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Setting Clear Targets for Managing Performance

The overall purpose of performance management is to maximise the contribution of individuals and teams to enable the organisation to achieve its strategies, and goals.

However, for performance management to succeed, it is vital that everyone in the organisation knows what's expected of them. One way of clearly expressing what the organisation wants an individual to achieve is to set them personal targets/objectives.

Targets need to be clear, and not 'just do your best'. Unclear targets only serve to frustrate and de-motivate.

The following are tips to help you set clearer targets and get the most from your staff.

1. Targets should be SMART, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Timely.
2. Don't think that you have to write targets using the 'SMART' sequence, just use the acronym as a checklist.
3. Targets need to be specific. What specifically what you want your staff to deliver? Do you want them to deliver improved performance, implement a new way of working, or perhaps improve their skills?
4. Measurable is probably the most important consideration. If a target is readily measurable then both the manager and the staff member concerned will be able to easily demonstrate that the target has been achieved (or not!)
5. Realistic is linked to measurable. Usually, there's no point in starting a job you know you can't finish, or

one where you can't tell if/when you've finished it.

How can you decide if it's realistic?

A target is realistic if:

- It is measurable.
 - Other people have done it successfully before. It's theoretically possible. It might be tough but it is clearly not impossible.
 - The individual has the necessary resources (time, money, equipment) and skills to deliver what's being asked.
 - There are no other conflicting priorities. Too often targets are not delivered because the individual has a number of competing and/or conflicting priorities.
6. Timely means setting deadlines. You must include one, otherwise your objective isn't measurable. When do you want the target to be complete by? It is important to note that deadlines must be achievable or the task is not realistic.
 7. Agreed. If you want people to deliver their targets willingly, then they need to be agreed with the individual.
 8. The devil is in the detail. You will know whether your targets are SMART by asking someone else to review them. Can they readily understand them even though it is not their job or targets?

The key to successful performance management is to set clear expectations and SMART targets. By adopting the principles outlined above you will have a greater chance that your staff will understand and deliver what is needed, and that the organisation will ultimately achieve its goals.

Managing Staff Performance Effectively

The effectiveness of a business depends on the contributions and activities of staff at all levels - from those who ensure efficient running of 'front line' up to senior managers who need to make the right strategic decisions about the direction of the organisation.

Performance management is therefore about maximising all of these contributions, from each employee, their teams and ultimately the whole organisation. It is the activity of setting targets and tracking performance

against them and identifying opportunities for improvement. While reviewing past performance is important, the real focus of performance management should be on the future. What is it that your employees need to be able to do their job and how can they do it better?

Managing performance is essentially about managing results, it should demonstrate that each employee:

- Knows what the organisation is aiming for.
- Understands how their targets fit with the overall aims of the organisation.

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Managing Staff Performance Effectively Continued...

- Knows what they have to do to meet their targets.
- Recognises how progress against targets is measured.
- Understands the consequences for achievement or non achievement of targets.

Ultimately, performance management should deliver improved bottom line performance which might be better customer service, improved productivity, or increased sales.

There are a number of factors that are critical for the success of performance management in an organisation.

- Understanding what the organisation is and trying to achieve, and what it needs from its performance culture
- Being clear with all staff what is meant by performance (e.g. achievement of targets, behavioural standards etc).
- Being focused on how individual employees will benefit and play their part in the process.
- Understanding that performance management is a tool for managers and its success will depend on their ability to use it effectively – therefore it is important to provide the relevant training and development.
- Focusing on outcomes that meets business objectives, rather than tasks and inputs.
- Relating individuals' reward and remuneration with achievement of outcomes.

- Managing performance by cascading down from the top and building capability from the bottom-up.

Conversely there are number of factors that can cause the failure of performance management in an organisation.

- Implementing a highly 'comprehensive' performance management system. If it is too complex or takes too long it will not be used.
- The organisation assuming performance management is a 'one off' isolated event that happens on an annual basis.
- Managers failing to document performance, follow up or take consequential action.
- The organisation assuming that people will automatically know what is expected of them.
- Being unclear with individuals about actual performance and how they can improve.
- Ranking employees. It may be that the only way an employee can improve their position in the ranking system is to sabotage the performance of their colleagues!

Finally, and probably the most important factor is to recognise that the behaviour of any manager will dictate the behaviour of others within their team. For example, if a manager doesn't spend the time to develop the performance and capability of their leaders, they cannot expect them to do develop the performance and capability of their staff!

Does our own mindset cause the talent shortage?

With a little bit of imagination employers can beat the skills shortage.

Even in this recession, everyone I speak with is moaning about not being able to find the quality candidates they think they need. Maybe they have caused their own problem by narrowly defining jobs, by using yesterday's criteria to solve today's problems, and by a lack of imagination.

We (hiring managers, executives, HR folks, and recruiters) set up expectations and define jobs based on what is traditional. We work from habit and past experience. This is not necessarily bad, but may not match our current needs or the available supply.

Some of us say that we cannot find qualified C# programmers, for example, when we all know that there are very few people with good skills in this area. We are left with choices: hunt like crazy on the internet and elsewhere to find someone we can influence to leave their current position, wait to find a disgruntled person, or decide to do something different. Something different might be to rethink the job entirely so that it more closely matches someone we already know is available. It might

be to increase the supply by developing training programs or taking on apprentices. It might be to merge the job with another one. There are lots of possibilities beyond just doing what we have always done.

