

## Talent Development 32 Organizational Data

by **Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD**



Section 3.7 in the CPTD Certification program for ATD is Data and Analysis. Section D reads, “Skill in gathering and organizing data from internal and/or external sources in logical and/or practical ways to support retrieval and manipulation.”

My prior article addressed performance analysis for the purpose of designing a development program. This article will deal with where you find the data and how you organize it for

maximum use over time.

I will use an example of a manufacturing operation in this article. A similar approach could be used by any kind of entity, but it would contain different items depending on the industry involved.

### **Where to find the data**

Sometimes it is obvious what the relevant data are for an operation. For example, in a manufacturing unit, the output per day and machine efficiency along with yield information would be important to track.

While some information is obvious, there are secondary sources of data that may be even more powerful at monitoring performance. For example, for the manufacturing unit above, there may be numerous indirect measures that are critical to track. The delivery performance of the material supplier is vital to know and track.

Any disruption in the supply chain can shut down an operation. These things include invoice accuracy, shipping delays, weather related downtime, strikes, and numerous other disruptions that can shut down an operation.

Likewise, the distribution function is important to keep things flowing once product has been produced.

Internally, the inventory accuracy is critical, so that the right materials are delivered to the line in time.

## Central Database

In most cases, it is a good idea to track all of these variables in a central database. In this way, spot shortages or outages can be identified in time to deploy work-around measures so that the main operation is not impacted.

The supply chain manager usually is responsible for tracking all of the vital measures and sounding the alarm if something is off standard.

## Lean Thinking

In most industries, the concepts of lean thinking allow managers to understand how things are supposed to work and what things to track. It becomes like a giant puzzle where hundreds of things can go wrong. It is the role of the supply chain manager to monitor the key factors and take preventive measures to avoid a stock out.

Lean thinking attempts to reduce the levels of inventory required to keep an operation in production without sacrificing overall unit performance. Things like “just in time” delivery of supplies will keep the cost down without undue risk. These processes must be designed carefully by known experts in order to be robust.

Trying to implement a lean manufacturing process without the specific content knowledge can lead to a disastrous outcome. It is best to relay on experts in the design and testing of any system.

Once a system is in operation and proven, then you can reduce the expert support to lower the overall costs, but there needs to be warning flares that go off if one of the variables is about to go out of spec.

Every variable needs to have an alarm level that prevents an upset from jeopardizing the main operation. The job is not complete until the alarm and work-around measures are in place.

*Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals, Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online, Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind, and Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.*



