

to demand search engines that respond to our wants and needs, but it also points to **two problems which are common within organizations:**

- 1) **you get what you pay for, so pay for what you want ... and**
- 2) **one size does NOT fit all**

**More on these in chapters to come.**

## **You get what you pay for So pay for what you want**

This concept underlies many of the problems that keep businesses stuck in the industrial age. A few examples will help illustrate its manifestations.

A company offering DSL service had a customer support problem. Their well trained, expensive support people were spending most of their time on very basic problems (Is it turned on? Are the cables in the right place?). Customer waiting time was getting too long and customers were dropping the service.

They decided to develop a **level one** support team of less knowledgeable, **cheaper** workers. “They will be the first responders. They can handle many of the calls for a fraction of the cost. If they can't handle the call, they will transfer the customer up to level two support people.”

**It worked like a charm.** The torrent of calls to level 2 support slowed to a trickle and customer questions were handled quickly and cheaply.

However, the number of people dropping the service continued to be high. They decided to hire more level 1 people. Even more calls were handled quickly and the support calls to Tier 2 (more

experienced and expensive) remained low. **But the drop rate continued.** A manager decided to do some digging. He monitored technical chat rooms and started to hear troubling comments from technically savvy users about bad support at the company. He decided to make some support calls of his own, pretending to be a novice and then an experienced user installing the service. What he found was troubling.

All the people he talked to were very good, pleasant and efficient at answering basic questions. However, when they reached the top end of their knowledge, they were reluctant to pass him to the level two support. In several instances, he was given patently ridiculous tasks to do that would be very time consuming (reinstall the operating system), and then call back.

Why was this happening? Was it because the workers didn't want to admit defeat? No. Performance reviews and funding were based on volume of calls handled. Any call that was passed up to the next level was then a failure of the first level support team. **Their funding was not affected by customer drop out. It was negatively affected by “pass throughs” to level two.**

**The company was getting what it paid for - less calls to the second level support.**

**What they WANTED was better customer service.**

**If you are trying to affect a change and what you are doing is not working, take a close look at what you are paying for.**

Ask why the intervention is used.

**Be particularly suspicious of interventions that are rooted in tradition - “we’ve ALWAYS done it that way.”**

A sales company measured its performance based on number of calls made. Everyone knew that for every 20 calls made, the agent would make a sale. It was a numbers game. When sales fell, agents were urged to make more calls.

A new company came in and trained its agents to research before calling, so they knew who they were calling and why. They made far fewer calls, but easily outsold the old company. **They knew that the measure was sales made, not calls made.**

Once you begin to look, you will see that this is a very common cause

of problems within your company and other companies. **The problem with searching is, at its core, the same thing.** Because of the way search engines are evaluated, a “good” engine returns a large quantity. An engine that returns a single, very good document will have a very high precision, but a very very low recall. We get what we pay for, even though we often don't realize what it is we are indicating (by our payment) we want.

The director of IT training for a large insurance company talked of the difficulty in assessing his people. “The company judges success by time and budget. If the project came in on time and on budget, it is a success. **But that does not give me any measure for improvement.** Each project is different with different teams.

**How can I tell how they are doing?** How can I improve the process? In addition, that measure doesn't take into account whether or not the project actually did what it was supposed to do or if it caused more problems during implementation and use.

**If we build something that screws up a system, but we delivered it on time and on budget, we're a success.”**

***The reason that the wrong thing is measured is often because it is easier to measure.***

Measuring the right thing is often hard, expensive and messy. Budget and time spent are relatively apparent and easy to quantify. Measuring the affect on the organization, measuring the process of development...that is time consuming and hard.

## **Beware of the easy road in defining problems and measuring results!**

It was widely predicted that introducing word processing systems would reduce the number of typists by at least 40%. Instead, what often happened was that, because typing was easier and faster, people started having drafts typed and went through more revisions. Number of typists rarely decreased. In addition, many of the people who were typing were not solely typists. They were often administrative assistants. In order to really reduce the number of typists, the organization would have to route all typing through a typing pool and reduce the number of administrative assistants. Hmmm. Do you want to guess how well that was received?

## **What was the goal?**

Reducing the number of typists? Creating better end documents? A more efficient organization? **Too often we begin building without knowing what we are really trying to do.** Then we measure whatever sticks out and walk away - **trying to justify the result.**

A common problem, which we will explore in the next chapter, is training. People not doing what you want them to do? Train em! Still not doing it? Train em some more! Training costs too much? Build the training faster. The problem is that you are paying for training - butts in seats. What you WANT is better performance.

However, you don't measure performance.

You have no idea if the training affects performance. Training is almost universally measured at the end of the training session usually through smiley sheets (I liked/didn't like the training) and sometimes through a test. It is too expensive to look at the worker's performance at some point after the training and see if you got what you paid for. **It is EASIER, FASTER, and CHEAPER to measure butts in seats. However, when that is what you measure... that is what you get.**

**The other side of this problem is this: If you aren't measuring something, you can't improve it.**

You don't know and by your actions are stating that you don't care about it.

I recently spent far too long at Motor Vehicles trying to register a car.

Having a chance to observe a terrible system for hours on end, I noticed something troubling. When people checked in, they were given a number. When that number was called (up to two hours later) they were served. However, while **I** noticed the length of time, there was *no time tracking* on the part of the staff. **They didn't know how long someone had been waiting.** I don't know if they cared, **but there was no way to improve the system without paying attention to that measure.**

Let's talk training evaluation for a minute. Now, most training programs are evaluated based on a 4 level model developed by Kilpatrick. Level one: Did you like it (can you say smiley sheets?)? Two: Did you learn something (a test)? Three: Did it affect your behavior on the job? Four: Did it make a difference in the organization? **It is accepted, but shouldn't be** that the overwhelming number of training courses are evaluated by Level One (Did you like it?) and almost none are evaluated by what actual difference they made to the organization. **What if we raised our kids that way?** "I don't LIKE taking a bath. Oh, ok..then don't. I don't LIKE going to school. Oh.. ok. We'll change that."

What if we repaired our cars that way (oh, I couldn't fix the engine, but I polished the hood.)?

**This is insane behavior, but think**

## **back...how do you evaluate training or any organizational change?**

Look at what you pay for. Look at what you measure. THAT is what you get. THAT is what you can improve.

