

A message from our president,
Paul H. Elliott, Ph.D.



CHANGE

There are several initiatives going on within Exemplary Performance that will have a positive impact on the clients we serve.

People and Process Optimization

We are currently developing our first proprietary products under the umbrella of People and Process Optimization. This integrated system [workshops, job aids, and dedicated portal] will be aimed at managers and individual contributors. It is designed to enable them to be 'guerrilla' performance consultants, identifying and addressing barriers to optimal performance. We are dedicated to working with clients to provide transferable and sustainable approaches to improving enterprise and individual performance, and this is a significant step in that direction.

EP Internal Project Management System

As the number and size of our client projects grow, we have been looking at ways to sustain the high level of customer satisfaction that we have experienced. We have a major internal initiative to codify our success to date in our approach to project management. One enhancement that you, our clients, will see is the commitment to explicitly establishing Conditions of Satisfaction [CoS] for every project during project initiation. We will return to the CoS as part of the formal project close-out to ensure that we consistently meet or exceed client expectations.

I look forward to hearing from you with feedback about the Exemplar and/or questions about these new initiatives.

Regards,



Paul H. Elliott, Ph.D.
President

Exemplary Performance Identifies Manager Performance as Key Opportunity

Two New Workshops in the Making

If there is one consistent pattern we see as we analyze organizational effectiveness across world-class companies, it would be a break down in management effectiveness. Managers, just like individual contributors, operate in broken, sub-optimal systems. We believe that a systemic and systematic effort to address the management sub-system would have a dramatic impact on overall performance.

There are currently two new workshops in the developmental stages that will be aimed at improving the unification and alignment of your organization's business strategies with the efforts of individual contributors. Entitled People and Process Optimization, the workshops in this program are role-specific to either the managers or individual contributors in order to better effect positive change.

The manager workshop will be the first to launch and will focus on challenging assumptions that activity or busyness equates with performance. The workshop for team members will focus on teaching participants to view their performance in a systematic way and to learn more about the "behind-the-scenes" human performance system. The workshops will be supported by rich tools available on a dedicated portal.

Look for announcements for the availability of the People and Process Optimization Program on our website!

Exemplary Performance Website Update!

With the continued growth of the company, Exemplary Performance will soon release a new version of our website to more effectively communicate with both our current and prospective clients. The website will also have improved navigational capabilities in order to minimize the amount of "digging" needed to get to pertinent information about our company.

Version 2.0 of ExemplaryPerformance.com is currently in its final stages of development and is due to launch by mid-October. Look for the new version and feel free to provide us any feedback you may have in order for us to further improve our site!

“CREATING CLIENT CONNECTION”

BY ELENA GALBRAITH

CONTEXT -> CONNECTION -> COMMUNICATION

Have you ever been in a meeting with someone and you were not successful in making the connection you had hoped for? Have you ever been in the situation where you knew what you wanted to communicate but you struggled for the best way to get your message across? Well, I have. And truth be known, I'm quite sure some of you have experienced the same dilemma one time or another.

Elusive as the Holy Grail

Is effective communication as elusive as the Holy Grail? I guess that depends on who you ask. There are many who apparently think so. All you have to do is go to any brick and mortar book store, local library or go online and you will find hundreds of books on the topic of communication (I'm not exaggerating). There's *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Confrontations*, *Effective Listening Skills*, *Getting to Yes*, and *Fundamentals of Organizational Communication*, just to name a few. There are training classes and seminars you can attend. The American Management Association, for example, offers 170 courses, of which over 35% target communication and interpersonal skills. That's just one vendor!

Fools Rush In

Let's tie effective communication and customer relationships together. It's well and good to develop great communication skills, dare I say essential; however, equally important is the knowledge of your client—called business acumen. There is a

saying that goes something like, if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck. On the surface, yes this may be true; but be careful not to rush to judgment. Forming opinions and beliefs too quickly, or making assumptions based on a lack of understanding can be costly. In the consulting business, rushing to judgment or assuming you know more than you really do about a client's situation or business can result in the loss of a project or, worse yet, a relationship. All the while the client is asking—how well do you know me? Are you concerned about what I am concerned about? Would you walk a mile in my shoes?

I SEE What You Mean

Back to the subject of communication that connects. People are either visual or conceptual. I had an interesting learning experience recently when my husband and I built our dream home. There were many decisions that had to be made (as you can well imagine) and to make them well, we needed to be on the same page—seeing eye to eye on the topic. Well, Jeremy would talk to me about an idea he had, let's say, an idea on creating a terraced rockery in the back yard. After lots of words exchanged, I finally said, please draw me a picture, and when he did, we could align. In our relationship, a picture is truly worth a thousand words. And the same holds true in business relationships.

