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Article abstract

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A Macro/Micro Decision Model for the Training and Development Specialist

David W. Mealia

This article describes a macro/micro decision making model designed to aid the T/D specialist.

As one observes today's organizations, it becomes increasingly apparent that pressure continues to mount for the Training and Development (T/D) specialist to play a more significant role in both the organization's day-to-day operations and internal decision making process. This increased demand for active organizational involvement, is clearly indicated by T. White (9, p. 3) when he argues:

As experts in the people end of the business, we (T/D professionals) are being asked to play an increasingly important role in helping our organizations succeed. To meet these increased demands, we must continually grow and develop our skills and knowledge.

Similarly, Lippitt and Nadler (5) argue that the T/D specialist's responsibilities have expanded beyond the traditional learning specialist role to include the role of internal organizational consultant. Consequently, the T/D specialist frequently finds himself/herself being called upon to be an active participant in such areas as organizational problem solving, individual change, and organizational development.

Unfortunately, there has been no attempt in the T/D literature to supply an integrative decision making model designed to guide the T/D specialist when fulfilling his/her responsibilities. The purpose of this article is to construct such a model¹ and explain how it can be used by the T/D specialist². The model to be developed will guide the T/D specialist in how to a) effectively assess training needs, b) differentiate between the impact of major organizational changes and day-to-day performance deficiencies, c)

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1 Because of space constraints a complete flow diagram of the proposed model could not be presented. Individuals interested in such a flow diagram should contact the author and request a copy.

2 The following discussion draws heavily from such authors as BRETHERTON and RUMMLER (1), KIRKPATRICK (3), LAIRD (4), LIPPITT and NADLER (5), MAGER and PIPE (6), and WATSON (7).

evaluate the appropriateness of T/D and non T/D solutions to organizational problems, and d) identify critical areas in the consultative/decision making process where key errors are frequently made by T/D specialists or other managers within the organization.

The decision making model to be discussed is broken down into two major levels — a macro and a micro level. Generally, the macro level is associated with major organizational/job changes which are likely to affect large numbers of employees or change the job requirements of specific job clusters. Conversely, the micro level will generally be associated with the day-to-day performance of specific individuals, or small groups of individuals.

THE MACRO LEVEL

As a point of departure, let us begin with the macro level of our model. Critical to the effective performance of the T/D specialist is the collection of relevant information which will directly, or indirectly, affect his/her choice of actions. Therefore, the T/D specialist must continually monitor the organization's internal, and external environment, in an attempt to remain alert to those changes which are likely to require some type of T/D effort. Specifically, the T/D specialist should monitor changes in such critical areas as a) organization mission, b) technologies available, c) existing policies and procedures, d) personnel moves (transfers/promotions), e) organizational structure, f) client needs, and g) day-to-day operations. It is also important to note that information obtained from actual monitoring of day-to-day operations will also act as a direct input into the micro level of our model. Finally these areas are themselves interrelated, i.e., each area has the potential of affecting the others. For example, a change in the organization's mission may require new technologies or the hiring of new employees.

To operationalize the macro level of the model the T/D specialist must develop a mechanism designed to collect the necessary information. Because of the varied sources of potential information existing internally and externally to the organization, the author recommends a multi-pronged approach to data collection. For example, the T/D specialist should a) develop close ties with line personnel so as to gain their trust and concomitantly their insights (this may require involving others in the decision making process); b) periodically interview, on a one-to-one basis, knowledgeable individuals internal and external to the organization; c) utilize written questionnaires to periodically tap relevant information sources; and d) liaise with other

power/information centers within the organization which are primarily responsible for dealing with those areas which are of concern. The reader should realize, however, that the development of such an information gathering network is not something that can be accomplished over night, but rather will require considerable time and effort on the part of the T/D specialist, or department.

Questions Relevant to the Macro Level

At this point, the question which must be asked by the T/D specialist is "Do the affected individuals have the required skills to perform as expected in the new or changed positions?" The T/D specialist's response to this question will determine what subsequent course of action should be taken. If the employees filling the new or changed position are qualified, they should be directly assigned to the new job³.

