

SPECIAL ISSUE
Clarifying HPT



PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Volume 42 • Number 2 • February 2003 *International Society for Performance Improvement*

The HPT Value Proposition

by Dale Brethower

Performance Technology Landscape

by Roger M. Addison

Visibility Into the Work: TQM Work Process Analysis With HPT and ISD

by Charles A. Beagles and Steven L. Griffin

Measurement and HPT: Sharpening My Old Saw

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Turning Research and Evaluation Into Results for ISPI

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Certification: How It Can Add Value

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HPT, ISD—The Challenge of Clear Boundaries in an Evolving Discipline

by Peter R. Hybert

Value, Value—Where Is the Value?

by Roger Kaufman

Graffiti and HPT

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HPT Value Proposition

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ISPI's Value Proposition: Two Examples

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Performance Technology: Foundation for All Organizational Consulting?

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The HPT Value Proposition in the Larger Improvement Arena

by Guy W. Wallace

Resurrection

by Frank T. Wydra



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

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Performance Improvement is committed to presenting multiple voices and multiple perspectives related to the practice of human performance technology. Opinions of the authors do not necessarily represent the beliefs of ISPI or the editor.

This is a *SPECIAL* special issue of *Performance Improvement (PI)*. At the request of Guy Wallace, the incoming ISPI President, several prominent leaders in ISPI have filled the pages of this *PI* issue with words that reflect their viewpoints concerning the status of the field of human performance technology (HPT), particularly its value proposition. The reason for this call by Guy Wallace is to begin an open dialogue about the propositions and practices of HPT.

I encourage you to read every word with care. Begin by reading the guest editorials by Roger Kaufman and Guy Wallace. In so doing, you will learn of their intentions. You will learn that this special issue is to serve as the beginning, not the middle or the end, of a yearlong process to shape a vision and mission for the field of HPT and its dominant professional association, ISPI. This involves defining our field and its future.

I then encourage you to read all 15 pieces. In so doing, I suggest that you answer for yourself, the following five questions.

1. Are there common themes or recurring ideas that emerge from the pieces?
2. Among the authors, are there contrasting perspectives, concepts, and ideas that must be resolved?
3. In your judgment, are there any unique or visionary ideas in one or more of the pieces?
4. Are there significant voids in the perspectives and ideas presented?
5. Do you feel there is a need to continue to have a public discourse among the members of ISPI that tests the ideas and propositions of the field of HPT?

Finally, I want to encourage you to add your voice to the dialogue. Respond to Guy Wallace's call for responses and papers. Begin by answering in your own words one or more of the five questions I posed above. Or, respond to one or more of the questions posed by Guy Wallace to the authors in this issue (see the guidelines in the breakout box on page 9). Best yet, do both.

Your input into this important undertaking is vital. Regardless of your status, your contributions are valued. As professionals, we are obligated to share our perspectives. Whether we see ourselves as veterans or newcomers to the field; insiders or outsiders; performance technologists, instructional developers, organizational consultants, change managers, and so on; or old guard, new guard, or no guard; we must share our views and our concerns.

Please note that the essence of being a professional is to *profess*. As a member of ISPI, in my judgment you are obligated to openly declare your opinions and feelings about this initiative. Your assent and dissent are the key ingredients to the dialogue that has begun. In short, do not sit on the sidelines. Participate.

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The editor welcomes letters from all readers wishing to comment on articles in this issue of *Performance Improvement (PI)*. Early responses have the best chance of being published. Please be concise and include your title and organizational affiliation. *PI* reserves the right to select, solicit, and edit letters. Send letters to: *PI* Editor, 1400 Spring Street, Suite 260, Silver Spring, MD 20910; fax: 301.587.8573; or email: pershin@indiana.edu.

Ann W. Parkman, Executive Vice President

The Center for Effective Performance, Inc.
Atlanta, GA

The article on “HPT Models: An Overview of the Major Models in the Field” (*Performance Improvement*, Vol. 41, No. 8) provides a solid and succinct description of the history of HPT and how the field has evolved to encompass the major models in existence today.

To add to this article, I would like to point out that the Performance Analysis Flow Chart—referenced on page 16 (Figure 4)—underwent significant revisions in 1997 to incorporate Mager and Pipe’s latest updates to the performance analysis process. The current flow chart includes analysis on performance expectations, feedback, fast fixes, calculation of benefits vs. costs, plus a number of other additions that make it even more versatile and useful in solving virtually any type of performance problem. 🌟

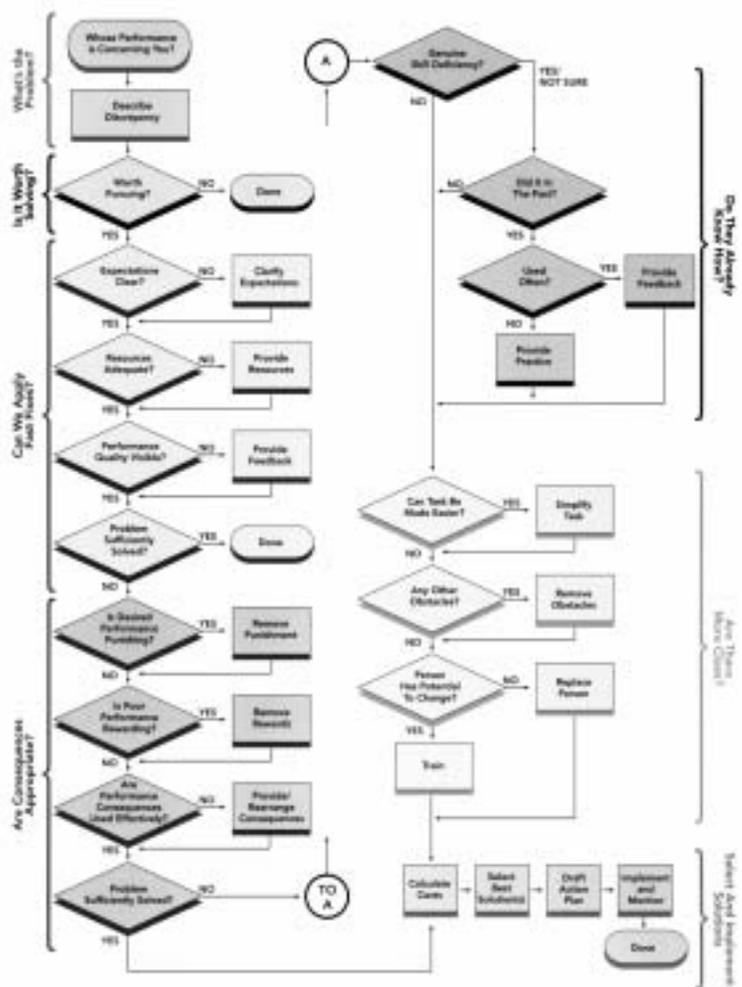


Figure 1: Performance Analysis Flowchart.

©1997 The Center for Effective Performance, Inc. Adapted from *Analyzing Performance Problems*, Third Edition by Robert F. Mager and Peter Pipe. For information contact: The Center for Effective Performance, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia 1-800-558-4CEP.



Why This Special Issue?

by Roger Kaufman, PhD, CPT

As members of a professional society, we believe in results based on research and application. What we use, do, produce, and deliver and the payoffs are vital to our reputation and ourselves.

Our field is currently an array of tools, techniques, frameworks, dogma, and just plain junk. And there is some good stuff, very good stuff often mixed in the *soup* of our profession. Arguments abound about whether or not instructional systems design (ISD), human performance technology (HPT), training, e-learning, learning objects, quality management, behaviorism, cognitivism, or constructivism is the way to go. Arguments are usually based on biases about means, not on research and the pragmatic feedback from sensible application.

People often, too often, are looking for quick fixes, magic checklists, and comfortable ways to make a living without risk and without problems. Good luck.

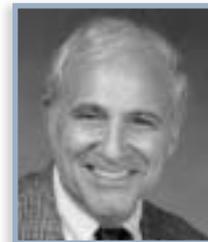
But hope springs eternal and slick people (Dick Clark calls what they provide as “snake oil”) provide a dizzying array of quick fixes, short cuts, simplistic models, and alluring solutions. Most of these offerings, not all coming from members of the International Society for Performance Improvement, are not based on research or even on field validation, but there they are. Training, for example, is the solution *de jour* for those who call themselves trainers. No matter what the presenting symptoms are, training is seen as the way to get useful performance. Research shows us that this is an invalid assumption no matter how conventional or comfortable training is to solving real problems. For every quick fix, there are ardent supporters.

With so many alternatives being offered and so little research used for justification of them, I suggested to Guy Wallace, our incoming ISPI President, that ISPI should open the dialog about what ISPI is about and what it is that successful professionals use, do, produce, and deliver. We agreed that real professionals take full responsibility for what they use, do, produce, and deliver, and as professionals, we should examine pub-

licly what we do, produce, deliver, and the impact that has for internal and external clients, including society.

Some suggest that such a public discourse is counterproductive. It might give people the idea that we do not know what we are doing or why we are doing it. They feel that such a dialogue might weaken our appeal to current and potential clients. That is a risk. On the other hand, I suggest that research and science call for a public discourse on ideas, hypotheses, and resulting data that have been tested in the lab and in the operational world and revised on the basis of results and consequences.

This testing of ideas and the public discourse takes us out of a *secret society* and a *true believer's* posture and into modeling what it is we might do for our clients and our world. So we invited some, unfortunately, not all, thinkers and practitioners to help define our field and our future. These short articles may form the grist for our future continuous improvement. Thank you for considering these short articles and then entering the dialogue. ☀



Roger Kaufman is professor and director, Office for Needs Assessment and Planning at Florida State University where he received a Professorial Excellence award. He also has served as Research Professor of Engineering Management at the Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA and Director of Roger Kaufman & Associates. He earned his PhD in communications from New York University, MA from Johns Hopkins University, and BA from George Washington University. Roger was awarded the Member for Life designation, the highest honor of the International Society for Performance Improvement and the Thomas F. Gilbert Professional Achievement Award by that same organization. He has published 35 books, including *Mega Planning*, *Strategic Planning Plus*, and *Strategic Thinking, Revised*, and co-authored *Useful Educational Results: Defining, Prioritizing, and Accomplishing*, and *Strategic Planning and Thinking Field Book*, as well as more than 230 articles. Roger may be reached at rkaufman@onap.fsu.edu.



What Is the Goal of This Issue?

by Guy W. Wallace, CPT

This issue is very different from the typical issue of *Performance Improvement (PI)*. And that is by design. It is intended to begin a societywide dialogue regarding human performance technology (HPT). This is Phase 2. More on that later.

In April 2002, immediately after the ISPI Annual Conference in Dallas, Roger Kaufman and I asked 25 ISPI *old guard* and *new guard* members to pen a short response to one or more of the following questions:

1. What is HPT's value proposition?
2. What does HPT include and not include?
3. What's wrong with and right with HPT today?
4. If one were to master HPT, what would one be "skillful" at, versus "knowledgeable" about, or simply "aware" of?
5. How can HPT co-exist with other improvement methods, techniques, and tools such as those that come from: Industrial Engineering (IE), total quality management (Statistical Process Control (SPC) and six sigma), Organization Development (OD), finance, etc.?
6. How do we position ourselves and HPT with those other disciplines for true collaborations?

In an attempt to provide total flexibility and *outs* for our guest authors, we suggested that they could also address anything that they felt will help the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), as a professional society for its members, better communicate or market HPT based on the value of HPT in addressing human and organizational performance improvement.

That gave the authors seven things to possibly address. For the most part they covered the topics, some even addressing several within their short response.

The point of all of this is not to finish a dialogue on the questions raised, but to start a dialogue. I personally think we require a greater shared understanding

of HPT and what it is and what it is not. I didn't think that the task would be easy to accomplish; but that did not stop my desire, nor this attempt.

Roger Kaufman had suggested in our early email exchange that "some of the confusion—even among ourselves—is over any distinctions between instructional systems design (ISD) and HPT. We talk HPT and usually do ISD...or training. I think this is a vital distinction and the two should be compared and contrasted...."

In this issue of *PI* we are also inviting other Society members to write their own two-page response on the value proposition of HPT to be published on ISPI's website. You will have a four-month window to do so. In June 2003, we will take all of this input and run with it. But run to where and for what ends?

What Might This Accomplish?

Where, you may ask, is this going? Why is this necessary?

This is your *heads up* for one of my intended initiatives for ISPI during my presidential term, from April 2003-April 2004. This article series is just Phase 2 of four phases I have in mind. But first...

The end purpose of this issue is simple: to clarify HPT so that ISPI can create more compelling marketing messages and materials and thus promote the technology domains (beyond performance-based ISD) of HPT based on what really works, not just what is inviting in description.

That is what I personally want at the end of this four-part effort. Something compelling.

The Four Process Phases

I encouraged Jim Pershing, Editor of *Performance Improvement*, to republish Geary Rummler's October 1983 article on HPT technology domains, with

Geary's permission. That was done in the July 2002 issue of *PI* (see Technology Domains and NSPI: A Proposed Framework for Organizing the Professional Content of NSPI). That was Phase 1.

The articles in this issue of *PI* are intended to be the start of an *article dialogue* between invited authors. Roger (Kaufman) and I asked 25, and besides Roger and myself, 13 responded.

The authors who took us up on our request for Phase 2 include Roger Addison, Charles Beagles, Steven Griffin, Carl Binder, Dale Brethower, Richard Clark, Timm Esque, Judy Hale, Pete Hybert, Roger Kaufman, Miki Lane, Carol Panza, John Swinney, Don Tosti and Stephanie Jackson, Guy Wallace, and Frank Wydra. The authors are presented in alphabetical order. They addressed one or more of the six questions and "Anything Else (AE)" in the following manner:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	AE
Roger Addison	★	★					
Charles Beagles & Steven Griffin		★		★	★		
Carl Binder			★				★
Dale Brethower	★		★				
Richard Clark			★				★
Timm Esque		★					
Judy Hale							★
Pete Hybert		★					
Roger Kaufman		★	★				
Miki Lane			★				★
Carol Panza	★	★	★		★		
John Swinney							★
Don Tosti & Stephanie Jackson	★	★			★		★
Guy Wallace	★	★			★	★	
Frank Wydra			★				★

Again, the six questions and seventh item are:

1. What is HPT's value proposition?
2. What does HPT include and not include?
3. What's wrong with and right with HPT today?
4. If one were to master HPT, what would one be "skillful" at, versus "knowledgeable" about, or simply "aware" of?
5. How can HPT co-exist with other improvement methods, techniques, and tools such as those that come from: Industrial Engineering (IE), total quality management (Statistical Process Control (SPC) and six sigma), Organization Development (OD), finance, etc.?
6. How do we position ourselves and HPT with those other disciplines for true collaborations?
7. AE. Anything that will help ISPI better communicate or market HPT and the value of HPT.

