Strategic Business Partner

A Critical Role for
Human Resource Professionals

ALIGNING PEOPLE STRATEGIES WITH BUSINESS GOALS

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An Excerpt From

Strategic Business Partner: Aligning People Strategies With Business Goals

by Dana Gaines Robinson and James C. Robinson
Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers

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Chapter 1

Key Concepts for Partnering Strategically

"I just learned that I am going to be working in the role of a Strategic Business Partner. Sounds great, doesn't it? Unfortunately, I'm not certain what it is that I will do differently. Guess it means I will be implementing different solutions than I used to do."

We have had numerous conversations with people in Human Resource (HR) and Training and Development functions that resonate with the preceding statement. To be viewed as a *business partner*, and to do work that is *strategic,* has high appeal. But, as the old adage indicates, "The devil's in the details!"

In this book, we plan to answer the question, "What do you as a Strategic Business Partner (SBP) do differently Monday morning at 8:00 A.M.?" But it is not as simple as providing the top ten proven practices! There will always be situations that have never been encountered before as well as those to be viewed in a different light. You need to draw upon your knowledge of key concepts and accountabilities to determine the practices to use in each unique strategic

opportunity. These concepts and accountabilities are the foundation of your role as an SBP.

Overview of Four SBP Concepts

The word *concept* means "a general idea derived or inferred from specific instances or occurrences." From our work and that of academicians and other practitioners in our field, there are clearly four concepts that are relevant to an SBP:

1. *Three Kinds of Work.* HR functions support three kinds of work: transactional, tactical, and strategic. Although SBPs perform all three kinds of work, it is vital that the majority of their work be strategic in nature.

2. *The Need Hierarchy.* If you have read either *Performance Consulting: Moving Beyond Training*, or *Zap the Gaps! Target Higher Performance and Achieve It!*, you will be familiar with this concept, which acknowledges the four needs resident within organizations at all times. This hierarchy will be explained in this chapter; it is a key tool SBPs use to define and align these needs.

3. *Translating Business Needs into Human Performance Requirements and Initiatives.* This concept supports the types of questions that are asked by SBPs. It is vital that SBPs ask "the right questions right" to determine the human performance requirements and gaps relative to a business need. Only then can the most appropriate initiatives be identified. But what are the right questions? They are rooted within this concept.

4. *Identifying the True Client.* One of the most common errors made by SBPs is to learn too late they are not working with the "true" client. Who qualifies as a client? Using appropriate criteria to determine the specific individuals with whom to partner is critical.

Concept One: Three Kinds of Work or "What Is Strategic Work Anyway?"

There are three kinds of work required of those who work in HR, Learning, and Organizational Development (OD) functions: transactional, tactical, and strategic. It seems obvious to say that SBPs should focus on *strategic* work. But it is also safe to say there is lack of shared understanding as to what qualifies as strategic work. Let's begin by discussing the two types of work that are *not* strategic.

Transactional work is sometimes referred to as administrative work. This work is completed in an order-taking manner, with quick turnaround expected. Generally, this work identifies and addresses the needs of individuals. Examples of transactional work typically completed within HR functions include:

- Upgrading an individual employee's HR records.

- Filling a specific position that has been vacated.

- Assisting someone in locating a training program to address a developmental need.

- Counseling a supervisor on how to manage a discussion with an employee whose performance is substandard.

The problem with transactional work is that there is so much of it! To illustrate this point, how many total employees are you currently supporting in your role? Less than 100? More than 1,000? Whichever is the case, consider the number of people who could potentially call each day requesting some type of assistance. You can quickly see why those in HR functions sometimes feel they are buried in transactional work. The dilemma: this category of work will not go away. It must be completed in a competent manner if people in HR are to earn the right to move into the strategic arena. As one operations manager indicated to us, "Why would I invite people in HR to help with my strategic business needs when they can't even get my employees' paychecks done

correctly?" Completing transactional work both effectively and in a timely manner is a requirement for earning credibility to work strategically. In Chapter 10 we will discuss some of the structural options used to manage this category of work—options that include Shared Service Centers and outsourcing. For now, we want to clarify what transactional work *looks* like and indicate that it is *not* what SBPs should spend their time doing.

