

DEVELOPING A MOTIVATED WORK GROUP

Participant's Manual
Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)
State of Louisiana

DEVELOPING A MOTIVATED WORK GROUP

Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)

Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service

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DEVELOPING A MOTIVATED WORK GROUP

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for supervisors to learn strategies for improving and maintaining employee performance. Participants will learn to identify performance issues and problems that are related to employee motivation and to solve those motivation-related performance problems. Participants will also learn to maintain the motivation of employees who are already performing at acceptable or higher levels. *Note: This course is not designed for improving the self-motivation of the participants – it is not a “feel-good” course.*

JOB OUTCOME

- Motivates employees at all levels to work toward the department’s goals, objectives, and strategies.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate motivation-related performance problems.
- Apply appropriate motivational strategies for given situations.

INTRODUCTION TO MOTIVATION

Motivation means “a motive for action.” Put another way, motivation is the reason a person chooses to do some things and chooses not to do other things.

FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MOTIVATION

- A supervisor’s actions influence the day-to-day motivation of employees. (People respond to how they are treated.)
- A supervisor can achieve department expectations and be concerned about employee satisfaction at the same time.
- Positively reinforcing high performing employees is as important as dealing with motivation-based problems.

MOTIVATION AS A COMPONENT OF PERFORMANCE

Supervisors and managers are responsible for achieving the goals of the organization through leading the efforts of their employees. Individual job performance can be summarized as follows:

Performance is a function of Ability and Motivation, where:

Ability is:

- Aptitude
- Training
- Resources

Motivation is:

- Desire
- Commitment

Performance is a function of *both* ability and motivation; both elements of performance function together.

- **Aptitude** refers to existing skills and capabilities that an employee uses on a job or a task.
 - These skills and capabilities can be technical, physical, interpersonal, or a combination of those.
 - Aptitude is affected by an employee's previous job experiences, formal education, and training.

- **Training** is a method for improving employee job performance when it is properly designed and delivered. Training that is specific to the duties and tasks of an employee can improve almost any ability or skill.
 - When there is a change in the method or the technology to be used by an employee to do the job, some additional training is usually necessary.

- **Resources** are the tools that an employee needs to do the work assigned to him or her. Resources are not part of an employee's knowledge or experience, but they are an equally important part of an employee's ability. Some examples are listed below:
 - Functioning equipment and tools.
 - Appropriate materials and supplies.
 - Enough time to do the task the right way.
 - Timely access to necessary information.
 - The completed work of other employees, especially when the finished work of one employee is the starting point for another employee's work.

Note: An employee who has repeatedly performed well in the past but who now performs below expectations most likely *does not have an ability problem* unless the job, the methods, the equipment, or the resources have been changed.

See the Appendix for specific examples of ability-related performance problems.

If the supervisor determines that an employee's performance problem is not related to ability, the next step is to look at the employee's motivation.

Motivation defined: the desire and commitment to perform a task well enough to meet expectations.

- **Desire** means wanting to perform a task. This can mean wanting to do a task, yet it can also mean "wanting to finish a task" in order to go on to something else. An employee who wants to complete a task displays this by the effort he or she devotes to the task.
- **Commitment** means being persistent or trying hard to complete a task. It means being willing to continue working toward job completion even when distracted or discouraged during the process. An employee displays this by persevering or "sticking to it" when there is some difficulty in completing the job or task.

Note: An employee who is persistently giving enough effort to complete a task, but has never performed it well enough to meet expectations *does not have a motivation problem*. Put another way, an employee who is trying hard to accomplish a task but is getting nowhere has enough motivation (look at the effort), but that employee probably has an ability-related problem that needs to be solved before the employee gets demotivated and becomes harder to reach.

See the Appendix for specific examples of motivation-related performance problems.

A STORY OF JILL AND JACK

Supervisors tend to apply more pressure to an employee if they believe that the employee is deliberately not performing up to expectations vs. struggling with a task due to a lack of knowledge or skill. The following is an example of that approach:

1. Jill is a supervisor. Jill has an employee named Jack, and Jack has a performance problem. Jill assumes that Jack's problem is that he's not trying hard enough (not motivated enough).
2. Jill increases the pressure on Jack.
3. Jack wants to do the job well, though from Jack's point of view Jill does not see his real problem – a lack of proper training and some unrealistic time schedules.
4. Jill keeps up the pressure on Jack, and Jack continues to perform poorly, because the root of the performance problem has not been addressed (training and/or scheduling).
5. Eventually Jack stops trying hard, since it seems he is getting nowhere. (Jack has developed a motivation problem under this misapplied pressure, on top of the original problem of training and scheduling.)
6. Jill notices this change in Jack and is convinced that her original assumption about Jack's motivation was correct (a self-fulfilling prophecy).
7. Things go downhill from there.

