

PERFORMANCE Management Tips

Outstanding companies are marked not only by the quality of their employees, but also by the ability of management to systematically maximize their potential. Without effective performance management, employees are denied an opportunity to participate in a proven, critical process that improves job satisfaction and performance, while managers are denied the fundamental analysis necessary for identifying and fixing areas of underperformance.

Effective performance management raises morale, provides the basis for a fair compensation system, helps managers to promote effectively, and improves employee morale and retention. Without it, no company can succeed.

TRUST

Before launching a new system of performance evaluation, employees must be assured that you are working toward mutually beneficial goals. Performance evaluations should not be presented as punitive in nature, but rather as honest appraisals designed to help employees improve.

Employees need to have both an understanding of and confidence in the process. You should have brief, individual meetings with each employee under your supervision before launching a new system of performance evaluation and improvement. Discuss job responsibilities and performance expectations, create clear and measurable work objectives, and clarify organizational goals and each employee's role in meeting them.

Allow time for questions and employee input. Together create a draft of behavioral anchors that correspond to your employee's

essential job functions. This serves as a contract of sorts between you and your employee and a point of reference to which you can return throughout the year.

FEEDBACK

Schedule quarterly, formal performance updates and check in with your employee regularly in-between. A short chat is usually sufficient. View these chats as opportunities to head off areas of concern before they lead to underperformance.

Use a diagnostic approach to resolving problems. What is causing the employee to fail? Are expectations unreasonable or unclear? Is it an issue of employee temperament? Does your employee need additional training?

Focus on successes as well as shortcomings. Be sure to praise and thank individuals for tasks that they do well at various times during the year. Be specific with your praise, saying, for example, "You did an excellent job arranging that sales conference. I feel like I can always count on you to take care of details, like boosting registration."

REMOVING BARRIERS

Performance management is a two-way street. Just as your employee has a responsibility to strive to meet or exceed performance standards, so do you have a responsibility to provide the tools necessary for success.

Be ready and available to remove barriers that are preventing your employee from succeeding, and don't be afraid to modify the behavioral anchors that you drafted at the beginning of the year if they are no longer appropriate to the situation.

Your job is to set your employees up to win. They should view you as a partner in their success and improvement, not someone who is constantly looking for negatives to whack them over the head with during their yearly performance reviews.

REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

Schedule uninterrupted time for every yearly performance review and give each employee your undivided attention. Be positive and supportive at all times, even when discussing negatives.

An employee should never be surprised by your areas of concern. Ambushing someone with previously unknown complaints about his or her performance creates distrust.

Allow for employee input. It is natural for employees to disagree with parts of your assessment. Give their input a full hearing and consideration. Do not become argumentative or angry at their disagreement.

Close the meeting by providing exact instructions on how your employees can earn better ratings in areas that you've marked for improvement. Inform your employees that they can visit your supervisor if there are still areas of disagreement in your assessment. Be sure to thank your employees for their contributions before closing.

Effective performance management removes the "us vs. them" mentality and replaces it with two ingredients that virtually ensure superior performance — teamwork and support.



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Management Consultation at
1-877-747-1200.**