

Before You Prescribe Training

A practical guide for determining what is preventing successful performance - and whether training is the right response.

START WITH THE PERFORMANCE GAP

1 What should be happening?

2 What is happening now?

3 Who is affected?

4 What evidence demonstrates the gap?

Define the performance problem before selecting the solution.

Diagnose the Conditions

Examine the conditions surrounding performance before concluding that employees need more training.

01

INFORMATION

- Are expectations specific and understood?
- Do employees know what successful performance looks like?
- Is feedback timely, consistent, and useful?

02

RESOURCES AND PROCESSES

- Do employees have the necessary time, tools, authority, and support?
- Are processes creating unnecessary barriers?
- Are responsibilities and decision rights clear?

03

INCENTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

- Does the workplace reward the desired performance?
- Are competing priorities sending conflicting signals?
- What happens when employees perform correctly - or incorrectly?

04

KNOWLEDGE AND CAPABILITY

- Do employees possess the required knowledge and skills?
- Have they had an opportunity to practice?
- Can they perform correctly under realistic conditions?

Select the Response

Match the intervention to the condition producing the performance gap.

FINDING	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
Expectations are unclear	Clarify standards and feedback
Tools or processes interfere	Redesign the process or provide resources
Incentives conflict with expectations	Align measures and consequences
Knowledge or skill is missing	Provide learning and practice
Several conditions contribute	Develop an integrated performance solution

Training is appropriate when employees need knowledge, skill, or practice. It cannot compensate for unclear expectations, broken processes, insufficient resources, or conflicting incentives.

Before authorizing another course, diagnose the conditions producing the performance gap.