Most training discussions begin when someone identifies a performance gap. Performance gaps are the difference between an employee's expected performance and their actual performance. A key element to conducting a needs assessment is identifying the reasons why a performance gap exists.

Identify the Reasons

There are generally five main reasons why employees don't do the job you would like them to do:

> "Performance gaps are the difference between an employee's expected performance and their actual performance."

1.   They don't know how.

The person may never have been effectively shown how to do the task. Check to see if the person has received useful instructions.

2.   They don't want to.

There may be reasons why the person does not want to do what you want them to do. Check for negative consequences for the desired behaviour or a lack of consequences for the extra effort required.

3.   They think they already are.

Most people do the best job they know how. Check to see if the person has received feedback that indicates performance needs to change.

4.   They are prevented from doing it.

The person may want to perform as you desire, but may be prevented from doing so. Check for any obstacles that keep the employee from improving performance, such as time restraints or lack of resources.

5.   They can't do it.

Some employees lack the ability to grasp concepts or perform complex tasks. Check to see if previous training, feedback and coaching have resulted in improvement. It's possible the person is unable to perform as required.

Vary the Solutions

Depending on the reasons for a performance gap, one or more solutions are possible. We generally find that performance solutions fall into one of three areas: training, operations or hiring. Although performance gaps may be more complex than this table indicates, it will give you a place to start your problem solving discussions.

Reason	Solution		
	Training	Operations	Hiring
Don't know how	✓		
Don't want to	✓		✓
Think they already are	✓		
Prevented from doing it		✓	
Can't do it			✓

Shaughnessy Howell