Individual Exercise

What: Identify a performance problem that will be used for discussion later during the class.

How: Identify an actual performance problem, past or present (not a hypothetical situation).

Notes:

DETERMINING THE CAUSE OF A PERFORMANCE PROBLEM

1. Make sure the employee understands that there is a performance problem in the first place.

This is important because this whole process is based on the premise that both the supervisor and the employee recognize the existence of a performance problem.

If the employee *does not understand* that there is performance problem:

- The supervisor should clarify this with the employee, using two-way communication, so the employee can see that there is a problem with his/her performance.
 - The employee does not have to like the fact that there is a performance problem, only acknowledge that there is one

If the employee *understands* that there is a performance problem:

- Go on to Step 2.

2. Determine if the performance problem is based on the employee's ability or motivation.

Use the “**Questions for Evaluating a Performance Problem**” in the table on page 10. These questions are a useful tool to help supervisors to properly identify the performance problems that they face.

3. If the performance problem is motivation-based, use the appropriate strategy:

- Set clear, challenging expectations.
- Use positive (+) and negative (–) consequences appropriately.
- Create and maintain a motivating climate.

Questions for Evaluating a Performance Problem	
Ability	<p>1. Does the employee have the capability to do the tasks assigned to him or her?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical and technical capability? - Interpersonal ability (work with people)? - Appropriate education/experience level? <p>2. Has the employee been properly trained?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any changes in the job/task or in the procedure for completing the job/task? - Any changes in technology or equipment used to complete the job/task? - Enough on-the-job training and guidance from the supervisor? - Enough real-world practice doing the task? <p>3. Does the employee have the right resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functioning equipment and tools? - Materials and supplies? - Enough time to do the task well? - Have the completed work of others? - Timely access to necessary information?
<p>Look for ability-related causes first. Only after questions 1-3 are answered acceptably do we move on to questions 4-5.</p>	
Motivation	<p>4. How hard is the employee trying to complete the task?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start tasks but not finish them? - Get discouraged with tasks that don't go smoothly? - Confident that he or she can succeed? <p>5. How much improvement is the employee making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employee's work unacceptable even though he or she is giving effort? - Good performance only occurs when the employee is closely monitored? - Willing to listen and learn in order to improve?
<p><i>Note: The 5th question is the "quality check" on the first 4 questions. If the answers to the first 4 questions are positive, then the last question should have a positive answer also. If not, then the supervisor missed something in answering those first 4 questions and must go back for a closer look at the answers to the questions.</i></p>	

Skill Practice

Assessing Performance Problems

What: Discuss the performance problems identified earlier.

How: Listen to your group members' different situations, select one of them to work on, and use the questions from pg. 10 to determine whether that problem comes from a lack of ability or a lack of motivation. *See the Appendix for some specific examples of ability- and motivation-related performance problems.*

Focus: Correctly identifying ability and/or motivation problems.

Notes:

IMPROVING MOTIVATION-RELATED PERFORMANCE

This manual addresses motivation in two ways: (1) solving motivation-related performance problems, and (2) maintaining the motivation of employees who are already performing at acceptable or better levels.

The remainder of this course focuses on the motivation component of performance. Strategies to deal with the *ability* component are taught in a separate CPTP course:

- *Improving Employee Performance through Coaching*

The strategies listed below are designed to improve performance problems that are rooted in motivation by identifying and addressing the specific motivation-related issues.

MOTIVATION STRATEGIES
1. Set clear, challenging expectations.
2. Use positive and negative consequences appropriately.
3. Create and maintain motivating climate.

To address performance problems linked to motivation, we will turn the three components listed above into questions that can be used to identify specific motivation issues. By answering the questions for each component, the supervisor can identify which issues impact the performance problems and which ones do not.

1.A. Does the employee understand and accept the performance expectations?

1.B. Does the employee believe that he/she can achieve the expectations?

Answering these two questions will let you know if this strategy (#1) is the place to begin to deal with a motivation-based performance problem. If the answer to both questions is “yes,” then it is likely the best strategy would be #2 or #3.