A second category of work completed by HR functions is *tactical*. We actually prefer to think of this type of work as the many *solutions* that are offered. Consider:

- Recruitment initiatives.
- Training programs.
- Restructuring of departments.
- Succession planning processes.

Each of these is a solution—or *tactic*—used to achieve some type of goal. Therefore, *tactical* work results in the design and/or purchase and implementation of HR, OD, and Learning solutions. This work identifies and addresses the needs of work groups. Tactical work has been the home turf for HR functions during the past 20 years. Many HR functions are siloed into solution specialties, such as compensation and benefits, recruitment and staffing, learning and development. If your job title is Compensation Manager or Learning and Development Manager, is it any surprise that clients call you with a solution in mind?

What is interesting about tactical work is the process used to implement it. Tactical work can be implemented in a programmatic manner ("We are rolling out a new leadership training program.") or as part of an overarching strategic initiative ("We are creating greater flexibility in the workforce to support our goals relative to operational efficiency. For this to succeed, our managers need to operate in a more empowering and flexible manner, so we are implementing a leadership development program to build their capability in this area.").

Tactical work can consume a great amount of a person's time. Fortunately, there are many trends in place regarding alternative ways to deliver the tactics and solutions needed while still providing some HR people with the time they require to work as SBPs. These alternatives will be discussed in Chapter 10.

The third and last category of work completed by HR functions is *strategic* work. We define strategic work as work that moves the business into a favorable position, supporting one or more courses of action developed by the organization's leaders. Strategic work identifies and addresses the needs of business entities, including the entire enterprise. Strategic work:

- Focuses on departments, functions, and/or the entire enterprise—it is macro, not micro, in focus.

- Is long-term in scope, often looking out two or more years rather than on the next quarter.

- Is directly linked to one or more business goals of the organization.

- Is solution-neutral in the early stages of partnering.

- Requires multiple solutions or tactics to be implemented; single solutions do not yield results in strategic initiatives.

This is the type of work that, as an SBP, you need to seek to identify and deliver. Examples of working strategically include:

- Partnering with clients to develop business strategies and plans.

- Translating business strategies and goals into human performance requirements.

- Helping to identify *all* the solutions required to enhance performance of people and to positively impact upon the business.

- Supporting the execution of business plans once they are designed.

In summary, keep this in mind:

- Transactional work benefits individuals.
- Tactical work benefits employee work groups.
- Strategic work benefits business units and, perhaps, the entire enterprise.

Something You Can Do

What percentage of your current work is transactional? tactical? strategic? You may want to take a moment to jot down your estimate here, ensuring that the percentages total 100%.

___   % of my work is Transactional.

___   % of my work is Tactical.

___   % of my work is Strategic.

___   % of my work is for other responsibilities.

We do not have an ideal percentage for each category to offer, but we do know that effective SBPs do little (if any) transactional work. The tactical work SBPs do is typically integrated into a strategic initiative rather than positioned as a stand-alone event. It is difficult for you to be viewed as an SBP if clients observe that most of your time is spent recruiting candidates or conducting training programs. You risk being viewed as an expert in that single solution and not a strategic partner to address business needs.

Concept Two: The Need Hierarchy or "What Do SBPs Discuss With Clients?"

Our short-form description of what SBPs do is that they partner with their clients to define and align the four needs of the

organization regarding specific business strategies and goals. So, what are these *four* needs?

As Figure 1.1 illustrates, the four needs are business, performance, work environment, and capability. These needs nest like boxes within a box, with the business needs residing at the top of this hierarchy. *Business needs* are the highest-order need because all other needs *should* emanate from them. If business needs go unmet for a protracted period of time, the future of the enterprise is threatened. What are business needs? They have three characteristics:

- Operational in focus.
- Measured in a quantifiable manner.
- Needs or goals for an entity, such as a unit, department, function, plant, or organization.

