

***POSITIVE APPROACHES TO
RESOLVING PERFORMANCE
AND CONDUCT PROBLEMS***



INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

1/2-DAY COURSE

HRDQ[®]

***POSITIVE APPROACHES TO RESOLVING PERFORMANCE
PROBLEMS***

Copyright © 2008 Treeline 2008

Published by HRDQ

2002 Renaissance Boulevard #100

King of Prussia, PA 19406

Phone: (800) 633-4533

Fax: (800) 633-3683

Web: www.HRDQ.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means except as permitted under HRDQ's End User License Agreement, and the 1976 United States Copyright Act (17 U.S.C.) sections 107 and/or 108. Inclusion in any publication, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes, is prohibited. Requests for permission to reproduce or reuse this content outside the terms of the End User License Agreement, should be addressed to permissions@hrdq.com or (610) 279-2002

For additional Reproducible Program Library licenses please contact the HRDQ Client Solutions Team at (800) 633-4533

The material in this publication is provided "as is." HRDQ disclaims any warranties, expressed or implied, regarding its accuracy or reliability, and assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions. To the extent permissible by law, HRDQ accepts no liability for any injuries or damages caused by acting upon or using the content contained in this publication.

Version 2.0

Last updated May, 2008

ISBN 978-1-58854-277-9

Licensing agreement

Reproducible Program Library—End-User License Agreement IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ!

The following terms and conditions are a legal agreement between Organization Design & Development, Inc. DBA HRDQ (“HRDQ”) and You, Your organization, its subsidiaries, affiliates, and legal partners (“You”) regarding the Reproducible Program Library (“RPL”).

You may use the RPL only in accordance with the terms of this agreement as set forth below.

1. License Grant. HRDQ hereby grants You a non-exclusive and non-transferable license to download, reproduce, customize, and otherwise make use of the RPL within the terms of this agreement.
2. Proprietary Rights. The RPL is the sole and exclusive property of HRDQ and/or its authors including all right, title, and interest in and to the RPL. Except for the limited rights given to You herein, all rights are reserved by HRDQ.
3. Term. This Agreement is effective upon acceptance, and will remain in effect in accordance with the term of the license purchased. The specific term of this Agreement is defined on the sale invoice provided You at the time of purchase and available thereafter from HRDQ.

4. Authorized Use of Library. For the term of this license, You may:

Store the RPL on a computer,

Amend, edit, and change the RPL provided that all original copyright notices, and trade and service marks, remain intact and appear on this agreement and amended versions and reproductions thereof,

Print and distribute paper copies of the RPL for educational or training activities, whether with direct employees, students, agents, or clients, and,

Resell the RPL, in whole or in part, provided You have a current reseller agreement with HRDQ.

You may not:

Translate, reverse engineer, decompile, disassemble, or create derivative works based on the RPL,

Include the RPL, in whole or in part, in any publication, product or service offered for sale,

Lease or loan the RPL,

Distribute the RPL through the means of a removable storage medium, such as CD-ROM or DVD,

Copy or upload the RPL onto any bulletin board service or public Internet site, or,
Sublicense or reassign this license.

5. Termination. Failure to perform in the manner required in this agreement shall cause this license to automatically terminate and HRDQ may exercise any rights it may have. Upon natural expiry of the term, unless renewed by You with HRDQ, access to the download site will be denied and all passwords rendered inactive. Upon termination, for whatever reason, You must destroy all original and amended versions of the RPL, in any and every format, and certify as such, in writing, to HRDQ upon request. All provisions of this license with regard to the protection of the proprietary rights of HRDQ shall continue in force after termination.

