Performance Architecture
Roger Addison and Carol Haig December 2020

A Few Final Words

In 2009 we wrote *Performance Architecture: The Performance Technology Landscape,* our first column for BPTrends. With this column we offer our closing words for this publication. It is fitting that we end both 2020 and our time with you in the last month of this most unusual year.
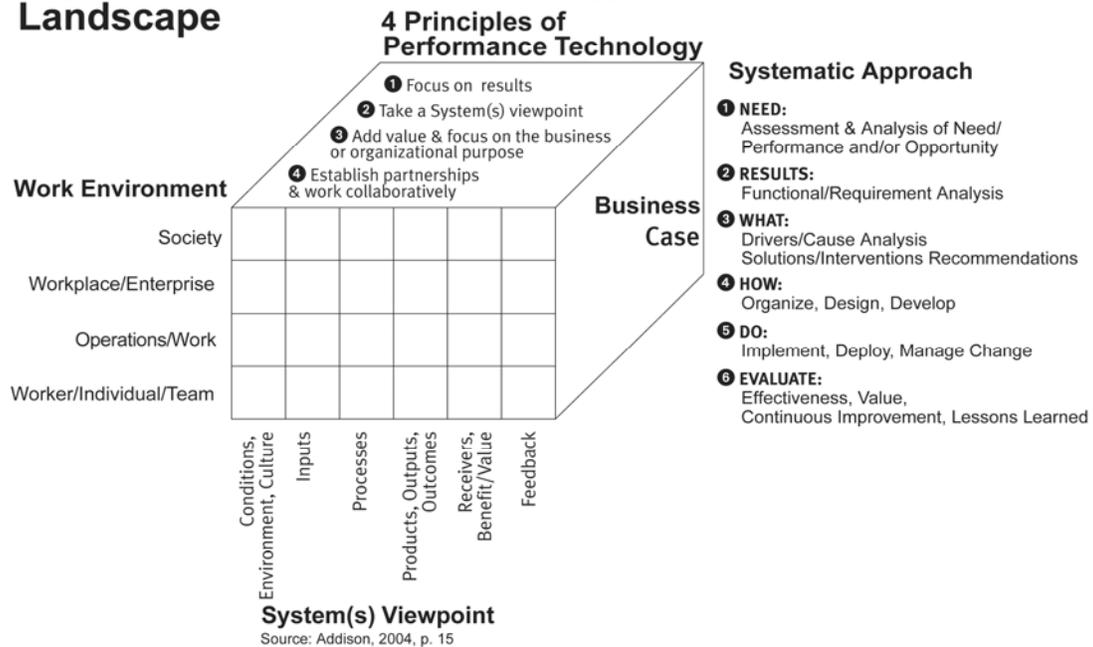
We've had a long and adventurous run at BPTrends. We welcomed the opportunity to introduce Performance Architecture to you and to link performance improvement models and tools to the work you do as business process professionals. Along the way, we had the pleasure and the challenge of exploring the world of work with a business process focus. Please join us as we look back on our eleven years with you.

What is Performance Architecture?

Performance Architecture is the art and science of improving the results workers achieve in their jobs. The Performance Architects who do this work rely on a body of experience, proven approaches, and documented successes to help clients provide an environment in which workers can meet and exceed expected performance results.

The **Performance Technology Landscape** below shows all the ways we work to identify performance issues and structure solutions to improve the results. The Performance Technology Landscape is our guide to designing and building Performance Architecture.

Fig. 1.1 Performance Technology Landscape

4 Principles of Performance Technology

❶ Focus on results
❷ Take a System(s) viewpoint
❸ Add value & focus on the business or organizational purpose
❹ Establish partnerships & work collaboratively

Systematic Approach

❶ **NEED:**
Assessment & Analysis of Need/ Performance and/or Opportunity

❷ **RESULTS:**
Functional/Requirement Analysis

❸ **WHAT:**
Drivers/Cause Analysis
Solutions/Interventions Recommendations

❹ **HOW:**
Organize, Design, Develop

❺ **DO:**
Implement, Deploy, Manage Change

❻ **EVALUATE:**
Effectiveness, Value,
Continuous Improvement, Lessons Learned

Work Environment

- Society
- Workplace/Enterprise
- Operations/Work
- Worker/Individual/Team

Business Case

Columns: Conditions, Environment, Culture | Inputs | Processes | Products, Outputs, Outcomes | Receivers, Benefit/Value | Feedback

System(s) Viewpoint
Source: Addison, 2004, p. 15

Performance Architects work in every industry and get to learn about, and help improve, all kinds of work challenges. Just in the years we researched and wrote this column, we looked at work performance in organizations like a zoo, an Apple Store, a cruise ship, a hospital, Tesla, Autodesk, Guide Dogs for the Blind, and more.