Figure 1.1 Need Hierarchy

Business Needs

Performance Needs

Work Environment and Capability Needs

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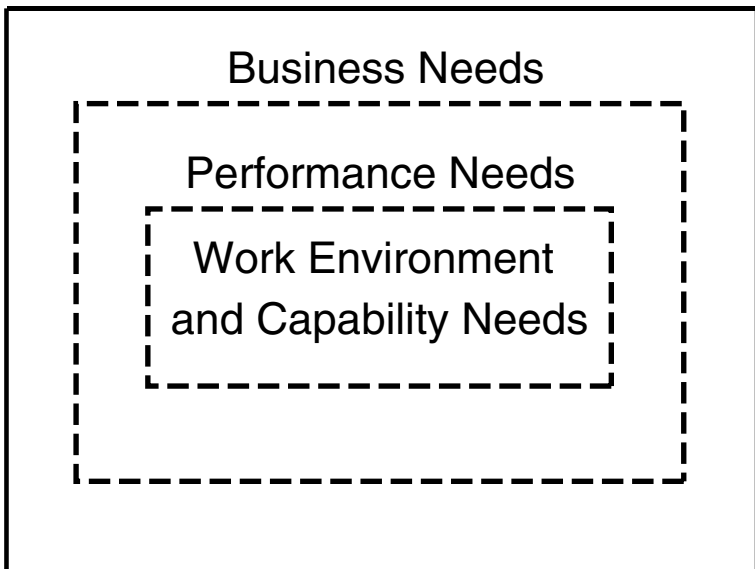
Examples of business needs are to:

- Grow market share.
- Increase profitability.
- Decrease production waste.
- Reduce operational costs.
- Enhance plant safety.
- Improve customer satisfaction.

Each of these is operational, measured numerically, and focused at an entity level, requiring efforts of multiple people in order to be achieved.

Performance needs identify the on-the-job behavior or activities that employees must do (perform) if the business needs are to be successfully achieved. In essence, performance needs answer the questions, "What must people do more, better, or differently if we are to achieve our business goal?" and "How does that compare to what people are typically doing now?" Performance needs require that one or more specific *groups of employees* be identified. By *employee group* we are referencing individuals who share a common job and/or role and who, through their day-to-day performance, most *directly* contribute to the achievement of the business needs. Account representatives, plant managers, and customer service representatives are examples of *jobs* that qualify as employee groups. The key is to identify specific groups and specific behaviors needed by people in these groups—the more specific the practices, the better. Table 1.1 provides some examples of how performance and business needs can be linked.

**Table 1.1 Linking Business and Performance Needs**

Business Need	Employee Group and Appropriate Performance Needs
Increase revenue	*Sales representatives* need to tier their customers into A, B, and C groupings. They then need to build account penetration plans for customers in the A Group—those customers currently generating at least $1 million or more of revenue per year with our organization.
Increase customer satisfaction	*Customer service representatives* (CSRs) need to ask open-ended questions of customers to identify their specific needs. Then the CSRs should summarize what they have learned to ensure mutual understanding.

Work environment needs represent the infrastructure of the organization surrounding all employees. This infrastructure includes work processes, information flow, reward and recognition systems, as well as clarity of expectations. Many work environment needs are intangible. Although you cannot "see" them, you can always "feel" their presence.

Capability needs are the skills and knowledge employees need to perform effectively. Capability needs also include inherent capability—the background experience, education, traits, and characteristics that are hard-wired into each person. Let's look more closely at work environment and capability needs.

In 2002 we co-authored a book with Ken Blanchard. The book, entitled *Zap the Gaps! Target Higher Performance and Achieve It!,* tells the story of a leader with a business problem in the area of customer service. Working with his HR Manager, this Call Center Director uses The Gap Zapper to identify root causes for the performance problems within a call center. This tool is displayed in Figure 1.2. Essentially, The Gap Zapper is a comprehensive list of most factors that impact upon human performance in the workplace.

External factors are outside the control of anyone in an organization, including the president and board of directors.

