

Q&A TIME

Dear Carolyn:

“Please answer my questions.”

Question 1: “How, specifically, do I write my organizational standards and performance standards? Can you give me an example?”

Answer: Remember the two categories of writing standards—organizational standards (philosophy, mission statement, purpose, goals, and objectives) and job performance standards (replacement for job descriptions) that were identified in an article a few weeks ago? Job performance standards require a quantity or quality statement, which differs from and improves a so-called job description.

Also, earlier, we considered the three categories of writing organizational standards and employee performance standards. The three categories are called “domains.” These categories/domains (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective/attitude) are derived from a taxonomy developed by Benjamin Bloom, often known as “Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy.” Both standards (organization or job performance) start with a verb related to one of the three domains.

You will find these three categories/domains listed separately with possible verbs (according to the verb complexity desired) on Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy website. Use your personally selected verbs to start (being the first word) of each organizational standard or job performance standard within each category/domain.

When writing organizational standards that meet the requirement of philosophy (We/I believe), mission statement, purpose, goals, and objectives, start each statement with an appropriate verb selected from one of the domains (cognitive, psychomotor, affective/attitude.) Organizational standards form the foundation of any business, organization, or group gathering/meeting. They are succinct reminders to be read each meeting as a reminder of the reason for the meeting. Without this consistent ongoing reminder, entropy behavior (movement toward random behavior) is more likely to occur.

Examples of a Job Performance Standard:

1. Cognitive (e.g.--thinking, remembering, calculating, decision-making, problem-solving, etc.)—Any behavior that requires specifically the use of the mind. Example: Decide three of the most important activities for the day. (Note the verb as the first word “Decide” and quantity stated as “three,” which represents a quantity required of this job performance standard.)
2. Psychomotor (e.g.--moving, turning, manipulating, placing, stacking, etc.)---Using the body muscles to accomplish a job. Example: Turn the lights on the bright category at 7:45 each morning. (Note the verb as the first word “Turn” and quality “bright”, which represents a quality required of this job performance standard.)
3. Affective/attitude (e.g.--participates, helps, serves, listens, assists, etc.)—A behavior that shows personal concern and kindness toward others. Example: Listen carefully to the news to determine the possibility of rain. (Note the verb as the first word “Listen” and quality “carefully”, which represents a quality standard of a job performance standard.)

Question 2: “How can I best inform an employee that he/she is not following one of his/her job Performance Standards?”

Answer: Be sure that the current employee’s job performance standards are written to include all specific performance standards, signed, and dated by the employee—including the one(s) not being followed. First, ask the employee to read the specific performance standard not met. Now stop--do not judge or comment as a leader on non-performance of the identified performance standard! Simply say what you, as the leader, observe without judgement. Let the employee personally judge their behavior relative to the job performance standard. The employee’s judging of their behavior (not you, as a leader) will reveal their understanding and provide meaning to the leader’s decision(s) as a result of the employee’s response. Have the employee sign and date a new job performance standard. Document, sign, and date on the new job performance standard any appropriate leader’s comment(s) relative to the employee encounter.

Thanks for asking—and you are always welcome to email questions for a response.

Carolyn Taylor, Ed.D. M.N. R.N.
leadershippoweronline.com