

Nurturing Work Environments: Research Producing a Performance Goals Tool

**A Presentation to the San Antonio Chapter of the
International Society of Performance Improvement**

January 24, 2002

By

Evelyn E. Boaz, Ph.D.

Tel: 210-656-4537

E-mail: eboaz@idworld.net

Nurturing Work Environments: Research Producing a Performance Goals Tool

Evelyn Boaz, Ph.D.

Work force – one of the three basic areas in any organization that determines not only if it survives but how it thrives.

A qualitative study - identified conditions and circumstances forming nurturing work environments and from these produced a performance goals tool.

A concept model was developed from the ideational data found in multi-disciplinary literatures and used to analyze data collected from seven individuals working at the production levels of two organizations, one providing a service, the other manufacturing various products. [Analysis procedure – meta-comparison]

A Description Construct emerged - provides both end goals of actions and attitudes to achieve nurturing work environments and the supporting data to understand the details of these actions and attitudes. Use as a performance goals tool.

Tool consists of 3 strata with each stratum providing an increasing amount of detail.

- Top stratum is a data display table giving a silhouette of the dimensions of the circumstances and conditions forming nurturing work environments.**
- Middle stratum has expanded data providing a profile of these conditions and circumstances.**
- Bottom stratum is the originating content that supports the particular circumstance or condition.**

How to use the Description Construct in a workplace?

Some simple initial steps:

First step – Ask members some vital questions.

1. Do you want to have nurturing work environments in the organization?
2. Are there aspects of the conditions and circumstances forming nurturing work environments already present in the organization?
3. Are you and all other members willing to take the time and energy necessary to find what the organization is doing now in relation to the identified conditions and circumstances forming nurturing work environments?
4. Does the organization want use the performance goals tool to achieve the conditions and circumstances forming nurturing work environments?
5. Does the organization agree with the end goals described in the performance goals tool, the Description Construct of nurturing work environments?

Second – Using the information obtained by the Q & A, decide where within the tool to begin changes needed to achieve an identified condition or circumstances.

- Can start process of change with any action or attitude identified anywhere within the top stratum.
- Effect of any change ripples throughout the organization.

Third – Decide which procedures to use to initiate and sustain the change process.

- Can be prepackaged or organizationally developed.
- Must have a sustained effort to be successful.

Forth – Decide when and how to use the tool to evaluate the progress of change toward the end goal.

Fifth – Repeat these steps until nurturing work environments are everywhere.

A Silhouette of Dimensions Describing the Characteristics of Nurturing Work Environments

Thematic Concept	Literature Discussion Parameter Sections and Participant Interviews Data Sources					
	Work Activities and People	Holistic Work Environment	Social Perception by Individuals	Nurturing Components	Organizational Practices	Human Reality
Attending	Being listened to	Communication	Reciprocal listening	Listening	Able to talk to management	Collaborative listening
Choice	Able to make decisions	Expectation of responsiveness	Adaptation	Allows decisions over own actions	Decentralized decision-making	Decisions by each person guides events
Concern	Cared about as a person	Support structures available	Cognizant of reaction to projected image	Maintaining a positive attitude	Belief can accomplish work	Intentional consideration
Connected	Relationships seen as important	Team and personal interrelationships	Circular influences	Expands relationships	Supports team and group work	Relationships mean involvement
Esteem	Treated as an expert	People first then processes	Communicates respect	Regard for the person's viewpoint	Respect for abilities	Respect is vital
Freedom	Given autonomy	Self-direction	Behaviors modified voluntarily	Provides autonomy	Encourages empowerment	Allowed and willing to take action
Inclusion	Being asked how to improve work	Cultural norms invite diversity	Social context created by everyone	Availability to others	Worker participation	Conscious togetherness
Mastery	Training for new and old skills	Development of capabilities	Self-knowledge	Developing learning opportunities	Continual training available	Continuous learning
Options	Work seen as challenging	Multiplicity present in context	Interactions initiate complex changes	Sharing	Work requires a variety of tasks	Multiple paths beckon
Trusted	Given responsibility	Attitude of openness	Detect then use relevant patterns	Increases responsibility	Management shares authority	Giving and taking responsibility
Visibility	Recognition for achievement	Emphasis on the individual	Awareness of differing perceptions	Praise for achievement	Systems validate work	Appreciation is important
Vulnerable	No guaranteed outcomes	Perilous to ignore surroundings	Organizations and individuals affected	Survival requires versatile behaviors	Unavoidable daily impact	Support and stress always present

Note. Part of initial stratum in the three strata Description Construct