Class Discussion

Experiences with Expectations

What: Class discussion about expectations

How: Based on questions 1.A. and 1.B. discuss motivating or demotivating experiences you have had with work-related expectations.

Focus: Offer examples from your experience with expectations – motivating or demotivating ones. Explain why the expectations were motivating or demotivating.

Notes:

Setting Expectations

The foundation of an effective motivation program is setting proper expectations. Employees are more likely to “buy into” expectations if they are involved in the process. Put another way, involvement in setting expectations leads to commitment to those expectations. For this reason, most performance appraisal systems are centered on employees and their supervisors working together to set performance expectations.

An expectation is a specific and measurable target for accomplishment, within specified time and resource constraints. For a performance expectation to be effective in improving or sustaining motivation, the expectation must be “S.M.A.R.T.”:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Time-bound

Example of a S.M.A.R.T. expectation:

By March 31 20xx, increase the percent of error-free inspection reports submitted to 90% (current level is 85%). Do this while maintaining the same monthly average number of inspections conducted as the last fiscal year.

- **Specific** – provides enough detail so the person who must meet the expectation knows the ‘what’ *and* ‘how’ of the task.
- **Measurable** – provides a standard for comparison, a specific result that can be checked; focuses on behavior, activity, and tasks.
- **Attainable** – challenging enough to be a little bit of a stretch for the employee, yet still within his or her capability. It is do-able within the resources available.
- **Relevant** – individual expectations should be in line with the work unit performance targets and the department’s goals and objectives.
- **Time-bound** –the task has a timeframe for completion that meets the needs of the work unit, whether that is a specific date or a cycle of activity repeated by the employee over time.

Supervisors also need to be willing to reconsider expectations that, over time, become inconsistent or incompatible with an employee’s job duties.

Element	Example of SMART elements from the previous page
<i>Specific</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...increase the percent of error-free inspection reports submitted..." tells the employee to focus on the inspection reports that are still being submitted with errors. ▪ "Improve inspection report quality" would not be specific enough
<i>Measurable</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...increase to 90% (current level is 85%)..." is a clear target of achievement that contrasts the current reality (85%) with the new expectation (90%).
<i>Aggressive but attainable</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing to 90% from 85% while maintaining the same monthly numbers is challenging but is not impossible.
<i>Realistic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is sensible that it can be done. It is a natural follow-through from last year's expectations. It is do-able. ▪ A change to 100% from 85% probably would not be realistic.
<i>Time-bound</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "By March 31 20xx..." puts a deadline on the expected improvement in the quality of reports with no drop in the number of inspections to be completed. ▪ Some expectations have a date-specific deadline, yet many expectations describe a time cycle rather than a deadline. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each morning... ○ Each Tuesday... ○ Every pay period... ○ By the end of each work day... ○ By the last working day of each month... ○ Twice per month... ○ Every quarter... ○ By the end of the fiscal year...

In addition to the S.M.A.R.T elements, setting expectations should include opportunities for feedback to:

- Clarify expectations
- Adjust the difficulty of the expectation
- Give recognition

Feedback provides for along-the-way progress reports to the employee. Checking in with an employee is also prime opportunity for informal recognition and praise when progress has been made.

Skill Practice

Setting Expectations

What: Two-part exercise

- 1. Individual activity:** Write 1 or 2 expectations appropriate for an employee in your work group (if you do not supervise anyone, write expectations for yourself).
- 2. Group activity:** Discuss these expectations with your group; ask questions and give each other feedback on expectation elements; make changes if necessary.

How: Use the S.M.A.R.T. approach; your individual example does not have to be as long-term as the example in the book.

Notes:

2. Use positive and negative consequences appropriately

Once clear expectations have been established and communicated, the next step is to **encourage employees to achieve the expectations by linking performance to the appropriate positive or negative consequences.**

2.A. Does the employee believe that there are consequences for poor performance?

2.B. Does the employee believe that there are different consequences for average vs. high performance? Are the consequences for high performance valuable and worth the effort?

In general, employees will accomplish expectations when there are consequences attached to achieving or not achieving of those expectations.

- Rewarding is linking positive consequences (rewards) to performance expectations on a consistent basis. Be wary of linking positive consequences (rewards) to non-performance factors (e.g., seniority).
- Disciplining is responding negatively to an employee's behavior by linking negative consequences (discipline) to unacceptable performance.
- Keep in mind that **a supervisor is always reinforcing something.**
 - What gets rewarded gets repeated.
 - Any employee behavior that is repeatedly exhibited in front of a supervisor is being rewarded, even if the supervisor wants that behavior to stop.