Roger Addison wrote about the ISPI performance landscape and its use in defining performance technology. *Charles Beagles* and *Steven Griffin* wrote about HPT as a robust approach of several technologies based on applied behavioral sciences. *Carl Binder* wrote about the importance of measurement to HPT. *Dale Brethower* wrote about the points of similarity and difference between HPT and ISD. *Richard Clark* wrote about the desires of ISPI members, from the work of an ISPI Membership Committee in 2000, for more emphasis and evaluation data on research-proven HPT products and ideas. *Timm Esque* wrote about applying Occam's razor, a principle of scientific philosophy, to define HPT. *Judy Hale* wrote about how ISPI's certification adds value for practitioners, their clients, and society. *Pete Hybert* wrote about the differences between ISD and HPT, and their shared, underlying technologies and methods. *Roger Kaufman* wrote about the requirement to ensure that we are adding value at all levels when we proscribe HPT interventions. *Miki Lane* wrote about the use of HPT outside of an organizational context, in addressing the needs and requirements of a neighborhood. *Carol Panza* wrote about our requirement to not begin with an intervention in mind as we begin to examine the performance situation of our customers, and our responsibility to focus on results and the context of the organization. *John Swinney* wrote about the value proposition of ISPI. *Don Tosti* and *Stephanie Jackson* wrote about performance technology being the foundation for all of organizational consulting. I wrote about HPT addressing one of four key variables of processes as depicted by the Ishikawa Diagram from the quality movement. *Frank Wydra* wrote about ISPI's roots, its evolution, and HPT having strayed from a technology of measured, applied science to a technology of too much opinion and anecdote.

Some of the authors have some not-so-gentle messages, intended as wake-up calls, for all of us to consider. Please do so.

In Phase 3 we "open up" the discussion "societywide." All responses are limited to the same two-page limit

YOU are invited to participate in our societywide exchange of ideas regarding HPT. Please write your two-page treatise (no more than 1200 words) and submit it to Guy Wallace at guy.wallace@eppic.biz.

Please respond to one or more of the following points:

1. What is HPT's value proposition?
2. What does HPT include and not include?
3. What's wrong with and right with HPT today?
4. If one were to master HPT, what would one be "skillful" at, versus "knowledgeable" about, or simply "aware" of?
5. How can HPT co-exist with other improvement methods, techniques, and tools such as those that come from: Industrial Engineering (IE), total quality management (Statistical Process Control (SPC) and six sigma), Organization Development (OD), finance, etc.?
6. How do we position ourselves and HPT with those other disciplines for true collaborations?
7. What else can/should ISPI do to better communicate or market HPT and the value of HPT?

(approximately 900-1200 words). Three to four months after this issue of *PI* is distributed, we will close this window and move to Phase 4. The Phase 3 deadline is June 1, 2003. Those articles will be published on the Society's website as they come in (after my review).

Phase 4 is where the Presidential Initiative Task Force will run with it. That group will be chaired by ISPI past-president John Swinney. Roger Addison will participate, both to protect and safeguard all previous Society work and to ensure that things such as the new performance landscape stay, or evolve in an acceptable manner. Also, Geary Rummler has agreed to help shape the "run" and see his HPT technology domain framework used as the organizing framework. Ray Svenson has agreed to facilitate. Additionally, I have asked Dick Clark and Roger Kaufman to be the core team of the initiative. That core team will assemble another 18 members.

The Presidential Initiative Task Force will include additional *old guard* and *new guard* members, as well as rising stars from within our Society's ranks. It will also include some non-North American members from our international Society.

This entire effort should create a "big-tent" view of HPT (versus a narrow view—that is, "HPT is only performance-based ISD") with greater clarity of the piece parts and technologies of HPT so that ISPI can create more compelling marketing messages and materials to better meet our stated vision and mission of ISPI as published on our Society website:

Our Vision: ISPI's vision is that members have the proficiency and insight to customize Human Performance Technology to meet the needs and goals of their organizations and clients, so that the members are recognized as valued assets.

Our Mission: ISPI's mission is to develop and recognize the proficiency of its members and advocate the use of Human Performance Technology.

That's our end game goal as I see it. Of course, continuous improvement will be required from here on out. Those are the future phases, unplanned, but not unanticipated.

Please allow us to use you toward our end: creating a big-tent view of HPT and clarifying "the HPT value proposition." You will be helping us all tremendously within the Society, and all of our future members, if you participate in Phase 3.

Intrigued? Upset? Care to play/react? Your turn comes next. Prepare your two-pager for our Society's website in Phase 3. Submit those articles to me at guy.wallace@eppic.biz. 🏠



Guy W. Wallace has been in the T&D field since 1979 and an ISD consultant to government and industry since 1982. His clients have included 27 of the current Fortune 500 firms, plus non-US companies such as BP and Siemens. He has analyzed and designed/developed training and development for almost every type of business function and process.

Guy is the author of three books, more than 50 articles, and has presented more than 50 times at international conferences and local chapters of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD), and Lakewood Conferences. He served as the treasurer/director of the 1999–2000 Board of ISPI and is currently ISPI's president-elect for the 2002–2003 Board of Directors. Guy may be reached at guy.wallace@eppic.biz.

The HPT Value Proposition

by Dale Brethower, PhD

The (implicit) value promise of human performance technology (HPT) in the early 1960s focused only on instruction: Put people through the instruction we develop and they will attain a prespecified set of measurable learning objectives.

HPT professionals differentiated ourselves in our hearts and minds and in the marketplace by taking the promise seriously: We set high quality standards. For example, we shocked the world by promising that at least 90% of the learners would score at least 90% when tested on the objectives. We shocked the world even more by keeping that promise.

Neither instructional systems design (ISD) nor HPT actually existed in the early 1960s, though ISD was being created to get the promised instructional results better, faster, and cheaper. We kept instructional value promises by developing and using orderly procedures. We had to.

But a funny thing happened on the way to success. We discovered that achieving agreed-on learning objectives was not the only or even the major result clients wanted. What other results did they want?

Many. Some valuable. Some suspect. Here is a short list:

- The prestige of using new technologies
- Avoidance of the fear they would be laughed at for using old technologies
- A good show
- Happy trainees
- Learning that could be used on the job
- Classes presented by charismatic instructors and organizational opinion leaders
- Money spent so it would not disappear from the budget
- Positive rumors about the training
- A better dog and pony show than some other company had
- A political win for a vice president
- Instruction that could be presented to large numbers of people
- Instruction that could be delivered to individuals or groups “just in time, just enough, just for me”—and wherever they were
- Performance improvement by key people
- Performance improvement by key groups and processes
- Performance improvement by total organizations

Achieving a variety of results requires a variety of methods—methods dictated by the desired results. If the result sought is “three days of instruction using the hottest new media,” we must do different things than if the result sought is “decrease cycle time for new product introduction from two years to three months” or “increase stakeholder satisfaction (that is, ratings, repeat business, and referrals) with our customer support services.” Seeking results such as decreasing cycle time and increasing stakeholder satisfaction required that we develop HPT methods.

Getting Results That Add Value

The secret to the effectiveness of the best ISD and HPT work is that both methodologies are data driven. Data collection begins during front-end analysis and continues through design, developmental testing (alpha testing), field testing (beta testing), implementation, and continuous improvement. Collecting data is fundamental whether we are developing units of instruction, improving processes, or implementing performance management systems. HPT and ISD have always been about trying something, getting feedback, and improving—improving until the results are obtained, and doing it on time and at budget, as promised.

It is not magic, it is not art, it is not luck, it is not genius. It is technology: We can specify how to do it, teach people how to do it, and they can do it. Do what? Use orderly procedures to get the promised results consistently.

We made a serious mistake often during the early years. We make it less often as time goes on. The mistake is the failure to make part of the value promise explicit. We assumed everyone would immediately understand that:

- the desired results should add value.
- there is more bang for the buck if value is added to the whole organization, not just one part of the organization, perhaps at the expense of other parts.

In hindsight it is very clear that the assumption was wrong. We should always be explicit. The HPT-ISD value promise should always emphasize very special results—results that add value.

Promising to get value-adding results is a very different value promise than just promising to get results. Spending \$50,000 to develop training that helps solve a \$5,000 problem does not add value even if we get the promised result. Failing to show clients that spending \$50,000 to get a result that is worth \$500,000 does not add value. Getting a \$500,000 short-term result that ends up contributing to a \$1 billion loss does not add value.

In the early days we proved again and again that we could get the results we promised, reliably and cost-effectively. We are proud of that. But we also proved again and again

that we could get the results promised without adding any value whatsoever! We are not proud of that.

This discovery placed us between a rock and a hard place: the rock of our ideals (the promise to add value) and the hard place of the market—what customers wanted, knew how to buy, and could buy from many vendors. That list of 15 client wants contains at least 10 items that would rarely add net value to an organization. Selling what customers want to buy can take value away rather than add it.

Knowledge and technology are useful only if we use them well. An ISD project focused on the right results and in conjunction with good workplace planning and management systems can add value. An HPT project focused on a flavor of the month rather than a critical business issue can suck value out. An “HPT” project or an “ISD” project that uses all the tools except data collection is not HPT or ISD; it will certainly add cost; it probably will not add value.

The Heart of the Problem

Buyers of ISD or HPT do not typically recognize good ISD or good HPT products and services when they see them. Customers want “better, faster, and cheaper” but it is a lot easier to recognize “faster and cheaper” than it is “better.” As a result, selling “faster and cheaper” is easier for outside vendors and for internal training units. “Faster and cheaper” training looks a lot like “better” training. How is the buyer to know?

Similarly, the value-adding deliverables of HPT look a lot like deliverables that do not add value. In addition, HPT deliverables look a lot like the deliverables of, for example, firms providing customer relationship management, total quality management, six sigma, or balanced scorecard products and services.

How is the buyer to know? And what can we do to help buyers buy our products and services wisely? The answers are implicit in the value promise.

The Essence of the HPT-ISD Value Promise

The value promise is to do two things: we say what we will do, do what we say, and prove it, and we ensure that what we promise and deliver adds unique value.

Buyers of our products and services should demand quality and demand proof that they are getting it. This prudent practice is well known in other fields. Demand a quality history for any ISD or HPT product or service delivered! The demand for a quality history, in our field as in others, would drive out those who cannot *prove it*—or force them to learn how to use ISD or HPT methodologies competently. HPT and ISD methodologies support the documentation of quality.

But how do we ensure that what we promise and deliver adds value? How can the buyer be sure that the value is unique to our methodologies and not a value provided by other approaches? We use methodologies that are orderly, data-based, and systemic, and that provide deliverables that support human performance at multiple levels in the organization.

The uniqueness of the value promise is signaled by the words "systemic" and "human performance." We are not chemical engineers but performance engineers. Chemical engineers have a methodology for building plants that support chemical processes; we have a methodology for creating workplaces that support excellent human performance.

The human side of our methodology is an important part of what contributes unique value. Equally important is the systemic nature of the methodology. Senior-level managers or executives worth their salt know from experience that piecemeal initiatives do not work. They know that the only initiatives with staying power are those that happen to be supported by a critical mass of other initiatives. Systemic approaches make it more likely that initiatives will fit together in ways that achieve the critical mass necessary to sustain success.

Conclusion

The unique value we add can be shown by a 30+-year track record in human performance improvement. The contribution of our systemic methodology is harder to document right now because the systemic methodology is used routinely

only by a too-small collection of the thought leaders in our field. Fortunately, systemic results are easy to identify: They are total results, not piecemeal results. They are results that can be seen in the performance of the entire organization, typically in the performance of key individuals (perhaps senior managers), key processes (perhaps the order fulfillment process), and overall results (perhaps results tracked by a balanced scorecard).

ISD, used competently, assures that training delivers:

- the right knowledge
- to the right people
- at the right time
- to help improve workplace performance
- related to a significant business issue

HPT, used competently, adds value by improving significant performance at the individual, process, and organizational level.

HPT, used wisely, adds value to an entire value chain: the organization and its customers, suppliers, employees, and financial supporters, as well as the physical, social, and cultural environment.

Dale Brethower is a Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Western Michigan University. One of the pioneers of HPT, he was the 1999-2000 President of the International Society for Performance Improvement. He may be reached at dbrethow@wmich.edu.

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Performance Technology Landscape

by Dr. Roger M. Addison, CPT

The International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) has offered Performance Improvement Institutes since 1997. Developers and faculty of these Institutes include some of the leaders in performance technology (PT): Roger Addison, CPT; Anne Apking; Rebecca Birch; Dale Brethower; Roger Chevalier, CPT; Ruth Clark; Peter Dean; Peter-Cornelius Dams; Lori Gillespie; Carol Haig, CPT; Judy Hale, CPT; Roger Kaufman, CPT; Lynn Kearny, CPT; Danny Langdon; Doug Mead; Margo Murray, CPT; James Robinson; Geary Rummler, CPT; Harold Stolovitch, CPT; Deborah

Stone, CPT; Rodger Stotz, CPT; Don Tosti, CPT; Ken Silber, CPT; Charline Wells; and Kathleen Whiteside.

In the institutes we use PT models, tools, and techniques to present the fundamentals of performance improvement. As we look at the various PT approaches it becomes apparent that there are common elements. We have organized these elements into a performance technology landscape (see Figure 1), which includes the following elements:

- the basic principles
- where we work
- how we think
- what we do

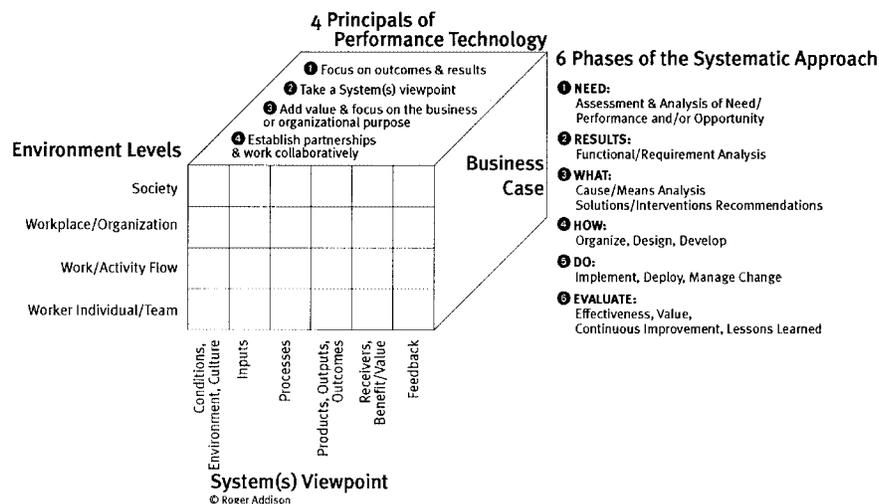


Figure 1. Performance Technology Landscape.

The PT landscape forms the basis of the certified performance technologist (CPT) designation launched by the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) in April 2002.

What Is Performance Technology?