6. Warranty. The RPL is provided "as is." HRDQ warrants that the RPL does not violate any copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, or patents of any third parties. HRDQ disclaims all other warranties, expressed or implied, regarding its accuracy or reliability, and assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions. To the extent permissible by law, HRDQ accepts no liability for any injuries or damages caused by acting upon or using the content contained in the RPL. If any part of the RPL is defective in workmanship or materials, HRDQ's sole and exclusive liability, and sole and exclusive remedy for You, shall be replacement of the defective material. HRDQ's warranty shall survive the termination of this agreement. Some states do not allow exclusions or limitations of implied warranties or liability in certain cases, so the above exclusions and limitations may not apply to You.

7. Permissions. Any other use of the RPL not defined in this agreement is subject to the written approval of HRDQ.

HRDQ, 2002 Renaissance Blvd. #100, King of Prussia, PA 19406, 610.279.2002,
www.hrdq.com.

Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:





- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

Course timing

Chapter One: Finding and Assessing Performance Problems

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Recognizing the nonperformer or problem employee	10
	Four reasons for poor performance	15
	Confront performance problems early	10
	Creating clear documentation of problem employees	20

Chapter Two: Conducting Winning Confrontation Sessions

	Identify the outcomes you want from your nonperformer	15
	Dealing with your own emotions when you confront employees	10
	Approach confrontation without intimidation	5
	Run a successful confrontation session	15

Course timing (cont.)

Chapter Three: Setting and Communicating Realistic Standards

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Developing realistic standards	25
	Communicating clear standards	10
	Assessing standards for effectiveness	10
	Determining why standards aren't being met	10

Chapter Four: Obtaining Employee Commitment to High-Quality Performance

	Getting employees to buy into standards	10
	Strategies to enhance quality performance	10
	Identifying demotivators	10

Course timing (cont.)



Identifying what your employees want the most 15



Recognizing and rewarding quality work 10

Chapter Five: Discipline for Positive Results



A four-step process for running formal disciplinary session 20



Create a more positive discipline experience for you and your employee 10

Contents

- Licensing agreement iii
- Instructional design and learning philosophy v
- Course timing vi
- Course objectives xi
- Chapter One: Finding and Assessing Performance Problems**
- Recognizing the nonperformer or problem employee 2
- Four reasons for poor performance..... 4
- Confront performance problems early 5
- Creating clear documentation of problem employees..... 6
- Chapter Two: Conducting Winning Confrontation Sessions**
- Identifying the outcomes that you want from your nonperformer .. 10
- Dealing with your own emotions when you confront employees... 11
- Approach confrontation without intimidation 12
- Run a successful confrontation session 13
- Chapter Three: Setting and Communicating Realistic Standards**
- Developing realistic standards 16
- Communicating clear standards..... 19
- Assessing standards for effectiveness 20
- Determining why standards aren't being met 21

Chapter Four: Obtaining Employee Commitment to High-Quality Performance

Getting employees to buy into standards 24
Strategies to enhance quality performance 26
Identifying demotivators 27
Identifying what your employees want the most..... 28
Recognizing and rewarding quality work..... 29

Chapter Five: Discipline for Positive Results

A four-step process for running a formal disciplinary session..... 32
Create a more positive discipline experience for you and your employee 36

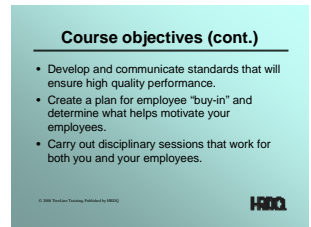
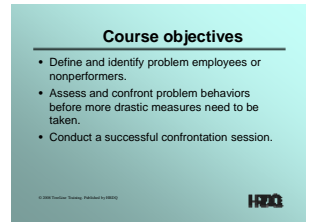
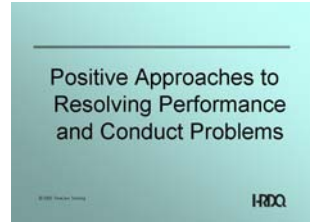
Appendix

Action plan..... 37
Course review..... 38
Course evaluation 40
Solutions for every training challenge 42

Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- Define and identify problem employees or nonperformers
- Assess and confront problem behaviors before more drastic measures need to be taken
- Conduct a successful confrontation session
- Develop and communicate standards that will ensure high quality performance
- Create a plan for employee “buy-in” and determine what helps motivate your employees
- Carry out disciplinary sessions that work for both you and your employees



Chapter One



FINDING AND ASSESSING PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

Recognizing the nonperformer or problem employee

Recognize problems and address them appropriately (so more drastic measures don't have to be taken).

