

**TOPIC:**  
**IMPACT OF "NEEDS ASSESSMENT"  
ON PROJECT/PROGRAM SUCCESS**

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# Objectives

- Explain what “Needs” are
- Explore “Needs Assessment”
  - ✓ Define the term
  - ✓ Provide rationale for performing
  - ✓ Consider context in Change Implementation
  - ✓ Steps and tools to conduct
  - ✓ Outline the outputs
  - ✓ Example
- Conclusion

# What does “Need” stand for?

- “Need” refers to the gap or discrepancy between a present/current state (what is) and a desired/future state (what should be).
- The need is neither the present nor the future state; it is the gap between them.
- Desired Results (what should be) - Current results (what is) = Need



- Needs that must be reduced or eliminated are termed as “problems”. E.g. factors contributing to inefficiencies or low performance.
- Needs that must be exploited are perceived as “opportunities”.

# Needs Assessment

- Needs assessment is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information in order to understand needs or gaps between current and desired conditions.
- The goal is to improve performance as well as fix any defects in an organization.
- Needs assessment focuses on the ends (i.e., outcomes) to be attained, rather than the means (i.e., process).
- The needs assessment is an important stage that should be done before starting a project or implementing a strategy on it.
- In many cases, there will be more needs than can be met, even conflicting needs. Hence, prioritization is necessary.