Figure 1.2 The Gap Zapper
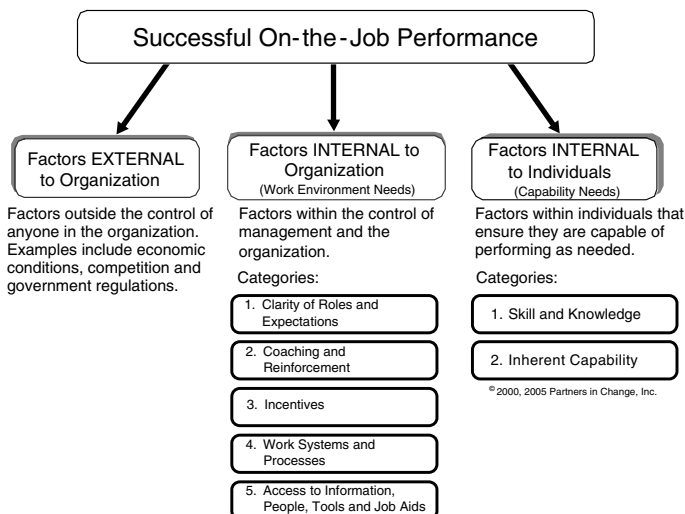
These factors make achievement of performance and business results more difficult, requiring strategies to be formed that will ensure business success despite these factors. Examples of external factors are competitive pressures, economic conditions, and relevant government regulations.

Factors internal to the organization consist of five categories of work environment needs. When these factors are present in a positive manner, they enable performance. When they are either absent or an obstacle, they hinder performance. Note, however, that these factors are something that people in an organization *could* change if they so desired. They are within the control of the organization.

1. *Clarity of Roles and Expectations* focus on employees knowing specifically what their roles and responsibilities are relative to their job goals and accountabilities. This also means that people know how their responsibilities differ from others who are working on the same business goal.

2. *Coaching and Reinforcement* means having a system that pro-
   vides coaching support to people as they perform their job
   responsibilities. It also means reinforcing and acknowledg-
   ing good performance as well as providing developmental
   feedback when needed.

3. *Incentives* are the rewards, both tangible and intangible, that
   encourage people to perform as needed. This category re-
   quires presence of a positive balance of consequences.
   When there is lack of any consequence, performance often
   does not change. It is easy for employees to maintain the
   status quo when there are no consequences—positive or
   negative—for changing on-the-job performance.

4. *Work Systems and Processes* are the workflow and organizational
   systems within which people operate. These can make work
   performance easier and more efficient, or more difficult and
   ineffective. Geary Rummler, co-author of the book, *Improving
   Performance: How to Manage the White Space on the Organization
   Chart,* stated it quite succinctly when he said, "If you pit a
   good employee against a bad system, the system will win al-
   most every time" (Rummler and Brache, 1995, p. 75).

5. *Access to Information, People, Tools, and Job Aids* is a category
   of work environment needs that continues to grow in
   importance as people are expected to perform in an au-
   tonomous manner—without a lot of day-to-day guid-
   ance. How can people perform effectively without
   accurate and current information and access to the type
   of tools required to do the job?

   Factors internal to individuals refer to capability needs. They
address factors within individuals that enable people to per-
form as needed. Once again, these factors are within the con-
trol of the organization:

1. *Skill and Knowledge* is the only root cause for which training is an appropriate solution. People cannot perform successfully on the job if they do not know how.

2. *Inherent Capability* relates to the raw ingredient that is within each of us, making each of us unique. This category of capability need is very difficult to develop; it is much more efficient if the selection process accurately identifies people with the required inherent capability.

It is important to note that skill is *not* performance. For example, if a manager called and asked you to develop the negotiating skills of the work team, this manager has provided you with a capability need—not a performance need. To qualify as a performance need, the request must focus on what people are expected to actually *do* on the job as they negotiate.

A question we are frequently asked is, "Where does job motivation fit into this model?" Let us respond to that question here, should you wonder about it also. We view job motivation as a *symptom* and not as a *root cause* of a performance problem. A symptom is an indication that there is a problem. However, a symptom lacks specificity. You must ask questions to determine the root causes of the problem before you can determine a solution that will correct the problem. In this example, you might ask, "Why are people not motivated to perform as needed?" Some of the reasons could be:

- There is little recognition for performing as needed (work environment factor).

- There is a poor job match between what the people can do and what they have been hired to do (capability need).

The same rationale applies to "lack of time" as a reason. What factors are limiting time to focus on a specific performance requirement? Once the root cause(s) of poor job motivation or lack of time have been identified, you can implement appropriate solutions.

