

# Measuring Performance

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Credibility—and continued funding—for your CBT program usually depends on showing management some hard results. To do that, you have to measure the change in your students' on-the-job performance.

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**B**usiness people and accountants relate to objective measurement. Accountants work with objective quantities of things—usually units of money and time. When they measure performance, they count dollars, widgets, or other events or accomplishments per day, week, month, quarter, or year.

If HRD professionals are going to work successfully with bottom-line managers, they must communicate with one another about objectives and results. If, for example, HRD reports results which do not translate into dollars, widgets, or observable performance, managers may not appreciate the contributions they make. Sadly, this is often the case.

In order to have maximum impact on organizational performance, trainers and managers must measure performance and learning. A few simple steps will help this process:

1. Focus on relevant performance. Be sure your objectives include behaviors or accomplishments which are important to the organization, or which are prerequisites for important accomplishments.

2. Specify countable objectives. Training or performance objectives must include countable behaviors or accomplishments. Abstract verbs such as "understands" and "knows" do not describe behaviors. Use concrete action verbs and either direct objects or prepositional phrases in your objective statements. For accomplishments, use quantities that an accountant or manager can understand.

3. Include the time dimension. Performance goals must include countable behaviors or accomplishments per unit of time—phone calls per week, widgets per hour, dollars per month. Instructional objectives should likewise include time dimensions, with counts of correct and incorrect responses. For example, "Matches product names to need statements at a rate of 10 per minute with no errors." These criteria reflect observable performance.

4. Record and report actual measures not just ratios or percentages. Ratios or percentages can be useful for comparing pairs of performance measures. However, they lack meaning in the absence of the measures themselves. Therefore, always report the numerator and denominator of a ratio or percentage in addition to the percentage itself.

5. Use a standard system for graphing performance and learning. The Standard Behavior Chart is a universally applicable tool for recording and analyzing performance and learning. It is easy to learn and use. With standardized pictures of performance and learning, managers and trainers can make decisions and communicate results quickly and effectively. ■

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