Once employees are placed in a new or changed position, the temptation exists to immediately evaluate their performance. Such action, by either management, or the T/D specialist, represents one of the basic errors frequently made when attempting to evaluate employee performance. It would be more appropriate to allow the employees to adjust to the new job by giving affected individuals the needed time, support, and materials to perform the job effectively. If this is not done, the organization may inadvertently introduce training programs which are not needed, or worse, transfer or terminate employees. However, when the employees have been given the necessary time and support to effectively adjust, it then becomes appropriate to evaluate their performance on the micro level.

Even here, the T/D specialist must be alert to possible training opportunities. Typically, the reason why particular supervisors/managers fail to supply the new employees with the required support is their own lack of training in such areas as effective employee counselling or leadership. If these weaknesses do in fact exist, it is the T/D specialists' responsibility to attempt to overcome the problem through training.

If the response to the question "Do the affected individuals have the required skills to perform as expected in the new or changed position?" is "No", then this is a clear signal to the T/D specialist that some type of training/development program is needed.

However, before deciding on what type of program the employee should be exposed to, the T/D specialist must consider two additional fac-

³ Although even here, there is likely to be some type of orientation training required.

tors. First, were the employees able to perform the task some time in the past? In those instances where employees were able to perform the task in the past, it is likely that some type of refresher course would be sufficient to bring them up to the required skill levels demanded by the new, or changed position. To have employees enter into a training/development program which assumes zero knowledge would likely waste time, money, and energy. This is because the employees have already demonstrated past knowledge, or facility with, the required skills. Furthermore, such a situation is likely to be demotivating. Only if the time period separating the employees' past successful performance and present unsuccessful performance is of sufficient length to produce total (or near total) forgetting would the T/D specialist be advised to start the training/development at the most basic level.

If, however, it has been determined that the employees have never possessed the required skills to perform effectively, it must then be determined whether the employees have the potential to develop the new skills. In those instances where the answer is "No", the decision must be made to a) not hire the individuals if they are not presently employed, b) transfer the employees to positions requiring a lower skill level, or c) terminate the employees. Conversely, if the individuals do have the potential to learn the new skills then some type of formal training should be arranged.

Once the decision has been made to formally train employees, the T/D specialist must be careful not to make the following error. Because of time pressures, or lack of experience, there is an unfortunate tendency to evaluate training and development efforts on the basis of the number of hours spent in the T/D session. Consequently, if a trainee spends the allotted amount of time in a T/D session, he/she is placed on the job.

By merely utilizing time as a decision criteria, the T/D specialist often fails to ask the following appropriate question, "Have the involved individuals mastered the required skills?" If the answer to this question is "Yes", only then should employees be assigned to the new or changed job. However, if the answer is "No", then the T/D specialist, in consultation with line management, should decide whether to a) recycle the trainees, b) transfer trainees to less demanding positions, or c) terminate.

THE MICRO LEVEL

At this point, the T/D specialist enters into what can be referred to as the micro, day-to-day, evaluation of performance. However, prior to operationalization of the micro level the T/D specialist must have already established, in conjunction with interested/knowledgeable others, standards of

performance. These standards of performance will act as standards against which to compare actual performance. Furthermore, prior to the actual operationalization of the micro level one must introduce an effective monitoring system which will accurately measure the employee's present performance. One option open to the T/D specialist is to rely upon line personnel to evaluate their own subordinates. However, such reliance may once again require additional training activity in an effort to educate supervisors on how to effectively evaluate their subordinates.

Questions Relevant to Performance Discrepancies/Deficiencies

The first question the T/D specialist must ask on the micro level is, "Does a performance discrepancy exist?" If, after the appropriate analysis of micro information, the answer is "No", then the T/D specialist, or management, should be willing to maintain the status quo. However, here again another basic error can be made. The potential for error arises when management becomes complacent and takes good (desired) performance for granted. As a result, one frequently finds management failing to adequately recognize and/or reward those individuals who are performing at or above required levels. If this is in fact the case, future performance is likely to suffer.