Performance Architects can be specialists, with a background in a specific industry, or generalists who rely on models, tools, and a particular analytical approach to help clients address and resolve performance issues in their organizations. As generalists, the authors have been rewarded with opportunities to learn about different industries and develop a broad network of various experts we can call on for advice or refer to others.

The Four Organizational Levels

If you look at the Performance Technology Landscape, above, you'll see a section to the left of the grid called **Work Environment.** It consists of what we refer to as the **Four Levels of Performance:**

> **Worker/Individual/Team**, or the *Worker Level*
> **Operations/Work**, or the *Work Level*

Workplace/Enterprise, or what we usually refer to as the *Organizational Level*

Society, or what the late Dr. Roger Kaufman termed *Mega,* and we call the *Societal/World Level*

In 2011-2012 we wrote a series about these Levels called *A Walk on the Human Performance Side, Part I, II, III,* and *IV.* For each level, we introduced models and tools that can help process experts with the human performance side of work. We recap a selection of them here.
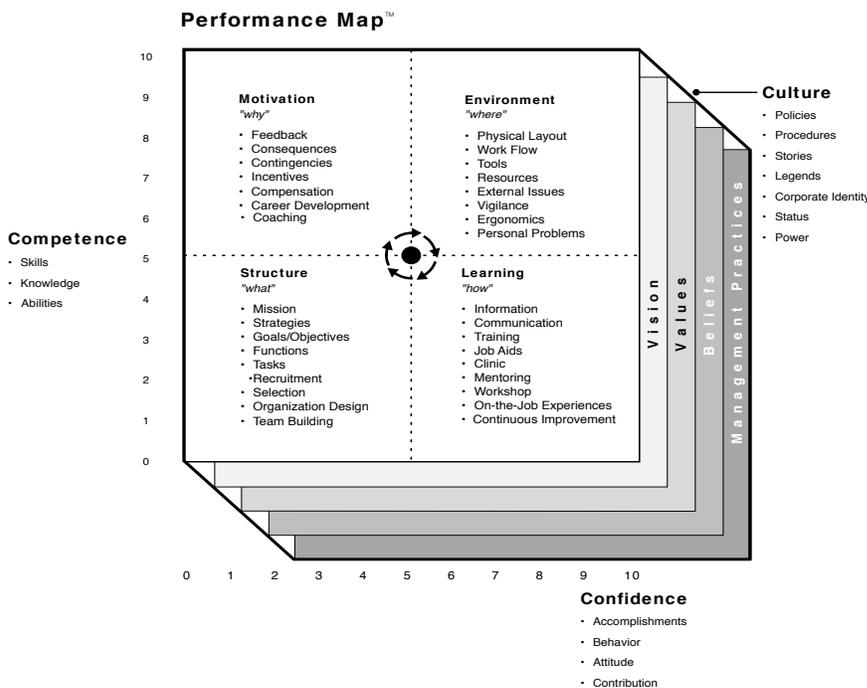
Part I - The Worker/Individual/Team Level

In *Level I – The Worker/Individual/Team Level* Performance Architects investigate how individuals perform their jobs, how work is done in a particular department, or the dynamics of a specific work team. Performance issues at this level are usually signaled by:

A drop in individual worker output

Increased errors and re-work

Failure to meet sales goals

Inconsistencies in required safety practices

An effective and easy-to-use tool to help identify performance obstacles at this level is the **Performance Map.**

Performance Map™

Motivation *"why"* • Feedback • Consequences • Contingencies • Incentives • Compensation • Career Development • Coaching	**Environment** *"where"* • Physical Layout • Work Flow • Tools • Resources • External Issues • Vigilance • Ergonomics • Personal Problems
Structure *"what"* • Mission • Strategies • Goals/Objectives • Functions • Tasks • Recruitment • Selection • Organization Design • Team Building	**Learning** *"how"* • Information • Communication • Training • Job Aids • Clinic • Mentoring • Workshop • On-the-Job Experiences • Continuous Improvement

Competence
• Skills
• Knowledge
• Abilities

Vision Values Beliefs Management Practices

Culture
• Policies
• Procedures
• Stories
• Legends
• Corporate Identity
• Status
• Power

Confidence
• Accomplishments
• Behavior
• Attitude
• Contribution

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The **Performance Map** is a diagnostic tool used with supervisors to help pinpoint the performance issue an employee is having. The four quadrants identify possible drivers for performances. The north-south axis considers employee *Competence* on a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) and the east-west axis reflects the employee's *Confidence* in being able to do the job.