The PT landscape helps us define our technology and its practices:

- PT is a systematic process/methodology of linking business, educational, and governmental goals and strategies with workforce responsibilities for achieving goals.
- PT identifies opportunities and analyzes performance problems.
- PT stresses performance results, value-added solutions, and return on investment.
- PT helps organizations design systems that enable people to do their best work to produce results that are valuable to the organization.

PT is a set of principles and applications focused on helping to achieve valued results through human action (see Figure 1). PT can support individuals, teams, organizations, and society in cost-effectively increasing the value of the results they produce. PT methodologies and applications are numerous and varied, but all are founded on the same fundamental principles and all contribute to accomplishing one or more of the following:

- **Identification of Value:** Clarification of the problem, business issue, or opportunity
- **Definition of Outcomes:** Specification of the requirements to create the value or close the gap between existing and desired results
- **Analysis of Performance:** Identification of the factors in the performance system that can influence the production of outcomes to meet requirements
- **Selection of Interventions/Solutions:** Choosing from a range of possible PT applications those that will best meet the requirements, given the information about outcomes and performance
- **Design/Development of Interventions/Solutions:** Preparation for execution including a wide range of decisions about what it will take to cost-effectively implement the solution and match culture requirements
- **Deployment of Interventions/Solutions:** Execution of the design to meet requirements
- **Evaluation of Effectiveness:** Measure intervention processes, outcomes, and results to determine how well they meet the requirements and what might be required to further improve results

How We Work: Four Basic Principles

- Focus on results, start with the end in mind.
- Take a systems viewpoint, think systemically.

- Add value to the client and focus on the business.
- Establish partnerships with experts and clients.

Where We Work (From Micro to Mega)

To be most effective, performance improvement specialists align these systems elements:

- the workers, individuals, and teams
- the work, activity, and flow
- the workplace and organization
- society

How We Think

Rather than defining ourselves by the intervention that we develop or use, we take a comprehensive systems view of performance. We focus on the alignment of the total performance system. This includes the environment, culture, inputs, processes, outputs, feedback, and organizational stakeholders. We apply a systematic approach by determining the need or opportunity; defining the requirements; determining the cause, opportunity, and solution(s); designing/developing solution(s); and implementing them and evaluating results for continuous improvement.

Donald Tosti expands how we think by identifying three types of models we use:

- **System Component Models:** Identify the components and perhaps give their relationships. Used to locate problems in doing diagnosis, for example, Gilbert's performance engineering, Tosti and Jackson's organizational scan, Rummler's organizational sweeps, and so on.
- **Driving Force or Alignment Models:** Specify the factors that must be considered in relation to each other to achieve some specific result, for example, Tosti and Jackson's organizational alignment model, Rummler's four views.
- **Procedure Models:** Specify a particular methodology we can use to take action, for example, instructional systems design, ADDIE, performance engineering, etc.

Conclusion

"What makes performance consulting so powerful," Tosti suggests, "is that its interventions are derived from basic principles and an underlying technology unlike most other forms of organizational managerial consulting which employ solutions based on best practice and constructs" (D.T. Tosti, personal communication, September 17, 2002). During the ISPI-EMEA Conference, Klaus Wittkuhn, CPT, founder of the ISPI chapter in Germany, observed, "Performance is the valued result produced by a system." If you start with the results in mind, then you have begun the PT journey. 🏔

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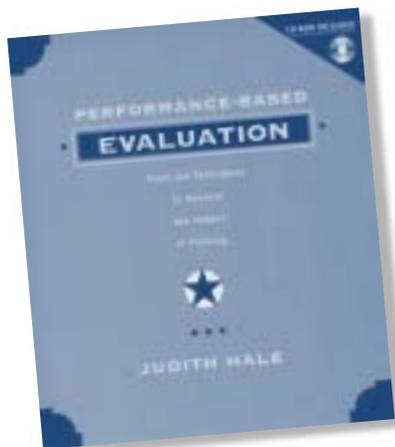
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Dr. **Roger M. Addison**, CPT, is an international practitioner of performance technology and performance consulting. He is the Director of Performance Technology for ISPI and consults with Fortune 500 organizations to help them align their business needs with bottom-line results. Roger is a frequent speaker at ISPI, the International Federation for Training and Development Organisations (IFTDO), and the American Society for Training and Development meetings. He received his doctorate in Educational Psychology from Baylor University. Roger received ISPI's awards for Member of the Year, Organization of the Year, and Outstanding Product. In 1998 he received ISPI's highest award, Member for Life. He may be reached at roger@ispi.org.



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by **Judith Hale, PhD, CPT**

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Visibility Into the Work

TQM Work Process Analysis With HPT and ISD

by Charles A. Beagles and Steven L. Griffin

In our view, human performance technology (HPT), as represented by the model of the International Society for Performance Improvement, is not an isolate technology, but a robust approach with a force multiplier effect that occurs when several technologies based on applied behavioral sciences are integrated.

One total quality management (TQM) tool, work process flow diagrams, was used to communicate and provide impetus to HPT initiatives within the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). One such initiative, the training and performance support system (TPSS), establishes proficiency in complex cognitive tasks performed by employees at 58 regional offices (Griffin & Beagles, 2000).

VBA's mission is to provide benefits and services to veterans and their families in a responsive, timely, and compassionate manner. Most VBA work involves consistently and accurately analyzing and adjudicating various types of veterans' claims—cognitively complex work, with speed and accuracy standards. The work both supports and is affected by all aspects of VBA (management, manpower

and personnel, hardware, procedural manuals, work standards, information systems, legal, medical, legislative, financial, training, facilities, evaluation, continuous improvement) The VBA had to bring to bear numerous TQM, HPT, and instructional systems development (ISD) tools to address performance gaps to improve accuracy, and reduce backlog of claims files.

Selecting a Primary Work Analysis Tool

To address these needs in a meaningful way throughout the organization, we looked for a work process analysis tool that would be both the foundation for and catalyst of HPT and ISD activities. The tool chosen would have to (1) handle the complexity of the work, including cognitive and metacognitive elements and process exceptions, yet be capable of representing the work as simply as possible, to support communication to and between many organizational elements; (2) provide analysis results to support VBA's ISD-based TPSS; and (3) support and interact with the full range of HPT initiatives being pursued by VBA, not just TPSS.

Available Tools

A literature review revealed a large number of approaches. Miller addressed the task analysis issue (1962) with an emphasis on analyzing cognitive and affective components. Miller and Smode (1976) summarized the critical role of task analysis in the design of complex training systems. Seamster and coauthors provided methods for cognitive task analysis (1997). Levine and Brannick (2002) give an excellent summary of the more complex models. Although we use a number of these approaches in VBA, an additional tool was needed to meet the criteria listed above.

TQM's Work Flow Analysis Tool

We felt that one TQM method provided the needed visibility into organizational work. Deming (1986) included work process flow diagrams in his action plan for getting businesses out of crisis. Sholtes (1988) presents four types of flowcharts for documenting various work processes: the top down, the detail method, the work flow diagram, and the deployment chart. The work flow diagram can be expanded into a work process flow diagram (Conway, 1982; Carlisle, 1986) that visually captures the complexity of the work in detail yet preserves the logic of the work process.

We decided to build the foundation for TPSS development and HPT actions on multiple HPT methodologies, with work process flow diagrams providing the catalyst (after needs assessment and analysis) and the common language across all efforts. Work process flow diagrams were developed through performer observation, talk-throughs, and think-aloud sessions; performer and supervisor interviews; and analyses of documentation, workplace environment, job aids, work measurement standards, information processing, and interactions of all types.

Benefits

The work process flow diagrams proved to be an extremely valuable tool. The diagrams provided visibility into the work, which allowed managers, workers, software designers, training developers, and other HPT professionals to reach a common understanding, grasp the work complexity, and define the range of the performance domain that had to be addressed in training, evaluation, and task proficiency certification of employees. The work process flow diagrams and other types of task analysis information ensured that TPSS and other HPT initiatives would be grounded in performance of each specific work task, rather than in content or general competencies. Most importantly, it would provide assistance to increasing consistency in rating decisions.

Impact on HPT Functions and ISD

The understanding made possible by the work process flows and related task standards provoked VBA decisionmakers to think fruitfully about inter-relationships and ripple effects between HPT initiatives. The circled material in Figure 1 shows VBA's experience concerning the major functional areas of the HPT model that are affected by the use of work process flow diagrams and related analysis products.

Analyses

Let's begin on the top left side of the figure. Work process flow diagrams, accompanied by behavioral and cognitive task-detailing tables, environment scan reports, and human factors engineering analyses, are appropriate for capturing data in all four subject areas in the diagram section labeled Environmental Analysis. The interests of the organizational development consultant, human factors engineer, ISD practitioner, and HRD pro-

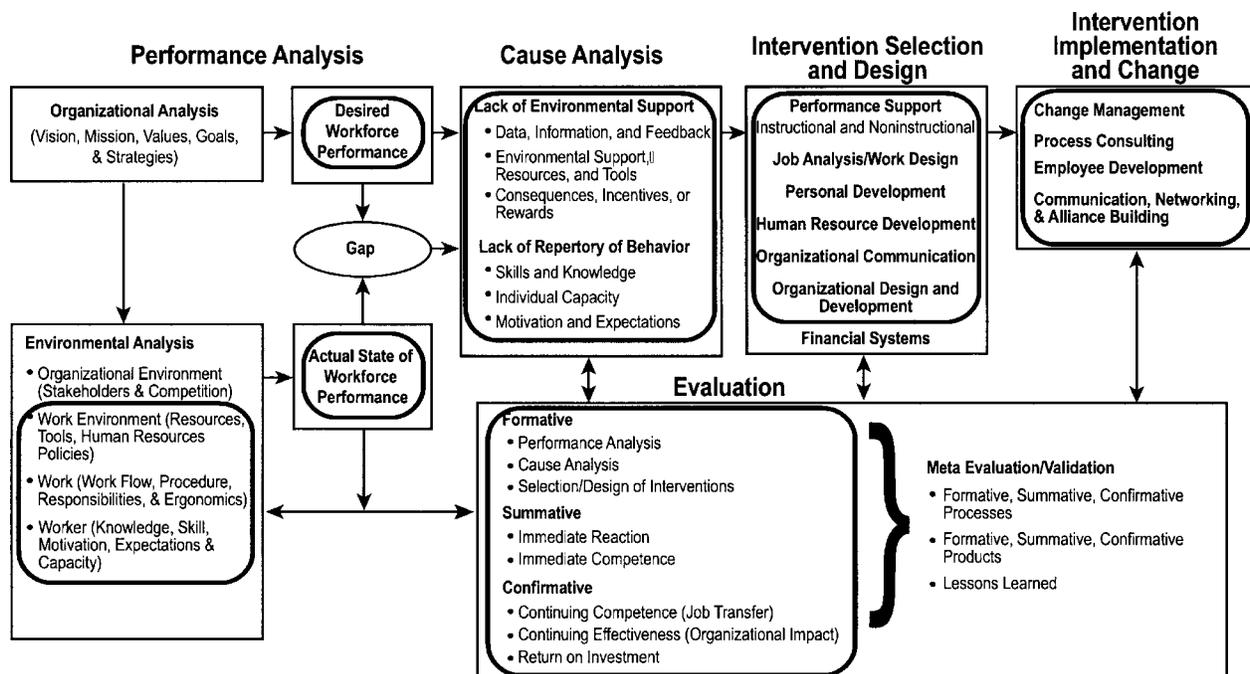


Figure 1. HPT Impact Areas for Work Flow Analysis ISPI Model (Source: Van Tiem, Moseley, & Dessinger, 2000).

professionals are all united in a quest for knowledge of the work, the worker, and the workplace. The next set of blocks address gap analysis. Work process flow diagrams are a useful tool for capturing both the actual state of workforce performance and, in TQM/business process re-engineering activities, desired workforce performance. Comparison of the work process flow diagrams of both of actual and desired design helps identify performance gaps.

Work process flow diagrams also support analyses of root causes; training needs; job software; organizational systems; process control, metrics and rewards; and manpower and personnel issues. If a multitude of disciplines are united under the HPT umbrella, work process flow diagrams form the handle of the umbrella.

Intervention Selection and Design

Work process flow diagrams also directly support both intervention selection and intervention design. In selection, knowledge of the work that must be done and its environment are both key givens and areas for possible improvement. In design, work process flow diagrams provide important knowledge to redesign work and work organizations and training and performance support systems.

Evaluation

The bottom section of the figure describes four levels of HPT evaluation. The work itself, as captured in work process flow diagrams, is a key component of what is being evaluated. Formative, summative, and confirmative evaluations and meta-level compilations of lessons learned all focus on employee reactions to and actual performance of work itself or of proposed work changes, as well as on outputs and outcomes.

Intervention Implementation and Change

The top right section of the figure addresses implementation issues at the organizational level: The right vision must be executed well. Work process flow diagrams are directly involved in building TPSS in VBA. They also provide a common language for activities of communication, networking, and alliance building. In VBA, this occurs between senior management, field management, training developers, operations and production analysts, information systems designers, and subject matter experts. Work process flow diagrams are the obvious starting point for process consulting. Finally, work process flows and work breakdown structures can and should be built and implemented for the "change management" process supporting each initiative.

Summary

If the focus of HPT is on the human, then clearly understanding what the human does or is expected to do is critical to the HPT enterprise. The work-process flow diagram

form of documentation discussed in this article is one way of clearly articulating the process element in the language of work formulated by Langdon (1999). 

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Measurement and HPT: Sharpening My Old Saw

by Carl Binder

In thinking about what to write for this special issue, two different but somehow connected images of saws kept rumbling around in my head: the old, noisy, repetitive saw that drives everyone crazy with its droning sound, yet serves an essential function. And Stephen Covey's saw, the one he says we ought to sharpen regularly (1989). I think I'll go with both of these images, perhaps with slightly different meanings than their originators intended.

My Old Saw

Measurement is my old saw. I've been going on about it for most of my professional life, perhaps preaching a bit too much about it to my colleagues in recent years (Binder, 1995, 2001, 2002). But as a field, we human performance technology professionals claim to produce *results* for our internal or external clients. Tom Gilbert (1996), one of our Founding Fathers, used the phrase "valuable accomplishments" to describe the performance we seek to improve. He stressed that in order for performance to be considered "worthy," it ought to yield accomplishments of greater value than the cost of the behavior required to pro-

duce them. To be true to this simple cost-benefit principle, we must *measure* the effects of our interventions.

However, as Lindsley (1999) and others have pointed out, less than 10% of the presentations at our conferences and the publications in our journals typically include objective measures of results, whether of business results, the accomplishments that contribute to them, or the behavior that produces those accomplishments.

If this is true, then we have both a marketing problem and a problem of professional identity. Because if we claim that HPT is a systematic methodology for producing results, perhaps even results that are superior in quality or quantity to those produced by other means, then we had better be able to back up this claim with data. And if we *can't* back it up, then it's not clear how we can claim to be effective, different in important ways, or even true to our roots (Binder, 1995).