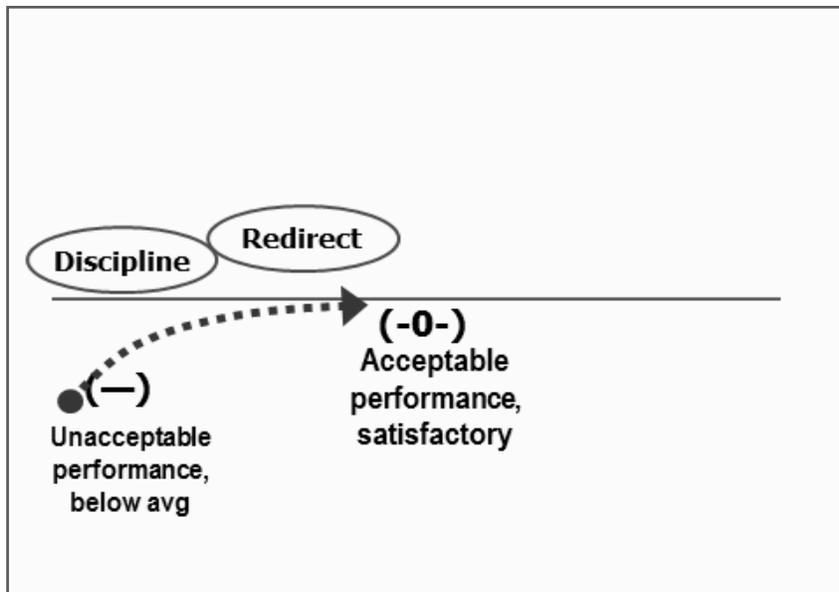
Positive and Negative Consequences

When trying to improve an employee's performance, there are several actions that you can use depending on the employee's current level of performance:

- Discipline and Redirect – used to motivate an employee to change from *unacceptable* performance to *acceptable* performance (see below).
- Redirect and Reward – used to motivate an employee to improve from *acceptable* performance to *excellent* performance (see the next page).

Using Negative Consequences

<p>Discipline (-)</p> <p>The goal is to motivate the employee to eliminate problem behavior or unacceptable performance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the specific inappropriate behavior. Give examples. Indicate that the action must stop, or more serious disciplinary steps will be taken. 2. Point out the impact of the problem on the performance of others, on the unit's goals, and/or on safety and security. 3. Ask questions about causes and lead the discussion about how to fix the problem.
<p>Redirect (0)</p> <p>The goal is to help employees understand what they need to do to achieve acceptable performance.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Describe the acceptable performance you expect and make sure the employee understands. 5. Get the employee's agreement to comply. 6. Be appropriately supportive by complimenting other aspects of his or her work and identifying the benefits of improved performance.

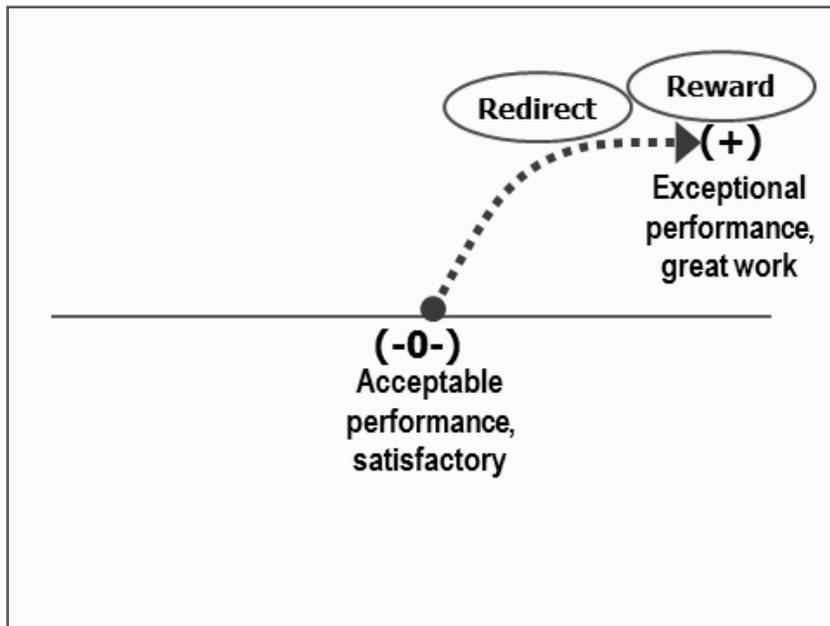


Unacceptable performance can change to acceptable if the behavior is corrected and redirected. However, negative consequences cannot move the performance any higher than acceptable.

