

## Improving Performance

June 2005



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### Greetings!

In my second quarterly column I want to continue to address the use of two data sets, the Performance Model and the Enabler Matrices of the EPPI model (my model for Enterprise Process Performance Improvement) in driving the requirements and metrics for the first 2 of the following 7 Human Asset Management Systems (HAMS):



Figure 1. HAMS Systems and Processes

If your enterprise is off on an improvement drive, do its models and methods help you see more clearly the change requirements for these types of systems? In your enterprise they may be named differently and organized differently or may not formally exist at all as the responsibility of a department or one person.

Note: The EPPI model was overviewed in my March 2005 column, which is available on the BPTrends site at [www.bptrends.com](http://www.bptrends.com). Just enter "Guy Wallace" in the Search space.

The HAMS's **Organization & Job (Re-)Design Systems** provides a set of job designs and an organization design conducive to the needs of the process, its volume and predicted variation over time, and the designs are configured to be able to find and attract enough human performers with the current abilities and future capabilities for the jobs in the labor markets where the performers will be employed.

The job designs then roll up into the organization design. It is a "bottoms-up" approach driven by the visible "top-down" *end goals* of the enterprise's processes performance.

The HAMS's **Staffing & Succession Systems** provides the strategies, plans, and mechanisms for staffing plan development and succession to populate the organization's jobs with people in an efficient manner, providing career and growth opportunities where possible or feasible.

Staffing & Succession Planning Systems takes the job designs, their process performance requirements, and the enabler requirements, and determines who to recruit, how many, from where, when and how.



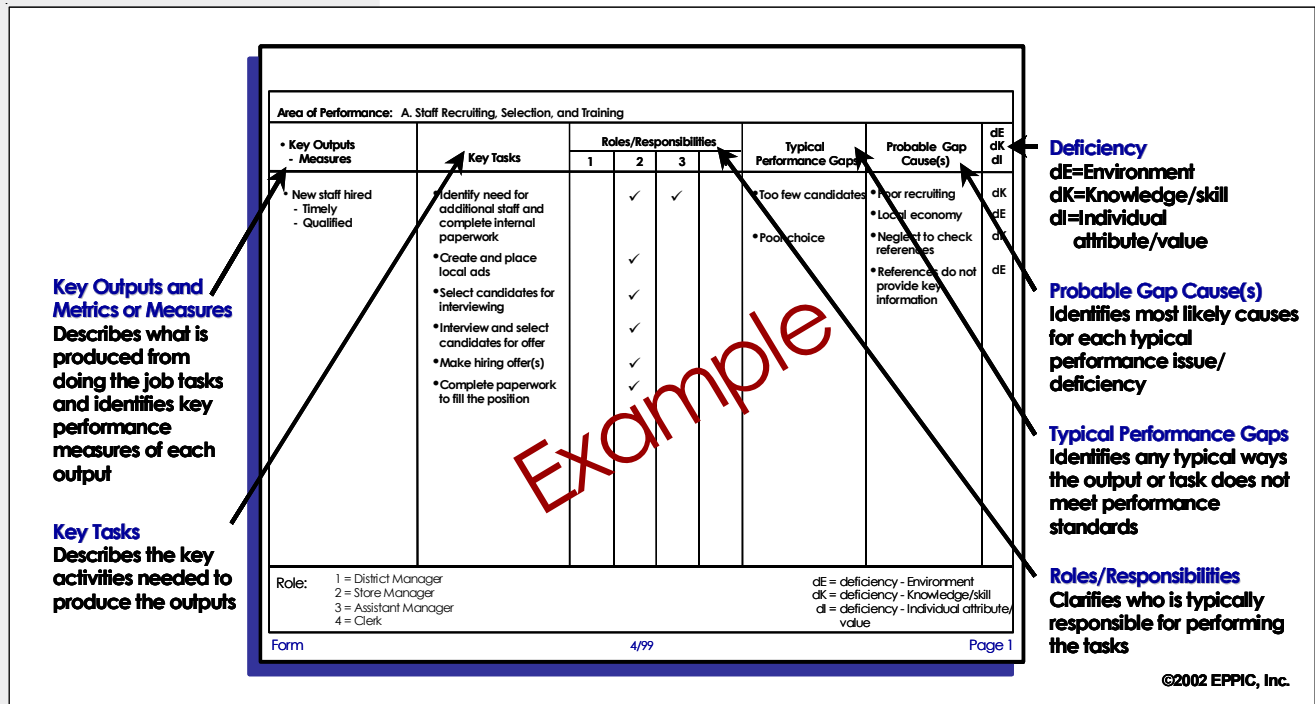
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The Performance Model charts capture both the ideal performance in the current state and the current state gaps in terms of the following data sets:

- Area of Performance
- Key Outputs produced and their key Measures
- Key Tasks per Output
- Roles/Responsibilities
- Gap Analysis of the non-ideal performers/performance environment of the current state



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Figure 2. Area of Performance Model

The Performance Model captures the Human Performance Competency requirements for the targeted job and/or processes of an enterprise that are to be improved for sufficient ROI.

The Enabler Matrices capture the enabling human and environmental requirements. Those enabling human asset requirements, and everything else non-human -- all of the environmental asset requirements are needed to support ideal, peak performance -- peak performance that has already been achieved, demonstrated by some subset of the performer population...the Master Performers.

It is not theoretical. It has been done. But what enabled it? The EPPIC method for deriving the enablers with a group of Master Performers and other Subject Matter Experts uses the following enabler categories:



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- Knowledge/Skill Competencies
- Physical Attributes
- Psychological Attributes
- Intellectual Attributes
- Personal Values

There are many subcategories for each. The following matrix in Figure 3 is an example of one of the data gathering tools that also serves as a “reporting out” tool.

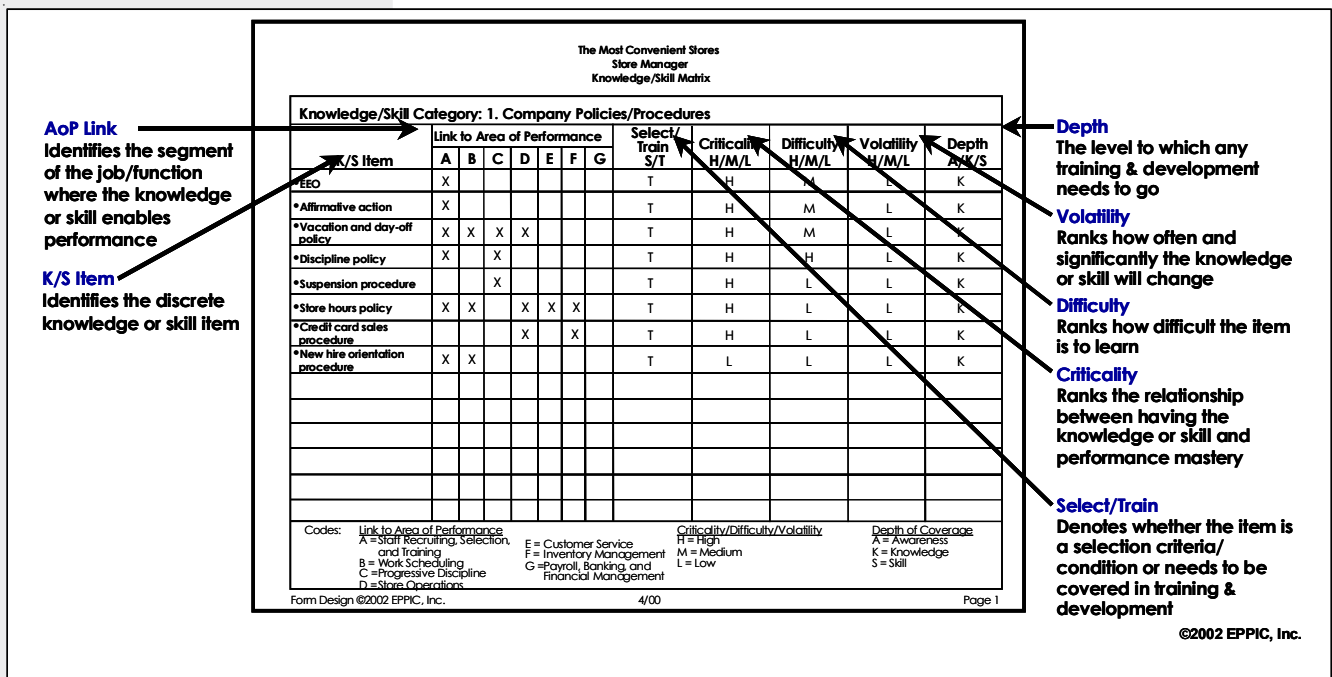


Figure 3. An Enabler Matrice

The Enabler Matrices capture the enabling competencies in terms of awareness/knowledge/skill, plus the attributes and values that the Master Performers and Subject Matter Experts agree are needed to perform at a mastery level. And, of course, that does not always make them right. But who else would you have determine them – especially in complex jobs/processes where there is more cognitive/covert behavior going on than the physical/overt behavior that a trained observer could see?

Since starting this approach in 1979, I have seen enough negotiations and restatements of these enabling items by the many Analysis Teams I have facilitated for me to “trust the process” and to feel comfortable that no other reasonable/feasible group or non-group approach would do as well. And I also believe that in the areas of tricky interpersonal skills a more rigorous analysis should probably follow on the heels of the EPPI approach before any large investments are made.



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With these two data sets...

- Job Design *systems* would better avoid incongruence in the enablers required within any one job
- Organization Design *systems* would better design the configuration of jobs around the flow of both the core processes that the performer's department *owns* and in the other processes that they do not own but that they nevertheless participate in
