

Hello,

Corporate Information Technology investment is back on the rise following the post-dot.com decline. As companies pay closer attention to the return on their technology investments, they would be wise to consider the impact that workforce performance plays in the success or failure of IT systems implementation. The following release recommends specific actions executives can take to get the full economic value from their investments, including in-vogue systems such as business intelligence and CRM. Please contact me if you'd like to speak with Dr. Seth Leibler, our CEO, regarding this issue.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Paula Alsher, CEP

**Phone:** (770) 458-4080

**E-Mail:** palsher@cepworldwide.com

### **To Improve IT Return on Investment, Pay Attention to the “People Factors”**

*Workforce Performance is Critical in Systems Implementation*

**June 11, 2004 - Atlanta, GA** – Companies looking to IT to improve performance and gain a competitive edge will most certainly face disappointing results unless they also invest in the employees who need to use these systems in their jobs. Technology alone will not yield companies' anticipated rewards for capital investment in high-cost systems. “Companies spend millions of dollars on systems that, whenever possible, are bypassed and used by employees in ways most closely resembling the system that was replaced—thus ensuring that ROI goals are never achieved,” says Dr. Seth Leibler, Chief Executive Officer of The Center for Effective Performance (CEP).

Many organizations turn to technology to resolve business problems without considering how the systems will impact both people and processes. Says Dr. Leibler, “With any system change, there is a subsequent change in business processes. And when processes change, jobs change as well. New, usually higher-level skills, are required of employees.”

Companies who invest significant time and dollars in systems purchases often make user needs for training and support an afterthought. Equally important, the training that *is* offered focuses on system features instead of on the skills critical job groups need to use the new system to perform tasks. Employees are left to figure out on their own, usually through trial and error, how to actually use the system in their daily tasks. Over time, top performers (usually no more than 10% of the workforce) learn how to make changes in their jobs to accommodate the

new system. The remaining employees—the backbone of the workforce—typically never use the system as intended. Leibler strongly recommends that organizations consider all the factors required for performance—skill, motivation, and other supports-- as they develop their implementation plan.

### **Skills for Users**

Poor training can lead to costly mistakes, loss of productivity, and a downward slide in morale. To prevent these significant consequences, Leibler offers these six recommendations:

1. Don't use system documentation in training. Most documentation is extremely long and difficult for users to follow. In addition, it is usually organized around system functionality instead of around user job tasks.
2. Don't just train the system. Training should focus on how employees will use the system to perform their job tasks.
3. Use analysis to identify discrepancies between system functionalities and business processes. Ensure "holes" are identified and resolved before rollout.
4. Ensure that every user practices on the new system using job-simulated exercises. Practice should mirror real-life conditions as much as possible. It's the only way employees will become proficient with the system and confident in their ability to use it.
5. Look for opportunities to develop job aids that are task-based and user-friendly. Job aids that are organized around job tasks are much easier to understand and use, and can be a cost-effective substitute for full training.
6. Allocate 10 percent to 13 percent of the total project budget to training. Being realistic about costs up front is more than worthwhile, given the investment being made in the technology.

### **Motivational and Resource Supports**

In addition to following the training recommendations, organizations should use diagnostic tools like Dr. Robert F. Mager's Performance Analysis to uncover motivational and other support requirements for successful implementation. "Most people want to do a good job," says Dr. Seth Leibler, Chief Executive Officer of CEP, The Center for Effective Performance. "But the simple truth is that people don't adapt that easily to change. We can help them overcome the barriers so that companies achieve their anticipated results."

### **About CEP**

The Center for Effective Performance (CEP) is the industry leader in helping organizations turn their workforce into a competitive advantage, especially in high

risk situations such as outsourcing, mergers, acquisitions, restructurings, downsizing and large scale system implementations. For nearly two decades, CEP has helped companies solve performance problems, develop training guaranteed to work, implement best practices, and create performance improvement strategies that translate into improved financial results. As the world's leading practitioners of Dr. Robert Mager's research-based methodology, CEP delivers world-class, proven solutions that increase profitability and shareholder value.

For more information, go to [www.cepworkforceperformance.com](http://www.cepworkforceperformance.com).

###