If, however, the response to the question, "Does a performance discrepancy exist?" is "Yes", then the T/D specialist must continue the evaluation process one step further. The T/D specialist must next ask, "Will such a discrepancy, if left unchecked, have a negative impact on some relevant dimension of organizational performance, i.e., productivity, morale, turnover, etc.?"

The decision making process which must be carried out at this point is quite similar to the one following the first question asked on the micro level. If after careful analysis, it is determined that no negative consequences will occur should the discrepancy be left uncorrected, then the discrepancy should be ignored and the status quo maintained. However, good performance must again be rewarded so as to maintain current standards.

Conversely, if it is discovered that there are negative consequences associated with the performance discrepancy, then the T/D specialist, in consultation with line management, must develop an appropriate intervention strategy designed to correct the situation. It should be mentioned that once it has been determined that a performance discrepancy will have a negative impact on organizational (departmental) performance, it is more appropriate to refer to it as a performance deficiency.

At this point the T/D specialist faces the possibility of making another basic error. The T/D specialist should not assume that all performance deficiencies can (or should) be solved through training and development efforts. In fact, training and development efforts are only relevant when some type of skill deficiency exists. If a skill deficiency does not exist on the part of the employee, then some type of non T/D solution will likely be more appropriate. Therefore, when selecting an appropriate intervention the T/D specialist must first determine whether the performance deficiency is a result of a skill deficiency or an environmental deficiency. Only when this has been determined can the T/D specialist proceed.

Questions Relevant to Skill Deficiencies

Let us assume for the moment that, after an appropriate analysis of the situation, a skill deficiency has been discovered, i.e., the employee could not perform if his/her life depended on it. In this case, the T/D specialist should proceed by considering the following questions and alternatives.

When a skill deficiency is discovered, the T/D specialist must again consider whether the employee was able to perform the present task sometime in the past. If the answer, on the micro level, is "No", the T/D specialist has two basic alternatives open to him/her. First, the T/D specialist should determine whether a given task, which can not presently be performed because of an existing skill deficiency, can be simplified. The relevant point is that it is frequently possible to modify the task (i.e., through task division, technological supports, memory-judgemental supports, etc.) so that actual skill requirements are lowered to the level presently possessed by the job incumbent. Such changes in job design can often be accomplished at a lower cost than a formalized training program.

If the task does not lend itself to simplification, and the individual has not demonstrated a past ability to perform, it is now time to consider some type of formal training/development program. However, as on the Macro level, before sending a particular individual to a T/D program, it is necessary to determine whether that individual has the ability to learn the skills required to perform effectively. In those instances where it is believed that the individual does not have the potential to sufficiently improve his/her skills through formal T/D efforts, the decision must again be made to either transfer or terminate the deficient individual.

Conversely, in those instances where the individual is believed to have the potential, and desire, to develop the required skills, the decision should be made to train/develop that individual. Again, the choice of the actual T/D program (technique) employed will be based upon situational considerations.

Let us return to the question "Was the individual able to perform the task sometime in the past?" If the T/D specialist's response is now "Yes", he/she must consider the following question before determining an appropriate T/D response, "Is the task performed frequently?" In those instances where the appropriate response is "No", then there is a high probability that the required skill level can be maintained if the employee is exposed to some type of practice schedule designed to maintain the desired skill level. Therefore, to help maintain desired skill levels, we find the pianist practicing between concerts, the policeman engaging in target practice to maintain shooting accuracy, or the assessor in an infrequently used assessment center practicing his/her skill observing behavior.

However, if the employee regularly performs the required task, but still demonstrates a skill deficiency, practice will not have the desired impact. Often what is producing the skill deficiency is not lack of practice but the lack of adequate feedback to insure that the individual has the required information to alter his/her behavior when actual performance deviates from required (desired) levels. This can frequently be accomplished with minimum effort if the organization has already established performance standards and has set up monitoring procedures to measure actual performance. What would then remain to be done is for management to feed this information back to the job incumbent. This information would allow the individual to take corrective action to bring his/her performance back to desired levels when actual performance was below predetermined standards and also act to reward the individual when actual performance was at or above predetermined standards.

