



# BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENTIATION

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People decisions are the ultimate – perhaps the only – control of an organization. People determine the performance capacity of an organization. No organization can do better than the people it has.... If you want people to perform in an organization, you have to use their strengths – not emphasize their weaknesses.... The purpose of a team is to make the strengths of each person effective, and his or her weaknesses irrelevant. The best way to accomplish this is to hire and retain the “right” people. Who are the “right” people? The “right” people are the ones who are strong where you need them to be strong, and whose weaknesses don’t negatively impact your business.

~ Peter F. Drucker

## PEOPLE ARE NOT YOUR GREATEST ASSET – THE RIGHT PEOPLE ARE YOUR GREATEST ASSET!

We’re going to continue discussing getting it right on the inside because as I stated in last month’s issue if you don’t get it right on the inside, you can’t get it right on the outside. And, rest assured, you ain’t gonna get it right on the inside with the wrong people. In his latest book *Winning*, Jack Welch, former GE CEO is adamant regarding the importance of hiring and retaining people that require a minimum of supervision and direction, because in today’s ultra fast paced environment you simply don’t have time to baby-sit. He went on to emphasize that if you’re a manager worth your salt you had better...

## MAKE THE LOWER 10% OF YOUR PEOPLE AVAILABLE TO THE INDUSTRY.

## DE-MOTIVATING ACTION INTENTIONALLY OR OTHERWISE.

In last month’s issue we discussed the term discretionary effort, remember? Discretionary effort is the level of positive BD your employees could give if they really wanted to. We also suggested several ways to maximize discretionary effort. Now let’s take a look at how we can continue the process and how you may be inadvertently preventing the best efforts of your people.

### THE FACTS

- If you ain’t positively different you’d better be cheap!
- If you want good behavior to begin and continue you must reinforce it.
- If you want bad behavior to stop you don’t reinforce it.
- When you stop reinforcing good behaviors, they stop.
- When you stop reinforcing bad behaviors, they stop.

In other words, doing nothing changes behavior, this means...

***Just as you can inadvertently reinforce behaviors that produce negative BD you can also inadvertently stop behaviors that produce positive BD!***

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## How to Stop Non Productive Behavior.

- Stop investing your time trying to control and change people.
- Stop paying attention to the chronic whiners and complainers.
- Stop squandering your time on your “problem” people.
- Stop assuming that your “good” people don’t require positive reinforcement.

### IGNORE IT AND IT WILL GO AWAY.

#### THE FACTS

- When you ignore undesired behavior it will stop, but not immediately.
- Expect an increase in the bad behavior when you ignore it.
- More intense bad behavior means you’re making progress.
- The more reinforcement a person has received for the bad behavior, the more time that will be required to eliminate it.
- Most managers fail to eliminate bad behavior because they can’t handle the Extinction Burst; the increased bad behavior leading to its extinction.
- When the bad behaviors have stopped for a period of time, it is not unusual for them to occur again, seemingly out of nowhere. This is because the resurgence of the old, undesired behaviors is a strong indication that the desired behaviors that replaced them are not getting enough positive reinforcement to sustain them.

**The Key to Eliminating Bad Behavior Forever is to Introduce Positive Reinforcement for a Pre-Determined Alternative Behavior.**

## Pinpointing Specific Results and Corresponding Behaviors.

In most organizations if you are getting results management leaves you alone. They spend their time with those not getting results. I see this all the time and it’s an ineffective and very risky practice. You cannot effectively manage by results alone. Yes, getting results is critical to organizational survival; and your personal survival as well, however...

### Short-Term Results are Often Achieved With Totally Inappropriate Behavior – Remember Enron?

Sustaining motivation that drives long-term results requires managers to know precise outcomes required and the exact behaviors that produce them. The procedure for specifying results and behaviors is called pinpointing: Pinpointing means being specific about behaviors required to achieve a pre-determined result. This is KEY, and it is often overlooked! See if you agree with my observation...

*Its commonplace, and insidious for organizations to start programs that require people to change the way they work [BEHAVIORS] with only a very general idea of the RESULTS they are expected to achieve...*

**This Is Why “Flavor of the Month” Programs are so Prevalent in Under-Performing Organizations.**

## THE MOST NEGLECTED BEHAVIORAL ENHANCING COMPONENT.

Effective performance feedback has tremendous positive influence on desired behaviors. The term feedback is not to be confused with general information or data.

