations

Are You Satisfied?

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no

yes

no
12. Realistic Expectation

If there are no organization problems; the workers have the ability, knowledge, and skills; and are sufficiently motivated; the next question is, “Is the performance expectation realistic?” If expectations are realistic, go to step 14; otherwise, go to step 13.

If there are no organization problems; the workers have the necessary ability, knowledge, and skills; and the workers demonstrate that they are motivated by working hard—but they still cannot meet the expected level of performance—the performance expectation must be questioned.

13. Change in Expectation

If the expectation is unrealistic, it should be changed according to the process described at the end of this chapter.

When establishing the expectation, be sure that it is not so high that it is impossible to achieve or so easy that it can be reached with little effort. It should be challenging but achievable.

14. Change in Technology/Methods

If the expectation is realistic but it is not being achieved, it is necessary to change the technology and/or methods being used.
Performance Analysis Flowchart

Choose Activity

Gather Actual Performance Data

Does Actual Performance Exceed Expected?
  yes  → Are You Satisfied?
  no  → Were There Uncontrollable Events?
  yes  → Revise Strategy
  no  → Performance

Were There Uncontrollable Events?
  yes  → Were There Organizational Constraints?
  no  → Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill?
  yes  → Are Workers Adequately Motivated?
  no  → Improve Job Management

Were There Organizational Constraints?
  yes  → Improve Selection, Training & Assignment
  no  → Apply Motivational Techniques

Do Workers Have Ability, Knowledge & Skill?
  yes  → Is The Performance Expectation Realistic?
  no  → Change Methods or Technology

Are Workers Adequately Motivated?
  yes  → Revise Expectations
  no  → Improve Selection, Training & Assignment

Is The Activity Complete?
  yes  → Performance
  no  → Revise Strategy

Are You Satisfied?
  yes  → Performance
  no  → Revise Strategy

Change Methods or Technology

Improve Job Management
WHAT DO YOU THINK? (Segment 3)

Show the third segment of the What Do You Think? trigger video. It runs for 1 minute.

Then discuss it with the group. This situation highlights one of the first lessons of performance measurement—comparing apples with apples.

Why did Nick’s boss have a problem?

The participants’ responses may include the following, in their own words. If not, offer them yourself.

- The boss didn’t consider the differences in the work—location, difficulty, materials.
- He didn’t indicate what his expectations were, so Nick still has no target for any type of repair that will satisfy his supervisor.
- Instead of asking questions to identify problems—like those in the Performance Analysis Flowchart—Nick’s boss indicated that he felt the problem might be Nick himself.

Have you had similar experiences?

Introduce the participants to the Performance Troubleshooting Checklist, the next “Tool” in their Toolbox. This is a slimmed-down, streamlined version of the flowchart.
ESTABLISHING REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Tell the group that there are two basic questions for all supervisors, which are:

- For what activities and behaviors should there be a desired or expected performance?
- What should the expectations be?

The first question can be answered easily. There should be desired or expected levels of performance for all activities and behaviors that are important to the organization. If pothole patching is important to the organization, the supervisor should have an expectation that X tons of patching material be placed per day. Similarly, if attendance is important to the organization, there should be an expectation that workers will be at work.

Given that there is a need for desired or expected levels of performance, what should they be? This really becomes a question of what is reasonable. How much should a person or crew do in a specified period of time? Expectations that are too high are unattainable and greatly reduce the motivation of people to try to meet them. On the other hand, expectations that are too low are too easily attainable and provide little motivation to reach them.
Factors in Establishing Performance Expectations

Establishing goals for activities is sometimes difficult because of the diversity of the people performing the activity and the conditions under which the activity is to be performed. An expectation that is reasonable for some people may be too easy or too hard for others. Here are the factors that should be considered in establishing activity performance goals for a particular person or crew:

- Nature of the task
- Workers to perform the task
- Resources available to perform the task
- Conditions under which the activity is to be performed

The nature of the task is important because it establishes exactly what is to be done. For example, patching potholes in a concrete pavement is different from patching potholes in an asphalt pavement.
Are the crew members who are to perform the task well-skilled and experienced, or are they relatively new employees? Experienced workers will be more productive than workers with less experience.