Determine why standards aren't being met.

Generate buy-in from employees to meet performance standards.

Determine the specific actions that need to be taken.

Recognize and celebrate successes.

Defining performance problems

Instructions: List the types of issues and behaviors that constitute performance problems.



Introduction: Many organizations have some sort of goal-setting plan, and many managers do some sort of coaching. However, when the situation gets sticky with employees not performing up to established goals, many managers become uncertain how to handle the situation effectively. Yelling at the employee or ignoring the situation are natural responses, but not the most effective ones.

This chapter will help managers recognize performance problems and give them skills to address the problem effectively. Go through the bullets regarding recognizing the nonperformer or problem employee.

Activity to introduce: Have participants fill in the various types of performance problems they run into at work. Some examples: Poor quality, not meeting deadlines, slow, inadequate skills, doesn't get along with others, excessive absenteeism, abusing privileges, insubordination, buck-passing/blaming others, creating bottlenecks, personal issues affecting work performance.

Look for obvious reasons first

Unclear expectations: Make certain employees know what is expected of them; performance gaps may be due to unclear expectations.

Insufficient resources: If an employee has insufficient resources (time, money, or access to required tools/material/information), no performance plan can correct the performance.

Inadequate feedback: An employee may simply need more ongoing feedback, not a formal performance improvement plan.



Before addressing performance problems, first make certain there's not a simple explanation for any performance discrepancy. This page lists several reasons for poor performance or underperformance that can be corrected without a performance plan.

Unclear expectations: It is important to have clear, written expectations of your employees. This will be discussed further in the course. Note: Be certain that as a manager, you don't have any hidden agendas that would prevent the employee from accomplishing the desired performance.

In addition, employees may have certain mindsets that lead to performance problems. Some examples: They think their way is better, they think your way won't work, they think they already are doing it, they think something else is more important. Although these mindsets seem to belong to the employee, as a manager you actually can influence them with clear expectations, frequent coaching, and appropriate measurements.

Four reasons for poor performance

Don't know

Does the employee have adequate training for the job?

Can't do

Does the employee have the capability to do quality work?

Isn't allowed

Does the employee have the necessary tools, systems, processes, and support to perform the job?

Won't do

Does the employee have an interest in doing the work?

Four reasons for poor performance

- Don't know: An employee isn't scheduling training rooms in Outlook because she hasn't had training.
- Can't do: An employee has been assigned to work in an area that requires strong technical knowledge and the employee doesn't have the capacity to learn and understand the complexities of technology.

Four reasons for poor performance

- Isn't allowed: An employee is required to book appointments using Outlook but doesn't have access to a computer.
- Won't do: An employee feels that copying and filing aren't part of her responsibilities and refuses to do those tasks.

Activity: Ask four volunteers to stand. Request that the first person say the "Pledge of Allegiance" in Spanish. Most people don't know how to do this. Ask the second volunteer to say the "Pledge" backward—most people can't do this. Ask the third volunteer to say the "Pledge," but as they do, interrupt constantly and ask them to move to another part of the room, then ask them to speak louder—in essence, not allowing them to complete the task. Ask the fourth volunteer to go to the front reception area and greet an incoming customer by saying the "Pledge." Most people are unwilling to do this. This activity demonstrates categories of performance issues.

Examples: Don't know: an employee isn't scheduling training rooms in Outlook because she hasn't had training.

