Absolutely Positively Achieve Level 4 Outcomes

Here's what to do when you want training to achieve business results

Dr. James (Jim) Pepitone

DESIGNEDWORK ™

*Improving people-dependent operations*

What does "Level 4" mean?

Four Levels of Evaluation*

- **Level 1** – **Reaction**: Participants react favorably to the learning event

- **Level 2** – **Learning**: Participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills and attitudes from the learning event

- **Level 3** – **Behavior**: Participants apply what was learned when back on the job

- **Level 4** – **Results**: The targeted business outcomes occur as a result of the learning event

* *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels* (1993) by Donald Kirkpatrick

How are business results created?

By people who adopt job/roles within an organization. All the machines, technology, processes and other stuff used were created previously by other people.

Economic Environment (i.e., economy)

Organization
Work System

Inputs →

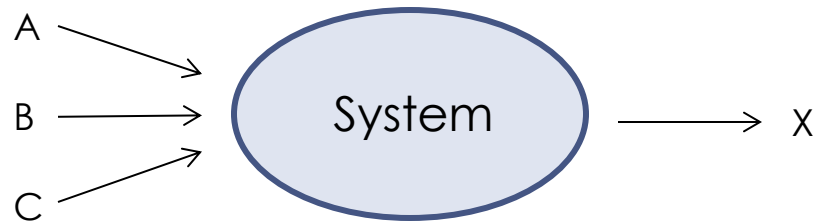→ Outputs
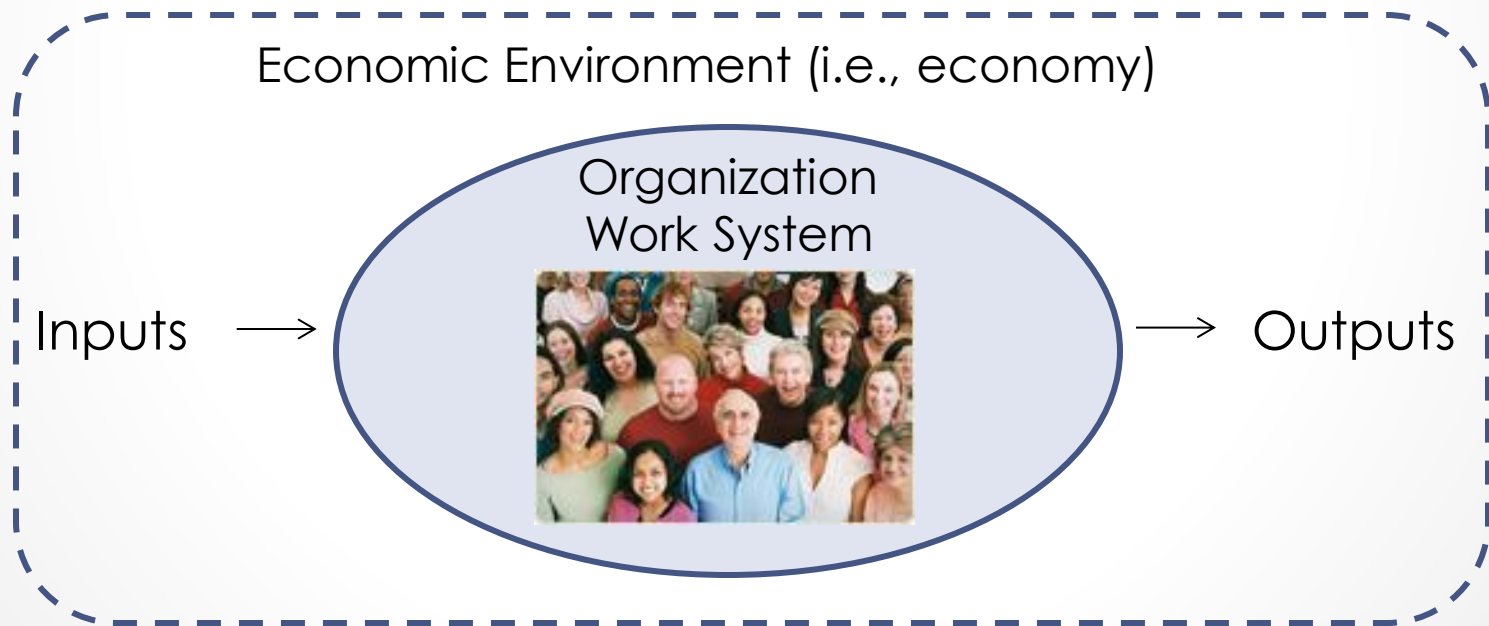
How is human performance created?

By people adopting a job/role's objectives and standards, adapting to the culture, and applying available resources toward achieving our intentions.