Using Positive Consequences

<p>Redirect (0) The goal is to help employees understand what they need to do to improve from acceptable to excellent performance.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the higher level of performance you believe the employee can achieve, and make sure the employee understands. 2. Ask the employee if he or she will comply. 3. Be appropriately supportive by identifying the benefits of the higher level of performance and complimenting the employee as he or she begins to excel.
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<p>Reward (+) The goal is to motivate the employee to continue the higher level of performance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Identify positive consequences (rewards) that are valuable to the employee. 5. Link those positive consequences (rewards) the step-by-step improvement toward higher performance to. It is best to compliment the step-by-step improvements in performance in a timely and sincere manner.
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Acceptable performance can change to exceptional if the behavior is redirected and rewarded. However, using positive consequences with

See the Appendix for a list of Low-Cost Motivators (positive consequences or rewards) that may be helpful.

Group Discussion

Positive and Negative Consequences

What: Discussion of your experiences with performance-related consequences

How: Group members give real-life examples of how they have used consequences (positive or negative) to influence an employee's behavior. The examples may be of consequences that worked (and why they worked) as well as consequences that did not work (and why they did not work).

Focus: Be ready to explain why the consequences (+ or -) were motivated the employee or did not motivate the employee.

Notes:

3. Create and/or maintain a motivating climate

Once expectations have been established and consequences have been linked to performance, **the last step is to increase the impact of rewards by providing timely consequences and feedback about the employee's performance.**

3.A. Does the employee believe that rewards are fairly and consistently distributed?

3.B. Does the employee receive complete and accurate performance feedback?

- Using consequences to encourage achievement of expectations works best when the reward/reprimand comes very soon after the performance that earned it.
- Giving an employee complete and accurate feedback about performance shows him or her which behaviors should be continued, which ones must be improved and which ones must be stopped.

Note: The 3rd motivation strategy differs from the first two. The first two are separate techniques they must be done in order. This last one (motivating climate) is not a specific technique – it is the long term result of implementing the first two over and over; the climate is motivating if the first two are done well and demotivating if not.

Class Discussion

Motivating Climate

What: Discussion of your experiences with motivating or demotivating work environments

How: Based on questions 3.A. and 3.B. on the previous page, offer examples of:

1. The experiences you have had when the available rewards were consistently and equitably distributed (or were not).
2. How the timing of a reward/reprimand had an impact on an employee's performance.
3. The impact on performance when an employee received complete (or incomplete) feedback about performance.

Notes:

Providing motivators

When considering how to reward an employee based on his or her performance, supervisors must determine how valuable a particular positive consequence (reward) is to the employee.

- Valuable rewards are the ones that matter to the employee.
 - Part of the value of a reward relates to how valuable it is to a particular employee. One person may value a reward that others do not care about. (Different strokes for different folks.)
 - Another part of the value relates to how fairly the supervisor uses rewards or discipline in general.
- External motivators
 - Are “external” to the employee, meaning that they are under the control of someone other than the employee.
 - External motivators include
 - Pay and benefits
 - Job security
 - Material things (newer computer, better truck, office instead of cubicle, schedule flexibility, etc.)
 - Good relationship with supervisor and co-workers. (*See the Appendix for a list of Low-Cost Motivators*)
- Internal motivators
 - Are inherent in the job itself; the duties and tasks the employee likes to do well (e.g., interesting work).
 - A supervisor does not control an employee’s internal motivators, but the supervisor can manage things and lead people in ways that make it easier for an employee to be internally motivated.

Focusing on internal motivators and the “good relationship” part of external motivators is especially important when supervisors have very little control over things like pay, benefits, and job security.

Focusing on Internal Motivators

Five internal motivators have been identified that relate to employee job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). These motivators encourage high performance on the job when they are present. A supervisor's actions on a day-to-day basis set the climate for employees to be motivated (or demotivated).