So my old saw is this: As a profession, and as an organization (the International Society for Performance Improvement), we should take the high ground on the practice

of results measurement. We should systematically monitor and regularly publish the proportion of our publications and, ideally, of our conference presentations that include quantitative results data. We should do everything we can to make practical results measurement, not merely the assessment of opinion or reaction, a widely held and routinely applied competence within our ranks. And we should then, on the basis of these efforts, stake our claim to effectiveness on an increasingly robust database of objectively, quantitatively measured results.

Sharpening the Saw

We need to keep our intellectual and professional tools in good working order, to avoid superstition, and to stay away from faddish yet ineffective interventions. Given the origins of our field in basic and applied behavioral research, we ought to approach our work as scientist-practitioners, always seeking to produce more valuable results at lower cost and in less time. The only way we'll be able to do this, to borrow Covey's phrase, is to keep sharpening our saw.

We sharpen the saw by making contact with reality rather than living in a world of opinion, by letting the actual, objective results of our work serve as feedback to us—often as *corrective* feedback. In other words, we sharpen our saw with measurement of results and decisions based on that measurement about what to do differently, when we should change, and what interventions have the greatest impact.

If HPT is going to be anything beyond a philosophy that some people like and others do not, then it must keep sharpening its saw based on measured results. We ought to be using measurement to decide what types of interventions actually work best in different types of situations, to compare the magnitudes of our effects and provide copious rewards and recognition for those who produce big results, and to help our clients improve overall productivity and efficiency.

One of the most elegant communications that has come out of our ranks in recent years is Timm Esque's book, *Making an Impact* (2002). It is elegant because it reduces the job of managing and improving performance to three essential features: setting clear and measurable goals or expectations; putting the means of measuring progress against those goals in the hands of the performers; and then applying and optimizing resources based on measured results until expectations have been achieved and maintained.

Many of us are specialists in particular types of performance interventions, while some are generalists. Some of us are

even experts in practical results measurement methods and tools. In any case, it's clear that Esque's model is at the heart of what we must do to be fully effective HPT professionals. We must measure results, and we must use the data to make decisions about and adjust what we do.

It would be great if ISPI would take this issue on in a very proactive and public way, making measurement a cornerstone of its marketing and professional communications about the effectiveness of HPT. For me, the value proposition of ISPI and HPT must include this essential feature. Otherwise, we cannot credibly demonstrate value, no matter what we might propose it to be. 🏔️

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Turning Research and Evaluation Into Results for ISPI

by Richard E. Clark, CPT

Any question about the value of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) must be answered from the perspective of the people who matter the most—our membership. The ISPI Membership Committee posed this question to our members two years ago (ISPI, 2002). The study was powerfully designed and had a much higher response rate (about 50%) and a much more solid design than most top marketing surveys.

In the survey, current, former, and prospective ISPI members told us that the most important services we can offer to them are current and useful information on performance improvement, networking with colleagues, and an outlet for publishing and presenting. There were two main recommendations from the authors of the report:

- Emphasize ISPI's mission related to systematic and reproducible results that positively impact organizations in the value proposition.
- Emphasize the value of an organization that provides a translation of research results into practical advice.

This may be a unique contribution that people can use to make a difference to their own careers and also to the business needs of their organizations.

It is interesting that ISPI's mission has changed since the report was delivered. Our current mission is "to develop and recognize the proficiency of its members and advocate the use of human performance technology (HPT)"; our current "vision" is "that members have the proficiency and insight to customize HPT to meet the needs and goals of their organizations and clients, so that the members are recognized as valued assets." Neither of these statements seems to me to reflect what our members told us they wanted.

We have the resources and the capacity to become the engine that identifies, develops, tests, certifies, and disseminates new or improved performance innovations and solutions based on research and systematic testing. ISPI can do what our members suggested. The challenge from Guy Wallace that resulted in this special issue is a giant step in the right direction (see "What Is the Goal of

This Issue?” page 7). Guy is helping us get a handle on how to implement what the membership requested. To discover how we can do what our membership suggested two years ago, lets go on to another of Guy’s questions: “What is wrong with HPT?”

HPT Today

In my view, nothing is wrong with HPT. But perhaps we should consider the values ISPI uses to select its programs and services. Are we avoiding necessary change because we realize that we’d have to go outside our comfort zone? Are we hesitant to take advice because we cannot imagine what would result from the change we are being asked to make? Would providing the answers to “What are the performance solutions that we can count on to work?” be such a daunting proposition? Of course it would take a variety of skills and a team-based effort, but I think this organization is up to the challenge.

Proposals that attempt to dig deeply into new performance technology research and translate it for our members, or proposals to conduct more systematic tests of established products such as total quality management, statistical process control, and six sigma seem to receive considerably less support. It is very revealing that the National Academy of Sciences has concluded, for example, that as it is currently used, TQM simply does not work in most organizations (Druckman et al., 1997). We have an opportunity to look deeply into the “why” in so many failures and give specific advice about how to succeed with limited tools like TQM. We have the opportunity to go far beyond the scope of TQM and develop exciting new products.

Why not draw on the huge body of existing performance research and reputable reviews of that research and translate it into new solutions for our members? Why not let the chips fall where they will, even if we learn that some of our most cherished HPT products are snake oil and sometimes make performance worse? Why not become the industry standard for research and evaluation about what works and what does not work to improve performance?

One way to interpret what our members are telling us is that they want accurate and current *consumer* information about HPT. They want new performance improvement products and ideas and trustworthy evaluations of the impact of established products. What can we do to respond to the clear message from our members?

What Would It Take to Adopt This Value Proposition?

A professional organization must support the growth of the field it represents and the continuing education of its members. ISPI’s future growth depends on enlarging its membership and focusing its mission on the translation of research and the development and testing of new performance products. We need more members who understand current performance research in a variety of areas. We

should not be conducting basic research; we should be asking our members to help translate existing research conducted elsewhere and turn it into viable products. As the membership committee advised two years ago:

The ISPI mission is “dedicated to improving human performance in systematic and reproducible ways.” Researchers can play an important role in ensuring that we can state with confidence that our methodologies actually make a measurable difference and that we recognize the active ingredients in those methodologies that will transfer from one context to another. We have a relatively low number of academics, between 3% and 7%, depending on whether we ask about primary responsibility (3%) or employer type (7%). The Delphi study recommendations for an ideal percentage for this group are at 15%-20%. ISPI members, former members, and prospective members value keeping current. Students, researchers, professors, and so on, can help keep members current. (ISPI, 2000)

To meet these new goals, we have to encourage people who are aware of the research that is available for the development of new and exciting products to join ISPI. We must make ourselves accessible to new members by lowering or subsidizing their cost to participate in our international conference and directing some of our support to new initiatives involving the translation of solid research into new performance products based on the HPT model, assessing (measuring) the effectiveness of new and established products (such as ISPI’s recent study of the use of financial incentives to increase performance headed by Harold Stolovitch), and engaging our best talent to disseminate what we produce in a way that both attracts new members and creates income for ISPI. 🏔

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Richard Clark’s current interest is in the translation of learning, motivation, and organizational change research findings into a form useable for solving learning and performance problems in work settings. His most recent books include *Turning Research Into Results: A Guide to Selecting the Right Performance Solutions* (2002, CEP Press) with Fred Estes and *Learning From Media: Arguments, Analysis, and Evidence* (2001, Information Age Publishers). In 2002, ISPI awarded Dick the Thomas F. Gilbert distinguished professional achievement award and a Presidential Citation for Intellectual Leadership. He is an elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Division 15, Educational Psychology), a Fellow in the Association of Applied Psychology, and a Founding Fellow of the American Psychological Society. Dick may be reached at clark@usc.edu.



The HPT Razor

by Timm J. Esque

Occam's razor" is an oft-cited principle of scientific philosophy attributed to the 14th century theologian, William of Occam. In today's language, the principle states that given more than one theory, explanation, or definition of something, the simplest one is probably the best. Francis Heylighen, an eminent systems thinker, explains:

Occam's razor helps us to "shave off" those concepts, variables or constructs that are not really needed to explain the phenomenon. By doing that, developing the model will become much easier, and there is less chance of introducing inconsistencies, ambiguities, and redundancies (Heylighen, 1997).

This seems a useful principle to apply as we attack questions such as what human performance technology (HPT) includes and does not include. I believe that HPT is and is intended to be a broad, cross-disciplinary field. Any unnecessary assumptions made while defining this overall field would only seem to reduce the chances of

HPT achieving its potential. Our definition of HPT should not bias us toward or against specific theories, approaches, or styles within the overall HPT framework. At the same time, HPT is meaningless without some sort of boundaries.

We need a clear criterion for determining if and when true HPT is being practiced. If it were possible to lay on a single tabletop all the learning and performance interventions that have ever occurred, this criteria would be like a razor that we could use to "shave off" all those that are not really HPT. The question is, what simple (per Occam) and clear criteria should make up the HPT razor?

The Management Connection

Performance does not occur in a vacuum. Performance is defined in a context; to be meaningful, performance must be viewed and communicated about in that context. Gilbert defines performance as a function of the ratio of worthy accomplishments to costly behaviors (1978). I assert that the most sensible context for performance is management.

To manage, according to the Random House Unabridged Dictionary (1987), is “to bring about or succeed in accomplishing, sometimes despite difficulty or hardship.” More precisely, managing is about pursuing performance goals and making adjustments based on knowledge of actual performance against the goals. Within the context of management, I would argue that HPT is about making (designing and implementing) adjustments... to improve performance against stated performance goals.

Including everything in the broad category of “making adjustments” may at first seem like a very dull razor (it seems to eliminate almost nothing). However, when we stay within the context, the field narrows considerably, because within the context of management, *HPT is not just about designing and implementing adjustments, it is about whether, and how, adjustments impact actual performance as compared to stated goals.* We can design and implement all the adjustments (interventions) we want, but unless we understand the impact on actual performance against stated goals, we are not practicing HPT. I would guess that this razor would be sharp enough to shave off a fair amount of what gets called HPT today.

Let me try to clarify these notions with a simplified example. You are a training specialist in a factory that builds and repairs precision mechanical assemblies. One step in most of the various product lines is chrome plating. The manager of the plating area asks for your assistance in training people at the chrome plating station. You are given free access to the area and the experts and six weeks to come up with the intervention. You perform a job analysis and determine that the bulk of the knowledge and skill required is involved in maintaining the chrome bath within specification. You develop a combination of structured on-the-job training, job aids, and certification checklists to ensure that those working at the chrome plating station know how to maintain the chrome baths.

Implementing this training would clearly be making an adjustment, but how would we know if you were practicing HPT? Is it enough that you have a background in instructional design and you followed the instructional systems design model? I don't think so. Is it enough that both the manager and the trainees were pleased to finally have training aids? I don't think so. Would it be enough if the organization finally started tracking and maintaining certifications? How about if you used a return-on-investment model to show that the new training created time savings that more than paid for the cost of the training? Each of these factors probably add worth to the intervention, but they would not cause this intervention to get past my HPT razor.

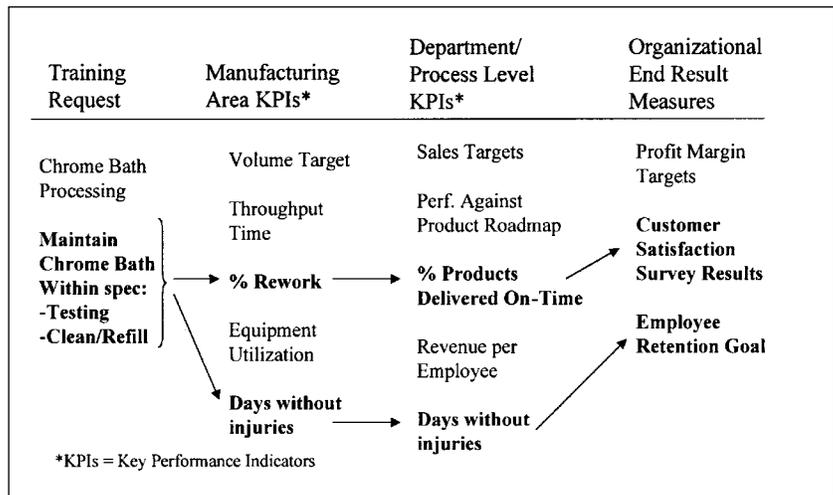


Figure 1. Linking an Intervention to Performance Against Goals.

What is still missing is an understanding of whether actual performance improved against stated performance goals. To avoid my HPT razor, you would need to develop information something like what is shown in Figure 1. On the left side of the diagram are the knowledge and skills you were asked to provide. The right column shows examples of the organization's overall performance goals. Moving left from there, the overall goals are articulated down to key performance indicators relevant to levels in the organization. (See sidebar at end of article for key distinctions regarding performance, measures and goals.) To fully evaluate any intervention, someone needs to connect the dots between the intervention and overall organizational performance. The critical linkage is the one between the intervention and the next level up organizational performance measure. *By linking the training to one or more key performance indicators (in this case, percent rework and days without accidents) and looking to see if performance against those indicators improves, “making an adjustment” (in this case, training) becomes HPT.*

The form that the information in the figure takes will vary. I am not suggesting that everyone create a diagram just like Figure 1 for each intervention. I am suggesting that the information in the diagram is necessary in some form to understand whether, and how, the intervention affects organizational performance. To avoid my HPT razor, that information must exist in some form *and* be part of the conversation between practitioner and client about whether the intervention helped improve performance.

This is admittedly a simplified example from one particular performance environment (the for-profit organization). But my proposed razor would not change as complexity is added or the performance environment changes. Large organizations have many nested layers of performance goals. Interventions still need to be understood in the context of those goals. Often performance measures have not been

articulated down to the indicator level, or they are not stated in terms of performance (per Gilbert). To call an intervention HPT, the relevant performance goals need to be determined and the intervention linked to them.

This applies to all interventions (making of adjustments), not just training interventions. And it applies to performance in any environment. When adjustments are made to a disabled person's home to help him or her live on his or her own, performance goals are implied. HPT is only being practiced when the adjustments are understood in terms of their impact on performance against those goals. One of the reasons that education is such a gnarly issue is because the performance goals have typically not been agreed upon, although we are going through a period where some are trying to make them more explicit. To truly practice HPT in the education realm, performance goals, at least local ones must be explicit, even if there is not a consensus on them. Otherwise, we may be learning about learning, but we are not practicing HPT.

Rationale and Some Interesting Corollaries

It is worth repeating that performance is a function of the ratio of valuable accomplishments to costly behavior. In an organization, the value of accomplishments and the relative costs of behavior are defined by the organization's goals, how they are measured, and how they relate to higher-level goals. Therefore, within the context of the organization, until we understand the impact of an intervention on performance against defined organizational goals, that intervention literally has no discernable value.

