

# When the Gears Don't Work – Problem Solving I: Improving Performance

Supporting and managing talent, volunteers, board members, hired help, etc.

What to do when the job's not getting done.

Southeast Dance Leadership Conference - Oct. 1-3, 2010

Rob Harper and Diane Silver

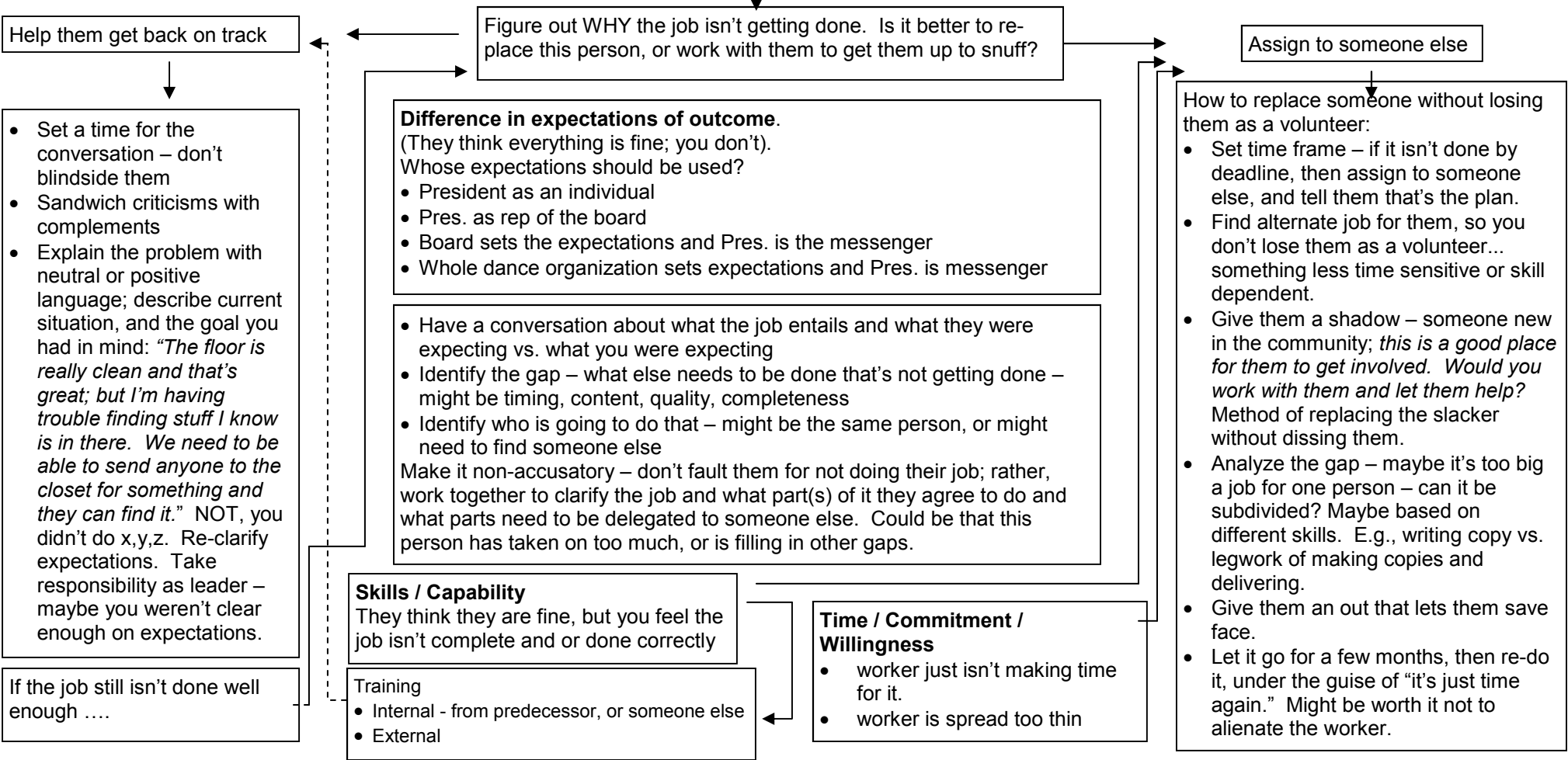
## ORGANZATIONAL WORK – behind the scenes - Categories of Jobs:

- Occasional or one-time and non-critical – e.g., organizing storage closet, replacing light bulbs
- Occasional but critical – e.g., website goes down. Needs to be up soon!
- On-going but relatively simple – e.g., copying flyers and bringing to dance for distribution
- On-going and critical – e.g., booking, financial management & reporting, opening & closing of hall, etc.

Skill-based job vs. non-skill-based – Easy training vs. difficult training – e.g., opening and closing the hall vs. financial accounting.

When the job's not getting done...Don't just do it for them. Analyze:  
What is the job?

What are the job expectations? Need to agree on what the job actually is. Create job descriptions - in most ideal situation. At the least, have a conversation about what exactly the job entails. If someone is filling a void, they may define the role as they go, but make sure they aren't stepping on someone's toes, overstepping bounds, etc. The challenge comes when things stop working well and there's a perception that the job isn't being done.



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### TALENT – up-front performance

“Whose expectations” becomes very important – very subjective – preference for music, programming (e.g., squares) instrumentation in the sound mix, etc. Expectations need to be made at the board or organizational level, not by an individual.

If the job is not acceptable ....

#### Adjustments that can be made that evening

If able, they will.

If not able,

Band – tempo, clarity of phrasing

Calling – set clear expectations re programming. OK, to reiterate instructions during the eve. (or let them know, if you neglected to be clear). e.g., to call squares or not; to please teach every new move

Sound – volume; instrumental mix (prominence --- too much bass, too much guitar, etc.). Screechiness, etc. (Things beyond their control include sound attenuation, echo-y hall, speaker placement).

Importance of filtering complaints (is the volume too loud for everyone or just the one complainer?) – see “Whose expectations rule?”

Replacing someone in the moment – only if grossly incapacitated (e.g., drunk), or inappropriate. Otherwise, there should be things you can recommend to help them get through the evening.

#### Decision to hire again or not

To give or not give feedback – solicited or unsolicited?

Band - tune selection / repertoire; skill at variation & improvisation to keep the dance exciting – jamming vs. playing for dancers.

Calling – teaching effectively (too many walk-thru); not knowing dances;

Sound – Attentiveness to musicians – are they at the board vs. dancing, taking a break, etc. (Are they paid or a volunteer?)