Managing Performance

Definition

Taking responsibility for one's own or one's employees' performance, by setting clear goals and expectations, tracking progress against the goals, ensuring feedback, and addressing performance problems and issues promptly.

Behaviors for Employees

- With his/her manager, sets specific, measurable goals that are realistic but challenging, with dates for accomplishment
- With his/her manager, clarifies expectations about what will be done and how
- Enlists his/her manager's support in obtaining the information, resources, and training needed to accomplish his/her work effectively
- Promptly notifies his/her manager about any problems that affect his/her ability to accomplish planned goals
- Seeks performance feedback from his/her manager and from others with whom he/she interacts on the job
- Prepares a personal development plan with specific goals and a timeline for their accomplishment
- Takes significant action to develop skills needed for effective news in current or future job

Behaviors for Managers

- Ensures that employees have clear goals and responsibilities
- Works with employees to set and communicate performance standards that are specific and measurable
- Supports employees in their efforts to achieve job goals (e.g., by providing resources, removing obstacles, acting as a buffer)

- Keeps informed about employees' programs and performance through both formal methods (e.g., status reports) and informal methods (e.g., management by walking around)

- Provides specific performance feedback, both positive and corrective, as soon as possible after an event

- Deals firmly and promptly with performance problems; lets people know what is expected of them and when

Importance of this Competency

Managing performance is a key competency for anyone supervising projects or people. By using this competency, supervisors provide direction, standards, and follow-up to ensure results. By managing performance, supervisors ensure that their unit achieves its goals. Additional benefits are happier and more productive employees.

General Considerations in Developing this Competency

This competency should be applied in the context of an organization's performance management system. Thus if your organization has a system for performance management, a first step in developing this competency is to familiarize yourself with the forms and procedures of your organization's performance management system.

Although you can learn a great deal about Performance Management and prevent many mistakes by taking a course or reading books, this is a competency which requires learning by doing. If you are managing people, you have an opportunity to demonstrate Performance Management with each of your employees. The first step is to hold meetings with each employee to implement performance management. At these meetings, clarify the person's job responsibilities and the performance measures you will use to assess the person on each job responsibility. For many jobs it is useful to establish specific, measurable goals, with time line for their accomplishment. In these discussions, it is important for the employee to have a two-way discussion with you to reach agreement on responsibilities, goals, and performance measurements. You should also set a date for a subsequent meeting to follow up on the employee's progress.

The next step is to establish formal or informal procedures for keeping track of employee progress. Regular meetings, reports, or voice mail communications are possible procedures.

This competency is closely related to several other competencies: Developing Others, Results Orientation, and Interpersonal Awareness. Review the sections on these competencies to identify ideas that will support your efforts to develop Performance Management.

Practicing this Competency

- Set up a meeting with each employee to plan his/her performance. Agree on responsibilities, performance measures and a set of realistic but challenging goals with dates for their accomplishment.

- Set up procedures by which employees can regularly report their progress and any obstacles they are encountering.

- Periodically visit each employee in his/her work area and ask about progress and issues. Check to see if employees have the resources and information they need in order to accomplish their tasks.

- Keep a file for each employee, in which you document accomplishments and performance problems.

- Schedule regular performance planning meetings with each employee.

- Provide specific behavioral feedback, both positive and corrective, as soon as possible after observing the behavior.

- Address performance problems promptly.

Obtaining Feedback

Talk individually with each employee to get ideas on how you can better manage their performance.

If your company regularly administers an employee survey, check results that may indicate how you are doing as a manager. If your company does not administer a survey, or if the results cannot be analyzed to provide specific feedback to you from your employees, consider developing and administering a short survey that will allow them to provide anonymous feedback on your performance management. Include some open-ended questions asking for specific suggestions.

Learning from Experts

Interview someone strong in this competency. Ask for specific examples of what he/she has done that was effective in managing employee performance. Ask the person to talk about a time when he/she confronted a performance problem. Find out what the person said and why.

Coaching Suggestions for Managers

If you are coaching someone who is trying to develop this competency, you can:

- Model good Performance Management in your interactions with this person.
- Notice and praise behavior that indicates good Performance Management (e.g., holding regular Performance Management meetings).

- Encourage the person to discuss with you how he/she will confront performance issues with individual employees.

Sample Development Goals

- By January 6, I will hold meetings with each employee to implement the first step in the company's Performance Management program.
- By December 9, I will confront Randy regarding his leadership of the Design team.
- By February 22, I will provide some specific behavioral feedback about performance to each of my employees.
- By March 8, I will read Performance Planning and Appraisal, by King, and prepare a list of ideas that I can apply with my employees.

Books

Criticism Management: How to More Effectively Give, Receive, and Seek Criticism in Our Lives, by Randy Garner. The Woodlands, TX: Prescient Press, 2006.

Improving Employee Performance Through Appraisal and Coaching, by Donald L. Kirkpatrick. New York, NY: American Management Association, 2006.

Managing & Measuring Employee Performance, by Elizabeth Houldsworth & Dilum Jirasinghe. Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page Limited, 2006.

Managing Difficult People: A Survival Guide For Handling Any Employee, by Marilyn Pincus. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corporation, 2004.

Managing Performance to Maximize Results (Results-Driven Manager), by Harvard Business School Press. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2007.

Managing Performance, by Angela Baron & Michael Armstrong. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development, 2004.

Performance Appraisals That Work: Features 150 Samples for Every Situation, by Corey Sandler & Janice Keefe. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corporation, 2005.

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Workitect Blogs on Performance Management

Competency-based performance management to reward top performers

http://www.workitect.com/blog/rewarding-top-performers-through-a-behavior-based-performance-management-process/

Performance Management Articles and Guides

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http://www.workitect.com/PDF/performance-management.pdf

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Consulting Services

http://www.workitect.com/Consulting/competency-based-performance-management.html

*The 7th competency in Workitect's Competency Dictionary

COMPETENCIES DEALING WITH

PEOPLE

LEADING OTHERS

1 Establishing Focus
2 Providing Motivational Support
3 Fostering Teamwork
4 Empowering Others
5 Managing Change
6 Developing Others
7 Managing Performance
8 Fostering Diversity

COMMUNICATING AND INFLUENCING

9 Attention To Communication
10 Oral Communication
11 Written Communication
12 Persuasive Communication
13 Interpersonal Effectiveness
14 Influencing Others
15 Building Collaborative Relationships

COMPETENCIES DEALING WITH

BUSINESS

PREVENTING AND SOLVING PROBLEMS

16 Diagnostic Information Gathering
17 Analytical Thinking
18 Forward Thinking
19 Conceptual Thinking
20 Strategic Thinking
21 Technical Expertise

ACHIEVING RESULTS

22 Initiative
23 Entrepreneurial Orientation
24 Fostering Innovation
25 Customer Orientation
26 Results Orientation
27 Thoroughness
28 Decisiveness
29 Business Acumen
30 Global Perspective

COMPETENCIES DEALING WITH

SELF MANAGEMENT

31 Self Confidence
32 Adaptability
33 Personal Credibility
34 Flexibility
35 Personal Accountability

Workitect's Competency Dictionary

With a definition and behaviors by role and level of proficiency for each competency

Tools to Assess and Develop each Competency
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- Competency Interview Guides
- 360° assessment & feedback
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