### FEEDBACK IS INFORMATION ABOUT PERFORMANCE THAT ALLOWS THE INDIVIDUAL TO MAKE SPECIFIC ADJUSTMENTS TO HIS/HER BEHAVIOR.

Learning requires specific information about how a person's behavior is affecting the environment. And it's critically important because without feedback there is no learning!

Typical performance data alone does not tell a person how to improve performance. Feedback deficiencies are a major contributor to virtually all problems of low performance. And most organizations do not have a system for providing performance feedback to their employees.

### SHARING SALES, PRODUCTION, QUALITY, AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION IS NOT PROVIDING FEEDBACK, IT'S SHARING INFORMATION.

This type of information gives employees only a vague idea of how they are doing. It has little impact on job performance

**With effective feedback, improvements of 20 to 600% aren't unusual.**

## PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

### THE FACTS

- Feedback is very important but alone will not sustain behavioral change.
- Because it is an antecedent, feedback produces a "performance surge."
- How people choose to respond to an antecedent depends on the consequences they experience, have experienced, or expect to experience.

### DELIVERING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

- Graphed feedback is superior to charts, text, or data presented verbally.
- Graphs immediately show where you are in relation to where you've been and where you're going.
- Graph data allows you to see performance trends earlier, permitting a more timely response to potential problems. Graphs help determine the most effective positive reinforcement.
- Individual feedback is more effective than group feedback.
- If you must provide group feedback, make it in the smallest group possible.
- Daily feedback is best.
- Post group performances publicly; provide individual feedback privately.
- Don't compare one person to another, compare them to an agreed upon standard.
- Have individuals establish and maintain their own graphs.
- Don't post or discuss graphical data over which the individual has little or no control.

## DELIVERING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Feedback and positive reinforcement form the most powerful combination of techniques you can use to cause people to give their best. To have effective feedback, you must have the right **pinpoints** [specific behaviors aimed at specific results] then add feedback and positive reinforcement and you will have the right "formula" to maximize performance.

The fastest way to improve performance seems slow. It involves reinforcing small improvements. Since positive reinforcement increases the rate of behavior by reinforcing small changes in performance, you are able to accelerate performance early and often.

Always remember...

### The rate of performance improvement is directly related to the number of reinforcers received.

The technical name for this process is **shaping**. Shaping is the process of positively reinforcing successive approximations toward a goal. To shape effectively requires breaking down a task into small steps, and the patience and the discipline to reinforce very small changes.

### THE ABILITY TO SHAPE BEHAVIOR IS THE ESSENCE OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING, COACHING, MANAGING OR SUPERVISING. SHAPING IS THE VERY HEART AND SOUL OF MAXIMIZING DISCRETIONARY EFFORT.

## The Five Stumbling Blocks.

There are five obstacles that prevent Feedback and Positive Reinforcement from succeeding, they include:

**1. PERCEPTION:** Many managers will choose the positive reinforcement they prefer rather than finding out what the other person prefers. They employ one management "style" and are reluctant to or don't know how modify that "style" to better influence the other persons performance.

**NOTE:** *If you're interested in learning more about how to accurately determine your preferred management "style" and the preferred "style" of those persons you desire to positively influence and motivate. Email me at [rjf@pworks.info](mailto:rjf@pworks.info) and request The Coaching Style Preferences Assessment.*

**2. CONTINGENCY:** This stumbling block relates to the relationship between a behavior and a reinforcer. If you can get a reinforcer without engaging in a prerequisite behavior, that reinforcer is said to be **Non-Contingent**. If the only way you can get a reinforcer is to enter into a particular behavior, that reinforcer is said to be **Contingent**. For example. An improved benefit package will not improve performance because everyone gets it. The same can be said for profit and gain sharing programs and the like.

**3. IMMEDIACY:** The longer you wait before you reinforce the less effective the reinforcement will be. If you have a limited time to invest reinforcing, invest it while the behavior is occurring. The most effective managers do not necessarily reinforce more often than ineffective ones. What they do is reinforce while people are performing. To do this they invest more time where the work is actually being done.

**4. FREQUENCY:** A few positive reinforcers change nothing. I have witnessed the frequency error many times. In most cases it's simply a matter of a manager that refuses to change personally so he/she "proves" that positive reinforcement and feedback doesn't work by making a few feeble attempts at it.

The way that many organizations feel about frequency may be seen in annual performance appraisals, annual recognition dinners, quarterly bonuses, employee of the month, etc.