- **Variety of Skills** – the more variety in the skills an employee can use to perform work, the more he or she perceives the task as meaningful or worthwhile.
 - Combine work tasks to create more challenging assignments for employees
 - Offer cross-training

- **Opportunity to Complete a Job** – performing a complete job from beginning to end is more meaningful to an employee than doing piecework.
 - Reorganize the structure or function of the work group to provide opportunities for employees to work on various parts of a job, project, or task

- **Significance of Work Tasks** – the more the work has a direct effect on the work or lives of others, the more an employee will view the job as meaningful.
 - Provide employees with information about how the work group is performing so they can see the impact of their work

- **Autonomy** – freedom to choose how and when to do particular jobs allows an employee the experience of being responsible for his or her own job outcomes; it also signals trust.
 - Offer opportunities for employees to help make decisions that affect how work is done in the work group
 - Delegate the responsibility and authority that employees need to get a job done

- **Feedback** – employees who are provided with information about their job performance are better able to understand the results of their efforts.
 - Provide consistent, timely feedback to employees regarding their performance so they know what to keep doing, what to improve, and what to stop doing

Incorporating these internal motivators into the work environment can result in the following:

- High internal work motivation
- High-quality work performance
- High satisfaction with the work
- Low absenteeism and turnover

Skill Practice

Racehorse 55 – 125

What: Small-group case study of a supervisor with low and high performers in the work group, using all the information presented and practiced up to this point. The case begins on pg. 25 in the *Exercises* section.

The instructor may assign one or more employees from the case to your group.

- How:*
1. For those assigned to handle “55”, use as the appropriate motivation strategy to begin dealing with this performance issue. “55” used to be a high performer, so take that into account when deciding what the problem is and how to solve it.
 2. For those assigned to handle “65”, assess what type of performance problem exists, and suggest ways to begin to solve it.
 3. For those assigned to “125”, consider the five internal motivators to design a strategy to reward the performance of “125”, with an eye toward valued rewards that “125” may care about as well as possible fairness issues about the workload.

Notes:

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RACEHORSE 55 – 125

Situation

For a number of years, Terry C. Loth was a caseworker in Region I-812 for the Department of Redundancy Department (DORD). She began 9 years ago as a caseworker for DORD, increasing her skills and performance over that time.

Two months ago, Terry was chosen as the new supervisor for a group of caseworkers in another part of the state, Region B-9. The B-9 work group's job is to process a caseload of a certain number, doing the same type of work as Terry did before she became a supervisor. The cases they work on at the B-9 Region do not differ very much from one another in terms of complexity and quality requirements.

Terry's boss, the regional manager, sets the target caseload for this (and every other) work group in the region. The work groups in the region are given a target of an average number of cases processed per caseworker per month. This monthly average was set several years ago at an average of 75 completed cases per caseworker per month.

Terry has five (5) caseworkers now reporting to her. She has access to several years' worth of past performance data for these five employees. For the last 2 years their average monthly performance numbers are as follows:

Employee #1	Employee #2	Employee #3	Employee #4	Employee #5
55	65	70	85	125
				"Racehorse"

These monthly production numbers are representative of the last two years of performance. All five of her caseworkers are veteran employees with a minimum of five years DORD case working experience, except for "65", who has just over a year of experience. None of the employees has had any serious FMLA, ADA, or other event that kept them on leave for longer than three to five weeks over that two-year period.

Important details

- "55" used to be a "125" several years ago. "55" knows how to do the work well, but no longer performs at a high level (or even an acceptable level).
- "125" has been the high performer for the last two years. "125" likes the work, and Terry wants to make sure that "125" avoids burnout.
 - Last week "125" expressed an interest in doing some on-the-job training for some of the employees who seem to struggle with the necessary job skills.
- In the last two years, under the former supervisor, when the B-9 caseloads got heavy or

difficult, the former supervisor always went to “125” to solve the immediate short-term overload.

– “125’s” reward for doing more work has been...more work.

- “65” has not been able to achieve the work expectation of 75 cases per month. “65” tries hard, really gives good effort, but has not been able to consistently meet the required numbers *and at the same time* meet the quality requirements for working the caseload. “65” can meet the quality requirements of each case, but so far has had trouble meeting the quantity requirement (75 per month average).
 - The few times “65” has met the target of 75 cases per month, the quality of the casework was below standard and had to be reworked.

Source: This case was prepared by Ted Ball, MBA, and is used with permission. All rights reserved.

SAMPLE PERFORMANCE PROBLEM

To be used as a substitute for the Individual Exercise on page 8 *only* when participants do not have a work-related example of their own.

