



# Analyzing Employee Performance Problems

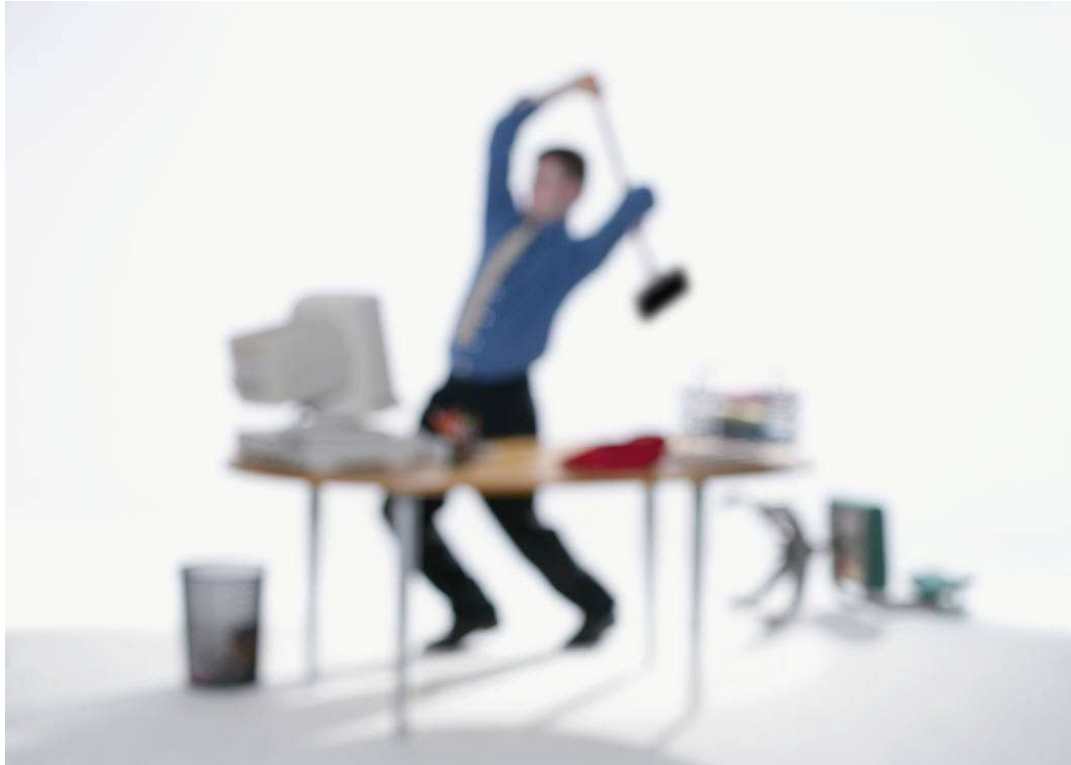
An Online Continuing Education Course for Engineers

**Course Number: FM-1005**

**Credit: 1 Hour / 1 PDH / 1 CPD**

# Analyzing Employee Performance Problems

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## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### After this course, you will:

- Be able to discuss the history of some of the founders of Management Theory
- Be able to describe what management traditionally controls
- Explain the difference between McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y management styles and determine which applies to you
- Analyze behavior to determine whether or not employee performance is a problem or just an irritation
- Be able to explain how there is a 90% probability that an employee's lack of satisfactory performance has its roots in something controlled by management
- Be able to conduct an objective and systematic approach to analyzing employee work performance problems
- Know how to ask specific questions to determine root causes of performance problems
- Make recommendations for change that create long-lasting solutions for recurring performance problems

## COURSE OVERVIEW

Before we get into analyzing employee performance problems, we will look at some major theories of management that attempt to explain how organizations may evolve and become the structures we commonly see today.

After the historical introduction, you will learn how to analyze employee performance problems quickly and identify methods of dealing with them effectively.

Then it takes you systematically through ten sequential steps to discover whether something that management controls is the root of the problem. You may be surprised to learn that nearly 90% of the reasons for employee performance problems have their roots in situations controlled by management!

This technique allows managers to retain good will with employees by looking at reasons other than the employee first when trying to isolate causes for work problems.

We hope this course will remain as a handy reference for you long after taking the course and collecting the credits for it.