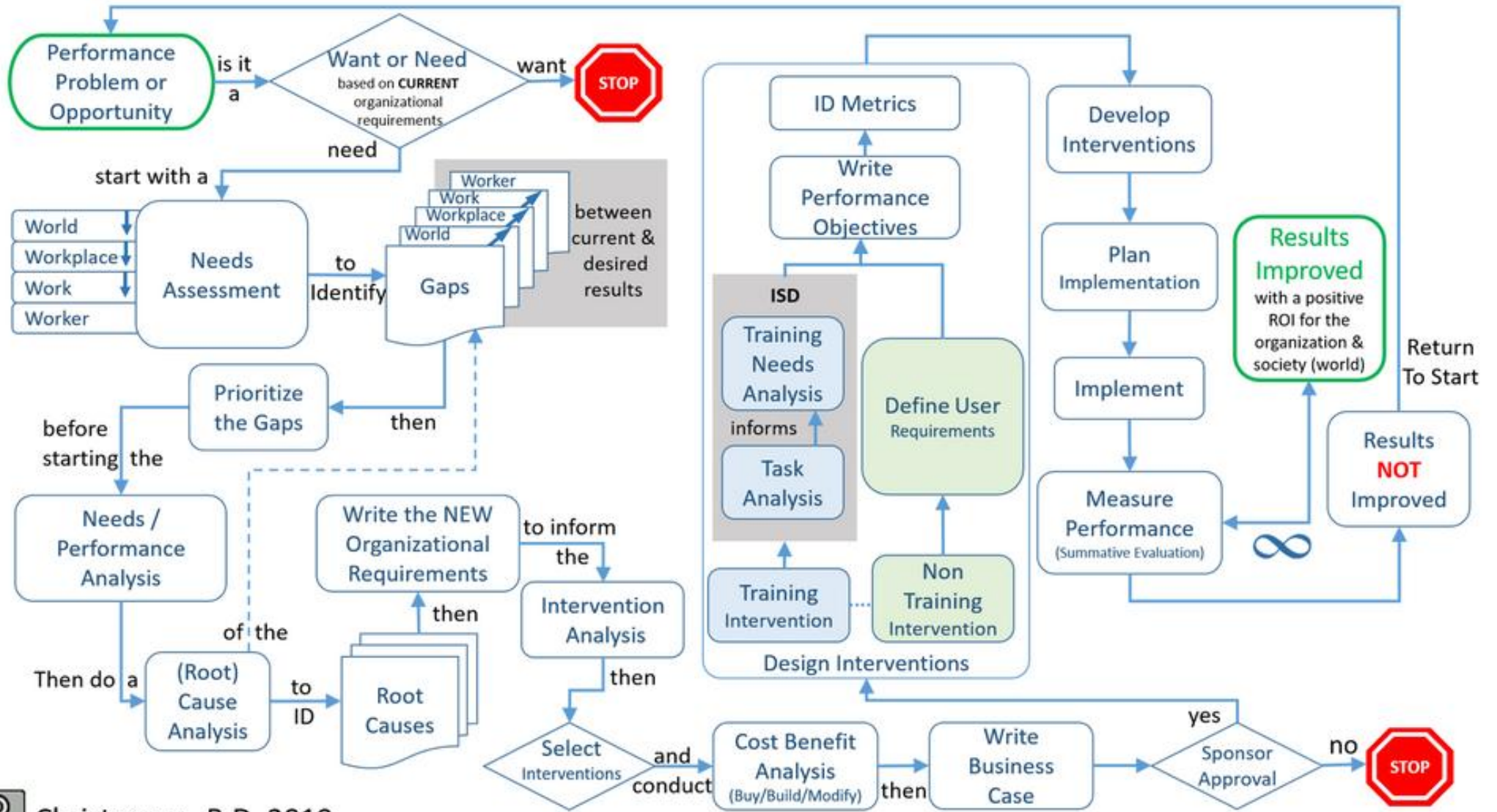
# Needs Assessment ... continued

## *Why perform Needs Assessment?*

Needs assessment ...

- ***Sets priorities and determines criteria for solutions*** so that planners and managers can make sound decisions.
- Ensures that stakeholders' needs are well understood before starting development.
- ***Sets criteria*** for determining how best to allocate available money, people, facilities, and other resources.
- Leads to ***action*** that will ***improve*** programs, services, organizational structure and operations, or a combination of these elements.