For example, after the appropriate training most individuals can effectively perform as an assessor in an on going assessment center. However, if the individual is not given appropriate feedback as to actual performance, the assessor's performance may begin to deteriorate. Such deterioration can frequently be prevented by periodically evaluating assessee reports (as to accuracy of skill observations) and giving this information to the assessor. This information (feedback) will allow the assessor to take the appropriate corrective action. If the deterioration cannot be corrected by the assessor through his/her own effects, it may be necessary to put the assessor through some type of refresher course.

Questions Relevant to Environmental Deficiencies

Let us now assume that, after an appropriate analysis of the situation, it has been determined that a skill deficiency does not exist, i.e., if need be the individual could perform the task. In this case, the T/D specialist should

proceed by considering the following questions and alternatives which relate to the task environment⁴.

One of the first questions which the T/D specialist should ask when considering the task environment is, "Is performance punishing to the individual?" If the response to this question is "Yes", then it would be in the best interests of the organization to remove the negative consequences (punishments) associated with desired performances. For example, if, in response to a typist's speedy and accurate work, the boss directs an ever increasing amount of work to that typist, then good performance becomes punishing. This is especially true if the work is being transferred to the individual from other typists in the same department who are not performing effectively. Unless such negative consequences are removed, there is a high probability that desired behavior will not be continued.

If, after appropriate analysis, negative consequences are not found to be linked with desired performance, the T/D specialist should consider the following question, "Is non-performance rewarding for the employee?" A "Yes" response should be a clear signal to the T/D specialist that such positive consequences must be removed. In the typist example above, it is possible to direct one's attention towards the poor performers rather than the effective performers. By so doing, one may find that poor performance is being rewarded by giving that individual a reduced workload. As a result poor performance will be maintained. Only when such positive consequences are removed is there any hope of motivating the individual to perform at desired levels.

If desired performance is not punishing, and non-performance is not rewarding, the T/D specialist should consider the question, "Are there obstacles in the employee's environment which prevent effective performance?" If after the appropriate analysis, obstacles are found to exist, then the T/D specialist, in consultation with management, must determine how to best remove such obstacles. Environment obstacles can take many forms, i.e., poor equipment, unavailable resources, poor environmental (working) conditions, unplanned disruptions, unclear directions or unclear steps to desired goals, etc. What is relevant is that such obstacles, if not removed, will continually prevent the employee from performing effectively.

Finally, one of the major questions which must be considered by the T/D specialist is whether job performance actually matters. Both the T/D

⁴ The reader should realize that the questions relating to the task environment can be considered simultaneously. However, for the purpose of discussion and model development, they are treated sequentially. Furthermore, these factors are environmentally based, i.e., they are external to the individual and often outside his/her control.

specialist and management must be continually sensitive to the need to have performance matter. Indifference on the part of the organization can only lead to negative consequences. For example, if both poor and good performers are rewarded equally, it will not take long before good employees either leave the organization or reduce their output. Similarly, if a manager accepts a poor (or late) report, it is unlikely that future reports will be treated and differently by the employee. Therefore, if the response to the question "Does performance matter?" is "No", then every effort must be made to insure that positive consequences are linked with desired behavior and either neutral or negative consequences (punishment) are linked with undesirable behavior⁵.

Up to this point, a decision model has been developed which will hopefully help guide the T/D specialist when attempting to fulfill his/her a) training and development responsibilities and b) expanded role as an in-house consultant. However, the model is not complete unless two additional dimensions are considered, dimensions some theorists and practitioners would consider the most critical. They are: prioritization of performance deficiencies and evaluation of both T/D and non T/D solutions.

PRIORITIZATION OF PERFORMANCE DEFICIENCIES

Let us first consider the issue of prioritization of performance deficiencies. As we shall see, prioritization will directly determine which corrective action will be taken by the organization.

