



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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The ABCs of Behavior

Behavior is neither positive nor negative; it is a term that refers to observable acts. In an organization, measuring behavior means identifying behaviors that contribute to the success or failure of a process in order to manage the business efficiently. A behavior-based approach measures specific behaviors and rates performance. Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence Analysis (ABC Analysis) is a behavior-based intervention tool that explains why employees behave the way they do. Here, antecedents (e.g., the ringing of a telephone) set the tone for one's behavior and invite a response (the individual answers the phone) or consequence.

ABC Analysis enables organizations to:

- Identify quality-critical behaviors
- Analyze them to uncover antecedents and consequences
- Change the behavior

Methodology

1. Writing down the behavior to be analyzed is the first step.
2. Listing the antecedents that trigger such behavior and the consequences of resorting to such behavior is the next step. How does one identify which consequence is more powerful? Consequences that are soon, certain and positive override others.
3. Ranking the consequences by which one is sooner, certain and positive (s/c/+) comprises the third step. This enhances understanding the naturally occurring s/c/+ consequences, which undermine quality critical behavior.
4. Now it is easy to address the problem by changing the antecedents and consequences. Removing barriers accomplishes this, as does compliance and implementing improvement measures and providing feedback. The feedback delivery must be prompt, certain and positive to become a powerful consequence. All these measures ensure quality critical behavior.

Benefits

Through the ABC analysis, an organization can:

- Move to a positive and effective approach
- Encourage employee involvement in quality excellence
- Specify how to practice quality initiatives
- Facilitate adaptation to change
- Institute a reliable source of upstream data, measures and reports
- Reduce variation between and within workgroups