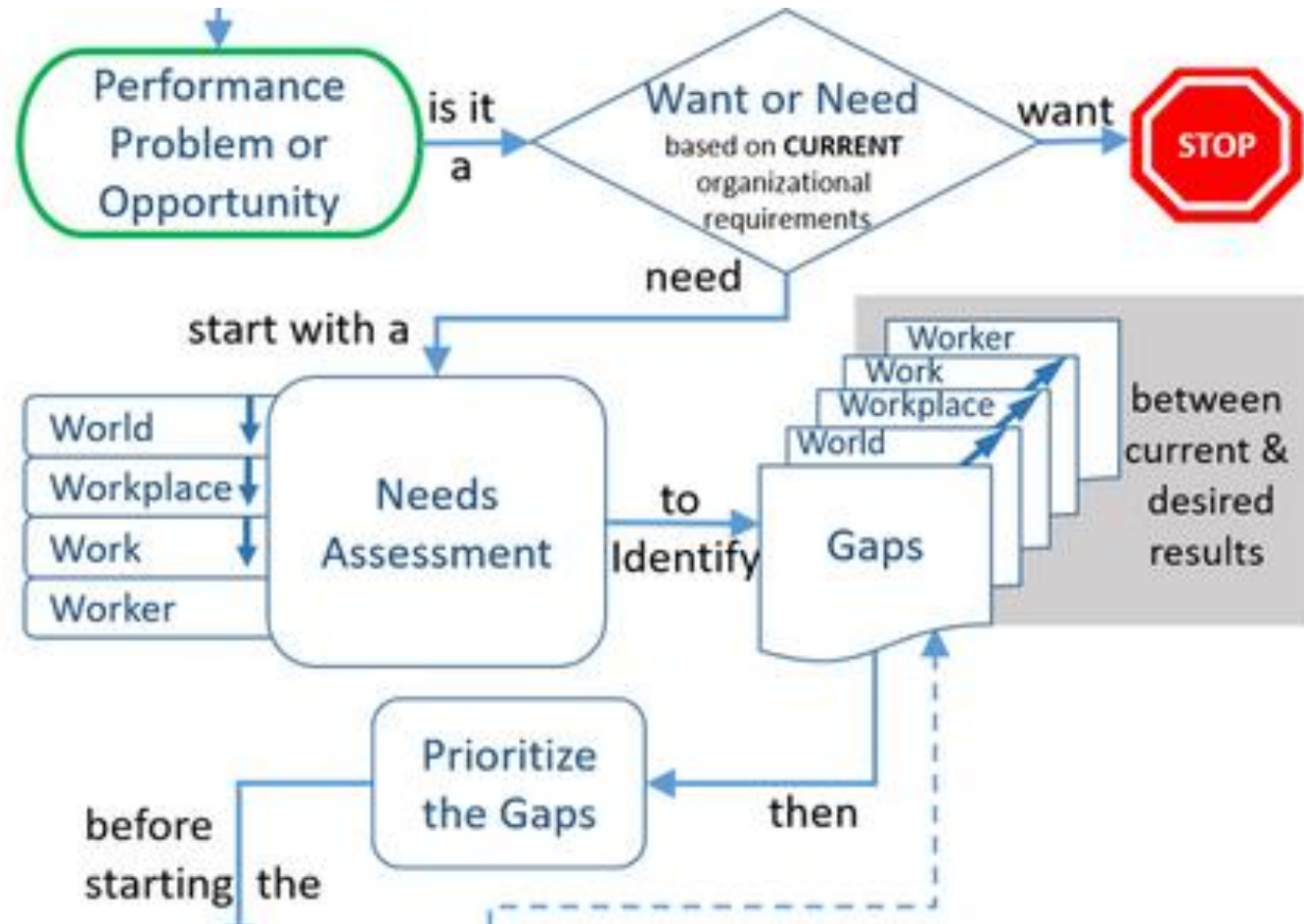
# Needs Assessment ... continued



Christensen. B.D. 2019

# Needs Assessment ... continued

## Needs Assessment in Change Management Context ... continued



# Steps for Conducting a Successful Needs Assessment



- **Why?**

- ✓ Reasons for performing the needs assessment
- ✓ List objectives clearly.
- ✓ E.g. Determine necessary training to improve customer experience and satisfaction score.

- **What?**

- ✓ What evidence exists that we have to improve or change?
- ✓ What data sources exist to provide evidence?
- ✓ What potential barriers do we anticipate?
- ✓ What resources do we need to carry out the assessment?
- ✓ Provide both **qualitative** and **quantitative** data to prove
- ✓ What do you plan to do with the findings?
- ✓ E.g. What proves that process automation is necessary?



# Steps for Conducting a Successful Needs Assessment ...



- **Who?**

- ✓ Who will be involved in this process?
- ✓ Who will collect data and from whom (data source)?
- ✓ Who are the target audiences for this process?
- ✓ Who will use the results of the assessment?
- ✓ E.g. Which departments or individuals can provide details of the manual process?

- **When?**

- ✓ When do we conduct a Needs Assessment?
- ✓ When will the required resources be available?
- ✓ When will the results be released to stakeholders?
- ✓ When will action be taken to bridge the gap?
- ✓ E.g. When is it prudent to embark on the process?

# Steps for Conducting a Successful Needs Assessment ...



- **Where?**

- ✓ Do the data collectors know *where* to enter the data?
- ✓ Where will the collected data be stored?
- ✓ E.g. Data will be stored on Google Drive, SharePoint, etc.

- **How?**

- ✓ How much time, money and staff capacity can we devote to the needs assessment?
- ✓ How do we encourage stakeholders to participate in the needs assessment?
- ✓ How can we overcome barriers to data collection?
- ✓ How will the collated data be retrieved by stakeholders?
- ✓ E.g. We can use interviews and surveys to engage the stakeholders to obtain relevant data.

# Techniques for Conducting Needs Assessment

- *Questionnaires:* Surface level form with general, yes or no questions. This is a great way to find quick information
- *Surveys:* Set of questions and the process of collecting, aggregating, and analyzing the responses from those questions.
- *Interviewing:* Guided conversations with users, process owners, etc., using different types of questions.
- *Focus Groups:* Interactive sessions to gather input on needs and validate data.
- *Workshops:* A session to arrive at a consensus with all participants.
- *Observations:* First-hand observations of current situation, process, work, etc.

# Outputs of Conducting Needs Assessment

- Documented list of collected needs
- Documented sources of needs
- Prioritized list: ***Key needs*** and any ***constraints***
- The rationale for the selection of the key needs and any constraints

# Needs Assessment Example

Imagine a manufacturing company that is having problems delivering its product to customers on time. What three key needs/gaps could be identified using needs assessment?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

# Conclusion

- Needs assessment helps an organization determine the **problems** that are preventing it from reaching its desired goals as well as identify **opportunities** that can be exploited to achieve its desired goals.
- Sound decisions such as selecting most viable solution (projects/programs) to undertake require sound data – and needs assessment is a key source of such data.

N.B: John E. O'Toole stated: ***“It is not possible to succeed with a brilliant idea and superb execution of the wrong strategy...”***

# References

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