First, the need to prioritize is often forced upon the T/D specialist (and line management) because of limited resources, i.e., time, energy, money, expertise, and top management support. As indicated by the present model, there are five factors (cost effectiveness, executive pressure, population serviced, immediacy of impact, and possible legal requirements) which should be utilized by the T/D specialist when evaluating the relative importance of performance deficiencies.

Cost effectiveness is a function of the difference between costs of implementing a T/D or non T/D solution and the benefits (saving gained) from such corrective action. The greater the positive spread between benefits and required expenditures the higher the priority is likely to be for correcting the performance deficiency. The reader should realize, however,

⁵ Although we have been discussing non T/D solutions, the T/D specialist must be alert to situations where training and development may still play a role, i.e., it may be necessary to train/develop line personnel to effectively recognize, and overcome, environmental factors which prevent effective employee performance.

that it becomes increasingly more difficult to make such comparisons as one moves from production type activities to middle and upper management decision making or integrative activities.

Next the T/D specialist should be aware of, and responsive to, executive pressure. Once the T/D function has been accepted within an organization, line management will frequently request that the T/D specialist solve existing performance problems through T/D efforts. Although such a situation is desirable, the T/D specialist should be aware of the presence of potential conflicts. Let us determine why.

First, as indicated above, not all performance deficiencies can be corrected through T/D efforts. If the T/D specialist succumbs to executive pressure and provides a T/D program which is inappropriate, the long-run results are likely to be disastrous. Such efforts are bound to fail and as a result the T/D specialist's credibility will suffer. However, if the T/D specialist too frequently refuses to supply requested services, and does not adequately explain why, his/her credibility will again suffer.

Secondly, the T/D specialist must be alert to possible conflicts associated with multiple requests simultaneously originating from several executives. Conflicts are likely to develop because available resources prevent the T/D departments from adequately handling all requests. Unfortunately, each executive will likely perceive his/her requests as both appropriate and critical.

Therefore to insure continued line support, the T/D specialist must draw upon his consultative and interpersonal skills to a) adequately explain why T/D programs may not be an appropriate solution, b) help diagnose appropriate non T/D solutions, c) effectively interact with line personnel so as to retain a politically viable position within the organization, and d) correctly evaluate the impact on executive support when refusing to supply T/D services.

When attempting to prioritize performance problems, one must also consider the population experiencing the performance deficiency. The relevant question here is how central is the group's performance to the organization's operations/goals. If they represent a key function within the organization, then performance deficiency within that group must receive a high priority rating. If the activities the group performs are not central, then it may be both appropriate and desirable to give the existing performance deficiencies a low priority when contemplating corrective action.

Next, the immediacy of the impact of a particular performance deficiency will play a central role in any final priority. If the impact of current

poor performance in a particular area will not be felt for some time, the pressure to act will be reduced. In this case, the performance deficiency may not be given a high priority. However, if the performance deficiency is likely to have an immediate and direct impact on organizational (or departmental) success, then there is a greater probability that the performance deficiency being considered will be given a high priority.

Finally, legal requirements found within the organization's environment may place numerous constraints on the level of discretion afforded the T/D specialist when attempting to prioritize performance deficiencies. As a result, before any final ranking is attempted, some effort must be made to consider the organization's legal responsibilities, i.e., as reflected in equal employment legislation, occupation and health acts, safety legislation, etc.

EVALUATION OF CORRECTIVE ACTION

Having prioritized existing performance deficiencies, the organization is now in a position to implement the appropriate solution, i.e., as determined through the application of the macro/micro level of the present model.

Once implemented, it becomes the responsibility of the T/D specialist, and/or line management, to effectively evaluate the success (or failure) of the corrective action taken. Therefore, for each decision point in the above model where some type of T/D or non T/D action was taken, it is necessary to determine if the performance deficiency has been removed. Until this has occurred, it is premature to consider the corrective action a success. Nevertheless, we frequently see organizations which are willing to a) spend the time and money to analyse a particular situation, b) develop what they consider to be an appropriate solution, and c) implement that solution, but then fail to assess the results.