Workers who have equipment that is well-maintained and of the appropriate size will be more productive than workers with poorly maintained equipment. The same goes for other resources.

Conditions must be considered. Patching potholes in a two-lane country road is a much different job than patching potholes in the middle lane of an expressway. Performance would likely be much better on the country road job than on the expressway.

These factors point out the need for different goals or expectations of performance. The expected level of performance will vary. For the activities of pothole patching and grass mowing, I want you to think of the factors that you would take into account in establishing the expected levels of performance.
Group Activity: Factors in Establishing Performance Expectations

Print the two activity names on the chalkboard, marker board, or flip chart, leaving space underneath them for responses. Then ask the participants to come up with the factors, and list them as they do so. Their responses ought to match somewhat the following lists:

**Pothole Patching**
- Traffic, location
- Size of holes
- Lane closure or “hit and run”
- Type of pavement
- Equipment
- Distance to materials

**Grass Mowing**
- Terrain
- Obstacles (bridges)
- Type of road
- Type of vegetation
- Equipment repair
- Time between mowings
- Amount of trash

Discuss the participants’ suggested factors, including any that differ from the “official” ones above.
The Process of Goal Setting

Having a goal is important when establishing performance expectations. A goal can be developed in one of three ways:

- The supervisor can develop it.
- The worker or workers can develop it.
- The supervisor and worker(s) can develop it jointly.

If the supervisor develops the goal and dictates it to the workers, the workers will not be or feel part of the process. If the workers set the goal, the goal may be very different from what the supervisor had in mind. **Jointly** developing the goal allows the workers to become part of the goal-setting process and promotes agreement between the workers and supervisor on the goal. Another benefit of joint determination is that differences in goals can be discussed and the reasons for the differences identified. There may be reasons that are not known to the supervisor as to why the goal should be lower than what he or she desires. This may include factors such as equipment problems, material problems, and so on.
Involving the workers in the goal-setting process also has a motivational benefit. People who participate in the establishment of their goals have a stake in reaching those goals. They view it as an ownership issue. If I develop the goal for me, it is my goal, and because I developed it or helped to develop it, I have a responsibility to reach it. Even then, workers should always have the opportunity to discuss and/or question the goals they are expected to accomplish.

So wherever and whenever possible, workers should be involved in determining their goals. The goals do not have to be elaborate or highly detailed. They simply have to communicate to workers what is expected…and be realistic, understood, and accepted.
Discuss the process of setting goals, being sure to include the following points:

The goals that are developed must be expressed quantitatively—in numbers. Too many supervisors convey their performance expectations by simply telling a work crew to do the best job that it can, and as much as it can. Everyone involved will have his or her own idea of what “doing the best job,” or “doing as much as possible,” means. If there are five crew members and the supervisor, there will be six opinions. So it’s important that the supervisor reach an agreement or understanding with the worker or work crew about how much is to be accomplished within a specific time period or how long it will take to complete the activity. Having a quantitative goal allows the workers to periodically assess how well they are doing relative to the goal. Knowing how well he/she or the crew is doing permits the worker or crew to control its performance to meet the goal. If the goal cannot be measured, it cannot be used for control purposes.

Finally, remember this: The goals that the supervisor and crew members set need to be compared with the established performance standards of the organization’s maintenance management system.
PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS IN SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS

Customer Satisfaction

Who are your customers?

- Public
- Local highway agencies
- Other maintenance crews
- Management
- Anyone who relies on your “product”

Displaying just the title, lead the group into the next phase of the discussion—what is the ultimate check of our performance?