We can expand this notion beyond organizations. All performance takes place in the context of management (as previously defined). This means that the value of any accomplishment is defined by predetermined performance goals, how those goals are measured, and how those goals relate to higher-level goals. If we are married to the idea that HPT exists to add value, and the value of performance is defined within the context of management, then to practice HPT we must understand how interventions affect actual performance relative to predetermined performance goals. The HPT razor should *shave off* interventions that cannot demonstrate this connection.

This logic may be starting to sound circular, so let's recap in the simplest terms. Management is about pursuing performance goals and making adjustments based on knowledge of actual performance against goals. Performance improvement interventions are the adjustments. This could include everything from a novice driver deciding to leave more room between herself and the car ahead, based on numerous close calls, to a supervisor deciding to schedule an extra person on the next shift, based on getting caught short-handed on the last shift, to the research, design, and implementation of a

Notes on Performance Measurement Terminology

Gilbert made most of the key distinctions in his book *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance* (1996). He clarified that performance goals must be accomplishment based and emphasized the crucial distinction between accomplishments (outputs, deliverables) and activities (tasks, behaviors).

In regard to performance measurement, Gilbert clarified that measuring accomplishments requires specifying requirements and standards. Requirements define how the accomplishment is being measured, and the standards are essentially the goal (how well the exemplary performer performs against the measure).

In practice, I find that what gets talked about the most is performance measures, or what Gilbert would call the accomplishment plus the requirement. For example, Figure 1 shows a number of performance measures. No standard or goal is specified because they would be revisited for every measurement period.

A distinction I have used in Figure 1 that Gilbert did not make was between end result measures and key performance indicators. I find the following operational definitions useful:

- An end result measure tells us if the desired end result has been met, after the fact.
- A performance indicator tells us if we are on track to achieve the desired end result, while there is still time to do something about it.
- Given these distinctions, my HPT razor suggests that any HPT intervention must be linked to one or more key performance indicators that are aligned to predefined end result measures.

cultural change intervention in a huge corporation. It could include the implementation of training, job aids, cognitive strategies, classroom instruction, e-learning, statistical process control, performance support systems, performance management systems, and so on. My HPT allows for a broad cross-disciplinary interpretation of HPT, but only in the case that each of these various and sundry interventions is linked intelligently to measured performance against predefined goals.

What are the relevant corollaries of my HPT razor? One that I find interesting is that HPT is by definition being practiced by anyone operating within the context of effective management. This does not just mean our organization's managers. Effective organizational management requires that every member of the organization manage at least himself or herself

(McGregor, 1960; Daniels, 1995). The implication is that lots of people that we do not view as HPT practitioners are in fact practicing HPT. Many are practicing it in relative ignorance of the HPT body of knowledge, which is why HPT specialists really are needed.

A related corollary is that in an entity that is not well managed, it will be difficult for anyone to truly practice HPT, including HPT specialists. The implication here is that, like it or not, our success is directly linked to the presence of effective management. Poorly managed entities, organizations for example, make lots of adjustments but nobody really understands the impact on performance relative to goals. We may have specialized knowledge for helping select, design, and implement adjustments, but our knowledge is irrelevant in an organization that is not well managed.

I will conclude with one more relevant implication. If we were to lay on a single table top all the learning and performance interventions that have ever occurred, I think my razor would shave off a substantial amount of them. This is because all too often we implement our interventions without making the necessary connection to performance against goals. The good news is that it is fairly simple to make the connection for all those different types of interventions and put all the different specialties we have to offer back on the table. 🦅

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Certification: How It Can Add Value

by Judith Hale, PhD, CPT

If we agree that a value proposition is a statement of the value that is promised, then we need to ask, “What is promised those who seek and achieve certification?” “What is the promise to the clients of those certified?” and “What is promised society?”

The answer to the first question is that being certified means you engage in a different level of conversation with clients, and seeking certification promises an opportunity to change the nature of the conversation with clients. Once the conversation changes, so do expectations, relationships, and our reputation as a profession.

The answer to the second question is greater assurance that the certified person is proficient and a steward of the client’s resources. The answer to the third question is our principles and technology, as described in our standards, apply to the dilemmas facing society not just the workplace.

What does being certified have to do with conversation? The conversation may start

with a discussion of our principles. It may be about what people do to achieve the designation. People who are certified have made the effort and taken the risk of having their work evaluated by professional peers. They have made the effort to demonstrate their ability to apply a systematic process, the technology, in the workplace and the community. Being certified says a lot about their commitment to themselves, the profession, and the well being of others. Let me explain.

Ever since I joined ISPI there has been a pervasive message that trainers (performance consultants, performance technologists, etc.) are just obedient order takers. They lack the moxie to challenge requests, to argue the need for better data, to offer a more appropriate menu of solutions, or to enlist the cooperation of others in support of a well-grounded course of action. Because training is an expensive solution, those of us who design, develop, and deliver training are somehow thought to be less scrupulous or competent. It is true that when training is either an inappropriate or incomplete solution, it is unnecessarily expensive.

However, training is and will continue to be a worthwhile cost-effective solution when the gap is a lack of skills and knowledge and the instruction is well designed and delivered. When training is not appropriate or only partially so, it is important to have the ability and willingness to identify underlying causes and offer more viable solutions.

Being certified demonstrates that you engage in a different level of conversation with clients prior to offering the solution. Being certified means you have proven you focus on results, consider the larger context including conflicting pressures, work as part of a team, follow a systematic process, and add value in the end. Your methods are not arbitrary; your aim is toward something that matters. Whether the bulk of your work is designing training, building job-aids, or redesigning work processes, you begin with assessment and diagnosis integrated with evaluation. So when people ask, "What's a CPT?" "What is this certification?" you can answer, "It means when I get a request, I begin by asking questions about what a person really wants to accomplish or make happen...I try to find out what the basis for the request is, and I argue for doing some up-front

analysis when it is missing...I keep asking questions until I understand how the situation will be different when the work is done...I suggest we enlist the help of other experts and together we examine different solutions and when I'm done I know what I did made a difference."

Currently it is difficult for clients to distinguish those who have, can, and will from those who'd like to, or perhaps did it once and think they can do it again. Clients want and deserve a way to distinguish those of us for whom improving human performance is a career of choice from the wannabes, transients, and dabblers. What certification promises and delivers is the recognition and confirmation that a person is a proficient practitioner, has committed to a code of ethics, and engages in efforts to improve his or her own performance. 🌅

Judith Hale, PhD, CPT, has been a consultant to management for more than 25 years. She designs, conducts, and partners with clients on projects involving alignment, strategic planning, performance improvement, and certification. Judy may be reached at HaleAssoci@aol.com.

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HPT, ISD

The Challenge of Clear Boundaries in an Evolving Discipline

by Peter R. Hybert

One of the goals for this issue of *Performance Improvement (PI)* is to air varying perspectives on the questions: What is human performance technology (HPT)? What is instructional systems design (ISD)? and, What is the relationship between the two? There has been a great deal of debate via email already and some big names in the field differ on the answers. They have even wondered aloud whether this debate is worthwhile at all.

This article addresses two related issues. The first is the balance between the benefits of diversity versus focus in the field. The second addresses the question of “what is ‘in’ vs. what is ‘out’?” I don’t pretend to have a definitive answer to either but, hopefully, some considerations that can help with the debate.

Diversity Versus Focus

In biology, diversity is usually a benefit to an ecosystem. It results in a healthier, more robust environment. But each individual species thrives best when it finds

a niche in which to specialize. If you start thinking about the need to differentiate for survival, it is surprising to discover how many places it creates explanations for what looks like weird behavior. This is true for employees, most will try to differentiate themselves one way or another, whether by dress, performance, specialization of expertise, antics, office/cube decoration, and so on. One thing effective managers do is find ways to direct that drive toward more useful, performance-related ends.

In a market, diversity gives consumers more choice, but it also makes the market more competitive. However, within a single company too much diversity in key areas (such as your strategy) dilutes effectiveness. That is why large companies use brands to create multiple, focused identities.

The field of HPT, and by extension, the International Society for Performance Improvement, is both a marketplace and an individual entity. As a marketplace, the diversity (membership) is generally good, it leads to innovation and expansion. But, as an entity, ISPI has to compete for

time and attention with other professional associations. To thrive, it needs a focus broad enough to appeal to multiple specialized practitioners but narrow enough to create a unique identity relative to other organizations.

What's In/What's Out?

I once designed a curriculum architecture for an audience called performance contracting sales—that is, people. They were engineers but really didn't want to be thought of as techies. Sales executive sounded too formal. During the project they never did decide, and they named the curriculum the performance contracting sales curriculum, focusing on the process or discipline, rather than on the job title. If you see a parallel between their dilemma and the performance technologist/consultant/engineer/facilitator job title ambivalence in our field, you are right, there is a point to the example.

The curriculum architecture design process began with defining the performance, that is, what the salespeople do (outputs, measures, tasks). The performance was the basis for deriving the necessary knowledge/skills. The meeting went quickly at the beginning: There was general agreement about what the job duties were (outputs, tasks, and measures). But things slowed down as we encountered disagreements about which knowledge and skills were needed to perform the job. In other words, it wasn't the overall tasks or process that varied, it was the enabling knowledge and skills, which were determined by the type of interventions that might be prescribed as solutions to the customer.

Performance contracting is a financially oriented selling approach, but the general concept might sound familiar to HPT practitioners. Imagine human performance technology applied to a facility, that is, a building and its functions.

- The salesperson works with the facilities manager to analyze the operation and find opportunities for improvement. Then he or she designs an intervention to capture the improvement. The intervention usually includes energy management strategies and, ultimately, computerized equipment controls and monitors, since that was their primary business. But depending on the situation, the salespeople often get pretty creative, which leads to the next point.
- The sales role began as an energy engineer who targeted energy savings opportunities. Over time, they began prescribing a wider range of interventions, everything from replacing windows to outsourcing the food service staff to repaving the parking lot. The expanded role requires expanded knowledge and skill for the job that are far beyond energy-related interventions. In the worst case, they need to know how to run a facility *better* than the average owner/manager and they have to know cost-benefit information about every service the average owner/manager might need!

- One sales approach is to charge based on results. In those contracts, true performance contracting, the fees are based on actual realized savings. Though the earning potential is great, so is the risk. This requires the evolution of a number of related technologies, especially in the area of measurement.

You probably already guessed many of the parallels in our HPT-ISD world. ISD is sort of like the original energy engineer, training was the first area of focus for interventions, but the focus has expanded as the market need and knowledge expanded. When I first entered the field, around 1984, it was still a pretty fresh idea that training should actually affect how people work. In other words, that the emphasis should be on performance more than learning. That expanded the potential interventions and, as a result, knowledge and skill requirements for practitioners.

I believe most of the training world is somewhat behind where ISPI is—witness the American Society for Training and Development's foray into performance improvement in only the last couple of years. Given that the field is evolving and individuals and organizations are adapting and adopting the technology for their needs and position on the learning curve, it is no surprise that there is a lot of variation in perception and application of HPT.

As in the performance contracting sales analysis meeting, the list of techniques, tools, and methods related to human performance has grown significantly as the discipline has matured. However, in the performance contracting meeting, the group was able to deal with this by prioritizing the need for each item (skill, knowledge, or awareness).

There are solid definitions of both HPT and ISD. There are clear differences, but also many shared underlying technologies and methods. Certainly the ISD practitioner needs to be able to conduct a needs analysis. And HPTers can still design and implement interventions; otherwise, how do they determine whether they have "got results"? Figure 1 (see next page) presents a summary of what I see as the primary characteristics that differentiate them.

Like the performance contracting sales audience, when we get into methods and means we can diverge quickly and greatly. And no one practitioner can be a master of every type of intervention. So we end up with common areas of focus (analysis, systems, evaluation/measurement) that should be a central interest of all members. But we can also have special interest foci in intervention areas, such as strategic alignment, organizational design, incentive systems, or related content areas such as reusable objects, HTML, or even techniques for keeping your presentations interesting.

	HPT	ISD
Definition	Science and practice of <i>analyzing the performance</i> of organizations, processes, and individuals to <i>identify opportunities</i> for improvement	Science and practice of <i>designing effective training</i> and information-support systems, products, and programs
Purpose	Accurate <i>diagnosis</i> of performance and <i>prescription</i> of various intervention(s)	Effective instructional <i>interventions</i>
Scope/ Application	Addresses <i>any situation</i> where human performance varies from expectations or between individuals/groups	Addresses identified gaps in <i>knowledge or skill</i>

Figure 1. Key Differences Between HPT and ISD.

What's In?

I would like to propose that we keep the “H” in. “Human performance” as a category is already quite large. Once we leave the human arena, we are competing with almost every kind of engineer, many of whom have advanced education and certifications against which we would find it very difficult to compete effectively. In addition, our would-be competitors lack the expertise on the human side, which is our strength.

Even if we do focus on the human performance factors, we still overlap with the field of general business management. Either way though, we still need an *awareness* of things targeted at “nonhuman” performance, such as operations research and process engineering just as we need an awareness of business finance and psychology. In fact, exploring seemingly unrelated fields is a good way to find innovations. Object-oriented computer programming and the stock-keeping units system in every retail store can yield a number of insights for people working on re-useable learning objects. Scenario-based planning, used in war games, can be used for all kinds of decisions. Understanding process capability and statistical variation can help determine how much improvement is possible and whether a given intervention has really made a difference.

What's Out?

This is a much harder question. I would suggest the “default” for anything new is that it is “in” until proven otherwise. The internal market will assess whether something doesn't even warrant an “awareness” level of interest.

Conclusions

Given the above, I believe we should clarify the distinction between scope of *analysis and diagnosis* we would perform versus the types of *interventions* we would actually design and implement. To me that puts ISD in the category of being under HPT as one of many types of interventions. That doesn't make it less important. I could argue that the

greatest value-add is as an intervention expert because that is where you need the specialized experience and processes, but it is different. I would say I am wearing an HPT hat all the time and, if an instructional intervention becomes appropriate, I would put on my ISD hat. I have learned enough over the years to be able to deliver some other types of interventions as well, but there are many others for which I certainly would not step up.

Regardless of whether you are inside or outside a corporation, I believe HPTers and ISDerers are essentially consultants. Regardless of job or department titles, improving performance is a responsibility of management. Inside or out, we are in the role of coaching and supporting managers far more often than we are in the driver's seat. It is rare for management to just hand over the wheel and ask us to wake them up when the performance improves. So in addition to the technical content related to analysis, design, and selected interventions, another key ISPI focus should be effective consulting in those areas.

HPT is not exactly catching fire in the market—it never has, though arguably it should have gotten a bigger chunk of the limelight that total quality management, e-learning, knowledge management, and re-engineering have received. But that is not all bad. Many of those who embraced the above as “program du jour” have just as readily moved on to the next new thing without actually having generated anything for their companies in terms of growth, profit, competitive advantage, or other measures.