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EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

Upcoming Conferences

ISPI:

- Performance Professional Workshop Series
Atlanta, Georgia
November 14-15
& 16-17, 2006

ASTD:

- Learn from the BEST Workshop
Arlington, Virginia
October 5, 2006
- ROI Workshops
Chicago, Illinois
October 23-24, 2006

- Facilitating Organizational Knowledge
Chicago, Illinois
October 25-26, 2006
- Managing the Learning Function Certificate
Chicago, Illinois
October 23-25, 2006

Visual Language That Resonates

In the Bible, parables were used to present important teachings or topics to the people of the day in a way they would understand—a powerful teaching tool. For visual language to be effective, the picture you paint (or draw, or use) to describe the concept must resonate with the receiver. And if you make the connection, two minds meet and there is true connection.

Setting the Context

Several years ago now, I worked as an internal consultant for a large manufacturing company in the Pacific Northwest. My clients were line-of-business managers who had P&L responsibility. The challenges they faced day-in and day-out as they ran their business units were issues like:

- Employee productivity
- Cycle time
- Scrap and rework
- Product or service quality
- Training efforts that do not result in improved job performance
- Customer satisfaction
- Employee morale
- Holding the gains on process improvement efforts

At that time, line managers were steeped in LEAN manufacturing efforts and controlling processes. One of the tools they used to manage their processes was the statistical process control chart (called SPCs). The process was tracked on a scheduled basis and process performance charted. A process was considered within tolerance when process data fell within the horizontal value-add band (as some called it) on the SPC chart. A process out of tolerance reflected data points outside the value-add band. Too many outliers, or anomalies, resulted in a corrective course of action.

Making the Connection

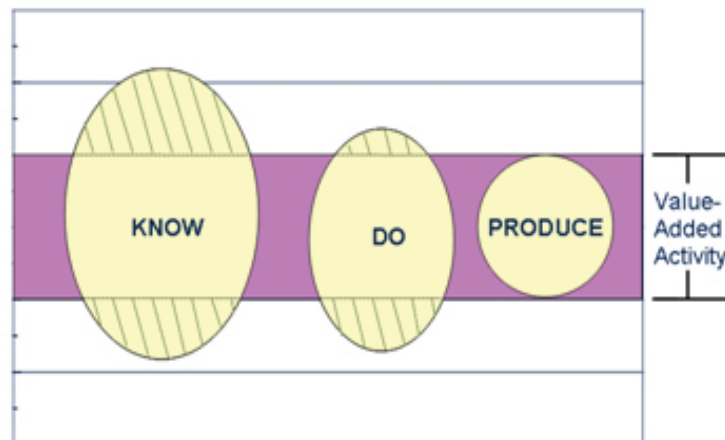
On one occasion, I met with a line manager who requested a training course for his people. This type of request should sound familiar—a request for help that comes in the form of a solution—and in most cases, the solution of choice is training. Such was the case here.

Changing the Conversation

At that moment, I had a choice. I could have continued down the path of gathering details around the training request—how many people needed training, which shifts, what do they need to do and know, etc.—or I could change the conversation to a results-based business impact conversation, which I did. The goal of the organization—as all for-profit organizations—was to drive value to the bottom line. Knowing this, yet understanding that I needed to meet the client (manager) where he was (at the point of his ‘perceived’ need), I decided to draw him a picture to help illustrate my thoughts and shift his thinking. I chose a SPC chart-like representation because he would be able to relate. The concept I drew is reflected in the below graphic. It helped him SEE that while the training he requested could change job behavior, what was more important to his business was the business results the desired behavior would produce.

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Results-Based Performance



The line manager agreed that business value produced from business results was paramount. The conversation then shifted and we began talking about the challenge he faced in meeting his business goals/objectives, how the target job supported those goals, and some of the challenges he believed his people faced. Playing it forward a bit, the performance analysis conducted indicated barriers in process, performance expectations, misaligned goals, and skills and knowledge.

Play It Again Sam

It's funny how things go round. After working on the above project, I took the graphic and created a PowerPoint of it and called it my KNOW—DO—PRODUCE chart. Time passed and my role changed from an internal consultant to an external consultant. What didn't change though was the need to have performance-based conversations with my clients. Most initial conversations started with a request that sounded like, "My people need training" but ended with the opportunity to take a closer look at what was really going on within the business. During many a conversation with clients, I have used this chart as a way of shifting the conversation and often shifting paradigms.

The KNOW—DO—PRODUCE chart has been a powerful tool in my toolkit over the years, helping me communicate concepts and constructs in an instant where words were long coming.

Look for the continuation of this article in the November Exemplar by Elena!

Elena Galbraith, CPT, is Vice President, Performance Improvement for Exemplary Performance, LLC. Elena heads up EP's Western Region Office in Redmond, Washington. She has been a practitioner in the field of human performance improvement since the early 1990s. This is Elena's second article written for The Exemplar, and she looks forward to contributing more to our newsletter in order to fulfill her passion of evangelizing human performance improvement as a core business strategy!



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