John is a social worker with 9 years of experience. The work he does is challenging for John and the other caseworkers, yet it is also satisfying for John in that he is able to make a personal impact on the lives of many people. He is very professional with his clients and he treats those clients with respect. While John does excellent work on his cases, he routinely falls behind on the deadlines for filing his reports and follow-up paperwork.

Dana is John's supervisor. It is apparent to Dana that John cares about his clients. Dana has talked with John about completing and turning in his paperwork on time. Even though Dana has had two or three conversations with John about the deadlines and about his paperwork, he has not made any substantial improvements in either area.

JOB AIDS

Components of performance – need enough of both of them*

Performance is a function of Ability* and Motivation*

- Ability is
 - Aptitude
 - Training
 - Resources
- Motivation is
 - Desire
 - Commitment

Performance problems come from a lack of one or more of these factors

Identifying ability- or motivation-related performance problems

Related to Ability

1. Does the employee have the capability to do the tasks assigned to him or her?
2. Has the employee been properly trained?
3. Does the employee have the right resources?

Related to Motivation

4. How hard is the employee trying to complete the task (commitment)?
5. How much improvement is the employee making (desire)?

Improving motivation-related performance

Set clear, challenging expectations

- 1.A. Does the employee understand and accept the performance expectations?
- 1.B. Does the employee believe it is possible to achieve the expectations?

Solution

- Setting expectations using SMART approach

JOB AIDS

Use positive and negative consequences appropriately

- 2.A. Does the employee believe that there are consequences for poor performance?
- 2.B. Does the employee believe that there are different consequences for average vs. high performance? Are the consequences for high performance valuable and worth the effort?

Solution

Using positive (+) and negative (–) consequences to:

- Discipline and redirect (for performance that does not meet expectations).
- Redirect and reward (for performance that meets expectations and could be improved, or for performance that exceeds expectations and needs to be maintained).

Create and maintain a motivating climate

- 3.A. Does the employee believe that rewards are fairly and consistently distributed?
- 3.B. Does the employee receive complete and accurate performance feedback?

Solutions

- Use internal motivators and the “good relationship” part of external motivators.
- Reward performance close in time to the behavior that earned the reward.
- Use rewards valued by the particular employee you are rewarding.
- Be consistent and fair about rewards.

APPENDIX

EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

Examples of performance problems related to ability

- Aptitude
- Training
- Resources

Aptitude problems

The employee does not know the necessary information or does not have the appropriate education to do the job and therefore cannot carry out the responsibilities. Neither threats nor rewards will make a difference. Look for employees:

- asking the same questions over and over;
- completing unimportant tasks while avoiding more important tasks (this also could indicate training problems);
- showing puzzled looks or expressions;
- taking excessive time to prepare for a task; or
- avoiding tasks that require the use of specific tools and/or techniques.

Training problems (and skill problems as well)

Providing the right kind of training is normally the responsibility of the supervisor and the agency. Look at:

- situations where the employee is trying hard to do the work (which means he or she has enough motivation) but is not able to do the work well or is not improving his or her performance;
- misusing tools or equipment;
- failing to use a new tool or technique when it is available;
- repeatedly making mistakes when using a tool or technique;
- failing to take advantage of certain features of a tool, equipment, or computer software;
- showing resistance to change or resisting the completion of a task; or
- not interacting with clients or coworkers when that is part of the assignment.
- failing to update job descriptions/qualifications used for hiring leading to a mismatch between employees hired and the job requirements
- any change in (1) the method or (2) the technology used to do a task often leads to performance problems, and those problems usually must be solved with proper training in the new method or new technology.

Resource problems

Resources are the tools that an employee needs to do the work assigned to him or her. When an employee has the aptitude and trained skills to do the work, yet is unable to do the work well enough, the problem could be a lack of necessary resources. For performance problems related to resources, look at:

- a lack of functioning equipment and tools;
 - a lack of appropriate materials and supplies;
 - not having enough time to do the job the right way;
 - not having timely access to necessary information; or
 - a problem with the work of other employees, when the finished work of one employee is the starting point for another employee's work.
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Examples of performance problems related to motivation

- Desire
- Commitment

Low desire problems

The employee does low-to-average quality work. Look for signs of:

- inconsistent performance: the employee improves when confronted by the supervisor, then slacks off after a while; or
- unwillingness to learn a better way to get the job done, possibly because the employee does not like the work in the first place.