Most likely, the reason is simple, we don't come out of the core business areas (sales, engineering, manufacturing, service); instead, we come from training, academia, or outside firms and just don't get the same hearing from executive management. Clarifying what we are doing is just one more step toward getting that hearing. 🎧

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Value, Value Where Is the Value?

by Roger Kaufman, PhD, CPT

One of the preoccupations of the International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI) 2002 annual conference was measurement. There were numerous sessions on the subject, as well as a special display (Got Results?) set up by Timm Esque and Carl Binder in the exhibit hall. While far from expert in the subject, I viewed the display with interest and attended several sessions on measurement. Throughout all this focus on the subject, I sensed a good amount of frustration that measurement is not treated as important by members of ISPI, or at least not as much as it should be.

Just about every session I attended used the Kirkpatrick four-level model of evaluation for training, in which at Level I, trainee satisfaction is measured; at Level II, learning; at Level III, application of learning on the job; and Level IV, results for the organization (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Even though employing the Kirkpatrick model, some session leaders took pains to state that they didn't think it really is a model or that the levels are really levels.

In the sessions themselves there seemed to be a good deal of angst about the difficulties of measurement, especially at the more challenging Levels III and IV. Participants brought up examples of managers who viewed their measurement data with great skepticism or denied that the interventions associated with some of the measures, given all the intervening variables, had anything to do with the gains.

I do not understand what the fuss is about, especially when we're talking about results (that is, Level IV) data. When I viewed the display of different projects showing a variety of measurement techniques and results, my eyes did glaze over pretty quickly. One of the truths about measurement, I suspect, is that, however important it may be, gazing at somebody else's charts and graphs is like looking at their chest X-ray: just not all that galvanizing. Unless we come up with dancing Ito's or some other trick for making measurement funny or sexy, measurement may always be a little dull. But I do not think that is the real problem.

Albert the Alligator in an old Pogo cartoon comes back bruised and cut from his trip into the swamp to find out who has been shooting at them. He announces, "We have found the enemy, and it is us." Albert could be talking about human performance technology (HPT) today. We don't yet have a clear definition of what business we are in, or why we are in it. And it isn't that difficult to figure it out, if we would only stop shooting at ourselves.

Value is something that contributes; it is indicated by increases in continuing profits for private-sector clients, and by continued funding for public ones. The lasting value of any organization is measured in terms of its contributions to its external clients as well as to our shared society.

Society is always central to the value equation. No matter how well individual employees do their job, how high we get production, how fast we ship, everything has to end up adding value to both an organization and all of its external clients. Don't believe it? I bet that Andersen had very cost-efficient operations, and likely so did Enron. Firestone/Bridgestone had excellent production numbers, and the supervisors at the FBI all got good performance reviews. Tyco and WorldCom said "good words" about their vision and mission. So did Andersen. But they all failed to commit to adding value to what is really important: external clients and society.

Value does not just happen at the next performance level up; value is best seen at the external client and societal level. You have heard the snide reorganization comment that "we are re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic." A limited perspective on performance improvement would have our clients rearranging their chairs with great speed and putting them all in the right new positions. They don't worry a bit about making our world better for tomorrow's child using organizations as the vehicle.

Most professionals know what should be accomplished...

Because we are serious professionals, there is a continuing dialogue about what our field should use, do, produce, and deliver. In most applications, we stop where the customer is most comfortable. We often focus only on the improvement of jobs and tasks even while we note that training is not the only solution. Why have we become so limited? It isn't because we don't know the right things to do. In her doctoral dissertation at Florida State University, Ingrid Guerra asked performance improvement specialists to compare their perceptions of competencies in terms of what should be done versus what they do. She found that people knew the right things to do, but didn't usually do them. Interesting. Why didn't they do what they knew should be

ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENT/ALTERNATIVE MODEL	TRAINING	ISD	HPT	PAS	PRIMARY CLIENT AND BENEFICIARY
Outcomes				X	External clients and society
Outputs			X	X	The organization itself
Products		X	X	X	Individuals and small groups
Processes	X	X	X	X	Delivery agent
Inputs	X	X	X	X	Delivery agent

Figure 1. Comparison of Models.

done? Comfort? Responsiveness? Ethics? Cash flow? Desire for acceptance? While the nature of organizational culture is vital, assessment of an organization's culture should be used to find blocks and ways to overcome them, not to find reasons to stop moving forward.

The study respondents recognized the importance of linking everything to societal value added, but didn't usually include that in their work. Why not? I vote for short-term stupid self-interest. If we have discomfort convincing others about the most useful thing to do, perhaps like Albert in the swamp, the enemy is us.

My suggestion is simple: Define our scope, assuring we are adding value at all levels of performance, and then select the most effective and efficient tools and interventions to get there. If we use this widest angle view, we can then sensibly use all the validated models that are out there. Let's see.

Some Frames of Reference

Here is a suggested manner in which different models are related. Using the organizational elements model (OEM) (Kaufman, 1992, 1998, 2000), which identifies what any organization can use (inputs), do (processes), accomplish (products), and deliver outside itself (outputs), and links those to the actual societal and external value added (outcomes), the following is a comparison of what each can contribute and cover. Also included in the comparison is another model termed a performance accomplishment system (PAS) that is intended to be holistic by adding focus on societal and external client impact (Kaufman, 2000). In addition, Figure 1 shows who or what is the primary client and beneficiary of whatever is done and delivered.

This sorting suggests that *training* focuses mainly on inputs (ingredients, resources, entry abilities, facilities) and processes (activities, modes of delivery, sequencing of instruction and activities). *ISD* is seen as focusing on inputs and processes, usually designed based on research on learning and performance, and begins with precise measurable objectives. *HPT* attends to all that *ISD* does and can (but does not always) include primary consideration of what the organization delivers outside of itself. None of these models formally identifies needs, gaps in results and consequences, for external clients *and* society, which is the extended "reach" of PAS.

MAJOR FOCUS/MAJOR PURPOSE	REACTIVE—PROBLEMSOLVING	PROACTIVE—PROBLEM AVOIDING
Efficiency	X ↓	? ↑
Individual/Team Performance Improvement	X ↓	↑ X
Organizational Performance	X ↓	↑ X
External/Societal Value Added	↓ ?	↑ X

Figure 2. Major Focus of HPT.

Another way to cut the pie is to look at different intentions and different scopes of concern as well as the direction of the flow for starting and then adding value (Watkins, Leigh, & Kaufman, 1998). This view of our field and what we can and should provide is shown in Figure 2 in terms of the major focus and whether we are reactive (the usual starting place) or proactive.

This assessment indicates that *reactive models* usually start with a concern for efficiency or, in a more sophisticated environment, as a call to improve individual or team performance. It may, but does so in relatively few popular models, flow to organizational performance and occasionally to external clients and society. This assessment also shows that those who want to create the future, or who intend to be *proactive*, start with external value added and then link downward, but not in a linear or lock-step flow, to organizational performance and then to individual performance. The *proactive* approach usually has only incidental concern for efficiency, being convinced that efficiency will flow from the definition and delivery of useful results.

So we can take on any *unit of analysis*, scope of our concerns, we choose, but we are responsible for the consequences of that choice—yes, professional and ethical consequences. To guide ourselves in that choice of unit of analysis, the checklist in Figure 3 is suggested.

Performance improvement has to link and align all levels of performance. Resources and means should be selected only on the basis of adding value to all three levels of results. When will we

QUESTION	YES	NO
1. Before training, ISD, or HPT, I know exactly the gap between current performance and required performance.		
2. My objectives are stated in measurable performance terms (even for so-called “soft areas”).		
3. I get hard data about the gaps in results rather than relying only on observers’, supervisors’, or subject matter experts’ opinions.		
4. I always consider alternatives to training (such as selection, job design, rewards and incentives, job aids, etc.).		
5. I check to see if we will produce competent associates and that they will add value to—		
(a) Their own job		
(b) Their work group		
(c) The entire organization		
(d) External clients, including society		
6. I design the learning experiences based on research-proven methods and techniques.		
7. I always evaluate the extent to which we have achieved our objectives.		
8. I always evaluate to assure that all levels—internal and external—are considered.		
9. I always revise as required.		
10. I use performance data for improving—never for blaming.		

Figure 3. Checklist for Choosing Unit of Analysis.

reach the “tipping point” for acceptance of including external and societal value added to our way of thinking and doing business? I hope it will happen before we have more accounting scandals, more corporate collapses, more societal horrors. Doing this is both practical and sensible. It is just a matter of knowing the right thing to do and doing it...a matter of professional ethics. 🏔️

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Graffiti and HPT

by Miki Lane, CPT

Human performance technology's (HPT) value proposition is usually focused on how HPT provides value to the internal or external client. The articles in this special issue of *Performance Improvement* do an admirable job of illustrating that focus. HPT can also provide value to the community at large. Roger Kaufman talks about providing value at the societal or mega level, where the focus is on the outcomes of the HPT effort. Examples of these outcomes can be:

- reducing air pollution
- reducing crime
- reducing homelessness
- reducing fatalities
- improving quality of life

Following is an example of how HPT helped provide value in a small, but for the community, critical situation.

The Sherbrooke Street West Merchants Association (SSWMA) is a loosely knit group of small business owners located in a slowly gentrifying area of greater Montreal. The stores that make up the SSWMA are an eclectic mix of clothing, food specialty, restaurants, retail sales, and service providers. The owner's ethnic backgrounds mirror the wide diversity of the residents of the neighborhood.

The main purpose of the association is to promote shopping in the area and to ensure that the area has a voice in the municipal government. While the association would like to see more shoppers in the area from other parts of the city, local residents make more than 95% of purchases. This contrasted with the trendy Monkland shopping area located two blocks north of Sherbrooke Street West, which pulls in a significant percentage of shoppers and diners from other parts of Montreal.

The members of the SSWMA have long felt that the excess of graffiti on almost all the storefronts has led to an overall look of malaise in the area and has had a negative impact on the area's appeal. They decided to do something about the problem. Over the period of several weekends, a number of the members removed the graffiti from two blocks of Sherbrooke Street.

Within one month, the graffiti returned to the walls. Rather than throw up their hands and admit defeat, the members called a community meeting, and in attendance were a couple of members of a local chapter of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), who resided in the neighborhood.

Naturally, they tended to look at the graffiti issue as a performance problem, the perceived gap being the difference between the optimal condition (no graffiti) and the actual condition (graffiti on every visible surface). The causes for the gap were discussed in the meeting. They broke down to the immediate cause (young people with spray paint) and the subcauses (gang tagging, wanting to be noticed, searching for permanence in an uncertain existence, etc.).

In discussion, meeting participants tried to find solutions immediately. Some of the following solutions were discussed:

- Declaring the neighborhood a no graffiti zone
- Outlawing the sale of spray paint cans in the city
- Requiring a license to buy spray paint
- Forming a vigilante committee to protect cleaned walls
- Coating the walls with a Teflon-like paint for easy cleanup
- Increasing police presence in the neighborhood

After about an hour of heated discussion, one of the ISPI members suggested that rushing to the solution before the true nature of the problem was known was premature. That statement met with blank stares from virtually all the other meeting attendees. The ISPIer responded with a number of analogies that seemed to make sense to the group. They asked what he would do in this situation.

He stated that without really knowing why graffiti happens, it is difficult to come up with a solution. He suggested talking to a variety of graffiti “artists” to find out why they do what they do. This suggestion was met with a combination of guffaws and incredulity. Everyone seemed to know why they did it:

- Disrespect for authority
- Pleasure in defacing property
- Gang “rite of passage”
- Its illegality
- Compensation for ills of society

There was another set of reasons that had to do with “marking a territory like a dog” and “making up for insecurities about their masculinity”.

The ISPIer countered that perhaps these were not the reasons and if the group dealt with these reasons, the problem might not be solved.

The group agreed to take an additional week to talk to the “taggers” and the ISPI people said that they would do so and report back to the group at the next meeting. While it wasn’t easy getting to meet with several “taggers,” the team succeeded. Following is what they reported back to the community group.

- The “taggers” were a diverse group, but were mainly males between 14 and 25 years old.
- About 40% admitted to being a gang member.
- They mainly “tagged” in what they perceived to be their geographical area.
- There are a few unwritten rules:

- Any space is fair game (commercial building, structures, buses, metro cars, billboards, etc.).
- You don’t “tag” over another “tag.”
- The more visible, the better.

When asked why they do it, the responses fell into a few main areas (interpretation by interviewers): creating a sense of identity and self-worth; feeling good about seeing finished work, and liking others to know of one’s work.

So what do you do with responses like this? The community group had difficulty with these reasons, because those were many of the same reasons why *they* do the work that they do. These reasons are not simply youthful exuberance; they are approaching higher level, Maslow-like issues.

The solutions the group stated earlier were not going to make the graffiti problems go away. It seemed that the only viable response was to not allow the graffiti to stay on the walls. If the “taggers” were looking for recognition and developing a sense of self-worth, it wouldn’t happen if their work were erased immediately.

The city was called into the next meeting, and it turned out that the city was experimenting with graffiti removal in one neighborhood in the eastern section of town. The issue was discussed and it was agreed that the Sherbrooke Street West area of Montreal could be designated as a graffiti-eradication test site. The city would fund the removal of all graffiti in the area, and, most importantly, its specialized workers would remain on site for several months to remove graffiti as quickly as it was painted on the walls in the area.

The group hopes that this instantaneous removal will eliminate the identity and self-esteem issues of the “taggers,” but the jury is still out. As with all solutions to performance problems, it will probably require a variety of additional solutions such as neighborhood watch and educational programs, or helping the young “artists” join with the community association to find less-destructive ways to publish their art.

But the community has seen that the HPT approach is viable to solving real-life, community-based problems. 🏡

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HPT Value Proposition

by Carol M. Panza, CPT

HPT? PT? Training? ISD? What are the real issues here? Are we talking about us versus them, that is, approaches and interventions that are included (the “in crowd”) and those that are excluded?

I have long had my own personal definition for the technology we use. It goes like this: “Performance technology can be defined as a comprehensive set of tools and techniques for achieving organizationally desirable results through the management of people and processes.” To recognize Roger Kaufman’s valid concerns about explicitly referring to society as the ultimate client and context for performance for organizations, I have amended my definition to read, “a comprehensive set of tools and techniques for achieving organizationally desirable results, *with positive, or at least neutral, impact on society*, through the management of people and processes.”

So, what’s my point with this definition? There are several:

- **Organization “fit” and operating context:** Our level of focus for performance improvement must begin with

and include the organization’s success in the marketplace and in the context of society.

- **Results or accomplishment focus:** We need to be concerned with results rather than means or approaches.
- **No magic bullets:** No one approach or intervention is the remedy for all performance issues or the vehicle to drive improvement for all organizations, in all situations and contexts.

The bottom line is that we are not going to serve our internal or external clients well if we do not keep the organization’s success and larger context for performance clearly in view first, last, and always. Nor will we be doing our job if we approach organizations with a solution, or even a set of solutions, in search of a problem. Even instructional systems design (ISD), which has a built-in analysis front end, limits our focus and the definition of problem cause or opportunity source. It certainly does not support or require process or organization analysis, not to mention a concern for the fit of the organization into its marketplace and society.

