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- **Article** – *The Business of Improving Organizational Performance*
- **Update** – *Our thanks goes out to over 100 executives who participated in our Enterprise Performance Management Study*

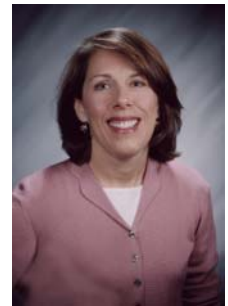
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## THE BUSINESS OF IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

By Carol Bergeron

You and other executives of your firm have just begun the annual planning process. Your firm's most recent data analysis tells you that the number of new customers is growing while the number of repeat customers is on the decline. True, revenue is up, but the short and long term health of the organization could be rosier. Thus the new strategic initiative is born: Increase repeat customers through stellar customer experiences.

When trying to identify why customers are not coming back, you refer to the most recent customer satisfaction survey results. At first glance satisfaction scores look pretty good. Relative to previous surveys though, a slight downward trend has begun. Noteworthy are the lower scores when it comes to trouble shooting customer problems.



How do you go about addressing this business challenge? Here are a few ideas to get you started.

1. **Share the results, concerns and impact on the organization.** Get together with the folks who are on the front line with customers. Share the results and concerns with them. Communicate how important their role is in the grand scheme of things. Ask for their initial insight and commitment to improve organizational performance.
2. **Charter employees to identify root causes** as to why customers take their business elsewhere. Group problem solving tools like fishbone diagramming and SWOT analysis can get you started. Include insightful folks outside your staff for broader perspectives as highly interdependent processes may dictate cross-functional solutions.
3. **Get more information** by having employees call customers to understand what's getting in the way of a positive customer experience.

Perhaps you learn customers are happy with the final solutions, delighted with the interactions with your employees but are dissatisfied with the hoops they had to jump through to get the solutions implemented.

4. **Clearly state the problem, causes and goal** based on your analysis. A common understanding of the problem, causes and future expected outcomes are absolutely critical to creating a foundation for performance improvement that happens through people. Document them, refer to them often and re-communicate them to employees as frequently as you can to maintain focus.
5. **Challenge the group to take action.** Collectively figure out what actions need to be taken to address root causes. What needs to happen so customer solutions get implemented more quickly, correctly the first time and with little to no follow-up required of customers?

Solutions may include revising cross-functional business processes, the selection of more efficient tools and/or restating performance expectations on what timely and reliable follow through looks like among employees. Rely on proven project management expertise and process to get the solutions implemented.

6. **Support employees.** Within the context of our case study we don't know what the actual corrective actions will be. You'll need to support both group and individual efforts based on need. Some needs will have their roots in logic while others in emotion.

The most effective ways to support employees include your own actions such as: providing employees tangible forms of support (money, people, re-tooling), preparing the workforce to be competent in executing their job responsibilities and providing real-time one-on-one coaching and feedback. Revisit reward systems so that desired results and behaviors are recognized and people are encouraged to repeat them. All these actions, and more, communicate that you are doing your part as a leader to improve organizational performance.

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## ENTERPRISE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT STUDY

Thank you for making this initiative a success! **Over 100 executives participated**; representing 20 states and 3 countries, in our study through a web based survey or one-on-one interviews. Stay tuned for how to obtain information on the results including published articles and a final report. You won't want to miss out on the key findings that separate top performing organizations from others.

Bergeron Associates and Insight Management Group partnered to conduct a study on Enterprise Performance Management. The study probed practices used and their effectiveness in managing enterprise-wide performance and aligning the workforce and large projects to the strategic goals of the organization.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERESTING RESOURCES

**2006 Schedule for Educational Workshops** at [www.bergeronassociates.com/calendar.htm](http://www.bergeronassociates.com/calendar.htm).

### Employee Value Proposition Gains Clout Among Executives

Senior Executive Networking Group, New England, Rebecca's Cafe, Burlington, MA, Friday, November 3, 2006.

### Resource for Workforce Effectiveness Information

Articles and electronic newsletters filled with practical tips on how to enhance the performance of people and organizations. Explore our publications: [www.bergeronassociates.com/publications.htm](http://www.bergeronassociates.com/publications.htm)

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## ABOUT BERGERON ASSOCIATES

Bergeron Associates<sup>TM</sup>, a human capital management and organizational performance improvement firm founded in 1998, provides leaders customized, practical workforce and organizational improvement solutions to achieve goals.

Bergeron Associates  
101 Middlesex Tpke, Ste 6, PMB 326  
Burlington, MA 01803-4914  
781-376-4071

[carol@bergeronassociates.com](mailto:carol@bergeronassociates.com)  
[www.bergeronassociates.com](http://www.bergeronassociates.com)

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