

Using a Behavioral Model of Excellence to Improve Organizational Performance: Benefits and Pitfalls

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Abstract

A behavioral model of excellence is used to profile successful human behavior in a selected context and, through a training program, to teach others the characteristics of success. This paper describes a model of excellence study, discusses some of the advantages of this approach and identifies some of the challenges in implementing the resulting training program in organizations. A specific case study, where the NLP LifeSets[®] Model of Excellence is used to profile star performers in an organization, is discussed. Coverage identifies the management objectives in commissioning the project, the steps included in the process to elicit the meta programs, beliefs, strategies and physiology of star performers, a description of the fieldwork undertaken, the validation process and the development of the resulting training program. The case study results are compared with findings from other projects and, in each derived profile, the NLP LifeSets[®] Model of Excellence was able to identify and distinguish the different meta programs, beliefs, strategies and physiology that drove success. The challenges of implementing training programs are highlighted and the importance of management commitment to the success of the project is emphasized. The authors suggest some further uses of models of excellence profiling but also reflect on the lack of similar critiques of NLP-based modeling which, if available, would inform and advance the application of NLP-based models of excellence.

Keywords: Behavioral Modeling, Model of Excellence, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Organizational Training

Behavioral modeling is a process for replicating successful human behavior and making exceptional abilities available to others (Dilts, 1994). It focuses on capturing both the conscious and unconscious competence of experts (Dilts, n.d.). A successful model identifies patterns in the interaction between human behavior and the environment and systematizes the behavior so that the desired outcomes can be efficiently, effectively, and consistently achieved (Dilts et al., 1980). Desired outcomes are defined differently, depending on the environment and the criteria established. For example, in organizations, success can be defined as the achievement of pre-determined levels of sales, productivity, or financial goals or the adoption of organizational cultural values. In sport, success could be classified as winning, as beating one's own personal best time, or as improving endurance levels. In many arenas – business, professional, social, athletic - there are star performers; those people who achieve success beyond the standards reached by their peers. These star performers employ behavioral patterns that can be learned by others.

To develop a model, the sequence of successful behaviors is broken down into manageable elements that can be replicated, practiced, and learnt by others (Day, 2008). A resulting model of excellence unearths the behavioral and cognitive drivers that influence how a star performer achieves, decides, creates, self-motivates, and remembers. Through a targeted training program, based on the model of excellence, people are provided with the skills and techniques to emulate and replicate the successful patterns of others.

Most Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) based models of excellence measure similar broad components: intrinsic values (meta programs), beliefs, cognitive/behavioral strategies and the physiology that people employ to competently perform specific tasks. The design of individual models reflects the specific environments in which they operate and the desired performance goals.

Meta programs are a person's characteristic way of sorting information and, collectively, they contribute to preferred thinking patterns (Kolarzowski, 2001). They are the unconscious personal filters that drive perceptions and are the patterns that capture an individual's interest and attention (James & Woodsmall, 1988). Brown (2004) describes them as "personality preferences that influence, at an unconscious level, an individual's language and behavior". Individuals can change their meta programs by making conscious decisions to delete processes and strategies that no longer work well (Hall & Bodenhamer, 2006) or, conversely, to add processes and strategies which will be more effective in changed circumstances. As reported by James and Woodsmall (1988), the foundations of meta programs are based on the work of Carl Jung and align with the model of personality in NLP. The number of meta programs used by practitioners can vary. The NLP LifeSets[®] meta programs cover 6 dimensions.

Beliefs are representations of memories that shape behavior and influence the results that are produced (Hoffeld Group, 2015). Bandler (1989) states that, "[most] beliefs about self are a function of generalization: specific events are generalized to the category of self" and, when this generalization is limiting, it can impact on an individual's ability to accomplish new ambitions. In a model of excellence (MOE) application, contextual beliefs are those that describe a person's key beliefs about the task at hand and their ability to successfully complete the task. In this case study, they influence an individual's perception of their employing organization and their job within that organization.

A cognitive strategy is the sequence of sensory representations (internal and external) that a person goes through to perform a task (e.g., a handshake or make a decision). The sequence of the task is embedded in a TOTE (Test-Operate-Test-Exit), a model proposed by Miller et al., (1960) and typically operates below consciousness (Dilts et al., 1980).