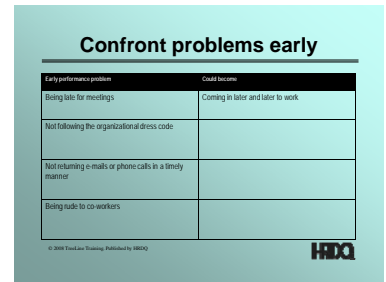
Can't do: An employee has been assigned to work in an area that requires strong technical knowledge and the employee doesn't have the capacity to learn and understand the complexities of technology.

Performance problem	Possible solution
Don't know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Assess knowledge gap □ Provide skills training □ Communicate more effectively □ Foster development through job shadowing, mentoring, etc.
Can't do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Determine appropriate career path □ Identify opportunities for relocating □ Assess necessary steps for removal
Isn't allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Improve processes □ Improve work flow and integration □ Control aspects of the work environment that the employee can't
Won't do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Clarify roles and responsibilities □ Communicate specific expectations □ Determine motivators □ Identify consequences for nonperformance

Isn't allowed: An employee is required to book appointments using Outlook but doesn't have access to a computer.

Won't do: An employee feels that copying and filing aren't part of her responsibilities and refuses to do those tasks.

Confront performance problems early



Early performance problem	Could become
Being late for meetings	Coming in later and later to work
Not following the organizational dress code	
Not returning e-mails or phone calls in a timely manner	
Being rude to coworkers	

If employers intervene when an employee's performance first becomes unacceptable, the discussions may serve as a "wake-up call" or "educational session." Unsatisfactory work performance can include the failure to complete work assignments or correct errors in a reasonable amount of time, inability or unwillingness to learn new tasks or skills, or to work well with other employees and customers.

Activity: Have participants work in groups or partners to brainstorm the effects of not addressing a simple problem early on by filling in the chart. Answers will vary, but stress the point that if problems are not confronted early on, they usually become bigger issues. Have participants volunteer some of their answers and write them in the blank chart on the PowerPoint Overhead.

Most performance problems can be resolved through early and effective communication between an employer and the employee. The employees may not even be aware of the change in their performance. Regardless, when employees' performances first start to slip, they are more likely to be open to discussing what needs to be done to improve performance. By working with poor performers earlier, employers can help employees improve without the negative consequences of threatening their jobs or taking other disciplinary action. More importantly, by addressing performance problems, employers signal to all employees that your business does not tolerate poor performance.

Why confront problems early?

- Prevent slowdown
- Can focus on one behavior at a time
- Prevent lower levels of performance from becoming standard
- Avoid the "snowball effect" of small problems becoming major disciplinary issues

Strategies for confronting problems early

- Use the intervention as an educational moment rather than a disciplinary session.
- Remind the employee of the expected standards.
- Be very specific in explaining one or two problem behaviors.
- Use the confrontation to get to know your employee better and to create an atmosphere of openness and support.

Emphasize that documenting employee behavior is an important and necessary part of turning a nonperformer around.

Documentation needs special attention: While it is necessary to prove discipline is appropriate, it can also become damaging information in a lawsuit. Follow these guidelines to minimize your risk.

Activity: Have participants work in pairs or small groups to change the vague language examples to specific, objective language.

Possible answers:

1. Doesn't greet customers quickly
2. Absent six days in the last month
3. Error rate of 10%
4. Doesn't complete work assignments by specified due dates
5. Doesn't make eye contact and talks to other employees rather than to customers

Participants will be encouraged to establish "just cause" when putting together documentation. It's critical to build a file that journals the good and the bad performances of the employee so that the appearance of bias is eliminated.

Creating clear documentation

Documentation needs special attention. While it is necessary to prove discipline is appropriate, it can also become damaging information in a lawsuit.

© 2008 TreeLine Training. Published by HRDQ.



Creating clear documentation

- Does the action follow an employment agreement if one is in place?
- Has positive and negative performance been documented?
- Have all contractual procedures been met?
- Does the employee have any right to claim unequal treatment?
- Are reasons for action clearly documented and verified?
- Is the organization's position definitely defensible?
- Have all the employee's rights been taken into consideration?