Richard Grimes, Course Author

## PARKINSON'S LAW

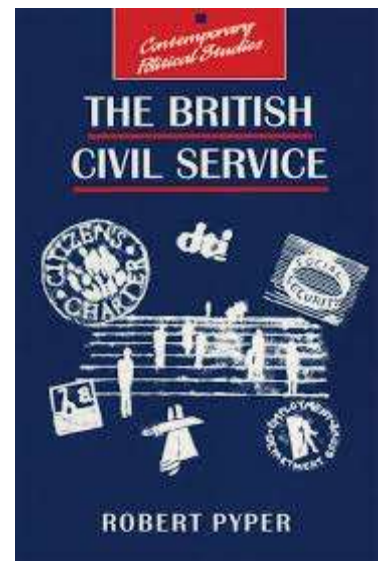
Parkinson's Law, proposed by Cyril Northcote Parkinson in 1955, states that "***work expands to fill the time available for its completion.***"

Regarding civil service employees in the British Empire, Parkinson observed that bureaucracies tend to grow over time, not due to increased work but because officials create more work for each other.

He noted that the number of employees in the British Civil Service, particularly in colonial administration, increased steadily between 1914 and 1928, even as the Empire's responsibilities contracted.

**This growth was driven by two factors: (1) officials hire subordinates to avoid overwork, and (2) officials create tasks to justify their positions, leading to inefficiency and bloated bureaucracies.**

The purpose of including Parkinson's Law in our course is that this same problem, "*work expanding to fill the time available for its completion*", is what we see in many private organizations such as engineering companies and projects, because we frequently confuse the meanings of the terms **PRODUCTIVE** and **BUSY**.



## MANAGEMENT'S ROLE IN EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

*“What do you think is management’s role in relation to employee performance?”*

Your answer to this depends on your academic background, experience as an employee, the kinds of leaders, bosses, or tyrants under which you have worked, and your personal thoughts about any activity called “work.”

The view that the activity called “management” may have some well-defined behaviors associated with it just like engineering, surveying, or architecture does, was revolutionary after the turn of the twentieth century.

Soon, however, it became evident that we could not look at management practices in a vacuum because management occurs within an organization – which is a collection of human beings.

Whether the “organization” is a work team of one boss and one worker or thousands of each, the study of any management practice must be done within the context of the organization.



A well-known American social psychologist, Douglas McGregor (1906-1964), proposed his famous X-Y theory of management in his 1960 book, *'The Human Side of Enterprise'*.

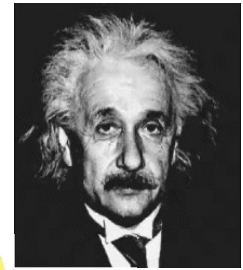
He posited that a “**Theory X**” manager has a negative view of employees assuming they are lazy, untrustworthy, incapable of assuming any responsibility, needing close supervision and external motivation like money. Its managers use authoritarian methods, creating a hierarchical, efficiency-focused, centralized command-and-control environment.

However, the counterpart, a “**Theory Y**” manager, looks at employees differently as being trustworthy, responsible for accomplishing their own work objectives, capable of assuming high levels of motivation, they work as natural, with employees seeking responsibility and self-motivation. **It promotes participative leadership (“none of us is as smart as all of us”), fostering creativity and aligning personal-organizational goals.**

Its leaders adopt a participative style, encouraging employee involvement and decentralization. They focus on creating an environment for personal growth and self-actualization. The work environment

under Theory Y is collaborative, with open communication and flexibility. It's ideal for jobs needing creativity and innovation, contrasting with Theory X's hierarchical setup.

Another belief that a Theory Y manager would have comes from one of the world's most famous scientists and thinkers, Albert Einstein, who told us, "You cannot do things the way you always have and expect different results."



**Can you recall trying to do something the same way over and over and expecting different results?**

Managers' choice between Theory X and Theory Y is based on the nature of the work and performance. A

Theory X approach is more suited to tasks that require a high degree of trust-building.

Many organizations are moving away from Theory X towards Theory Y, recognizing workforce traits.

This flexibility

**How do you see these traits?**

**How does inclusion of Theory Y affect the greater you...** and the Y-side,

"So," you ask, "what are the reasons for this?"

The reason we measure performance is to identify performance problems. An employee

Theory X managers view employees as needing to be controlled to perform to expectations is only because the employee doesn't want to, they would confidently affirm while never considering any other possibility. If you are a Theory X type of manager, this will be a difficult course for you because it will severely challenge your perceptions of the workplace. However, if you are willing to consider other possibilities, then you will enjoy this (and start enjoying leading your employees, too.)