Physiology describes the observable behaviors that accompany the performance of a task. These observable behaviors include, but are not limited to, how a person breathes, their posture, how they orient to see, what they hear, smell, or taste, how muscles move (e.g., tightening or relaxing) and voice technique.

The NLP LifeSets[©] Model of Excellence (NLP LifeSets[©] MOE) draws on the tools of NLP and the representation of behavioral modelling shaped by Wyatt Woodsmall around 1988 (Hall, personal communication, March 2, 2019). The specific elicitation methodology and techniques used in the NLP LifeSets[©] MOE were refined by the principal author based on his own extensive work and experience as a NLP Master Trainer. The NLP LifeSets[©] MOE employs the typical steps of behavioral modelling: identifying excellent performance and capturing what a person does (their behavior and physiology), how they do it (cognitive strategies), and why they do it (beliefs and values), then extracting and synthesizing the key activities and behaviors and, finally, designing a training program to teach the skills needed to replicate this excellent performance in others. Built into the NLP LifeSets[©] MOE are mechanisms for checking and validating the findings of each of the components.

The NLP LifeSets[©] assessment survey consists of 48 questions, 42 of which (seven per dimension) are used in the analysis. Most questions have two response options (the ‘Time Orientation’ dimension has three response options). Each question describes a common situation (e.g., ‘When I go shopping, I...’, ‘If I’m beginning a new task, I...’) and each of the response options corresponds to the orientations being tested. For example, for the Motivation dimension, one of the response options presents a ‘towards positive’ orientation and the other an ‘away from negative’ orientation.

Projects where the NLP LifeSets[©] MOE has been employed cover a range of industries, professions, and activities and have addressed goals such as achieving sales

success for both for-profit and non-profit organizations, identifying the key success attributes of an organization's supervisory team, defining success among customer consultants, forensic scientists, and creative chefs or determining characteristics of success in sports. For each project, the information is gathered from the organization's star performers and includes observation at their place of work (e.g., retail, call center, fieldwork).

After a model of excellence is developed, a tailored training program is designed to teach the identified behaviors of success to other team members. The final measure of success for a model of excellence program is a positive shift in relevant performance indicators, compared to the baseline data.

This paper profiles an application of the NLP LifeSets[®] MOE, using a case study undertaken by the principal author, to illustrate the processes involved in the development of a MOE profile and then discusses some of the challenges of implementing the resulting training programs for this and other case studies.

Method

Steps in Developing a MOE and Training Program

A NLP LifeSets[®] MOE based project for an organization involves the following steps:

1. The commissioning organization (the client) identifies the indicator(s) (e.g., sales volume, revenue target, percentage of successful contacts, production rates) that it wants to improve.
2. The client, in consultation with the MOE consultant, identifies the staff members (the 'star performers') whose performances best match the pre-determined success indicators.
3. The meta programs, contextual beliefs, cognitive strategies, and physiology of the star performers are then elicited.
4. The information gathered is then synthesized and a model of excellence is developed.

5. The resulting model of excellence forms the basis of a targeted training program. This training program focuses on teaching the values, contextual beliefs, strategies, and behaviors of the star performers.
6. The training program is piloted with a selected group. Assessment of the pilot program includes demonstration of an understanding of the successful beliefs and behaviors and an ability to reproduce these. If practical, a measurement of 'post-pilot' performance can also be taken before full implementation.
7. The training program is then refined, if needed, to ensure that the training will provide staff members with the skills and techniques already utilized by the star performers.

Data Collection

Input data is gathered across four input components, as defined in Table 1, using the data collection methods summarized in Table 2. The patterns revealed through interview, observation and the structured survey are confirmed through component-specific validation processes (Table 3). The validation of meta programs, beliefs, and strategies seeks to gather external confirmation of internal processes and, therefore, to establish that the expressed meta programs, beliefs or strategies are real, consistent and congruent. Physiology, on the other hand, is exclusively an external process that can be openly observed and validated by witnessing repetition of previously noted behaviors.