What we really have when we start an improvement effort or project by designing

a training program or initiating the ISD process is the rough equivalent of defining our aches and pains as aspirin problems. That is, we have essentially defined current or potential problems and improvement opportunities in terms of a solution. For the sake of argument, let's assume that we can isolate and confirm one or more significant skill or knowledge deficiency set. When we *begin* a performance improvement effort with training needs analysis or ISD as our point of entry and guide, we are left with some rather important questions:

- How do we determine what other things within the work environment do or will have an impact on performance? Are performer expectations clear, specific, and communicated in advance? Are all required resources and tools, for example, a functioning, accessible, accurate, and complete database for call center operators, available to support performers? Are measurements and mechanisms in place to provide timely, accurate, complete, and understandable feedback? Do consequences, whether formal and engineered by the organization or informal within the job environment, support or encourage desirable performance and/or at least fail to provide positives for *not* performing as desired/required?
- How do we determine or confirm that job (performer) expectations and their underlying skill and knowledge requirements are specifically defined to support the larger work process to which the job relates? Since expectations are the driver and point of calibration for the performance system surrounding any job, if those expectations do not guide performers to accomplish the "right stuff," it really doesn't help much if people do what they do extremely well! Furthermore, defining or confirming job expectations is only truly useful and effective if it's done by beginning at the level of the organization's product/service delivery *and* its fit into the marketplace and society. Once, and only when that external marketplace- and society-generated requirement set is clear, and the internal customer-supplier network formed by the interdependencies of the functional parts of the organization is defined, then, supporting cross-functional and function-level processes can be specified, which ultimately creates the framework for establishing or refining job-level requirements. It doesn't work the other way around, that is, to define jobs and hope that they add up to a functioning, effective organization!

I am not saying that any solution or set of solutions should be demeaned or eliminated from our bag of tricks, but rather that we need to use and combine solutions and improvement strategies as they are appropriate to the organization's suc-

cess. Geary Rummler has already suggested, via a *Performance Improvement* article that we, the International Society for Performance Improvement, develop a structure that will enable us to organize the myriad tools, techniques, and approaches available to improve performance. That is, we should not be looking at what to exclude or to "push." We should instead be looking at how to organize, sequence, and support the proper, effective use of all available tools, techniques, and approaches in support of organization success.

It is also important not to confuse large-scale, long-term and expensive/high-investment interventions, such as six sigma with an overarching structure designed to drive and organize available improvement strategies and tools. Although six sigma has been reported as very effective for some organizations, it is still an intervention and still subject to concerns over where it is appropriate as an approach to performance improvement and where it is not. Also, almost by definition, six sigma, practically speaking, begins at the process level, *not* at the strategic level. I have used six sigma only as an example here, and not to bash it, because we spend a great deal of time and energy caught in the rut of the never-ending training versus performance technology (PT) debate. Training is clearly not the only intervention, and the endless debate keeps us distracted and concentrating on which interventions should be included, excluded, done first, pushed, and so on. In my opinion, that's a waste of time and resources. The real, and more practical, focus should be on when and how to use the various available tools, techniques and approaches in the context of specifying and supporting the organization's ability to become or remain competitive in its current and potential marketplace while also doing no harm to society or the environment. Hey! Maybe it's a training issue after all, that is, how to rather than which interventions, but all focused on organization results, measured by customers and society. 🌟

Carol M. Panza is a management consultant specializing in organization, process, and position analysis for the identification of performance improvement opportunities. Her clients represent a broad range of industries and functions, and also include many countries and cultures. Carol became a consultant in 1978. Since 1985, she has operated as CMP Associates, completing a variety of highly successful projects. She has made frequent presentations to national and international organizations on performance topics, is the author of many published articles, and has contributed chapters to several books. She is also the author of a book entitled *Picture This... Your Function, Your Company...* The book includes an overview of the performance technology with a concentration on organization mapping as one very useful analysis tool. Among other professional affiliations, Carol is currently serving on the Board of Directors for ISPI. She may be reached at cmp@orgmap.com.

ISPI's Value Proposition: Two Examples

by John Swinney

It is easy to have an earnest, philosophical discussion about the value the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) brings to its membership, the business community, or society as a whole. Rather than attempt to clarify or expand on that ongoing discussion, this article focuses on two ISPI-related events that clearly illustrate the value of the society for this author.

Some years ago, I was employed as part of a two-person training and development function in a large retail chain. The organization was experiencing some pain, and the general belief from management, including the training department head, was that more or better training was the best solution.

The most significant scorecard by which department results were measured at that time was a large wall chart in the department head's office. It was a simple line graph measuring two dimensions across the company's six divisions: the number of people hired or transferred to front-line positions by month, and, of those, the number who received training on

time. I made several attempts to convince the manager that "butts in seats" was not really the best or most significant measure, but the chart was still the focal point of our success.

Enter ISPI (then NSPI). The department head agreed to attend an NSPI annual conference, primarily because it was to be held in San Francisco. (The author firmly believes that any trick will work if it will bring nonbelievers to the fold....)

At this conference, two well-known individuals, Geary Rummler and Bob Powers, gave a presentation titled "How to Turn Your Training Factory Into a Performance Improvement Organization." As you might imagine, the focus of this session was on results, improved performance, and expanding the role of training to include something called "performance technology."

The impact was immediate and significant. The department head and I spent the afternoon after that session in a hotel room designing and redesigning the mission of the training department.

what emerged was an organization dedicated to improving human and organizational performance. Training was still to be a visible output, although it was decided to measure it differently, but the main emphasis was on developing capability to provide a full range of performance improvement interventions.

As a result, the department grew, developed more of a *business* focus and, eventually, partnered with Dr. Rummier to spearhead a systemwide project that identified opportunities to improve performance by more than \$27 million annually. Training was still part of the solution, but in this case, only because there were to be significant changes in individual, process, and organizational capabilities.

That event occurred about 20 years ago. ISPI and the message delivered through Rummier and Powers were direct catalysts for the change.

Fast forward to the recent past.

Approximately three years ago, my current organization went through a significant series of changes that included some well-managed but still painful downsizing, resulting in several departments being combined. Prior to these changes, human performance technology (HPT), instructional systems development (ISD), organizational development (OD), and several other related disciplines were alive and well, and, for the most part, played well in the same sandbox.

A result of the change was to reduce emphasis on ISD and to combine several people with HPT and OD backgrounds into the same group, called Performance Consulting. Although members of this new group had worked together in the past, there was often a division of labor. OD folks worked with senior management and HPT folks worked with line management or with more tactical interventions. Often, previous work by the HPT members of the team grew out of initial requests for training that were expanded when additional causes or environmental issues were uncovered.

Initially, work in this new team was difficult. The department head and one other key department member were formally trained in OD processes; other members of the group had HPT or ISD backgrounds. Frequently, the group would discuss an issue or a way to approach a given project and would have difficulty finding common ground. As the discussion progressed, it became apparent that members of the team were essentially trying to address the same issues from different vantage points and using different tools and language. While these differences did not always get in the way of successful work, they definitely contributed to a process that was not as efficient as it could be.

Enter ISPI, again.

As a development activity, several members of the department decided to attend the 2000 annual ISPI conference in

Cincinnati. Credit must be given to the department head for approaching the conference with an open mind. His expectation was that this was not necessarily a conference about OD. His stated mission for attending was to learn where OD and HPT could interface and work well together.

Exposure to ISPI, the conference, and some of our senior members turned out to be a watershed event. The group rather quickly came to the conclusion that the two disciplines had much more in common than they had differences. There were several noteworthy sessions at this conference that discussed the relationship between culture and organizational performance. These sessions in particular held high interest for both the OD and HPT factions of the organization.

The changes were subtle, but if my department was to be surveyed now, all would probably describe their jobs as "performance consulting," not as OD or HPT. These disciplines are still there and are imbedded in all work that is done, but the bottom line is that *all* department work is geared to improving performance at organizational, process, or individual performer levels.

As simple as these anecdotes may seem, they represent two of several ISPI-related career-changing events for me. They also represent events that could not have happened without ISPI. 🌟

John Swinney is a Performance Consultant with Bandag Incorporated, a global tire management company with headquarters in Muscatine, Iowa. He has been actively involved in training and performance improvement since attending his first NSPI conference in 1972. John is past international President of ISPI (2000-2001) and served on ISPI's Board of Directors from 1997 to 2001. He is a founder, Past President, and current member of the Kansas City Chapter of ISPI. John may be reached jswinney@bandag.com.

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Performance Technology

Foundation for All Organizational Consulting?

by Donald Tosti, CPT and Stephanie Jackson, CPT

For much of its existence, the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) has been plagued by (some might say “enriched by”) a certain amount of controversy over the scope of its technology. Are we instructional technologists or performance technologists? If the former, what differentiates us from others who provide instruction/training? If the latter, what are the limits of our technology?

That issue raises additional questions about how we can effectively position ourselves within the performance field, with other performance professionals, and especially with clients. What do we offer? What is our value proposition?

This article proposes that we are *performance* technologists, and that there are few, if any, limits on the scope of our technology.

Performance Technology: Value Proposition

A value proposition should be a statement of the value that we promise to deliver to our customers. It is not a

statement about our output or accomplishments, or about the means through which we deliver value, our technology.

One of the pioneers in our field, Charlie Slack, once said, “Our technology needs to be as transparent as electricity when a user flips on a switch to get light.” Customers don’t care about the wiring in the wall and they don’t need (or want) to know Ohm’s Law. They are only interested in getting reliable light. We are nowhere near that point yet, and we may never fully reach it, but it’s a good goal to have before us.

If you’re in the delivery business and part of your value proposition is one-day delivery, customers don’t care whether you use trucks, motorcycles, or fast horses. There may be some in the delivery industry who love horses, just as there are some in our field who love instructional system design (ISD). That’s fine. Others of us love playing with systems models. But from the customer’s point of view, so what?

We need to avoid focusing our discussions solely on the means. What is important

is value. ISD, Tom Gilbert's models, Bill Deterline's models, and our models, too, will become a waste of time if they are seen as what is really important about ISPI and our technology. As technologists, we must value these models for their *usefulness* and be prepared to revise them or even abandon them if they do not further our delivery of value.

We are in the organizational success business, and training by itself usually makes a limited contribution to success. We should not see ourselves as in competition with the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD); they are primarily a training guild. Nor should we see the Organization Development (OD) network as a threat, with their psychological profiles. That needn't stop us from borrowing ideas or techniques from them or from any other field if it will help deliver success. And if they're smart, they will continue to borrow from us, as some have already done.

Becoming the "Technology That Underlies Everything"

We should begin with an understanding of who our customers are. ISPI, like many professional organizations, has two sets of customers, its present and future members and its members' customers. So it needs to be looking at how it can provide value to its immediate customers, the members, *and* how it can support its members in providing value to their customers.

If we are to consider expanding the scope of our technology to virtually all aspects of individual and organizational performance, we also need to look at some practical issues. For example, ISPI leaders have pointed out that 85% of our members are training technologists and raised two important issues:

1. Can we reasonably expect people who are in a training role in an organization to be willing and able to represent themselves as leaders of large-scale improvement efforts, particularly as there are likely to be other folks around who are more readily seen as appropriate leaders by management?
2. Unless we control the scope of ISPI in some way, we can become "everything under the sun" related to performance improvement.

The short answer to the question raised in the first issue is "no." But we *can* reasonably expect training specialists to strengthen their ability to work with others in a large-scale improvement effort as contributing colleagues, rather than as hired hands who do their piece as directed and then go away. One way to do that is to focus on value delivered to the customer; another is to become conversant with (not necessarily skilled in) other disciplines.

The second issue is more thought provoking. The answer may be "Yes! We *do* want to be everything under the sun when it comes to performance improvement."

There are thousands (maybe millions) of people engaged in organizational change. Many call themselves change management consultants. Most of these people do not have a professional home, and many are uncomfortable with organizations such as ASTD. They also do not have a unifying underlying technology that drives their efforts. Instead, they tend to use a best practices approach. ISPI should consider positioning itself to attract this significant group of potential members. It offers an opportunity to spread our technology far more effectively than we have been able to do through training, because they are often much better positioned within organizations and have a greater degree of influence with decisionmakers.

If we define ourselves in terms of the principles and processes of our technology, rather than our interventions (training, feedback, contingency management, job aids, process design, etc.), we can put ourselves on the road to becoming the foundation technology for all organizational performance consulting. The powerful principles of systems logic and organizational alignment are at the heart of that technology.

ISPI, with the great majority of its members in the training discipline, is in a position similar to a medical association that finds that 85% of its members are cardiologists. It has to make a decision whether to be an association of cardiologists and thus lose the 15% of its members from other disciplines, hopefully to be replaced by more cardiologists, or a medical association that will find ways to broaden its membership base.

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Similarly, ISPI needs to decide whether it wants to become a training society or a performance improvement and change management society.

Medical associations include members whose various specialties represent virtually everything under the sun related to improving and maintaining physical health. They are bound together by a common goal of maintaining physical health, a common framework for understanding what's required to do that, and a common basic process of assessment, diagnosis, prescription, and followup. Members benefit by having the opportunity to keep up in their specialties, to learn something about what's going on in other areas, and potentially to build relationships that will help them work effectively with other physicians. Such organizations cope with their variety by creating divisions for the specialties. In a similar way, training technology could be positioned as a division of ISPI.

Individuals within the society would then be better able to choose to remain generalists or specialists in the performance field. That decision is analogous to the one made by professionals in a number of other fields: Physicians may specialize or become general practitioners, managing the overall health of clients and referring to specialists as needed; carpenters and landscapers may decide to stay with their specialty or become general contractors, managing construction projects that use the services of a wide range of specialists.

ISPI's name implies that it does in fact aspire to address everything under the sun related to performance improvement. That goal seems both desirable and potentially attainable. Starting out with 85% of its members in a single performance improvement specialty presents some practical

difficulties, but the potential benefits of emulating the medical model or the general contractor model are enormous. We have one of the most powerful technologies in the world for change. It's time for us to let go of the past and truly embark on our future. And "letting go" does not mean discarding our roots, but expanding beyond their early applications. 🌱

Donald Tosti is the founder and managing partner of Vanguard Consulting. Don has an extensive and varied background in behavioral technology, and he has been a recognized expert in performance-based approaches to organizational change for over three decades. He has been involved in a wide range of organizational change programs for companies in the United States and Europe. These consulting activities in organizational alignment include work in leadership, management, culture change, internal marketing and strategic alliances. Don has broad experience with changing organizational cultures to focus on creating greater customer value. He has worked with several clients to help them translate their "brand promise" into specific performance at the customer interface. Don may be reached at Change111@aol.com.