The Need Hierarchy visually demonstrates that business and performance needs are the *results* to be achieved. The root causes of nonperformance usually reside in work environment and capability needs. Therefore, most solutions are designed to address the causes found in these two categories. Most HR people have a goal to link their work to the business needs of the organization they are supporting. But, as the Need Hierarchy illustrates, solutions (such as a revised compensation system or a learning program) are not *directly* linked to business needs. Rather, these solutions affect a change in performance that in turn yields results to the business. Therefore, HR groups that want to impact operational results *must* be in the business of changing people's performance.

Something You Can Do

A key skill for you as an SBP is to discriminate between and among the needs within the Need Hierarchy. The first step is to identify which needs have been provided to you by your client. The purpose of this exercise is to provide you with practice in discriminating among the four needs we have been discussing.

Discriminating among Business, Performance, Work Environment, and Capability Needs

Instructions:

- Consider each of the following statements as a request from a client. Each statement is a description of the need as presented by the client. The statements have been sent to you via voice mail, e-mail, or memo. Using only the information in the client's statement, determine what need or needs the client is describing. Make no assumptions.

- Each of the statements identifies one or a combination of the following needs:

BN = Business Need. The statement defines operational goals or needs of the organization. The statement may or may not contain the numerical measures; however, that information could be obtained by questioning the client.

PN = Performance Need. The statement defines what people must do on the job and/or what they are currently doing. The descriptors may be vague, but on-the-job behavior is clearly the focus.

WN/S = Work Environment Need or Solution. The statement identifies one or more of the five categories of work environment needs described in The Gap Zapper and/or it provides a solution that addresses one of these needs.

CN/S = Capability Need or Solution. This is a statement that identifies the skill, knowledge, and/or inherent capability required of people or it describes what is lacking in this regard. The statement may also provide a solution to address this category of cause.

- After you have made your selections, turn to the end of this chapter to see how your answers compare to ours.

  1. We are in the process of reducing operational expenses in our service centers. Can you help us put together a communication program to help people in the centers understand why we are doing this?

     ___ BN   ___ PN   ___ WN/S   ___ CN/S

  2. The managers in my region are skillful in the technical area. What I need to do is improve their interpersonal skills. They are not communicating with nor managing their teams in a satisfactory manner.

     ___ BN   ___ PN   ___ WN/S   ___ CN/S

3. We plan to increase revenue in the next year. We must ensure our talent recruitment and retention processes are ready as we need everyone performing in an optimal manner to reach our goal.

   ___ BN   ___ PN   ___ WN/S   ___ CN/S

4. Our sales representatives are not focusing on the long-term strategic sales that we need in this business. I'd like to talk to you about a new sales incentive program that would offer greater rewards for this kind of sale.

   ___ BN   ___ PN   ___ WN/S   ___ CN/S

Concept Three: Translating Business Needs into Human Performance Requirements or "What Questions Do I Ask?"

Asking "the right questions right" is a critical skill for SBPs. The questioning process, more than any other single process, helps to translate business needs into performance requirements. Essentially, you can raise concerns and influence clients more by what you ask than by what you tell. The questioning techniques will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapters 6 and 7; for now we want to introduce the three types of questions to be asked: SHOULD, IS, and CAUSE.

- *SHOULD questions* identify both the business and performance "SHOULDs" or desired state. Business SHOULDs are described numerically ("increase revenue by 10 percent") and performance SHOULDs are defined behaviorally ("use the tables feature in Microsoft® Word").

- *IS questions* identify what currently exists compared to the SHOULDs. Business IS information describes current results in quantifiable terms ("our revenue is currently increasing at a rate of 6 percent"), whereas IS performance defines the current behavior of specific employee groups ("engineers are not using the tables feature in Word").

- *CAUSE questions* focus on the root causes for why people are not performing as required. They also identify factors that might hinder future performance once a new initiative is underway. CAUSE questions draw upon the content in The Gap Zapper.

We have developed an acronym to assist in recalling the types of questions to be asked. The acronym is GAPS! and works in this manner:

G = **G**o for the SHOULD

A = **A**nalyze the IS

P = **P**in down the CAUSES

S = **S**elect the right SOLUTIONS

When the GAPS! acronym is integrated into the Need Hierarchy, as Figure 1.3 illustrates, the type of questions to ask become evident.