Analysis, MOE Profile and Training Program

The information collected is analyzed to determine the prevailing patterns for values, contextual beliefs, strategies, and physiology from these star performers. The resulting MOE profile is a synthesis of this analysis. Specifically, the profiling process covers:

- ***Meta programs***: the results of each of the six dimensions of the NLP LifeSets[©] assessment survey are recorded. Any outlying results are noted and, where extreme

variation is observed, can be deleted from the final analysis if excessive distortion would result from their inclusion. Responses are totaled and then averaged, for each orientation, and a score between 1 and 7 recorded (fractions are rounded to the nearest whole number) (Figure 1). The results are reviewed with the client to confirm that the ensuing meta program profile aligns organizationally. If necessary, a minor adjustment can be made to strengthen the alignment. In the authors' experience, this is rarely needed.

- **Beliefs:** the three most common beliefs are identified. These are drawn from between one and three areas (see Table 2).
- **Cognitive strategy:** the most common strategy is constructed from a synthesis of the strategies coded for individual participants, and then tested to ensure they are consistent for well-formed and ecological conditions.
- **Physiology:** the most common physiological behaviors are elicited from a synthesis of the physical movements of individual participants.

The resulting NLP LifeSets[©] MOE profile is reviewed with the client and, once agreed, is accepted as the operational MOE. From this operational MOE, a training program is developed.

Transparency and openness

We have described our sampling method, state that no data was omitted from the analysis for the profiled case study and we have adhered to the *Journal of Applied Psychology* checklist, where applicable. The raw data is held by the authors and the de-identified file is available on request. The quantitative data were analyzed using Excel. Qualitative responses categories (for example, a participant's description of their relationship to their organization) were coded into the pre-set categories. This study's design and its

analysis were not preregistered.

Case Study

The Australian branch of a large, international, not-for-profit organization raised revenue through door-to-door canvassing by its sales teams. In the field, these canvassing teams provided information about the organization and its role in promoting social and environmental good and asked people to donate money, through an ongoing payment plan, to help fund the work of the organization. The management of this organization noted that the success rates of their canvassing teams varied substantially. Success was defined, by management, as securing a plan for regular donations over a specified time period.

The organization commissioned the principal author to undertake a behavioral modelling study to identify the meta programs, contextual beliefs, and behaviors of the highly successful canvassers and, based on the resulting profile, to develop a NLP LifeSets[®] MOE and then a training program. After analyzing past performances, the organization's management selected the star performers to take part in the initial MOE development phase.

A total of 11 canvassers were selected for the initial phase. The information gathering process was undertaken in three steps as outlined below.

1. Each canvasser was personally interviewed for approximately 2 hours:
 - a. to identify their beliefs about the organization, about themselves, or about themselves in relation to the organization, and
 - b. to determine the cognitive strategies they used in the execution of their role (i.e., in canvassing for donations).
2. Each canvasser self-completed the NLP LifeSets[®] assessment survey to elicit their meta programs. This data was entered into Excel for analysis.
3. Each canvasser was observed undertaking their canvassing activity, in order to

determine their physiology.

During the face-to-face dialogue the interviewer (the MOE consultant) asked a number of questions, each of which was designed to gather information on a specific aspect of the MOE profile. At the same time, the interviewer was observing the level of congruency between verbal responses and non-verbal behavior as part of the validation process (Table 3).

Results

For this organization, the meta programs of successful canvassers demonstrate that they have a clear bias towards positive motivation (looking to rewards rather than considering consequences) and towards difference when making decisions (as opposed to deciding on the basis of similarity). These successful canvassers rarely consider the past; rather they focus on the present and the future. They also demonstrate flexibility; an attribute that is usefully employed in responding to comments from potential donors and in keeping the exchange open. For example, they can modify their language to present information in the relationship framework (self/other) that resonates with the potential donor or to mirror the potential donor's way of learning. Contextual beliefs, which consider the operation of the organization and the successful canvasser's place in it, are centered on the importance of organizational effectiveness, on communication skills as a tool for successful engagement with potential donors and on a personal belief in the canvasser's own ability to thrive in the organizational environment. The cognitive strategies used by successful canvassers focus on gaining rapport with potential donors, using sensory acuity to gather information and then formulating appropriate responses. The successful canvasser adopts an erect posture, maintains eye contact and matches their tone, volume, and tonality with that of the potential donor. More detailed descriptions of the results follow.

