A NEW VIEW OF
IS PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE
EVALUATION

Gary Klein, James J. Jiang, and Marion G. Sobol

For the sake of overall corporate performance, users and IS professionals need "consonance" when evaluating system performance.

TO HELP MANAGE THEIR INTERNAL IS PERSONNEL FUNCTIONS, MANY ORGANIZATIONS SCRUTINIZE IS PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE. CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE IN THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND IS LITERATURE SUBSTANTIATES OUR VIEW THAT SPECIFIC, CHALLENGING GOALS YIELD IMPROVED

productivity by IS professionals [1, 5, 9]. Tying the evaluation of an organization's IS personnel to the goals of their systems-development projects, as well as to strategic organizational goals, provides opportunities for enhancing IS personnel performance and productivity. Linking this evaluation to these goals obviates the need for a goal-setting-and-evaluation loop. Therefore, at the start of any system-development project, a set of specific, challenging, and meaningful performance measures should be defined based on the goals of both the organization and the systems being developed (see Figure 1).

Understanding how IS personnel performance supports corporate performance is not limited to disseminating a list of corporate and system goals. Management has to be certain all parties are aware of the relative importance and priorities of the goals and their attainment measures. Users and developers must recognize and share each others' goals, as well as those associated with the organization's strategic posture. The organization must structure its evaluation and reward system to encourage attainment of the desired strategic goals. Motivation theory argues that people tend to engage in purposeful behavior to the degree they believe their efforts will result in valued outcomes [9]. In sum,

performance criteria, evaluation techniques, and reward packages should be tied closely to organizational goals. Therefore, we highlight here a comprehensive feedback process derived as a result of a detailed survey we conducted in 1998 that enables the integration of these activities (see the sidebar "How the Survey Was Done").

Likewise, it seems logical to us that different groups of people might assign different weights to the same criterion due to their personal views as to what is important. Productivity and quality measures usually exist to reflect the view of developers and managers. Yet the customer, or user, of the system function is a primary source for determining any system's success. Thus, user views on goal attainment must be part of any comprehensive goal-setting and performance evaluation [4]. Differences in attitudes about what are desirable outcomes appear as gaps in an evaluation setting [11]. Despite being proposed as a way to measure system success, these gaps have not been integrated into any of the various comprehensive evaluation structures available today [8].

Popular evaluation techniques are unable to completely integrate goals and the different views of how to attain them [1]. Clearly needed is a more