



Buffet Style Learning Has Exciting Potential

Alex Ferguson, RPF & Brian Thomson

Buffet style learning, or performance support systems (PSS) as they are more commonly referred to, provide employees with the tools, information and coaching to complete their day-to-day tasks regardless of whether they are a novice or an experienced professional. This innovative "take as much as often as you want" way of addressing business opportunities has exciting potential in embedding the intellectual capital in your employees.

What is a performance support system?

A PSS is an integrated and comprehensive collection of tools and support systems designed to improve productivity through on-the-job access to information, advice and learning resources.

PSSs provide:

- integration of learning and doing
- task specific information
- multiple levels of support

While PSSs can range from sophisticated, elaborate computer-based applications to a collection of well-designed print-based materials supported by telephone help lines, all PSSs are based on the following key concepts:

- integration of learning and doing - the applicable knowledge, tools and support are available on-the job so that there is no significant difference between learning and doing;
- task specific information - a range of reference and training materials is provided, in different formats, specific to the task at hand; and
- multiple levels of support - to enable all employees to select a level of support that matches their experience and background.

Why use a performance support system?

Benefits of PSSs:

- leveraging intellectual capital
- reduced training costs
- consistent information dissemination
- increased quality, productivity and customer satisfaction

PSSs provide a wide range of benefits including:

- leveraging intellectual capital - by embedding the organization's expertise in the PSS, less experienced employees are able to perform more complex tasks;
- reduced training costs - by delivering training, when needed, at the employee's desk;
- consistent information dissemination - by making the same information available to all employees, regardless of geographic location; and,

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- increased quality, productivity and customer satisfaction - by providing integrated coaching, productivity tools and decision support systems.

What uses does a performance support system have?

PSSs can be used in any program, process or activity that requires tools and information and are characterized by:

- a requirement for analysis of information and/or judgment based on experience;
- a high number of errors and/or high costs of recovering from errors;
- quality issues and/or customer dissatisfaction;
- high support costs (e.g., supervision, hot-lines);
- a high turnover of employees resulting in loss of knowledge and/or continuous training;
- changing subject matter, procedures and/or legal requirements; and,
- a shortage of experienced employees and/or requirement for increased productivity.

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PFA Notice:

The Metropolitan Council's PFA program only accept W/MBE business listed with the State Department of Administration and the DBE Unified Certification Program.

For more information call Roderic Southall at 651-602-1184

Contractors/Consultants	Total Contract Amount	Total Paid to date	DBE Paid to Date	(1) DBE % Actual to Date	(2) DBE % Total Contract Value	Target DBE % Goal
Minnesota Transit Constructors (MnTC)	319,042,487	288,134,813	39,405,644	13.68%	12.35%	15%
Other Contractors	6,163,574	5,958,205	771,074	12.94%	12.51%	
O'Brien Kreitzberg (OBK) (3)	19,000,000	16,857,462	2,992,947	17.75%	15.75%	15%
Marsh	545,000	395,000	134,484	34.05%	24.68%	5%
Other Consultants	26,807,645	23,722,300	1,542,367	6.50%	5.75%	
SUB-TOTAL:	371,558,706	335,067,780	44,846,516	13.38%	12.07%	
Other Commitments *	91,848,109	82,821,840	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTAL:	463,406,815	417,889,620	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* ROW, Cooperative Agreements, Other Direct Costs, etc. (1) Calculates DBE percentage based upon DBE dollars expended vs. contract dollars paid to-date (actuals). (2) Calculates DBE percentage based upon DBE dollars expended vs. total contract value. (3) Values as of January 2004 - Preliminary Incorporates Amendment #2 to the URS/OBK Agreement