Meta programs

Specifically, the meta programs identified for a successful canvasser (Figure 1) in this organization reveal that the model canvasser:

- has a personal motivation towards pursuing positive goals and thinking in terms of advantages. They perceive obstacles as opportunities and, consequently, can turn objections into agreements. The successful canvasser responds well to positive encouragement and reward;
- has the ability to make choices when receiving feedback, drawing either on their own intuition or noting external physical expressions (e.g., posture, language) when framing their response to the potential donor;
- has an ability to relate to the potential donor by 'stepping into their shoes' and responding accordingly;
- can contextualize information to accommodate the donor's learning frame, either 'big picture' first and then specifics, or the reverse;
- orients time towards the present and the future with little reference to the past. Past failure does not hinder the successful canvasser's motivation: the present enables the canvasser to actively engage with the potential donor and to deal with day-to-day tasks while still striving for future goals and rewards;
- demonstrates a clear choice for making decisions based on difference rather than sameness.

Beliefs

The three core beliefs for a successful canvasser in this organization are:

- that the organization is effective in creating social and environmental change;
- that personal contact and communication with people is needed to achieve organizational goals;

- that the canvasser can be successful and survive using their own resources while acknowledging that there is always room for improvement.

These core beliefs consider the organization and its role in doing good, how the canvasser's role contributes to this and the self-confidence of the canvasser in undertaking their role. Other beliefs expressed by a number of the successful canvassers reinforced the themes identified in the core beliefs. For example, some canvassers commented on negative global situations and implied a role for the organization in addressing these. Others talked about the power of people uniting to achieve goals. Only one belief ('not a bad job'), referring to a canvasser's view of their own work, was expressed somewhat negatively.

Cognitive Strategy

For this organization, the cognitive strategy employed by a successful canvasser focuses on three key areas:

- ***feedback***: actively noting a potential donor's verbal and body language and responding with appropriate feedback;
- ***sensory acuity***: listening to and observing the potential donor and noting their environment;
- ***rapport***: utilizing information about the potential donor as a basis for rapport building.

The resultant NLP LifeSets[®] MOE cognitive strategy (Figure 2) is a synthesis of the content and sequence of each successful canvasser's strategy. This sequence summarizes the following steps:

1. The canvasser is motivated to succeed through positive internally generated pictures, feelings, or dialogue. This representation is closely linked to the motivational value (towards positive) and the beliefs that the canvasser has about their role in the organization's success.

2. In the field, when the canvasser first approaches a house, they note the style and presentation of the house and its immediate surrounds. The canvasser uses this information to assist in establishing rapport with a potential donor.
3. The canvasser then makes contact with the potential donor and notes, by looking and listening, the potential donor's response after an introductory greeting. The canvasser is using external feedback to facilitate early engagement with the potential donor.
4. Based on the initial exchange, the canvasser then gets a stronger feel for how the potential donor will interact during contact. If the feeling is positive, the successful canvasser will continue introducing the organization, highlighting its goals and the need for support. If the feeling is negative, the canvasser will attempt a creative tactic to gain rapport. Creative tactics could include telling a success story about a donor or a personal reflection on the impact of the good work being done by the organization. If unsuccessful, the canvasser will politely terminate the exchange.
5. If the exchange continues, the successful canvasser watches and listens to responses from the potential donor and uses these to guide the style of presentation, what to say and how to say it. The successful canvasser is, unconsciously, drawing on their flexibility and the potential donor's preference for 'big picture' or detailed information.
6. If a negative feeling then results from this further exchange, the canvasser again attempts to re-engage using creative tactics. If the negative feeling persists, the canvasser breaks contact (exits) while still maintaining rapport. If a positive feeling results, the canvasser closes the exchange with a new subscription.