For one project, we were asked to train customer-facing employees in service skills to create a service culture. In our experience, training is rarely the main solution to performance concerns, so we used the Performance Map with our client to get more information. The Map showed her that solutions other than training were most likely to achieve the results she was after. Complete instructions for using the **Performance Map** are **here**.

Part II – The Work/Operations Level

In *Level II – The Work/Operations Level*, Performance Architects are concerned with how the work of the organization produces the desired results. They make the work processes and practices visible and factor in what they learn about the workers at the Worker/Individual/Team Level to identify changes that will improve organizational results. Signs of performance issues at this level may include:

> Products and services are slow getting to the customer
> Complaints from customers and employees
> Excessive use of overtime
> Production bottlenecks
> Process delays
> Duplication of activities
> Procedures not followed

Key to analyzing performance issues at the Work/Operations Level is observation. What people tell you about how they perform a task, or what a supervisor tells you, is often quite different from what you see when you watch people at work. Frequently, the steps in a process are compressed or left out completely or shortcuts taken that undermine the work results.

An important observational skill is accurately recording what you see a worker doing. The **Workflow Chart** is a basic tool that helps you break down steps so you can describe them exactly. Complete instructions for using this tool are **here**.
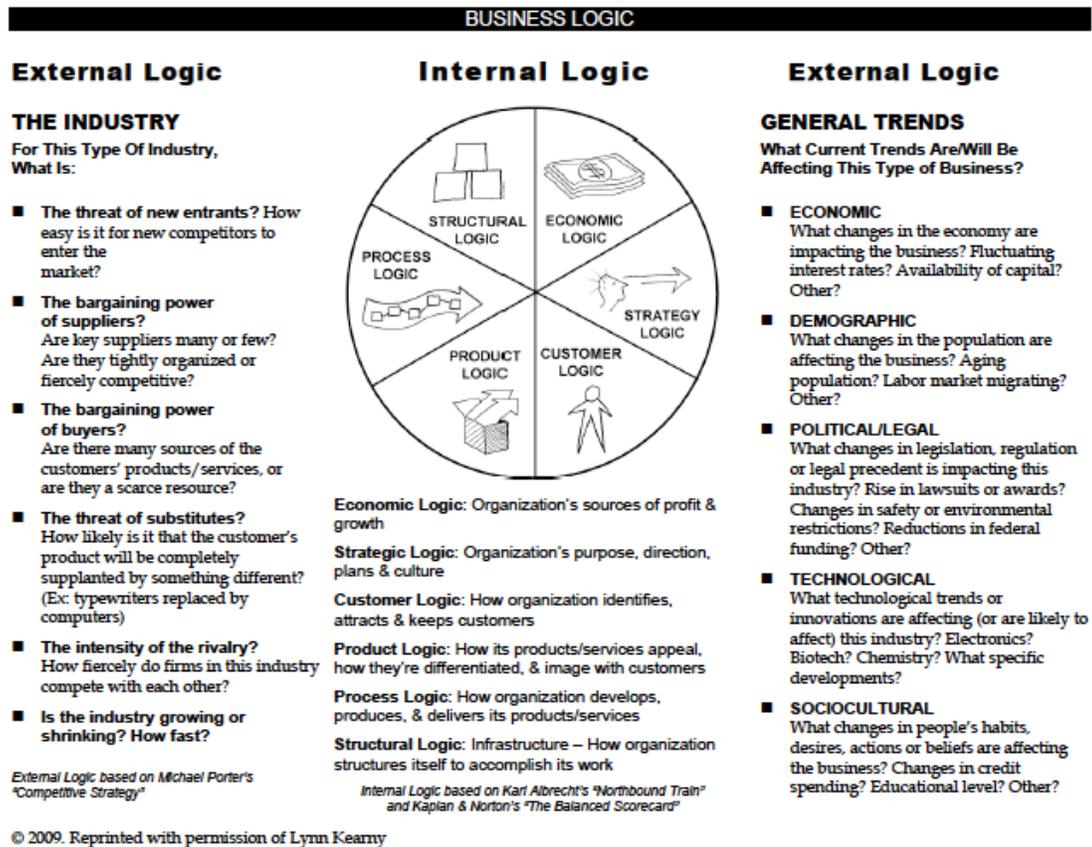
We used this tool to great advantage with a branch office of a large financial institution that had established an ambitious goal: customers in line to see a teller would wait no more than five minutes before being served. The **Workflow Chart** enabled us to demonstrate that relocating the lead teller in front of the vault would save enough time to meet the five-minute standard and to allow the hiring of an additional salesperson for the branch.