In the case of T/D solutions, it is often necessary to effectively evaluate results on three distinct levels. The first point at which some attempt to evaluate results should be made is during the T/D session. Such information allows internal correction while the session is still in progress. The next relevant point at which an evaluation is made is at the end of the T/D session. This allows the T/D specialist to determine whether the trainees have mastered the session's content. It is worth mentioning that the T/D specialist should not fall into the trap of merely evaluating the trainees' attitudinal response to, or time spent in, the training session. What is important is that the trainees be evaluated on the degree to which they have mastered the rele-

vant skills. Finally, it is important to make an attempt to evaluate the degree to which the skills gained during the T/D session are in fact transferred back to the work situation. It should be realized by the reader that effective evaluation should take place on all three levels.

For non T/D solutions, the primary thrust of the evaluative process should be the actual on-the-job performance of affected employees. Therefore, once, the environmental (organizational) change has been implemented, the employees' performance must be evaluated to determine whether the performance deficiency still exists. However, one must remember that sufficient time, support, and material must be afforded the affected employees so that they might effectively adjust.

Finally, if after effective evaluation has been carried out, the performance deficiency still remains, it will be necessary to re-assess the situation, i.e., retrace one's decisions to insure that relevant information has not been ignored or used inappropriately. However, after several iterations, it may be concluded that given present resources and knowledge the existing deficiency cannot be corrected but rather must be lived with.

CONCLUSION

It is necessary for the T/D specialist to realize that his/her role has changed dramatically over the past decade. The most important of these changes has been the broadening of responsibilities beyond the traditional role as learning specialist. Specifically, one finds, with increasing frequency, the T/D specialist being called upon to act as an in-house consultant on a broad range of performance related problems. Furthermore, in order to satisfy the organization's increased expectations and needs, the T/D specialist must continually monitor, interact with, and adjust to the changes within the internal and external organizational environment.

The model developed above is designed to facilitate the T/D specialist's performance when attempting to fulfill his/her new and expanded responsibilities. If the reader understands what has been discussed and is willing to apply this new knowledge to his/her own organizational environment, then a significant step forward has been made. However, it must also be realized that this model should only be used to guide rather than dictate behavior. Therefore, the degree of success experienced by the T/D specialist when applying the model will be a function of his/her energy, commitment and creativity, as well as the degree of openness and support of the whole organization.

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Un double modèle de décision pour les spécialistes en formation et en développement

Réponse à une carence apparente dans les études relatives à la formation et au développement, le présent article a pour objet de mettre au point un modèle destiné à guider les spécialistes a) dans la distinction de la formation et des développements, b) dans la distinction à apporter entre les transformations fondamentales d'une organisation et les déficiences journalières de performance, c) dans l'estimation de la justesse des solutions fondées sur la formation et le développement et des autres solutions possibles et d) dans l'identification des points où des erreurs-clés de formation et de développement qui se sont produites. Le modèle de prise de décision se situe à deux niveaux, global et fragmentaire. Pour chaque niveau de décision, l'auteur pose un certain nombre de questions auxquelles il faut apporter réponse avant de donner suite à des solutions aux problèmes, solutions qui relèveront ou non du système de formation et de développement. Enfin, on insiste sur les facteurs fondamentaux à considérer dans l'application du modèle, soit les mécanismes d'appréciation et de rétroaction.