Physiology

The physiology of the successful canvasser includes:

- an erect and primarily stationary posture with head held upward, ongoing eye contact,

and relaxed muscles. Any materials being discussed are held so that the potential donor can see them. A distance of about three feet (one meter) is maintained between canvasser and potential donor;

- the canvasser's voice tonality, volume, and modulation either matches the voice of the potential donor or is evenly/ neutrally delivered;

In summary, the key strengths found in the star performers for this organization are:

- a high value placed on the work of the organization;
- an ability to think in terms of benefits;
- a capacity to balance present needs with future goals;
- thinking and behaving optimally for successful outcomes;
- flexibility and creativity in gaining rapport and closing the sale.

Discussion

MOE profiling is a robust and discriminating tool for capturing the behavior of individuals who perform well in a particular activity. The project sample is limited only to those in the organization's occupational population who meet the qualifying criteria and the results cannot be generalized to a broader population. The sample selection is based on objective data; specifically that a participant's measured performance exceeds a minimum requirement. There seems little incentive for an organization to either exclude a qualifying candidate or include a non-qualifying candidate: in both instances, the derived MOE might be diluted and result in a less-than-optimum training program being developed. The MOE profile prepared for one situation should not be expected to fit broader populations, other jobs, or work environments. The lifespan and use of each MOE profile is therefore limited to implementation for the task, context, and environment for which it was created and is proprietary to the commissioning client.

Developed profiles uniquely reflect the studied population's best performance characteristics. A project which profiled the characteristics of excellent waitstaff found that contextual beliefs all focused on the individual (not the organization), postures were relaxed, time orientation was strongly focused on the present, details dominated over the 'big picture', and external cues and 'other' relationship orientations were prominent. Among a study of medical students, their preferred learning style order was 'big picture' first, and their time orientation concentrated on the past and the present with little reference to the future.

Similar profiles can emerge. The MOE profile of membership consultants for a health club largely mirrored that in the case study. The fundamental role of both canvassers and membership consultants is similar, that is, they are direct selling their organization's services to new customers in return for some personal benefit to the customer (altruism or wellbeing). One key similarity in this comparison is the positive relationship between the star performers and their respective organizations, as articulated in their contextual beliefs. In another study of canvasser activity (for a different organization), the most common beliefs articulated by the star performers reflected their confidence in their own capacity to perform well but, because of a weak relationship with their employing organization, their goal focused on making money for themselves. The other components of this second canvasser MOE profile also showed clear differences from the case study. This suggests that success in similar activities is influenced by the prevailing environments and can be achieved via different profiles.

Based on multiple profiling studies across a number of countries¹, the principal author has noted differences across cultures. For example, meta programs developed from studies in some Asian countries tend to exhibit more 'away from negative' orientation and a more 'other'

¹ Observations from some of the author's commissioned projects in Asian countries, Australia, Middle East and Europe.

relationship focus than is evident among other geo-demographic groups. Physiology and beliefs also tend to vary by culture.

Star performers who participate in the information gathering phase of a MOE are selected on the basis of pre-set success criteria as determined by the organization's management. Success is not dependent on length of prior experience; inclusion is based solely on the superior performance of some employees relative to other team members. Nonetheless, this selection process does not guarantee best possible performance for this activity, just that, relative to other team members, the selected participants perform better than their colleagues. The MOE profile can be flexibly applied and, if appropriate, the organization's management and the MOE consultant can agree to modify a derived MOE profile to accommodate prevailing internal or external circumstances or to aim for more ambitious success. In the authors' experience, any such modifications have been minor and, in most cases, it is the derived profile, without modifications, that forms the basis of the training program. There were no modifications made to the results of the case study.

A key strength of a MOE approach is that the content and design of the training program is internally derived using the behavior of the organization's own employees to guide the entire content. Externally constructed training programs, often designed to boost shortfalls in knowledge, skill, productivity, or performance (Bhasin, 2020), adjust their content based on tools such as a gap analysis or a survey (Thompson, 2022) but a behavioral audit appears to not be routinely included.

Through the behavioral audit, the design of the training program focuses precisely on the skills and behaviors needed to maximize success in the selected job and context. The ultimate measure of success for a MOE-based training program is the successful assimilation of the new behavior and attitudes among the targeted population. The measurement metric is

clear and precise; it tracks improvements in the baseline performance goals.