- Staffing *systems* would be better able to forecast the staffing levels required to adjust to peaks and valleys in workload at the job level, which would easily translate into the competencies, attributes, and values that may need additional efforts for development/acquisition or redeployment to accommodate the predicted workload volume variation
- Succession Planning/Career Planning *systems* would better determine the differences between any set of jobs in any organization and would help clarify the incoming performance and the enabling competencies needed, as well as the attributes and values needed for more probable success in a new job assignment

### Job Design/ReDesign

If these two data –sets – the performance-based views of the performance competencies of the Performance Model and then the enabling competencies and attributes/values of the Enabler Matrices – existed, then Job Design *systems* could deal with redesign of a job's performance task assignments. As an example, two positions might be redesigned into three with a new *middle job* to lower the costs of the more expensive engineering resource and provide a career ladder to the top performers in the original #2 job – a lower paying, less sophisticated job.

The unique enabling competencies and the unique attributes/values required for a configuration of jobs have to be feasibility tested, and the potential for fulfilling them adequately in the Recruiting/Selection systems, in the very labor markets where you need to accomplish this, needs to be determined.

If form is to follow function in Job Design then one must first understand properly what the tasks are in relation to the relevant enterprise processes and their unique flows that the job is intended to support. The process always exists to produce outputs that are inputs downstream.

*If a Performance Improvement Consultant at the Western States Forest Services is required to analyze enterprise jobs and processes in the "Firefighting and Watchtower Services Division" for a process that will require the physical strength and stamina to climb 250 steps to reach the top of any one of a few dozen watchtowers; then will not need that strength to conduct design and development activities; then will need those strengths to climb those stairs for implementation and evaluation efforts...then we could consider the redesign of the one job of the*



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*Performance Improvement Consultant into 2 types, one that requires the physical attributes and another job that doesn't.*

*A new job configuration may suit someone in a wheelchair who could easily contribute to the new job because they have everything that it takes to do the job if configured differently. Job A would do the analysis, support development, and then do the implementation. Job B would do the design and the development, and then do evaluation post-implementation.*

This would mean less square people in round jobs, and vice versa, and job designs that would be better able to actually acquire the “talent configurations” required in the local workforce labor pools – both internal employees and external candidates.