Le niveau global du modèle expose comment il faut procéder quand l'organisation doit faire face à des changements importants dans des secteurs comme a) les fins mêmes de l'organisation, b) les technologies disponibles, c) les politiques et les processus existants, d) les promotions et les mutations de personnel, e) la structure de l'organisation, f) les besoins des clients et g) les opérations quotidiennes. Lorsque des changements se produisent dans ces secteurs, il y a forte probabilité que les carences de qualification apparaissent au sein de l'organisation. Aussi, les questions à poser doivent-elles porter sur ce qui suit: «Les employés ont-ils la qualification requise pour accomplir la tâche efficacement?» «Si les employés en cause ne peuvent effectuer la tâche présentement, étaient-ils en mesure de l'accomplir efficacement dans le passé?» ou, enfin, «Les employés sont-ils aptes à acquérir les nouvelles qualifications?» La réponse à ces questions ou à d'autres semblables déterminera l'action que

le service de formation et de développement devra entreprendre. De plus, le modèle indique que, lorsque des programmes de formation sont mis en oeuvre pour assurer une performance acceptable de la part de l'employé, le spécialiste en formation et en développement doit prendre les moyens de s'assurer a) que les employés qui complètent leur formation doivent vraiment maîtriser les nouvelles qualifications, b) qu'une fois assignés à la tâche nouvelle, les employés reçoivent l'appui requis, c) que le personnel de maîtrise est suffisamment formé pour fournir cet appui. C'est dans ces domaines que les spécialistes en formation et en développement font des erreurs coûteuses.

Le débat, lorsqu'il se rapporte à des cas individuels (soit l'évaluation de la performance de l'employé au jour le jour) exige une double action au choix de la part du spécialiste en formation et en développement. D'une façon spéciale, il faut d'abord déterminer si une performance déficiente est ou n'est pas attribuable à une carence de qualification. Si celle-ci résulte d'une telle carence, le spécialiste en formation et en développement doit se demander ceci face à une pareille situation: «L'employé était-il en mesure d'effectuer la tâche dans le passé?» «La tâche peut-elle être simplifiée?» «Recourt-on fréquemment à la qualification?» «L'employé possède-t-il le potentiel voulu pour acquérir la nouvelle qualification?»

D'un autre côté, s'il n'existe pas de carence de qualification, les questions doivent porter sur les conditions ambiantes: «L'existence de la performance ne constitue-t-elle pas une punition?» «L'inexistence de la performance n'est-elle pas une récompense?» «Y a-t-il des obstacles dans le milieu qui nuisent à la performance de l'employé?» «La performance a-t-elle vraiment de l'importance?» Dans les deux cas, qu'il s'agisse de la déficience de la qualification ou de la déficience du milieu ambiant, on pourra y apporter correction selon les réponses aux questions posées.

Le modèle présenté tient compte de deux autres facteurs. D'abord, parce qu'il arrive à toute organisation de manquer de ressources, il n'est pas toujours possible de résoudre d'un seul coup tous les problèmes de performance. En conséquence, il importe de donner priorité aux carences de performance. Pour faciliter ce processus, l'auteur recommande de considérer les facteurs suivants: a) le coût de l'efficacité de l'action à entreprendre, b) les pressions de la direction, c) l'importance du groupe desservi par rapport à l'ensemble de l'organisation, d) le caractère immédiat de l'impact, e) les exigences légales. Une fois ces facteurs considérés et le type d'action choisi, l'organisation peut mettre en oeuvre les facteurs pour lesquels elle dispose de ressources suffisantes.

Enfin, le modèle attire l'attention sur la responsabilité du spécialiste en formation et en développement ou des cadres hiérarchiques dans l'évolution du succès (ou de l'échec) de l'action entreprise. S'il s'agit des solutions proposées par le spécialiste, l'évolution doit se faire au moins à trois étages: durant la session de formation et de développement, à la fin de la session et lorsque l'employé retourne à son poste. Pour l'autre type de solutions, le point de départ du processus d'évaluation doit être la véritable performance au travail des employés visés.

Dans chaque cas, si le processus d'évaluation démontre que le problème a été résolu, le spécialiste peut passer au problème suivant. Sinon, il peut être nécessaire qu'il revienne sur ses propres décisions pour s'assurer que l'information pertinente n'a pas été mise de côté ou mal utilisée. Cependant, après quelques reprises, force est d'en arriver à la conclusion que, compte tenu des ressources et des connaissances disponibles, la déficience ne peut être corrigée et qu'il faut s'en accommoder.