The implementation of a successful training program relies on real commitment from the organization. Any number of internal or external events can interfere with this. In the case study presented here, an unexpected shift in global fundraising strategies coincided with the development of the MOE training program; consequently, management lost its appetite for the implementation process. In another case, also a non-profit organization raising funds through canvassing, the canvassers participating in the training program were a mixture of star performers and non-star canvassers. This mix created some tensions among the group; the star performers (whose collective best practices formed the basis of the training program) felt a sense of superiority over their colleagues. The non-star performers were not fully committed to undertaking the training; this attitude was largely a failure of management to get buy-in among that group. Management itself had unrealistic expectations, anticipating an immediate shift in results rather than a more gradual improvement as participants practice and perfect the newly modelled skills and techniques. In yet another case, the project had been conducted in only one Australian location. The staff at the selected location represented the top echelon of the organization's performers across Australia. From this elite group, the star performers were selected. The gap between star and second tier performers at this location was relatively small, compared to other locations, so that incremental improvement in performance was not dramatic. A better measurement of the efficacy of this derived MOE-based training program would have been to implement it in a location where performance was relatively poor, compared to the top location.

The ease with which new behaviors and attitudes are assimilated can vary substantially. Sometimes, people are unwilling to change their own values and beliefs. Some people find it difficult to shift from a dissociated to an associated state in a training

environment: this limits their capacity to fully learn and integrate the modeled behaviors and can impact on a person's ongoing success in the role. de Smet et al., (2010, Help people want to learn section) note that “before employees ... master a new skill effectively ... they must be convinced it will help improve their organization’s performance, recognize that their own performance is weak in [the] area and then actually *choose* to learn”.

In many projects undertaken by the author, expressed beliefs have aligned well with organizational philosophy and culture; in others misalignment is evident. The beliefs identified in the case study presented here echoed the mission and philosophy of the organization and the role of the star performers in achieving those ideals. Customer consultants, the participants in another NLP LifeSets[®] MOE project, also recognized that they worked for a good company and they placed high value on achieving good customer relations in the successful execution of their jobs. Elite members of a sports club expressed pride in the quality of their club, they recognized that skills and practice were vital to being a successful player and they accepted that they had personal responsibility to keep themselves fit. In contrast, when the structure and philosophy of an organization does not embed a cultural commitment to the respective organization, employees exhibit a strong focus on getting their own individual needs satisfied. This situation creates obstacles for training, including difficulty in cementing shared beliefs between employees and their organizations.

The development of the MOE profile and the resulting training program requires a mastery of both communication skills and the techniques and skills of NLP. A quality MOE profile largely depends on accurate elicitation via interviewing and observation and on the ability to interpret and record findings so as to precisely reflect the behaviors of star performers. The MOE consultant needs extensive experience to select and adapt relevant NLP skills and techniques to build a comprehensive and targeted training program. If the

trainer lacks deep knowledge of communication skills and NLP techniques, the risk is that the instruction is superficial and the capacity of the participants to effect real behavioral change is compromised.

Conclusions

For this MOE-based training, the content of the training program has been generated from successful behaviors practiced within a specific organization. While the commitment of management is pivotal to the success of any training program, for MOE-based training it is critically important that management work with the MOE consultant from the inception of the project, before the training program has been developed. This requires management to have a clear understanding of the process, realistic expectations of successful implementation and outcomes, and awareness of any risks likely to impede success and to share those insights with the MOE consultant. The consultant should also be aware of any pending organizational change to policies, operations or strategic plans that could affect the long-term relevance of the training; training which has been built on the success of current practices and roles. Difficulties can occur when either the management has unrealistic expectations and insufficient commitment to complete execution of the full project or when the MOE consultant is not fully cognizant of factors influencing the successful delivery and implementation of a program. Both the MOE profiling and the training program need to align with the organization's mission statement and corporate values. Nahar (2018) notes that employees must understand their role and responsibilities from the perspective of the organization to keep them motivated to perform well.