You must make this transition or the rest of this chapter will seem disjointed. This is a crucial point in the chapter. This is where we bring the discussion back to application. We apply the fire, so to speak, to test its usefulness. Does this help us meet our ultimate goal of satisfying our customers and building a successful organization? Yes, but only if we integrate our customer into the flowchart.

No, we do not add another box. We simply include this dimension in all phases of the process—developing expectation, setting goals, considering and collecting our performance data. To do this we must first determine who our customers are and what they expect from us.

With that in mind, develop your own introduction to this new section and lead the group into answering the question.

OK, so we know how to analyze performance, set expectations, set goals, ... but ...
Once, the question is answered, you may want to include the following ideas in your discussion.

To be successful, any organization must develop a customer orientation and put customer satisfaction at the top of its list of important objectives. Who are the customers of highway maintenance agencies? First and foremost is the taxpaying public. The public wants a highway system that is well-maintained in a highly efficient and cost-effective manner. What this really means is that the public wants highways with smooth-riding surfaces, that are clearly marked and signed, and that are kept free of debris and other hazards. The public wants to know that its tax dollar is well spent and not wasted. When this occurs, the public is satisfied.

In addition to the public, your other “customers” include local highway agencies, other maintenance crews, management, and anyone who relies on your “product.”

Supervisors must develop expectations for their workers that will result in worker behavior that will promote customer satisfaction. The customer, who is paying the bill, doesn’t like to see four workers watching one worker work, even though there may be a legitimate reason why this is happening. The customer doesn’t like to see highway maintenance vehicles parked at convenience stores or donut shops.
A supervisor should communicate his or her expectations that the workers organize and perform their work in an efficient and effective manner. The greater the public's perception that highway maintenance work is being performed in this manner, the greater the customer satisfaction. This satisfaction indicates that the crew and the organization are successful.

Could you be successful according to the performance analysis flowchart and still be unsuccessful in the overall goal of customer satisfaction (or CS, for short)?

Only if you do not include CS in applying the flowchart.

... OK, let's say we've done it all. We can answer yes to all the questions. Everything is wonderful. Now, we never have to change or analyze anything again, right? ... WRONG.
Continuous Improvement

- Performance of activities can always be improved
- Worker can best identify types of improvement needed
- Ideas must be implemented—only when risks are understood
- Not all ideas will be successful—identify the cause of failure, not the person who had the idea

Continuous Improvement Process

An important element of customer satisfaction is the quality and efficiency of workmanship. Successful organizations focus on continually improving the process of providing their goods or services. This emphasis on continuous improvement requires the supervisor to establish expectations that workers will be innovative. Workers need to understand that they are expected to come up with ideas about how to do their job better or, in other words, how to improve customer satisfaction. The performance of any activity can always be improved. Workers who perform the activity are the best people to identify how that performance can be improved because they know the activity and how it’s done.

Developing ideas that improve performance is only one part of the process. These ideas need to be implemented, which frightens many supervisors. There is no guarantee that the idea will work; in trying out an idea, the supervisor is taking on some risk.
The risk is the possibility that the idea will not work and that the cost of completing the activity will be increased. When this happens, the idea may be considered a failure. However, risk also implies that the idea may work, thereby improving performance. A good supervisor supports risk taking. This doesn’t mean trying every idea no matter what the risk, but the supervisor should support taking on reasonable risk.

Continuous improvement in the work process requires the supervisor to do two things. First, as I just said, the supervisor must support reasonable risk taking. Second, the supervisor must be willing to accept failure. All ideas do not work.

Workers who come up with new ideas or develop new ways of doing things will be encouraged when they see that their supervisor is willing to take on some risk by allowing them to try out their ideas. They will be willing to continue to come up with new ideas. A supervisor who discourages workers from trying new ways because of the associated risk will cause workers to stop trying to improve the process.
Not only should a supervisor accept the fact that some ideas will fail, but when they do, he or she should help the workers to determine why the idea did not work and how it can be improved. The worst thing a supervisor can do when an idea fails is to tell the worker what a dumb idea it was and to stop messing around with other ideas. Every idea that Thomas Edison, or Henry Ford, or Bill Gates had was not successful. In the end they learned from their failures as well as from their successes.
Key Points

- Unsatisfactory performance is caused by many factors; examine each situation in an orderly manner to determine causes.
- Performance standards are usually written as statewide standards; specific conditions may cause unexpected performance results.
- The focus of the continuous improvement process is on improving performance in order to improve customer satisfaction—job one.

