Tool 8-6. Environmental Interventions

Environmental Intervention	Description or Explanation	Sample Applications	Appropriate (✓)	Feasible (✓)
Provision of information	Lack of clarity of performance expectations and lack of specific, timely feedback focused on how one is performing in light of these expectations combine to form the number one cause of performance deficiencies in the workplace. Other information factors that decrease performance are • Lack of access to required information • Unclear or unavailable policies or procedures • Inaccurate and out-of-date information • Contradictory information • Lack of communication about products, events, and decisions	• Creation of standards for doing the job • Harmonization of conflicting standards • Establishment and communication of unambiguous performance expectations • Provision of timely and specific information to the individual on how she or he is performing • Development of a company policy on appropriate practices • Priority access to databases and other information sources		
Provision of resources	Without sufficient resources, the individual cannot perform as expected. Too often, workers go through training on a new system and then return to the job where resources to practice and maintain or increase newly acquired skills are lacking.	• Provision of appropriate tools and equipment to perform the job as expected • Provision of sufficient time for task completion • Access to help desks or technical support to encourage performance • Creation of practice environments for newly acquired skills • Increased access to supervisors, specialists and resource personnel • Development of workable, efficient procedures • Development of job aids and performance support tools		
Redesign of the work environment	Inadequate organizational structure, communications systems, work processes, and physical or administrative infrastructures create delays and inhibit performance. Bureaucratic red tape, noisy and uncomfortable surroundings, and poor ventilation all contribute to decreased performance.	• Breakdown of barriers between departments to mutually beneficial decision making and resource sharing • Introduction of communications systems such as instant messaging and file sharing • Redesign of workflow to reduce unnecessary or bottleneck steps • Elimination of counterproductive bureaucratic procedures • Introduction of better lighting, sound buffers to decrease ambient noise, healthy air flow, and ergonomic furniture • Creation of networks to share knowledge and equipment		

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Elimination of task interferences	The work environment creates conflicting priorities or requires execution of activities that may decrease performance on essential tasks. As an example, filling out sales and contact reports may decrease time with customers and hence, sales.	• Setting up of work priority sheets with a procedure and facilitative verification and approval process • Assignment of tasks to individuals most capable and desirous of performing these while freeing up others to focus on remaining required tasks • Auditing of tasks being performed and elimination or reassignment of nonessential or inappropriate ones • Policy setting that rewards accomplishment of priority tasks • Automation of routine tasks • Removal of trivial tasks from key workers		
Selection	Persons who do not have essential prerequisite skills and knowledge or appropriate characteristics and talents to perform drain the organization's resources. Training may improve performance somewhat, but will rarely achieve desired results. The negative consequences to the individual, work colleagues, and customers can be dramatic and costly when selection is inappropriate.	• Establishment of competencies and characteristics that are requirements for the job along with performance-based measures for selection • Creation of a performance-based assessment center • Setting of clear performance goals (both behaviors and accomplishments) with predetermined checkpoints during a specified trial period • Targeted recruitment to the widest range of high-probability sources for appropriate candidates • Training of selection committee members on performance-based selection and provision of clear examples of poor selection—with consequences		
Provision of support	Performance, especially during early stages, requires encouragement, monitoring, and support. Research shows that when early performance attempts fail, individuals become discouraged and soon return to previous patterns of behavior or give up.	• Creation of initial meetings that cooperatively define performance expectations • Encouragement and rewards for initial performance attempts • Building of regular monitoring and support systems that include coaching • Creation of a performance tracking system with specific supervisor intervention menus • Recognition and publicizing of accomplishments • Scheduling of regular meetings to review performance and provide support • Provision of adequate resources to demonstrate support		