Organization Environment (i.e., culture)

Job/Role
Work System

Inputs →

→ Outputs
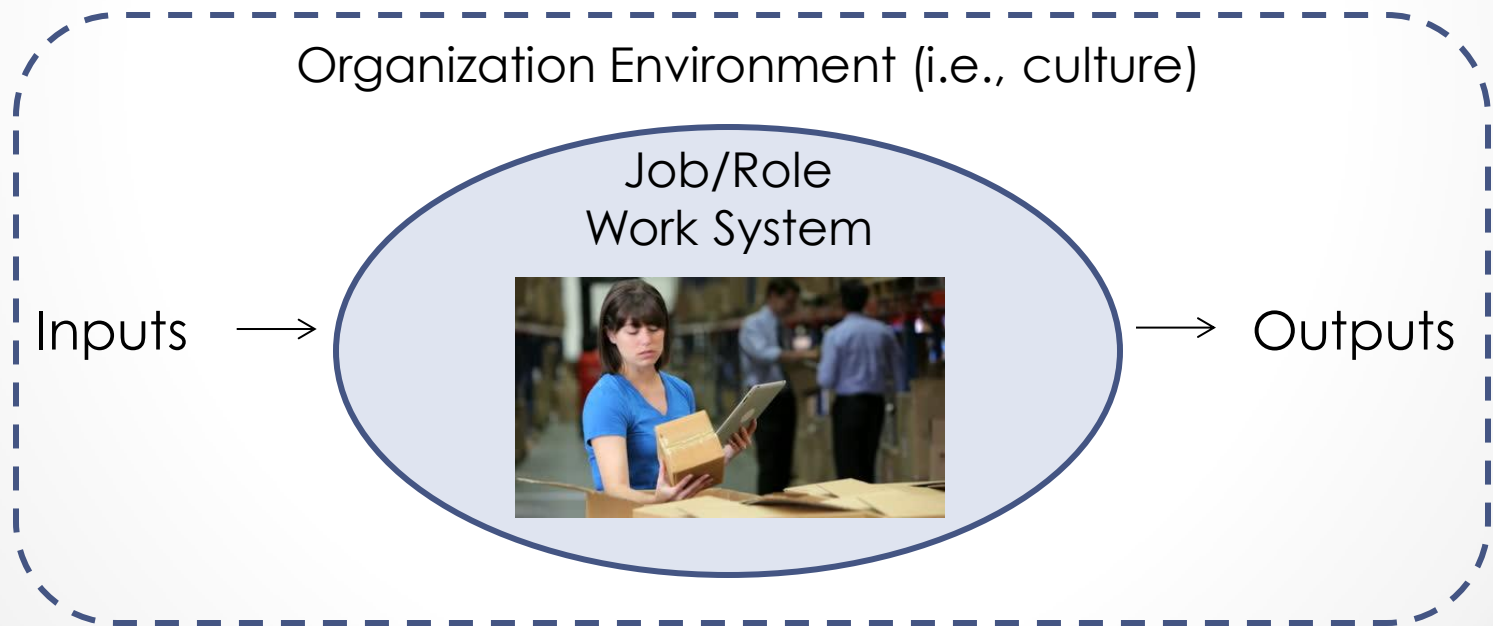
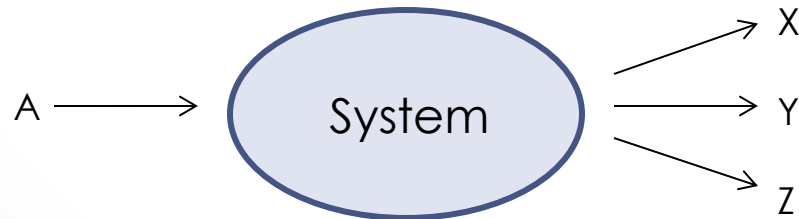# How do open systems work?

"Equifinality"

Different actions can lead to the same result

"Multifinality"

The same action can lead to different results

How do managers work?

"Satisfice"

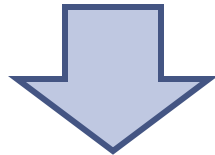Do whatever is "good enough" to achieve the desired business result

Supporting rationale:
1. limited resources
2. multiple conflicting wants
3. diminishing returns

Level 4 in management's terms

o   **Level 4 – Results**: The targeted business outcomes occur as a result of the learning event

1. Management's targeted business results are somehow achieved, and

2. Training gets credit as a determining factor in management's personal evaluation of the key factors (i.e., ingredients, elements) contributing to this successful outcome.