Stephanie Jackson specializes in the analysis and evaluation of performance and organizational systems, and the design of performance-based change programs. She is skilled at creating frameworks and models to organize complex concepts, and present them in ways that are meaningful and useful to the user population. Her clients have included AT&T, Pacific Telesis, Hewlett-Packard, Bank of America, Wells Fargo Bank, the U.S. Army, Norwest Corporation, Merrill Lynch, IBM, Motorola, Citicorp, First Chicago, Northern Trust, British Airways, General Motors, Alliant TechSystems, SITA, and many others. Stephanie is a frequent presenter at conferences and professional society meetings, and has published a number of articles in professional journals and book collections. She is a past President of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), and served as the Senior Consultant for Harless Performance Guild. Stephanie may be reached at Change111-SJ@aol.com.

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The HPT Value Proposition in the Larger Improvement Arena

by Guy W. Wallace, CPT

In the late 1970s and early 1980s I, and many others in the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) (then NSPI), were being exposed to various quality improvement tools and techniques. After a short stint working for Wickes Lumber's Training organization, I was a Training Project Supervisor supporting manufacturing, materials, and purchasing at Motorola's Training & Education Center, the forerunner organization of Motorola University. There I saw first hand, through my many projects, the work of

many *quality gurus* and the work of Geary Rummler, Carol Panza, and Neil Rackham. Besides being exposed to the work of quality experts, I was learning about business finance and politics, as well as participative management, and material resource planning.

One of the eye-opening models for me, simple but key, was the Ishikawa Diagram, also known as the "cause-and-effect diagram" or the "fishbone diagram." Below is an early (non-politically correct) version (see Figure 1).

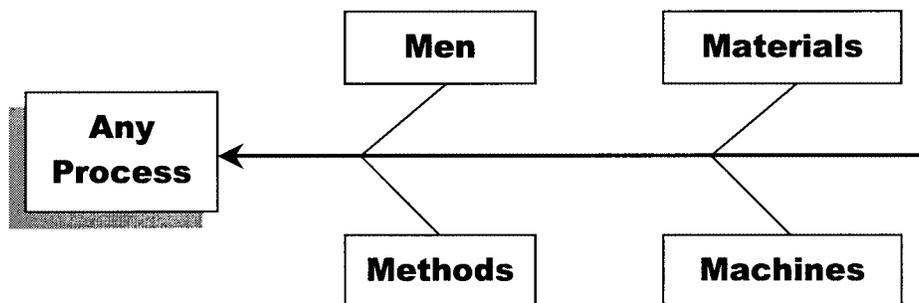


Figure 1. Ishikawa Diagram.

Every process has these four variables: men, materials, methods, and machines. This simple diagram helped me position what I was just learning about human performance technology's (HPT) concepts, models, methods, tools, and techniques and helped me put HPT into a larger framework, beyond human performance. Human performance, I learned from the quality folks, was but one variable of process performance.

My mental model of HPT now had a new framework to exist within; and I had other defined variables to work with when we could conclude from the analysis that, "it ain't the human variable that's screwed up here."

That rang loudly and resonated deeply with one of my favorite Rummler quotes: "Put a good human in a bad system, and the system wins every time."

I see HPT's value in addressing the human variable inherent in any and every process. But HPT doesn't cover every variable. I don't think HPT is the king of the mountain, the be-all and end-all of process improvement. It has improvement cousins.

I see HPT partnering and collaborating with the others in the *improvement space* to respond to the results of someone's front-end assessments and analysis for problem and opportunity causes, no matter who does the front-end work.

I would like to see us clarify HPT, using Rummler's suggested technology domains to better state what HPT is, and thereby clarify what it is not. Not because we don't have a clue, but because our cousins are taking the lead and have the deep expertise outside the human variable.

I also believe several other things that I wish to share:

- We will never convince the engineers and scientists that HPT is the umbrella for their total quality management (TQM), Statistical Process Control (SPC), six sigma, or scientific method.
- We will never convince industrial engineers that we can map complex processes, be they chemical or mechanical or other, better than they can.
- We will never convince the financial experts that our HPT measures of impact supersede the bottom-line metrics they use to measure the enterprise's current health or future potential impact for the equity investments for capital or human improvement.
- We will never convince executive management that their trust and investments in TQM and six sigma should be displaced by HPT.

We need to better figure out what HPT is and is not and then see how we can better partner and collaborate with our cousins' other improvement approaches, without doing a land-grab and claiming that our HPT is the king of the hill.

HPT has demonstrated real value, real returns on investments, but not all the time. Just as TQM was too often and inadvertently partial quality management, HPT is sometimes a partial solution. It's not always the human variable. And I do not expect any one person to be a real expert in all things improvement-wise.

Some of our members have suggested we take off the "H." We could then call our HPT technology "total performance technology" or something along those lines. But then, who are we to claim this as ours? What are our experiences, our successes, when compared to other improvement approaches? They have had their wins and their losses, just as we have. They sometimes recognize that they do not have all the answers, because they do not have expertise in all the many improvement concepts, models, methods, tools, and techniques.

No one has them all. No one is the Renaissance Man/Woman when it comes to improvement. We need each other because there is just too much to know, too much to master. That's also why we need to partner and collaborate with others; and our new certified performance technologist ethics require us to acknowledge that and act accordingly.

We need to invite these other improvement experts into our ISPI tent, to our conferences, and into our journals, and ask them to teach us about their approaches. Not so that we might master them. HPT by itself is probably too large for any one of us to master, let alone take on everything else under the sun improvement-wise. But once we better understand their stuff and ours, we can better clarify our HPT value proposition in concert with their value propositions.

Positioning HPT better with the other improvement specialties' value propositions can create win-win-win situations. HPTers can win, and other improvement specialists can win, and most importantly the stakeholder groups at the process, organization, and society levels can win. Customers and other stakeholders (governments, shareholders, executives, employees, suppliers, and the community) can win when we create real return on investments.

And that's what HPT can help with, for our key variable, is the human variable. For me, HPT is not for addressing every process performance variable, only the human variable. 🏔️

Guy W. Wallace has been in the T&D field since 1979 and an ISD consultant to government and industry since 1982. His clients have included 27 of the current Fortune 500 firms, plus non-US companies such as BP and Siemens. He has analyzed and designed/developed training and development for almost every type of business function and process. Guy is the author of three books, more than 50 articles, and has presented more than 50 times at international conferences and local chapters of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD), and Lakewood Conferences. He served as the treasurer/director of the 1999–2000 Board of ISPI and is currently ISPI's president-elect for the 2002–2003 Board of Directors. Guy may be reached at guy.wallace@epic.biz.



Resurrection

by Frank T. Wydra

I joined the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) in 1969, when the I was an N and the P stood for “Programmed.” My first convention was the society’s seventh. For a long while ISPI was a pretty important part of my professional life, and much of my intellectual challenge came from people I met in the organization. Then I grabbed responsibility for more than training, and my career moved on. For a decade, I lost touch. When I returned a few years back, the mantra was human performance technology (HPT), just the kind of stuff I had been doing in the missing years, applying behavioral technology to organizational issues. To me, the concept of HPT is a natural outgrowth of the work of generations of behavioral scientists, from Thorndyke, Hull, Watson, and Skinner to Gilbert, Kaufman, Markle, Brethower, Rummeler, Harless, and Mager. I’m a believer. HPT deserves a candle at the alter of progress.

Yet, while the ISPI HPT message felt right, something seemed wrong. As if image trumped substance and words disguised reality. As I explored my unease, I

searched for a handle, a way to describe what was out of kilter. I am not sure I have it now, but here is my take on the discomfort I feel with HPT in ISPI.

ISPI was born four decades ago because its technological approach to learning clashed with that of other professional training and educational organizations. Those in the movement’s vanguard knew that the message they championed would not, could not, mainstream in the calcified arteries of the then-existing professional bodies. Now, two generations later, having become the premier training organization, ISPI seems to HPT as the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) was to performance improvement: an interesting gene, but one that does not easily fit the code of the culture. Those who recognize the profound importance of HPT, including some mustangs who foaled the maverick NSPI, press for an organizational transfusion, intellectual resurrection, if you will. But, as Saul Gellerman once said, “Resurrection is harder than birth.” Let’s explore why.

First, most of what I hear at the conventions and read in the journal is not technology; it is, at best, anecdote or opinion. Technology by definition is applied science. Good science requires the ability to measure and replicate results. So does good technology. To test this notion, I did a flawed but quick assessment of the topics presented at the 2002 conference. I read the descriptions of the presentations to determine if there was any kind of science or technology supporting the presentation. What I found was that about 75% made no mention of a list of science-affiliated words such as duplicate, duplication, investigation, measure, measurement, outcome, replicate, science, scientific, observation, valid, or validation. There were a lot of high sounding words, a lot of references to performance, but scant mention of actual measurement, even less to proven replicable models. In science, it is not good enough for a personality to report on a finding. Others must be able to duplicate the result. That's what NSPI was all about, determining if RULEG produced a steeper learning curve than EGRUL and whether 90% of the learners could demonstrate 90% of the targeted skills. Science, not anecdote.

Next I went to the ISPI website and did a word search on the text of *What is human performance technology?* Of those keywords listed above, the word "measure" was used once. The other key words were not used at all. For me, it is hard to think in terms of science without these words. NSPI (with P for Programmed) was built on applied science. It is what made this place different from other organizations concerned with learning. As we migrate to HPT we also seem to be emigrating from the science in our heritage.

Second, setting aside the technology part, I believe we are pitching HTP to the wrong audience. Since marketing lingo such as "value proposition" seems to be the vogue, let's look at the market to which we address our propaganda which, incidentally, derives from propagation of the faith.

In marketing terms, if our product is a technology, then it is made of ideas and practices, applications, so to speak. When *learning* technology was our product, the market was training directors, people who make decisions about learning. The market for, or end user of, the HPT product, in organizations, is the people who make decisions about performance. My long and bloody experience as both practitioner and consultant tells me that these decisionmakers are not the training people. And, though they often seem to have more say in this area, neither are the human resource or organization development people. But, having started our journey with training people, they remain our market even though the product has changed.

The real performance decisionmakers are the operations people: CEO, COO, plant manager, business unit head, and so on. They are the ones who deploy resources. More importantly, they are the people who can deliver consequences in organizations. Remember our old Skinnerian mantra, "Behavior is

controlled by its consequences." I would venture that most ISPI consultants (our second largest constituency and the members who make a living by actually marketing applications and who are effectively dealing in HPT rather than learning related applications) are dealing with the operations, rather than human resources, people and rarely with the training people. It would seem to me that if ISPI's core technology is human performance, then we need to be more directly working with those who deliver consequences in organizations. Unfortunately, operations people are not the core, nor even the periphery, of our membership. To make them so would be akin to Phoenix rising, a resurrection of sorts.

Third, if the charge is to affect human performance in organizations, the scope of the society membership remains too narrow. The original scientific core of NSPI was modern learning theory. I continue to believe that this is the core science of HPT. At best, training is a stimulus, not a consequence. It provides the skills and knowledge that enable performance. What Skinnerian behaviorism added to the craft of training was the scientific notion that things like feedback, step size, chaining, successive approximation, and consequences affect learning. It worked. The effect on learning could be tested, replicated, and refined. When we transfer modern learning theory to performance in organizations, we see an array of consequences, things like pay raises, promotions, interesting work assignments, days off, a pat on the back, a good evaluation, bonuses, overtime, and so on. By and large, these things are outside the domain of the training folks. But there are others in organizations who control or influence the distribution of these consequences. Most work in operations, but a good number are in staff positions such as recruitment, placement, compensation, selection, staffing, quality, labor relations, or human resources. They are as much, if not more, of the consequence architecture in organizations as training specialists are. But the people populating these functions are not now, nor have they ever been, a significant part of ISPI.

In my view, we cannot have an effective HPT until we understand the applied science inherent in these functions. What, for instance, is the effect of a formal evaluation on performance? A promotion? A raise? A demotion? What is the effect of an incentive promised but not delivered? Does a participative, team-based organization affect productivity? How much? In which direction? Does change increase or decrease productivity? How much? For how long? These questions are inherent in a performance technology. But we will not begin to learn the nuances and inter-relationship of these practices on behavior until we invite others who control or influence them into the tent.

HPT is a brand that ISPI clearly owns. Check the web and there is virtually no mention of HPT that is not linked directly or indirectly to ISPI. But the thing about a brand is that it defines and differentiates the product. Usually, that is

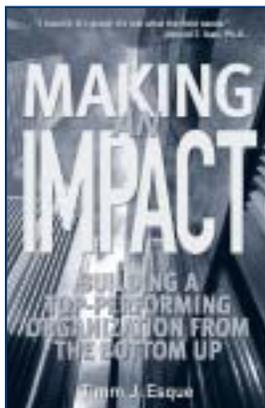
a good thing. But sometimes, a great brand name is wasted on the shadow of its promise. When that happens, the market rejects, then punishes the brand and its maker. Unless ISPI can deliver on the marketing promise, it risks becoming the Enron of professional societies.

Nonetheless, HPT has a ring to it. Clearly it is about people, and about doing things, useful things, and about the application of science. The implication is that HPT has no boundaries other than those defined by its very name. It does not say “humans” who happen to work in organizations; it says any human. It does not say “performance” as an adjunct to training; it says any performance. It does not say “technology” as defined by ISPI; it says any technology, which, of course, means any science, however applied. But the definition of HPT adopted by this society is a stone tied around the ankle of a child that will limit its movement far beyond its birthplace. It is too narrow, too confining, too tied to a training audience.

ISPI is clearly capable of renaming itself. Whether it can resurrect science as its core, whether it can escalate its influence to those who control or influence consequences, whether it can attract the broad range of practitioners who add operational and intellectual diversity into its ranks may be beyond its capability. ISPI, like most constituencies, is a hard beast to kill. It will go on. Whether it can fulfill the promise of HPT, as it is now constituted though, is questionable.

Those of us who have been here for a while will age with ISPI regardless of its success or failure. We are too tied to the organization to make a break: too little time, too many friends, too much memory. But still, might it not be better to let ISPI mellow into old age while a new organization—rooted in applied science, aimed at the consequence brokers, and embracing all disciplines that touch human performance—is conceived and born? Birth is easier than resurrection. And us old guys (for the politically correct, the word is defined as applying to either sex), we may still be mustangs. 🐾

A human resources professional who understands the bottom line, **Frank T. Wydra** has spent 20 years as a corporate officer dealing with both business and human resource issues. He is the managing partner of IRI Consultants To Management, Inc. a firm specializing in human performance issues, and has served as Executive Vice-President, The Chi Group, Inc., President, Radius Health Systems, Inc., Senior Vice-President, HGH Health System and Vice-President Personnel and Training, Allied Supermarkets, Inc. He has served on the boards of a dozen corporations and professional organizations. Frank has a BS degree in Management from the University of Illinois and is author of *Learner Controlled Instruction, Performulations* (a management game) and *Power and Authority*, numerous articles on management and human resource issues as well as *The Cure*, a novel. He has received ASTD's National Torch Award and is a *Marquis Who's Who in America* biography. Frank may be reached at wydrafr@irisolutions.com.



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