SHOULD and IS questions help to translate business needs into performance needs. CAUSE questions go below symptoms to identify root causes for problems. Root causes lead to identification of the solutions required to address the problem. In this way alignment among the four needs is accomplished.

SBP Example

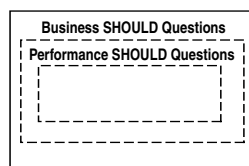### *Asking the Right Questions*

Marilyn, an SBP within a large pharmaceutical company, was assigned to support clients within a major business unit within the organization. Marilyn thoughtfully identified those individuals with whom she needed to build strategic client partnerships. She scheduled an initial meeting with each client and continued to grow the relationships over time. Several months after she began growing these

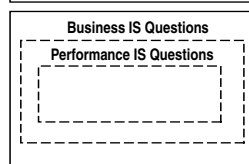**Figure 1.3 GAPS! Process and the Need Hierarchy**

G = *Go* for the SHOULD

     Ask SHOULD questions to determine:
- ✓ Business goals
- ✓ Performance requirements

> **Business SHOULD Questions**
> > **Performance SHOULD Questions**

A = *Analyze* the IS

     Ask IS questions to clarify:
- ✓ Current business results
- ✓ Actual performance

> **Business IS Questions**
> > **Performance IS Questions**

P = *Pin down* the CAUSES

     Ask CAUSE questions to discover:
- ✓ Work environment support
- ✓ Capability of individuals

> **Work Environment and Capability Causes Questions**
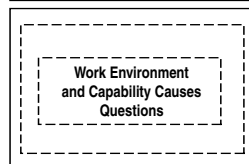
S = *Select* the right SOLUTIONS

     Select and implement two categories of solutions:
- ✓ Work environment support
- ✓ Capability solutions

> **Work Environment and Capability Solutions**
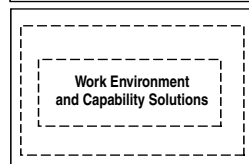
relationships, the president of the business unit called and asked her to obtain the dates for all future operating committee meetings. These are meetings the president held monthly with his senior team. The president wanted Marilyn to begin attending these meetings. She was, in essence, being invited "to the table." Marilyn responded, "I will be pleased to attend. I will contact Louise today to obtain the dates and get them on my calendar. But I'm curious, why do you want me to attend these meetings?" His response: "I want you there because of the *questions* you ask us. You have caused us to think about how to align performance of our people with requirements of the business in ways we have not thought about before—and need to do more of in the future." Essentially, she was invited to the table because of the questions she asked!

Concept Four: Determining the Client or "Who to Partner With?"

Let us share one of our frequent experiences. When we ask our clients in HR whom they view as *their* clients, we receive a myriad of responses including "all employees," "all managers," and even "our organization's customers." Clearly the word *client* is not universally defined nor understood! Suffice it to say that there is no way that you can strategically partner with *all* of any one group—unless the organization is relatively small. Considering the potential payback, it is vital that you invest time partnering with those within your organization who can make things happen. We define "clients" as individuals who:

- Own (have accountability for) achieving business results within the organization.

- Have authority or power to make things happen, including the garnering of resources required to support a specific initiative.

- Are within the chain of command of the employees whose performance is to be changed in some manner.

Interestingly, clients come in two flavors: sustained and project. *Sustained clients* meet the criteria in the preceding list because of their position and influence power within the organization. You develop and maintain a partnership with them independent of any current project or initiative. Generally, sustained clients are located in the mid to upper levels of the organization. Job titles of sustained clients often include President, Chief Executive Officer, Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, General Manager, Country Manager, and Director. As one SBP indicated, "I view the President and his direct reports as my sustained clients."

Project clients, by contrast, meet the criteria noted for a specific project. These are individuals whose position and power

generally do not warrant a sustained partnership. However, the importance of their role relative to a specific project does warrant a relationship. Often project clients are really *client teams* where several individuals have some ownership for the business and performance results associated with the project. For example, if the business need is to introduce a new product to the marketplace, a client team may consist of the Vice President of Sales, Vice President of Marketing, and Vice President of Supply Chain Management. Client teams are almost always required for enterprise-wide projects. Although a sustained client may work as a project client, the reverse is not necessarily true. Your level of contact with project clients is strong during the life of the project but will decline once the project has concluded.

