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Using Job-Focused Objectives to Improve Transfer to the Workplace

Learning Objectives:

- Write job-focused objectives that promote skill transfer to the workplace
- Develop strategies for collaborating with sponsors, SMEs, and other stakeholders to gain support for implementing job-focused objectives

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Directions: This session teaches a job-focused variation of a 3-part instructional objective that Mager (1997) popularized. Each objective consists of a job-focused performance, condition, and criteria. Use these guidelines, the checklist, and the objectives template to create job-focused objectives for your training.

Objectives Guidelines

Step 1: Specify the performance using a single action verb that describes what an exemplary performer does on the job.

Step 2: Specify the conditions for the on-the-job performance.

Cues	What tells the individuals to perform? Example: First responders react to an alarm.
Setting	Where will the individuals be expected to perform? Example: Nurses might be asked to work in a clinic or a hospital ward.
People	Will the individuals have access to supervisors, team members, or other people? Example: Managers might be asked to work as part of a project team.
Equipment	What tools, supplies, facilities, etc. will the individuals have to work with? Example: Auditors might be able to use calculators and spreadsheet templates.
Information	What information or reference materials will be available to the individuals? Example: Peace officers might be able to use online criminal databases.
Constraints	What predetermined limits or constraints are the individuals expected to adhere to? Example: Customer service personnel might be required to meet prescribed call length limits.

Step 3: Specify the criteria the on-the-job performance.

Time	Duration	Specifies the required length of the performance. Example: Paramedics will maintain a steady CPR rate for at least 10 minutes.
	Rate	Specifies the speed at which the performance must take place. Example: Court reporters will record at a rate of 150 words per minute.
Accuracy	Number of errors	Specifies the maximum number of errors allowed. Example: Flight attendants will announce preflight boarding instructions with no more than two verbal errors.
	Tolerances	Specifies the maximum range of measurement that is acceptable. Example: Quality assurance analysts will calculate a mean to the nearest .01.
Quality	Essential characteristics	Specifies the features or characteristics that must be present in the performance. Example: Salespersons will employ a consultative sales approach to identify a customer need.

Source	Specifies the documents or materials that will be used to judge the performance. Example: Graphic designers will create a series of computer screens that are consistent with established principles of screen design.	
Consequences	Specifies the expected results or the performance. Example: Managers will be able to develop a response to an employee conflict that reduces the company's legal liability.	

Objectives Checklist

Performance

1. Does each objective include a single performance, represented by a single verb?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Is the performance represented by an action verb that concisely describes the exemplar's performance of the task on the job?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does the performance focus on a higher-level problem-solving skill?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Conditions

4. Does each objective include conditions that are consistent with the job?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Do the conditions appear to be complete?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Do the conditions appear to be appropriate?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Do the conditions avoid mentioning the instructional setting?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Criteria

8. Does each objective include relevant, measurable criteria associated with exemplary performance on the job?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Do the criteria describe the standard for each time the performance is performed?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Do the criteria appear to be complete?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Do the criteria appear to be appropriate?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Objectives Template

Directions: Use this table to write and facilitate the review of job-focused performance objectives for training.

#	Performance on the Job	Condition(s) on the Job	Criteria on the Job
1			
2			
3			
4			

Planning Worksheet

Directions: Use this worksheet to cover your bases and spin your message as you work with others to adopt job-focused objectives within your organization.

Cover Bases

Bases to Cover		External Resources	Internal Resources	Who Can Help	Next Steps
1. Organizational Intelligence	*Using your knowledge of how the organization works to "work the organization"*				
Clear links between business goals and training	☐ Have ☐ Need				
Credible sources of trustworthy gossip about job performances that are keeping people up at night	☐ Have ☐ Need				
2. Consulting	*Provide relevant, trusted, and timely advice in ways that shape expectations and deliver valued performance*				
Credible allies with "street cred" who will push with you	☐ Have ☐ Need				
Ways to turn requests for training into opportunities to improve workplace performance	☐ Have ☐ Need				

Spin Your Message

Characteristic	What It Means	Spun Examples	Your Spin for Each Person
Relative advantage	People are more likely to accept changes that are better than old or new alternatives; answers the question, "What's in it for me?"	➢ "How would it help you if people left their training performing their jobs?" ➢ "How might training focused on what people do on the job help you?"	
Simplicity	People are more likely to adopt changes they perceive are easy to understand.	➢ "Seen this way, it's pretty simple. We want them doing in their training what they'll be doing on the job."	
Social impact/interpersonal pain	People are more likely to adopt changes when they see that desirable consequences occur to others who make the same change and no undesirable consequences occur in their relationships with other people.	➢ "How might the interpersonal and organizational benefits arising from job-focused objectives outweigh the pain of using them?	

Resources

Dormant, D. (2011). *The chocolate model of change* retrieved from http://www.lulu.com/product/file-download/the-chocolate-model-of-change/16378899?productTrackingContext=search_results/search_shelf/center/1

Mager, R. F. (1997). *Preparing instructional objectives* (3rd ed.) Atlanta, GA: The Center for Effective Performance.

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Villachica, S. W., & Stepich, D. A. (2010). Surviving troubled times: Five best practices for training professionals. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 23(2), 93-115. doi: 10.1002/piq.20083

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