Low commitment problems

The employee gets distracted or easily discouraged. Put another way, the employee has problems "sticking to it." Look for signs of:

- starting a task, but not finishing it before going on to something else (being distracted);
- being discouraged with a task when it does not go well at first; or
- lacking confidence that he or she can do a task well.

LOW-COST MOTIVATORS

1. Write a letter of commendation.
2. Ask the employee for advice or opinions.
3. Give verbal praise.
4. Let the employee report his or her results to upper management.
5. Allow employees to make decisions affecting their work, organization, strategies or plans.
6. Write a memo/e-mail to superiors on the performance of an employee with a copy to the employee. Write a memo/e-mail of praise to employees to recognize their specific contributions and accomplishments. Send a copy to your boss or higher managers and to the human resources department
7. Pass along compliments from others.
8. Put positive information in the employee's productivity file.
9. Give the employee an opportunity to represent the work group at meetings.
10. Spruce up the work area.
11. Give positive comments about performance improvements – ask your boss to send a letter of acknowledgment or thanks to employees or work groups making significant contributions.
12. Provide quick follow up on requests, problems, etc.
13. Put the employee's name on the bulletin board for meeting some goal.
14. Allow the employee to work on special projects.
15. Give a thank you, a nod, a smile, a handshake, or a pat on the back.
16. Call or write a personal note.
17. Give first choice at extra training and new equipment/tools.
18. Allow people to use flextime to meet their scheduling needs.

19. Designate special parking spaces.
20. Award plaques, trophies, and diplomas.
21. Create a “Best Accomplishments of the Year” booklet, and include everyone’s picture, name, and statement of their best achievements. Create a “Good Tries” booklet, and include innovations that didn’t achieve their full potential, recognizing those who put in a lot of effort on a project. Be sure to include what was learned during the project so that the information can benefit others in the future.
22. Briefly attend the first meeting of a special project team and express your appreciation for their involvement.
23. Show personal interest in employee’s development and career.
24. Hold a luncheon meeting with project teams once they have interim findings.
25. Feature an employee of the month.
26. Honor peers who have helped you by recognizing them at staff meetings.
27. Nominate employees for formal award programs.
28. Lend employees copies of the latest management/business best sellers.
29. Let employees attend meetings, committees, etc., in your place when you are not available.
30. Send an email to every team member at the conclusion of a special project or complex task thanking him or her for contributions.
31. Say hello to employees when you pass by their desks or pass them in the hall and recognize a recent accomplishment.
32. Have coffee or lunch with an employee or a group of employees you do not normally see, and recognize the value of their contributions.
33. Establish a place to display information, posters, pictures, and so on, thanking individual employees and their teams, and describing their contributions.
34. Say thanks to your boss, your peers, and employees when they have done something

well or have done something to help you.

35. When an employee or work group presents an idea or suggestion, thank them whether or not you will act on it. Thank them for their concern and initiative.
36. When discussing an employee's or work group's ideas with other people, peers, or higher management, make sure you give the employee or work group credit.
37. When a current issue arises similar to one in which an employee has shown a previous interest, involve that employee in the discussion, analysis, and development of recommendations.
38. Mention the outstanding work or idea brought to your attention by an employee during your staff meetings.
39. Create group awards to recognize the outstanding teamwork of employees.
40. Report periodically to your employees on hot issues and acknowledge their work and contributions in meeting work group goals.
41. Introduce your peers and management to employees and work groups who have made significant contributions, thereby acknowledging their work.
42. Ask your boss to attend a meeting with your employees during which you thank the employees and work groups for their specific contributions.
43. Ask employees and work groups to be part of or make their own presentations to higher management or to their own peers.
44. Develop a behind-the-scenes award specifically for those whose actions are not usually in the limelight; make sure such awards are in the limelight.
45. Recognize (and thank) people who recognize others. Make it clear that making everyone a hero is an important principle in your work group.
46. Ask your employees how you can best show your appreciation; what would they like?
47. Have an appreciation and welcome party whenever an employee leaves or joins your work unit. Note their specific contributions.
48. Have a senior manager write a letter of thanks.
49. Create an ongoing recognition award named after a particularly outstanding employee.

50. Offer training for different job skills.
51. Post customers' complimentary letters recognizing an employee's work.
52. Send employees to special seminars, workshops, or meetings outside the agency that cover topics of their interest.