The implication is that it would be valuable for you to identify those individuals with whom you wish to build a sustained partnership. Then work to gain access to and develop credibility and trust with these individuals. We will discuss how to do this in Chapters 3 and 4.

Something You Can Do

Complete the following steps to organize your list of sustained clients:

1. Create a list of individuals within your organization whom you believe meet the criteria for a client.
2. Then identify any of those individuals with whom you currently have a sustained relationship.
3. Next identify those with whom you would like to have a sustained relationship.

As you continue reading this book, you will be able to identify actions you can take to enhance the sustained relationships you currently have and/or to form sustained relationships with clients with whom an ongoing

partnership is not evident at this time. Return to this page from time to time and list actions you can take.

1. Individuals with whom I currently have a sustained relationship.

Names of Individuals   *Actions to Enhance the Relationship (Chapters 3 and 4 include possible actions)*

2. Individuals with whom I would like a sustained relationship.

Names of Individuals   *Actions to Form a Relationship (Chapters 3 and 4 include possible actions)*

SBP Tips

There are four concepts that guide the practices of your work as an SBP:

1. The HR function can do three kinds of work: transactional, tactical, and strategic. As an SBP you need to do a very limited amount of transactional work. Tactical work, when done, should be in support of a strategic initiative. In essence, the majority of your time needs to be spent on supporting strategic opportunities and initiatives.

2. Within every organization there are four kinds of needs: business, performance, work environment, and capability needs. You add value as an SBP by identifying and helping clients to align these four needs.

3. Asking the "right" questions enables you to translate business requirements into performance requirements.

4. As an SBP, you need to determine who qualifies as your sustained clients and then work to gain access, credibility, and trust with these individuals.

Answers to Something You Can Do

Compare your answers to our responses listed below. We have provided rationale for each of our answers. In some instances we indicate why a response would not be correct. Hopefully, this rationale will add to your understanding of the four types of needs.

1. Question: We are in the process of reducing operational expenses in our service centers. Can you help us put together a communication program to help people in the centers understand why we are doing this?

Our answer: **BN, CN/S. *Rationale:*** The statement, "we are in the process of reducing operational expenses in our service centers" describes a business need. This need is measurable in a quantifiable manner and is vital to the future success of the business unit. The request to "put together a communication program" describes a capability solution because the end result is for "people in the centers to gain knowledge" about this initiative. This statement is not a performance need because there is no indication of what people in the centers are to do differently or better on the job as a result of the communication program.

2. Question: The managers in my region are skillful in the technical area. What I need to do is improve their interpersonal skills. They are not communicating with nor managing their teams in a satisfactory manner. Our answer: **PN, CN/S. *Rationale:*** Managers "are not communicating with nor managing the teams in a satisfactory manner" describes a performance need. The need is vague, but can be made more specific by asking the client questions. The need to "improve their interpersonal skills" is clearly a capability solution.

3. Question: We plan to increase revenue in the next year. We must ensure our talent recruitment and retention processes are ready as we need everyone performing in an optimal manner to reach our goal. Our answer: **BN**, **PN, WN/S. *Rationale:*** The statement begins with a clear identification of a business need "to increase revenue." It continues by stating a *solution* that is "to ensure our talent recruitment and retention processes are ready." This is a work environment solution (work systems and processes). The final statement that we need "everyone performing in an optimal manner" refers to a vague performance need.

4. Question: Our sales representatives are not focusing on the long-term strategic sales that we need in this business. I'd like to talk to you about a new sales incentive program that would offer greater rewards for this kind of sale. Our answer: **PN, WN/S.** *Rationale:* The statement that, "our sales representatives are not focusing on long-term strategic sales" describes the current performance of the sales representatives. This is something they are not doing on the job. The suggestion that a "new sales incentive program" may be required is a work environment solution, focusing on the incentive category. To qualify as a business need, there must be a statement regarding a business goal such as revenue, profitability, or market share. There likely is such a need, but it is not included in the statement as presented by the client; you will need to ask about the business need.

this material has been excerpted from

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by Dana Gaines Robinson and James C. Robinson
Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers
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