**5. DENIAL:** As in management denial, see, in management you get what you tolerate, and when you tolerate continuing underperformance, complaining and whining, disloyalty, negative influence, and the like, you're steeped in denial. Denial that if you keep on tolerating what you've been tolerating you'll eventually win. You won't. You'll lose! You'll lose the respect of your people, upper management, and your peers. Don't kid yourself, you've got people on your payroll that drive you crazy, and run off your internal and external customers, they need a mental enema but they probably won't take it.

**The longer you put up with their behavior the longer you are sabotaging your personal success and the success of your organization.**

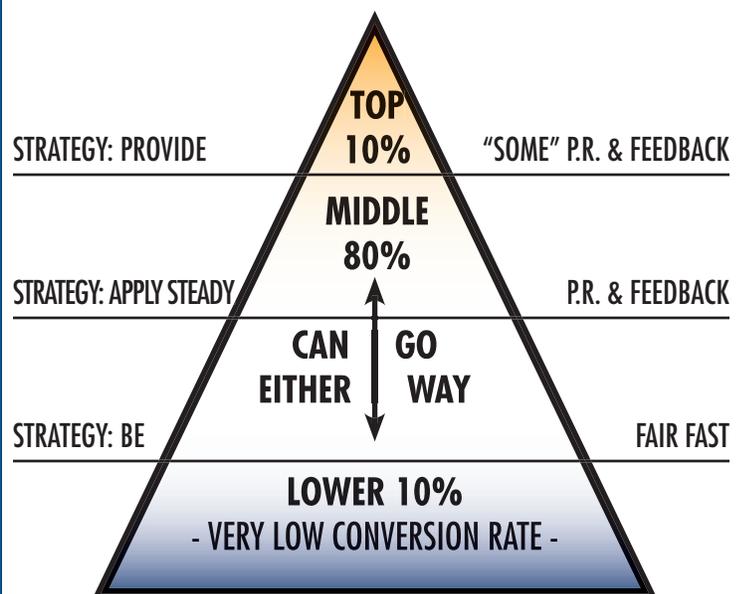
These people represent the lower 10% that Jack Welch said you'd better show the door. My suggestion is that you apply the principles taught in the past two newsletters; exhaust the positive reinforcement and feedback process, and if that doesn't turn them around let them go disrupt your competitors.

## "HI, I'M MORTICIA ADDAMS – THE CUSTOMER PREVENTION MANAGER.

Remember "Mortich" from the TV program The Addams Family? She or one of her descendents may be on your payroll, and if that's the case what are you doing about it? The truth is if you are not dealing with a people problem everybody knows it, even you, unless you're in denial. And guess what, everybody's wondering when you're going to do something about it. And guess what else? You're not judged by the strong people, you're judged by the lower 10%.

## And There's Something Else You Should Know.

Take a look at the graphic below; basically, you've got three levels of performers. The top 10% that get it done no matter what, the middle 80% that get it done to varying degrees, and the lower 10% that don't get it done and try to keep the others from getting it done.



## THE STRATEGIES

Your top 10% don't require as much positive reinforcement and feedback as the others, but they do require some. Make sure you don't neglect this group or they'll slip in to the middle 80%; it happens all the time.

Your middle 80% typically represent your best opportunity to positively influence. And if you don't, the lower 10% will. See, people just normally gravitate toward the negative. If this middle 80% does not receive positive reinforcement and feedback in steady doses they will either leave or start behaving like the lower 10%; it happens all the time.

Your lower 10% ain't smiled since their honeymoon; you might be able to turnaround a few, but the conversion rate is low, especially as compared to the time and effort required. If you've tolerated a bad situation for over a year your odds of a short-term conversion fall to zero or a somewhat lower number. If you error, certainly error on the side of fairness, but be fair fast! This group will undermine your best efforts, screw up your good people and generally make you miserable; I know I've been there.

## NEXT MONTHS ISSUE

The first thing I'd like to tell you about next months issue is that we'll be changing the name of the newsletter from Behavioral Differentiation to Winning Behavior. The new name is easier to pronounce and better fits the themes and titles of several of our training programs.

**The July Issue** will focus on lessons learned from companies that exemplify *Winning Behavior*.

### AND PLEASE REMEMBER...

***Customers today have a bewildering array of choices. If you can't differentiate yourself in their eyes, you are condemned to market purgatory, where your products and services are essentially commodities and where lowest price rules.***



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- Managing Key Accounts
- Winning Proposals
- Value For Value Negotiations
- Coaching To Win
- Presenting To Win
- Influencing Without Authority
- Time Management
- The 12 Absolutes Of Personal Effectiveness