Three elements to getting credit

1. Support the perception that training is a critical element in management's strategy

2. Make the training more than is expected, so as to impress the participants and manager in charge -- get them talking about it by making it better, faster, cheaper, smarter, and/or easier than expected)

3. Earn the praise of participants for the training's direct impact on their performance

"Biopsychosocial" bottlenecks

Biological, psychological and social issues can create constraints that function like bottlenecks on performance. Sustainable performance improvement requires the removal or reduction of these bottlenecks.

Your training initiative → Business results achieved by your client
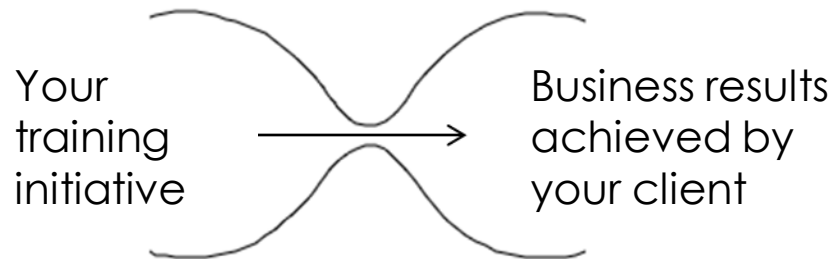
These characteristics
- Vague objectives
- Weak support
- Insufficient resources
- Aloof manager
- Nobody seems to care
- Threatening feedback

Make people feel
- Frustrated
- Disrespected
- Hopeless
- Unsupported
- Incompetent
- Distrustful

"Biopsychosocial" bottlenecks

A simple group interview of the targeted participants will enable you to identify and support these issues, and your client to assess and improve them.

Your training initiative ⟶ Business results achieved by your client
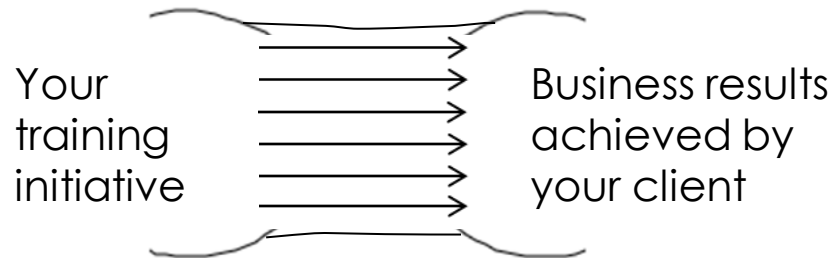
Supported Human Performance
- Clear and challenging objectives
- Resources to do the job right
- Needed response-ability and authority
- Autonomy and support of manager
- Frequent helpful feedback
- Great team of focused people
- Have advanced knowledge and skills

So, how do you begin?

Kick-off your Level 4 objective by inserting at the start of your development process a short, yet powerful, activity involving the targeted participants.

Activity: "Best job ever!"

1. Signals that training is important to management
2. Identifies ways to make the training exceptional
3. Will positively impact participant performance

Activity: Best job ever!

"Best job ever!" is most effective when "casually" added as the last part of a 30- to 60-minute information-gathering event with the targeted participants (i.e., representatives or entire group).

You will choose from 7 possible steps based on the overall work situation (e.g., culture, cooperation) and "mood" of the group (e.g., engaged, despondent).

Let's walk through all 7 possible steps, giving you time to participate when practical.

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 1 – Select

- Think back across your career, from your very first job to your job today.
- Select the "Best" of all the jobs you've had.
- You likely experienced some of these outcomes:
  - enjoyed the work
  - performed highly
  - learned a lot
  - think of fondly

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 2 – Identify

- o Think of this job and, in particular, think about working in the job each day and how that situation enabled you to do your work.

- o Now, write out a list of 6 to 8 or more of the characteristics of that situation that made/make this job your best job ever (allow 2 to 3 minutes).

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 3 – Share

- Now please select someone sitting close to you and take turns sharing with them your list and other information about your best job ever (allow 2 to 3 minutes). [Participants will enjoy talking about their "best job ever" and could go on much longer.]

- What did you notice about your lists . . . anything? [Participants typically notice that the lists are similar, having many of the same characteristics listed.]

- [Conclude this step by pointing out that many of the characteristics we need or appreciate in a job are a direct result of our human nature, and therefore are the same or similar for most of us.]

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 4 – Consolidate

- Now I would like to merge your individual lists of characteristics into a single list (record on white board).
- I need a volunteer who will read to me their list, one item at a time, in order.
  - What is the first characteristic you have listed? [Record as the #1 characteristic, leaving room for 2 columns of 10 characteristics.]
  - May need to translate into a more generic characteristic
  - What is the second characteristic you have listed? [Try to discourage any addition or change of characteristics.]
  - Continue until person's list is transferred to the board.

