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*Entelechy's Newsletter for Trainers, Managers, HR Professionals and Others  
Responsible for the Performance of Others*

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FIGURING THINGS OUT

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Recently, a reader wrote for help on determining the training priorities for her company. She wrote, "We've been asked to put together a training plan and I want to make sure that our plan addresses the critical training priorities. Do you have any tools that can help me?"

First, I suggested two books. The first, *Figuring Things Out*, by Ron Zemke (of Training fame) and Thomas Kramlinger is my favorite and one that I cut my instructional design teeth on back in 1984. It remains a classic trainer's guide to needs and task analysis. I enjoy reading the book because it is written in an engaging and straightforward manner. From surveys to interviews, questionnaires to focus groups, this book tells you how to Figure Things Out.

I also recommended a book that has had a major impact on my life and has helped shape Entelechy's philosophy about training and performance. The book, *Performance Consulting*, was written by Dana Gaines Robinson and her husband James Robinson, the authors of *Training for Impact*. Both books are seminal in that they helped define the shift from training as an end in itself to training as one cog in the performance machine. *Performance Consulting* came out in 1995 as I was struggling for words to describe my growing frustration with the world of training. We were focusing too much on training as an end product and largely ignoring the ultimate goal of training – to positively affect performance.

(Side note: Perhaps that's why e-learning's biggest contribution to training so far has been to reduce training costs. Companies will spend billions of dollars on marketing materials, advertising, engineering, and other things that should positively impact sales. However, when it comes to increasing the skills of the people selling the product, they seem to be more enamored by saving money than by increasing the effectiveness of the training.)

Second, I recommend Entelechy's compilation of the two books and the wisdom gained from 10 years of customizing training for clients big and small: *Entelechy's Approach to Performance* eGuide. If your goal is to provide maximum value to the organization, create training that is relevant, practical, and engaging, then *Entelechy's Approach to Performance* is a must-have. For more on this eGuide, check out <http://unlockit.com/eguides.htm>.

Third, I provided some ideas.

The simplest – and most effective – tool for determining training needs is the question. Knowing WHAT question(s) to ask and WHO to ask is key. Follow these three steps:

- 1) To determine business goals (ALL training should support these goals), ask the top brass (or read their memos, stockholder communiqués, press releases, etc.).
- 2) To determine performance required (this is what people SHOULD be doing in order to achieve the business goals), ask the managers or senior members of the group. Get them to CLARIFY performance in behavioral terms (things that you can observe) or results (that show up when the work is done).
- 3) To determine current performance (this is what people are currently doing), you can ask managers or you can observe. Or you can review the results of the current work.

The top training needs will be those that: a) are aligned with business goals (step 1), b) can most easily be addressed in training because they are behavioral (step 2), and 3) have the greatest gap between required performance and current performance (difference between step 2 and step 3).

You CAN gather a lot of this information using simple surveys or email. I strongly recommend that once you've gathered the information, that you verify it with various levels of management.

Please note that in determining the priority needs, I recommend NOT surveying employees. Their perspective is valuable for ADDRESSING the performance gap but can be misleading in determining what's most important.

What would YOU have recommended?

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TIME FOR SOME FUN!

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I frequently receive links and URLs that feature a new training product or service. Often the link is a joke or other diversion. Rarely does the link or diversion capture my attention and get me to think, “How do they do that?”

Below is a link to “The Flash Mind Reader” which, frankly, is a bit eerie. I can’t figure out how it works.

<http://www.cyberglass.co.uk/FlashEx/mindreader.html>

To link it to training, wouldn’t it be nice to capture the attention of learners and get them to stretch their minds? If graphics and animations are eye candy, I think that things like The Flash Mind Reader are eye protein.

Or after letting participants play with this for 15 minutes (before training or during break), we segue into our topic on communication by saying, “Wouldn’t it be nice if we could read the other person’s mind as easily as The Flash Mind Reader read our minds? Well, we can through clues that the other person....”

If you know (or think you know) how this works, please write me at [mailto:ttraut@unlockit.com?subject=Flash\\_Mind\\_Reader](mailto:ttraut@unlockit.com?subject=Flash_Mind_Reader). I’ll publish the information in the next issue of *The Key*.

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## TIME MASTERY: FREE PREVIEW

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Here's a deal: Seventy-five packed pages of time mastery techniques to help you achieve what you want to achieve – and find time to do it! Cost to *The Key* subscribers – FREE!

Simply go to <http://unlockit.com/freestuff/>, enter your name and email address, and enter TMFM (all caps!) as your Download Code. Then click on the “Click to download” link and start mastering YOUR time today!

Pass this on to a friend! Cut and paste the following text into an email. They will thank you for thinking of them!

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Here's a pretty sweet deal! For a limited time, Entelechy's giving away a free preview of their brand new *Time Mastery for Managers (and Other Leaders)* eGuide! All you have to do is go to <http://unlockit.com/freestuff/>, enter your name and email address, and enter TMFM (all caps!) as your Download Code. Then click on the “Click to download” link and start enjoy! (BTW, by entering your email address, you'll begin receiving *The Key*, Entelechy's newsletter. It's not bad if you're into training or managing the performance of others. Plus, you can always unsubscribe if you don't like it.) Pass this freebie on!

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The information for Entelechy's *Time Mastery for Managers (and Other Leaders)* eGuide comes from *Time Mastery for Managers*, one of the modules in Entelechy's High Performance Management program. If you would like the full training course, you may download and customize the training materials for this module to deliver to YOUR company. Visit us at [www.unlockit.com](http://www.unlockit.com) and select Training & Tools -> High Performance Management -> Time Mastery for Managers.

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## FEATURED IN CALL CENTER MAGAZINE

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In this month's issue of Call Center Magazine, I discuss the importance of a blended PERFORMANCE solution – a solution that goes beyond blended TRAINING. Check



out *Fixing the Other Parts of the Problem* at  
<http://www.callcentermagazine.com/showIssue>.

In case you missed these from the last issue of *The Key*, check out these other articles written by yours truly and posted at The Manager.Org.

Characteristics of high performing teams:

[http://www.themanager.org/HR/High\\_Performance\\_Teams.htm](http://www.themanager.org/HR/High_Performance_Teams.htm)

Handle challenging situations with a customer-focused mindset:

[http://www.themanager.org/Strategy/Challenging\\_Situations.htm](http://www.themanager.org/Strategy/Challenging_Situations.htm)

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MAILING AND PRIVACY INFORMATION  
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You have received this email because you are in Entelechy's database of people that we've interacted with directly or indirectly or you've signed up for *The Key*. If you've received this email in error, please click on <http://unlockit.com/optout.htm> to be removed immediately from our mailing database with our apologies. (If you have trouble with the opt out link, please reply to this email directly and I'll personally remove your name.)

Send this email to your friends and colleagues who may be involved in training and the performance of others and could benefit from FREE performance tips, tools, and techniques.

Entelechy will not sell, rent, or otherwise provide anyone else your membership information for any reason. Period.

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