Many emerging jobs require a new perspective, rather than an entirely new skill-set. An interior designer could easily do the new job of home stager – someone who decorates your house prior to selling it – but for a much lower price. Many skills for jobs in the health-care arena can be learned quickly, but are all based on a common set of skills around patient care, communication, and appreciation for and understanding of technology. The real challenge is perspective, attitude, and, sometimes, the willingness to work for less.

We need to expand the labour pool

Many available people are older or retired and have skills that have become obsolete or are not needed right now. However, these people could be retrained for some of the open positions if we took a different attitude. Unfortunately most of us, or most of our employers, anyway, would rather spend money on search fees, agency fees, administrative overhead, and advertising

rather than on intensively training people with decent basic skills. Granted, we cannot train people for every job because many of them do require experience, or time in the saddle, as they say, in order to be successful. However, I think we could significantly lessen the labour shortage if we were willing to be a bit wider in our job expectations and definitions.

This is why I constantly argue for integrated staffing and development because I believe their functions are inextricably intertwined. It is very difficult to do one without doing the other. If we are to look at recruiting as a process, we are going to have to incorporate development into our staffing thinking and staffing into our training thinking.

Whether this is done through merging departments or whether it is done simply through good collaboration doesn't really matter. What is critical is that there is a dialogue between the two functions. If you work in a small

company where there are no separate training and recruiting functions, then this becomes even easier for you to do.

You need to always think whether an open position is better trained for or hired for. Is it a job that would be impossible to train someone for in a reasonable period of time, or is it a job that someone could be trained to do fairly quickly?

When management and recruiters both develop a broader understanding of the issues and step up to the fact that in many cases skilled people are just not available at a reasonable cost, then developing people becomes sensible and cost effective.

There are no labour shortages or surpluses – there are just shortages of imagination and an unwillingness to accept responsibility for filling our own needs.

Source: Kevin Wheeler, *HR Leader Magazine*, 8 February 2010

HR and Business Consultancy Services Offered

<p>Employment and Industrial Relations Provide support and advice on workplace relations and the relevant legislation that affects the employer-employee relationship. Development of employment agreements and documentation that best suits your relationship and situation with your employee.</p>	<p>Change Management A structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organisations from a current state to a desired future state. Change is a part of every project we undertake, encompassing a number of techniques to achieve sustained improvement through change management.</p>	<p>Psychometric Assessments The strength and productivity of successful organisations lies with people. We use a range of assessment tools to accurately identify an individual's talents, strengths and weaknesses, and to diagnose organisational problems.</p>
<p>Performance Management Designed to be future-focused, support pay for performance programs, monitor milestones of goal achievement, and systematically improve the measured results of your employees and organisation. We facilitate the development of core organizational competencies, influence SMART goal setting, and clearly articulate expectations in order to have a measurable results-oriented tool for effective implementation.</p>	<p>Project Management Training, and resources to help organisations improve performance and deliver critical projects successfully. Project management is the discipline of planning, organising and managing resources to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals and objectives. The primary challenge of project management is to achieve all of the project goals and objectives while honoring the project constraints.</p>	<p>Process and Systems Development Professional human resource advice, policy solutions and job description writing and evaluation services. Development of employment policies and procedures and employee handbook. Provide practical guidance on administration of policies and pre-employment or post-employment duties required of the company.</p>
<p>Talent Management Developing and integrating new workers, developing and keeping current workers and attracting highly skilled workers to work for your company. Companies that are engaged in talent management are strategic and deliberate in how they source, attract, select, train, develop, retain, promote, and move employees through the organisation.</p>	<p>Health and Safety Offering both practicable and achievable health, safety and environmental sustainability solutions to suit your organisation. from a wide range of experience in health, safety, quality, environmental and sustainability (HSQE) management.</p>	<p>Professional Supervision and Mentoring A customised programme for Managers and Team Leaders to provide practical hands-on guidance as well as theoretical knowledge in relation to all aspects of management including leadership, performance management, delegation, communication & effective time management.</p>
<p>Career Transition/Outplacement and redundancy Managing change and redundancy in a fair and procedurally correct manner. Management Coaching through restructure and redundancy; Managing Change Workshops; Internal and external Job Search, CV Preparation and Interview Coaching; Budgeting and Financial Planning; On site consultation and redundancy support; Identifying the 'at risk' employee.</p>	<p>Investigations We investigate and report on the facts of a case to the person or body charged with making a decision, under the procedure relevant to the case and to the member of staff concerned. Any serious allegations or formal complaints require investigation to attempt to determine as objectively as possible the relevant facts on which decisions can be based. Ensuring that the investigation process is completed correctly enables you to make the right decision with continued support thou ought the process to reduce the risk to your company.</p>	<p>HR Audits Comprehensive report of the audit findings with recommendations prioritized, actionable work plan. Improves compliance, reviews ROI with Human Capital. Targets the organisational development and human resource practices including: Staffing and Hiring; Benefits Administration; HR Administration; Employment Practices; Education and Training; Time Off and Leaves; Health and Safety; Performance Management; Compensation; Terminations.</p>