Part III – The Workplace/Enterprise Level

In *Level III – The Workplace/Enterprise Level,* Performance Architects map the organization to show how it operates and where it fits in the larger business environment. Teaming with their clients, Performance Architects use the map they've drawn to analyze how well all the components of the organization are working together to achieve desired results.

Issues at this level are usually large scale and typically relate to mergers and acquisitions, reorganizations, or other changes in organizational structure. Regardless of the initial request for help, Workplace/Enterprise Level issues may actually originate in the external business environment and point to political events, supply chain disruptions, labor issues, or market trends. And, performance issues identified at the Worker/Individual/Team Level or the Work/Process Level may originate here at the Workplace/Enterprise Level and must first be addressed at the top of the organization.

A helpful tool at this level is the **Business Logic Model:**

BUSINESS LOGIC

External Logic

THE INDUSTRY
For This Type Of Industry, What Is:

- The threat of new entrants? How easy is it for new competitors to enter the market?

- The bargaining power of suppliers? Are key suppliers many or few? Are they tightly organized or fiercely competitive?

- The bargaining power of buyers? Are there many sources of the customers' products/services, or are they a scarce resource?

- The threat of substitutes? How likely is it that the customer's product will be completely supplanted by something different? (Ex: typewriters replaced by computers)

- The intensity of the rivalry? How fiercely do firms in this industry compete with each other?

- Is the industry growing or shrinking? How fast?

External Logic based on Michael Porter's "Competitive Strategy"

Internal Logic

STRUCTURAL LOGIC · ECONOMIC LOGIC
PROCESS LOGIC
STRATEGY LOGIC
PRODUCT LOGIC · CUSTOMER LOGIC

Economic Logic: Organization's sources of profit & growth

Strategic Logic: Organization's purpose, direction, plans & culture

Customer Logic: How organization identifies, attracts & keeps customers

Product Logic: How its products/services appeal, how they're differentiated, & image with customers

Process Logic: How organization develops, produces, & delivers its products/services

Structural Logic: Infrastructure – How organization structures itself to accomplish its work

Internal Logic based on Karl Albrecht's "Northbound Train" and Kaplan & Norton's "The Balanced Scorecard"

External Logic

GENERAL TRENDS
What Current Trends Are/Will Be Affecting This Type of Business?

- **ECONOMIC** What changes in the economy are impacting the business? Fluctuating interest rates? Availability of capital? Other?

- **DEMOGRAPHIC** What changes in the population are affecting the business? Aging population? Labor market migrating? Other?

- **POLITICAL/LEGAL** What changes in legislation, regulation or legal precedent is impacting this industry? Rise in lawsuits or awards? Changes in safety or environmental restrictions? Reductions in federal funding? Other?

- **TECHNOLOGICAL** What technological trends or innovations are affecting (or are likely to affect) this industry? Electronics? Biotech? Chemistry? What specific developments?

- **SOCIOCULTURAL** What changes in people's habits, desires, actions or beliefs are affecting the business? Changes in credit spending? Educational level? Other?

While this model has more complexity than others we've highlighted here, it is uniquely suited to the intricacies of performance challenges at the Workplace/Enterprise Level. Details for using the Business Logic Model are **here**.

*Good examples of challenges at the Workplace/Enterprise Level, are often found in businesses that upend traditional sales processes and re-imagine how best to reach prospective customers. Companies like Amazon and Tesla come to mind. See more about such innovative organizations **here**.*

Part IV – Societal/World Level

At *Level IV - The World/Society Level*, we shift our focus from internal goals and supporting operations to adding value for external clients and the larger community outside the organization. This level includes customers and other citizens and is often the level missed when strategic plans are made.

When we talk about performance at this level, we begin with **Mega** thinking and planning as described by the late Dr. Roger Kaufman:

> "Adding value to our shared society using your organization as the primary vehicle is the purpose and defining characteristic of Mega Thinking and Planning. When we place our shared world—where we live with others—as primary, that is Mega Planning. From this shared societal value-added framework, everything you use, do, produce, and deliver will achieve agreed-on positive organizational as well as societal results."(Kaufman, Roger. (2011). Mega thinking and planning. Amherst, MA: HRD Press, p. 9.)

At this level, delivering sustainably produced products and responsibly delivered services are crucial organizational goals. Customers and prospective employees are looking for such organizations and want to associate themselves with places that share their values. Key here are work methods and decisions that contribute to the **triple bottom line – profit, people, planet**.