If a job has some natural level of “ambiguity” to it, then design it with other role-sets to accommodate that. And don't factor in a “lot of response-time required” type of tasks to a job already chock full with routine, predictable tasks. Small responses – maybe, but any large responses – no. If there is a lot of unpredictable firefighting in a particular job, do not design it with a lot of routine administrative work responsibilities.

Is the job designed to be rich, with much variety in terms of task-sets, as with a marketing generalist who supports trade shows, sales conferences, large sales efforts, training, and recruiting? Or is to be less rich, with small variation, as it is for the security guards at the front gate who only track the comings and goings of non-employees, and respond to emergencies by dialing 911 first, and the head of security, second? This job is *less rich* in terms of task variety than the marketing generalist position.

The Job Design system in your enterprise must itself be designed to align jobs to the role-sets related to the specific outputs/tasks of the processes that the department either owns or supports. Is your Job Design system itself *by design*? Has it *enough control* in those “enterprise critical” processes? Or is there no real job design system, and it is more reactive than proactive, driven for compensation purposes alone?

Is there any ROI up-side for pursuing process performance improvement in this system so that you can meet the needs of your broader improvement initiative?

### Organization Design/ReDesign

If these two performance-based views of the performance competencies and then the enabling competencies and attributes/values required to support the process performance expectations existed, then Organization Design *systems* would reflect the processes that they own and the processes that they support, owned by others.

Organizing around the flow is tricky when your department is responsible for a variety of processes and their end products. It is much easier if your organization is responsible for only one product/service.



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*Our Performance Improvement Consultant works in a department within HR that is titled Process Performance Improvement – a combination of the old QA, Policy/Procedures and Training organizations of the past with several product/service lines, including*

- *Policy Development*
- *Process Mapping*
- *Improvement Strategies Development*
- *Process Redesign*
- *Process Metrics Systems Design and Implementation*
- *Job & Organization Design*
- *Training & Development*
- *Coaching & Mentoring*

The department is organized into teams that reflect the product/service lines of the organization. Of course, the jobs are designed in role-sets with some overlap to account for anticipated work volume changes and the need for a flexible workforce. But not in every department. Just as in their client organizations.

For example, the Payroll department is more stable in terms of work volume and its ability to be predictive. The Sales Support department is neither. The products/services Payroll offers to the enterprise are small in number, with large production runs of each, while Sales Support has numerous offerings and delivers both small numbers and large numbers. Sales Support sends out a single brochure to a single prospect on behalf of a Sales Rep, and it sends out thousands of multiple-item kits that vary slightly among the 50 sales regions whenever the Sales VP deems it necessary — hardly predictive.

The roles of both departments are critical for keeping the enterprise humming along, responsive by design to the predictable and unpredictable.

Your enterprise Organization Design System needs to provide the workforce flexibility and variation where it is really needed, not everywhere. Is your Organization Design System by design? Or is it a variant worth pursuing?

### Staffing Systems

If these two performance-based views of the performance competencies and then the enabling competencies and attributes/values required to support the process performance expectations existed – the Performance Model and the Enabling Matrices – then the Staffing *systems* would be better able to forecast, based on business volume forecasts and the staffing level changes over time, for jobs within the enterprise organizations. Again, at the enabler levels. And not using some generic competency model.

Understanding the peaks and valleys of staffing requirements and being able to deal with them can have a major impact on short-term customer satisfaction, long-term employee satisfaction, and, ultimately, shareholder satisfaction regarding the profitability of their investment.





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Understanding the competencies, attributes, and values specifically allows the Staffing System to provide planning input elsewhere. For example, the implications for workforce flexibility and planning for recruiting/selection efforts and for meeting the cross-training needs can be driven by the real performance competencies and the enabling knowledge/skill competencies, attributes, and values.