© 2008 TreeLine Training. Published by HRDQ.



Creating clear documentation of problem employees

Special considerations when documenting performance

Document the facts that show you acted fairly and properly

Do not document your feelings, speculations or concerns

Key events should be documented in every employee's file

Documentation of disciplinary action taken should be kept in the employee's personnel file in the HR office and in the manager's file and given to the employee

Language should be specific, and the tone should be corrective, not punitive

Activity: Change the vague language to specific, objective language

Vague	Specific
1. Lacks customer orientation	
2. Is chronically absent	
3. Work quality is poor	
4. Unmotivated	
5. Ignores customers	

Standards must be stated in the process of documenting and these standards must be fair and deemed necessary in the working environment. Action steps for improvement should be specifically spelled out and must be consistent. Finally, consequences must be stated and verification that the employee understood what those consequences would be must be in place.

It's critical that all managers know what is considered acceptable practice. Managers should work closely with HR at the first sign of any problem with an employee. This will ensure that the process is followed as needed.

Checklist

- Does the action follow an employment agreement if one is in place?
- Has positive and negative performance been documented?
- Have all contractual procedures been met?
- Does the employee have any right to claim unequal treatment?
- Are reasons for action clearly documented and verified?
- Is the organization's position definitely defensible?
- Have all the employee's rights been taken into consideration?

Activity: Determining appropriate documentation

Instructions: Decide which of the following statements would be appropriate to include as part of formal documentation. If the statement isn't appropriate, write something that would be.

1. Bob has a bad attitude. He's tough to get along with and many people find him a challenge.

2. Sue's been late five times in the past three weeks causing other department members to cover for her until she arrives.

3. Sherri's not a team player. Everyone knows she's only out for herself.

4. Randy has consistently missed deadlines and his work is sloppy.

Go through the checklist and answer any questions.

Activity: Have participants work alone or in pairs and determine if the statements listed are appropriate documentation. If not, rewrite them so they are. Possible answers:

1. Bob made negative remarks about Joe and Sue in front of a customer. He also accused Sue of not doing her job correctly.
2. Appropriate as is.
3. In a staff meeting, Sherri claimed sole credit for a report that was actually written by her and two other people.
4. Randy has missed three deadlines in the past month, and the past two reports each have had at least five typos or other mistakes.






Reproducible Training Library



DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY, CUSTOMIZED TRAINING HAS NEVER BEEN SIMPLER.

The Reproducible Training Library offers a full suite of training solutions, in three formats:

-  Instructor-led Classroom programs with reproducible instructor and participant guides
-  Self-study e-Learning with freely distributable self-study module in Microsoft PowerPoint© format
-  e-Books in freely distributable pocket book Microsoft Word© format

All formats can be easily customized so it's your training, your way. Why spend the time when we've done the work for you?

Get started today!

Download the Info Kit hrdqstore.com/rtl-info or call our Customer Service Team at **800-633-4533**

ABOUT US

HRDQ is a trusted developer of soft-skills learning solutions that help improve the performance of individuals, teams, and organizations. We offer a wide range of resources and services, from ready-to-train assessments and hands-on games to facilitator certification, custom development, and more. Our primary audience includes corporate trainers, human resource professionals, educational institutions, and independent consultants who look to us for research-based solutions to develop key skills, such as leadership, communication, coaching, and team building.

At HRDQ, we believe an experiential approach is the best catalyst for adult learning. Our unique Experiential Learning Model has been the core of what we do for more than 30 years. Combining the best of organizational learning theory and proven facilitation methods with an appreciation for adult learning styles, our philosophy initiates and inspires.

**DOWNLOADABLE,
CUSTOMIZABLE, REPRODUCIBLE
& AFFORDABLE**

For more information or to place an order, please call or visit us at:

HRDQSTORE.COM | 800-633-4533