Geary Rummler's **Super System** model makes visible the systems and sub-systems that should be included in any Level IV initiative. The model below is derived from Geary's original work:

Super System = Externally Focused AOP
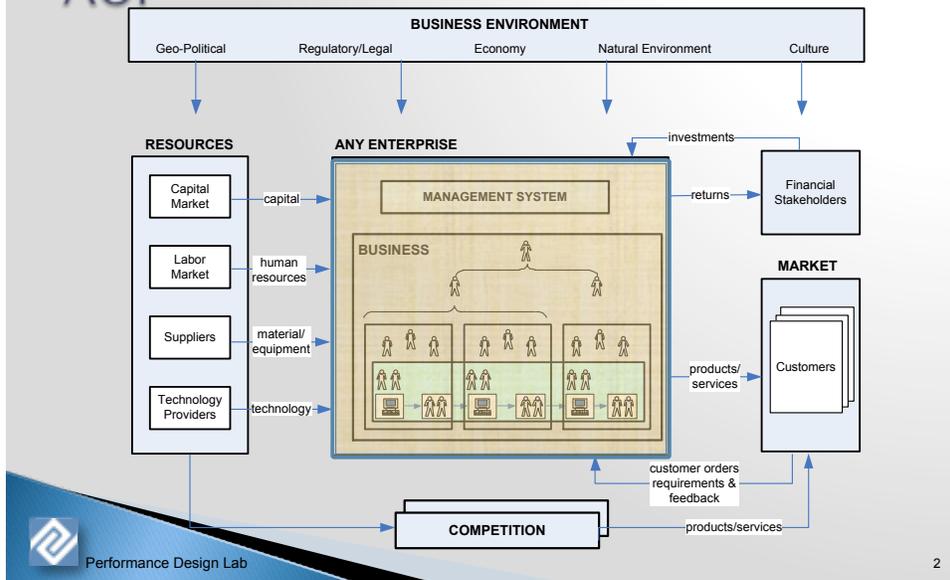
The model shows that work within an organization that excludes all the related larger systems ignores critical information about the impact of that work outside the organization. It is important for organizations and their customers to agree on what value they add to society. With an articulated common view, It is easier to make other agreements and the products/services that result will better serve society. For tips on using the **Super System** effectively, go **here**.

Examples of performance issues addressed at the Societal/World Level are global in nature such as the Eight Millennium Goals established by the United Nations:

1. Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty
2. Achieve Universal Primary Education
3. Promote Gender Equality
4. Reduce Child Mortality
5. Improve Maternal Health
6. Combat HIV, Malaria, and Other Diseases
7. Ensure Environmental Stability
8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development

From where we are today, it is clear we have made progress on several of these goals but not all.

Helpful Resources

All our Performance Architecture columns are archived on the BPTrends website. To search from the home page, go to Archives, then Columns and:

> If you know the column's title, enter it in the search box
> To see all our columns, enter Performance Architecture in the search box and scroll down

The website **HPT Treasures** also contains these same columns. Just search under Roger Addison's name or Carol Haig's to find them. You will also find other columns from us, such as the **TrendSpotters** series we did for the International Society for Performance Improvement for many years. In addition, you can browse the work of other Performance Architects and explore their ideas and experiences to enrich your work.

For books, we recommend:

Addison, R., Haig, C., Kearny, L. (2009). Performance architecture: The art and science of improving organizations. Pfeiffer.

Addison, R., Haig, C. (2016). Question five: Is the matrix worth the effort? In P. Harmon & R. Tregear (Eds.), *Questioning BPM?* (pp. 106-109). Meghan-Kiffer Press.

Addison, R., Haig, C. (2016). Question eight: Quality of process or process of quality? In P. Harmon & R. Tregear (Eds.), *Questioning BPM?* (pp. 172-175). Meghan-Kiffer Press.

Authors

Roger Addison has a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Baylor and is Certified in Performance Improvement Technologies (CPT). He is the co-author of Performance Architecture and an internationally respected performance improvement consultant. He is the founder and Chief Performance Officer of Addison Consulting. Previously he was the Senior Director of Human Performance Improvement for the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) where he was responsible for educational programs and

implementing performance improvement systems.

Carol Haig is a Certified Performance Technologist (CPT) and has more than 30 years of multi-industry experience partnering with organizations to improve their employees' performance. Carol is known for her superior skills in project management, analysis and problem/opportunity identification, and instructional design and facilitation. She has consulted with executives and line managers, established and managed training departments, trained trainers, written for professional publications and mentored performance consultants. She is co-author of Performance Architecture.