*The Western States Forest Services' Staffing System is capable of predicting shrinkage and growth in specific jobs at the competency and enabling competency and attributes level and can provide that input to the Succession Planning System for attempting to keep everyone currently on the payroll gainfully employed with reasonable investment costs for the cross-T&D needed to provide this flexibility.*

*Job stability is a key factor in choosing and keeping a job for the employees and prospects in the remote locations where WSFS operates. This approach promotes that.*

Your enterprise Staffing System needs to be able to predict the ebb and flow, the growth, stability, and decline in the numbers of people required to fill specific jobs in terms of role-sets of the job, the performance competency capability requirements that may need to have been previously demonstrated (if any), and the enabling knowledge/skill competencies and other human attributes and values that are necessary for peak performance.

It is complex. There is no denying that. Is your Staffing System performance-based dealing with the real-world complexity and does it make the human asset requirements of each specific staff job clearer?

### Succession Planning Systems

Again, if the Performance Model and Enabler Matrices can provide for a realistic, performance-based view of the required human performance competencies and the enabling human knowledge/skill competencies and the other human attributes/values required to support the process performance expectations existed, then Succession Planning/Career Planning *systems* could paint a very realistic picture of those requirements and enable people to plan their own way to develop the means to meet the needs as specified by the enterprise recruiting system's and the selection system's criteria.

With the additional clarity and motivation that clear, public staffing plans – without giving away the really important strategic plans in the works – provide to an individual employee, development planning for a possible future job assignment can be clear and easy. It does not guarantee that just anyone gets whatever job they aspire to and work quite hard toward, but it does provide a visible, rationale process and is, ultimately, a fairer system.

Your Succession Planning system needs to be able to break the job requirements into specifics such as

- The task capability requirements
- The enabling knowledge/skill requirements



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- The attribute/value requirements

*Many, but not all, of the employees of the Western States Forest Firefighting and Watchtower Division are looking for a move up and more pay. They want a process and a roadmap that is rational, clear, and fair.*

*If they are qualified as a Senior Watchtower Observer now and want really to be the Maintenance Manager of the Forest Services Public Golf Course someday, then how do they better self assess their real desire and the reality of that dream job? How can they better assess their own capacity to meet the learning and applications challenges that would lie ahead? And what would they do first, second, and later? What would the plan be? What resources exist? Etc.*

The Succession Planning System needs to be linked and in sync with the other Human Asset Management Systems so that succession planning links to career planning and into recruiting and selection, and training and development, etc.

Does your current system's design do so?

### Column Close

Regardless of whether you embrace the specifics of my EPPI model or not, my intent was to provide you with an example of how one might use a "performance-based view" of the human requirements that should be driving your HR systems/processes – your people assets, along with your environmental assets. Your enterprise has invested in your HR systems for a return.

They are either meeting the need, or they are inadequate. If you were to "improve" these systems, how would you start to specify the changes needed and the metrics to be put into place? I would make the metrics focus on meeting the real process performance needs of the enterprise's key areas of business.

First, define what they are to deliver to the enterprise. In most cases it is as simple as providing people capable of meeting their role requirements within the enterprise's process needs – not just in the core processes, but in all of the critical processes of the enterprise! Payroll is not a core process – but you cannot afford to have it screwed up either. It isn't non-critical.

And not all systems and processes need to be in as "tight of control" as some others might. As always, it depends. What is the ROI for doing nothing at all versus addressing the issue? If some processes were totally broke they would only be a nuisance; others would sink the enterprise ship.

In the next column we will cover the use of the Performance Model and Enabler Matrices in driving the Recruiting and Selection Systems and the Training and Development Systems. Until the next quarter...*cheers!*

**Guy W. Wallace**, CPT, is the president of EPPIC Inc. He has been an external performance improvement consultant since 1982 and has served 29 of the current Fortune 500 since then. He was the president of the International Society for Performance Improvement in 2003-2004. Guy may be reached via his web site at [www.eppic.biz](http://www.eppic.biz).