In developing a competency model, part of the data gathered by Kansal and Singhal (2018) included information on 'what [respondents'] thought, said and did when faced with a difficult task'. This is similar to the beliefs and cognitive strategies captured for a NLP

LifeSets[©] MOE. The Kansal and Singhal competency model was used to enhance organizational effectiveness and, as noted by Sparrow (1995, as cited in Kansal and Singhal, 2018), a focused competency model can benefit recruitment and selection processes, improve individual career progression and improve management performance. Merlevede (2012), from his modeling study, concluded that modeling can help predict which people will be top performers while noting that maximum performance and length of retention are not always correlated. He emphasized the role of management in creating a context where the patterns that motivate high performers are realized. Using an organization's NLP LifeSets[©] MOE can enhance the quality of the recruitment process and maximize the opportunity for early productivity from new employees. A mismatch of beliefs about organizational values and those of (potential) employees can lead to lack of loyalty to an organization and affect retention rates. In developing job descriptions, organizations could consider including aspects of the meta programs which have been identified as attributes of key performers and, where appropriate, develop a pre-test for potential applicants. This approach would serve to help potential applicants focus their short-term investment efforts on better understanding the skills and attributes that are relevant to the job (Campion et al., 2019) and, simultaneously, enable organizations to streamline their recruitment process. Campion et al. (2019) found that making pre-tests available, and encouraging potential applicants to take these tests before formally applying, yielded better quality candidates. Caution should be exercised in any recruitment testing process to avoid accusations of discrimination being levelled at the organization.

MOE profiling could potentially have a role in the development of job-specific training templates for tasks where precise sequencing is essential and variation can result in sub-optimal performance. With a MOE approach, the training would include not only the

technical skills required but also the optimum high-performance values, beliefs, strategies and physiology needed to maximize successful outcomes.

While others, including Ewing (1999) and Woodsmall (2020), have reported successes in NLP-based modelling projects, the authors, in scanning the publicly available literature, found no in-depth critiques of commissioned NLP-based model of excellence projects. There is an opportunity for other NLP-based modelers to share their work. This would serve to further enhance and advance the application of behavior modeling in organizations.

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Table 1*Input Components for Development of a Model of Excellence.*

Component	Definition
Meta programs	The determinants of behavior that motivate an individual to expend energy and resources to achieve a particular outcome.
Contextual beliefs	The philosophies, presuppositions, and attitudes that enable an individual to perform a particular task in a competent manner. Beliefs are critical to motivation and commitment.
Cognitive strategies	The specific sequences of mental and physical processes involved in performing a particular task.
Physiology	The physical movements performed in carrying out a behavior. These include, for example, posture, breathing, voice tone, position of the head and position of the eyes.

Table 2*Information Gathering Steps for NLP LifeSets[©] MOE.*

Component	Information gathering method
Meta programs	Written completion of the NLP LifeSets [©] assessment survey; face-to-face interviews.
Contextual beliefs	Via interview: participants identify 3 beliefs about one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role/mission of the organization - the relationship between the participant and the organization - the participant's perception of their task in the organization.
Cognitive strategies	Via interview: the NLP LifeSets [©] MOE consultant elicits, via visual and auditory observations, what participants say and do when performing a particular task. The NLP LifeSets [©] MOE consultant then codes the resulting strategy.
Physiology	NLP LifeSets [©] MOE consultant observes individuals as they perform the MOE-relevant activities.

Table 3*Validation Steps for NLP LifeSets[®] MOE.*

Component	Validation
Meta programs	NLP LifeSets [®] MOE consultant analyses the language used during interview and compares this with the meta programs obtained via survey. Congruency is satisfied if the same characteristics dominate in both survey and language for most of the dimensions measured. Any major inconsistencies are discussed to identify root causes and the innate (rather than learned) tendency is confirmed.
Contextual Beliefs	The consultant confirms that the participant's beliefs are real by guiding the participant to access their memories via sub-modalities. These sub-modalities (i.e., descriptions) are representations of how a participant feels, what they see and hear when stating their beliefs. If the belief is just 'made up', then the participant will be unable to spontaneously describe sub-modalities that resonate with the belief.
Cognitive strategies	The consultant has the participant rehearse a relevant task in an associated state and notes whether the behavior is congruent with the coded strategy. If non-alignment is observed, the NLP LifeSets [®] MOE consultant adjusts the strategy, in conjunction with the participant, until the strategy and behaviour are aligned.
Physiology	When observing repeated tasks, the NLP LifeSets [®] MOE consultant checks if any apparent inconsistencies occur.