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 4 – Consolidate (continued)

- o Now I need another volunteer who has any characteristics not already listed on the board, and who will share them with us.
    - It is important to compare any characteristics mentioned with those already listed, so as to prevent duplication. The participants like to help with this.
- o [After a maximum of 4 or 5 people, virtually all relevant characteristics will be listed on the board.]

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 4 – Consolidate (continued)

Responses from major utility training group:

1. Self-confidence
2. Capable and positive
3. Supportive environment
4. Feedback from customers
5. Clear objectives
6. Latitude to perform
7. Trust throughout
8. Support and resources
9. Meaningful contribution
10. Fair reward
11. Great teamwork
12. Shared goals
13. Positive expectations
14. Fun . . . liked the people
15. Successful . . . it worked
16. New & adventuresome
17. High profile . . . important
18. Fast-cycle impact

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 4 – Consolidate (continued)

Responses from Fortune 500 sales force:

1. Clear objective
2. Sufficient resources
3. Authority & responsibility
4. Support of supervisor
5. Measurable results
6. Great team of people
7. Customers dissatisfied
8. High goals & expectations

9. Aggressive schedule
10. Rewarded & punished
11. Self-responsible
12. Knowledge, skills and experience to do the job
13. Mentor to look up to
14. Valued the results

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 5 – Demonstrate

- If these are the characteristics that define a great job, then we should be able to assume that if a job had these characteristics you would perform at your personal best. Doesn't that seem reasonable?

- With that premise, I'd like to see the impact on your performance of removing these characteristics from a job.

- Starting with your performance at 100% of your ability, let's cross out the first characteristic from the list, and say that this job no longer has the characteristic. To what percent of your ability would your performance be reduced . . . 90% . . . 70% . . . 50% . . . or even lower?

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 5 – Demonstrate

- [Continue to cross out additional characteristics, until 4 to 5 have been removed, or until the percent of ability gets to 30%.]

- What we can say now is that with all of these characteristics we can perform to 100% of our ability. But as we remove characteristics, our potential is reduced. And after removing several characteristics . . . even with all the great characteristics remaining . . . our potential is substantially reduced.

- [The point to be made here is that these characteristics behave in systemic ways. With only a few missing we find ourselves performing at only a fraction of our potential.]

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 6 – Evaluate

- Now we want to rate each of these characteristics in terms of how well they exist in your current job.

- [If participants have different jobs] Please use this blank piece of paper to list the characteristics we have listed on the board, and then give each characteristic a school grade based on the extent to which it exists in your current job (e.g., B+, A-, C, etc.). Remember to note somewhere which job you are describing.

- [If participants have the same job] Let's create a group grade for each characteristic listed to indicate the extent to which this characteristic exists in your current job.
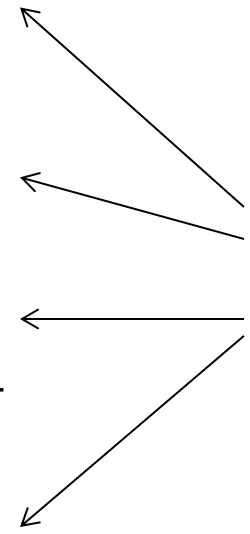
Activity: Best job ever!

Step 6 – Evaluate

o [Frontline supervisors can be a good alternative source of accurate grades for each characteristic. Getting them involved can also be a positive step toward improvements.]

Activity: Best job ever!

Step 7 – Facilitate

o [Share the results with management, and incorporate remediation where possible in the training design.]

Management support	C-
Development resources	D
Talented team	A-
Timely feedback	D
Fun place to work	A
Great strategy	C
Work is meaningful	B+
Fair compensation	B-
Clear objective	B-

Encourage management to focus on characteristics with . . .

- Lowest grades
- Easiest to improve

Three elements to getting credit

Let's return to our goal of getting credit for creating business results, and see how we have helped our cause:

1. We supported the perception that training is a critical element in management's strategy.
2. We have good direction for making the training more than is expected, so as to impress the participants and the manager in charge.
3. We are well on the way to earning the praise of participants for having a direct impact on their work and work environment, and therefore their performance.

That's how to achieve at Level 4!

Management's targeted business results still need to be achieved, but if they are then you are well on your way toward getting credit for this business result.

Questions?

I invite you to contact me directly with your questions.

Dr. James (Jim) Pepitone

Managing Partner - Direct 214-796-6861

DesignedWORK

15455 N Dallas Parkway, 6th Floor

Addison, Texas 75001 USA (Dallas area)

james.pepitone@designedwork.com

LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/in/drjimpepitone/