REVIEW OF KEY POINTS

5.18 Key Points Use the statements displayed in Transparency 5.18 to review the key points addressed in Chapter 5. The statements are reprinted below:

- Unsatisfactory performance is caused by many factors; examine each situation in an orderly manner to determine causes.
- Performance standards are usually written as statewide standards; specific conditions may cause unexpected performance results.
- The focus of the continuous improvement process is on improving performance in order to improve customer satisfaction—job one.
What You Have Learned

How to

- Analyze performance
- Identify causes of problems
- Develop expectations
- Continually improve

Transparency 5.19

5.19 What You Have Learned

Transparency 5.19 highlights the major points the participants have learned in this chapter. Read it aloud and ask them if they feel that they have learned these. Then see if there are any questions/comments from the group before taking a break.
Trigger Video Segment 1

Nick Steele has a problem with the behavior of a particular member of his crew. In reviewing the time sheets for the quarter he notices the frequent lateness of Alex.

He takes Alex aside and asks him why he is late so often.

Alex tells Steele that he lives with his brother in the inner city. Since no bus goes as far out of town as the state garage, Alex’s brother drives him to work.

But when his brother’s old car won’t run, Alex has to take the earliest bus as far as it goes…

…and walk the rest of the way. When this happens he can’t get to the garage on time.

Steele thinks about this situation. He remembers that Ed lives on the opposite side of the city from the garage and has to go near where Alex lives in order to come to work.

He notices that Alex and Ed have been friendly since they worked together on the inventory…

…so he suggests to Alex that he ask Ed for a ride.

Alex, however, is very reluctant to impose.

So Steele suggests the ride idea to Ed.

Ed is willing. He mentions that he has tried to help Alex with his English, and that this will give them more time together to work on it.

Trigger Video Segment 2

Nick Steele’s boss has reviewed the log of response to emergency call-out that is kept by the snow watch during winter off-hours. He detects a problem with another member of Steele’s crew.

The boss calls Steele and advises him that Steve has a low percentage of response to emergency call-outs.

Steele talks with Steve about this.

At first, Steve gets defensive and feels insulted. But after Steele speaks calmly for a while, Steve looks more comfortable.

He admits that when he is alone with the children and it snows, he tells his daughter to answer the phone and say that he is not there.

Steve says he has no choice, since his wife works at the hospital and her sister does not want to drive to his house in snowy weather to take care of the children.

He adds that he would like more overtime, since his family needs the money—but in no case will he leave his children alone.

Steele asks if Steve knows by Monday what hours his wife will work the following week. When Steve says yes, Steele tells him to inform the snow watch of the hours he will be available. This way the snow watch will only call him at those times.

Steele and his boss are happy with this arrangement, and Steve is delighted to get overtime and not have to avoid phone calls.
Trigger Video Segment 3

One day Nick Steele got a phone call from his boss:

“Nick, I just received the report on the last quarter’s productivity by activity. I noticed that you took three days to fix 1,000 feet of guardrail, yet when you were away at the concrete repair training course your acting crew chief, Steve, did 8,000 feet in one day! What’s going on out there?”

In response, Steele pointed out that Steve worked on Route 43, a high-volume commuter route where light cars had brushed the guardrail and pushed it out of line.

Steele then said: “I was on Route 59, a heavy truck route, where a milk tanker had jackknifed on wet pavement and completely taken out a 1,000-foot section of guardrail.

“All Steve did on Route 43 was hit the posts back into line and drive them down an inch or two to reset them.”