

## Key questions to ask yourself ...

### After training:

1. Is my staff's performance better than or equal to that of similar organisations?  Yes  No
2. Do I know what factors influence performance?  Yes  No
3. Can I carry out a thorough analysis of performance, which considers all possible factors in all four areas?  Yes  No
4. Do I consider all the possible means of achieving performance improvement before I recommend training?  Yes  No

If you have been accustomed to thinking of training or incentives as the solution to performance problems, then you may not be able to answer 'yes' to all the questions.

If you want help in analysing performance or if you want your managers trained in performance analysis, then PACT can help you.

## Your guarantee of quality

'PACT guarantees to meet agreed performance standards. In addition when providing training services all participants signed off as competent by PACT are guaranteed then to be able to perform to the competence standards or PACT will retrain at no charge'



Contact us now – we're ready to help

[www.pact.co.nz](http://www.pact.co.nz)

## One in a series of special reports from



## Improving staff performance: a formula for success

### Consider this for a moment

If you were to benchmark your staff's performance against similar organisations, do you feel confident the performance of your staff would come out on top?

In many cases there is an opportunity to improve performance but it is often difficult to know where to start.

There are many factors that influence performance and these can be grouped into four key areas:

- Ability
- Motivation
- Opportunity
- Direction

A lack in any one of these four areas means that staff will not achieve their full potential. To find out more please read on ...

**Ability**  
**Ability includes**

- Knowledge and skills
- Mental capacity

**Knowledge and skills**

- They must be used or they will be lost.
- They can be gained not just through training but also by on-the-job coaching or manuals or by study.
- Too often a lack of knowledge and skills is thought to be the problem and it is not.

**Mental capacity**

- The job may require more than a person is capable of mentally or physically. Not everyone can be a brain surgeon. People can also suffer from burnout.

**Opportunity**  
**Opportunity includes**

- Resources
- Time
- Systems
- Work organisation

**Resources**  
 To perform, people need resources which include

- other people
- equipment and raw materials
- money
- technology and
- information

**Time**  
 If the person has competing demands on their time – often the case these days – then time, or the lack of it, may well prove the most significant barrier to performance.

**Systems**  
 Systems or procedures can contribute to getting the job done, or can work against it. Does your organisation have too much red tape? Do its systems work in harmony or against each other?

**Work organisation**  
 If you want to set someone up for success they need the authority to do the job. Giving someone a job to do but not the authority to do it is a recipe for disaster. Clear communication channels help too.

**PERFORMANCE = A x M x O x D**

**Motivation**  
**Motivation includes**

- Incentives
- Attitudes

**Incentives**  
 Think beyond performance pay or second warnings, and consider if you are inadvertently punishing the individual for the very performance you want while rewarding the performance you don't want.

*A case in point:*  
 A manager tells her staff to use their initiative. However the staff work in a high profile area where misjudgments have embarrassing consequences. The boss is popular with the staff and they enjoy spending time with her consulting over their work.  
 Using their initiative has potentially undesirable consequences for the staff. Non-performance (ie consulting the boss) has favourable consequences.

**Attitudes**  
 When the employee thinks that the employer does not have their best interests at heart or where there is a clash between their values and the organisation's, their attitude to work may be affected.

*A case in point:*  
 A nurse at a private rest-home/hospital found that her ability to provide the best care for her patients was compromised by cost-cutting measures, which were imposed. Her attitude to her job was consequently affected.

**Direction**  
**Direction includes**

- Clear expectations
- Measurement
- Feedback

**Clear expectations**  
 Before someone can perform, they need to know what it is they are supposed to do and how well they need to do it. Where quality competes against – say – price or time, be clear which is most important. Your performance standards should be observable and measurable.

*A case in point:*  
 A boss asked his assistant to check a report and get it reprinted. The assistant got all the typographical errors corrected and arranged for the reprint at a lower price than before. The boss was not pleased: some of the figures in the report were out of date.

**Measurement**  
 Having set measurable and observable performance standards, you must then measure whether they were met. If you do not bother to measure performance against them, the standards will not be taken seriously.

**Feedback**  
 Having measured, you must then provide feedback. Sit down with your staff to discuss the standards you expected and the standards they achieved.