

The Performance Management Journey

Karen Kirby



KAREN KIRBY

THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT JOURNEY

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Kirby MCIPD has over 30 years' experience of working with people as a coach, trainer and HR consultant. In that time, she has developed a variety of programmes to meet the needs of businesses and institutions, as both an employee and as a freelance consultant. She has helped businesses in a wide variety of sectors to develop more effective ways of working and in building stronger teams; sharing not only her personal experience but also the experiences of the great businesses she works with.

Her specialism is to work with small and micro-businesses, but her suggested techniques can be just as effective for managers in larger organisations. Her passion is to encourage all business owners and managers to see frequent performance review (or supervision), alongside team communication, as vital for maintaining a motivated and loyal workforce.

Karen is based in the middle of the Midlands and has run an HR support service for several years. In addition to ensuring her clients meet legal requirements, she works with owners and managers to consider the impact of their personal style, and to adopt procedures and techniques that look to maximise the potential of all their team.

Her company is greenshoot HR and you can find out more at www.greenshoot.co.uk



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT JOURNEY

Performance management should be the responsibility of all managers at all levels and the information needed to effectively manage staff should be gathered via all the events in a person's employment, through robust systems and processes.

The objective of this book is to help managers and business owners reflect on how the various stages of employment influence and inform performance management, directly or indirectly; it also gives the practical reasons for the systems, processes and paper-trails found in many businesses.

The book is aimed at business owners, line managers and HR practitioners, to encourage them to review their current processes and look at how these could be improved to benefit the business (or organisation), the teams and department, and the individual employees.

Have a read, have a think and look at what you can change to better manage the performance of your staff.

Just a note, if I use the word 'business', I do mean to include any organisation, including public and third-sector ones. I may also use specific gender terms, but please read as applying to either gender. I'm not implying that men or women are any better or worse than each other.

1.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – WHAT IS IT? AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Performance management is, quite simply, managing the performance of all staff at all levels using the range of information available to you.

It isn't a separate event, e.g. an annual appraisal or a disciplinary hearing. It is an ongoing activity that should look to develop team members, iron out any issues, and build great teams that will contribute to growing and improving the business.

Why is managing performance important? Let's state the obvious:

- Your people are the most important thing in your business. If they aren't functioning properly, nothing works. Even in highly mechanised and technology-heavy industries, good people are needed to ensure the equipment works smoothly. Bad data input causes bad results.
- Your people are the face of your business and their skill, attitude, knowledge and motivation can make or break a business.
- Great employees don't come fully formed. Young employees need to learn about the job and about working; older, experienced employees bring habits and practices, some of which might be good, some might be bad.
- Less obviously, 'leaving well alone', or ignoring problems and high-flyers might not always cause a business to fail, but could lead to stagnation when you could achieve so much more.

1.3 A NEED TO BE MANAGED

People naturally want to know how they are doing. We might not always respond in the right way to feedback – praise or criticism – but we do like to know 'where we stand'. We also function better when we have good information and this applies to all areas of our lives. Some of us require less information and feedback than others (in the complementary book *Managing the team: The Good, The Bad and The Okay*), but we do all need it to be able to make decisions, take action and understand how to behave.

At work, this means, as managers, we need to tell our staff:

- Clearly what they need to do. Showing initiative is all well and good, but people do need to know the basics and the parameters of the job. Ambiguity leads to confusion, poor work, irrelevant work, frustration, jobs not being done or being duplicated, anger, laziness and excuses.
- The minimum standard required and from there how the standard can be raised – personally and as a business. If someone knows what they need to do and the standard required, the 'how' they do it becomes less important (unless specified methods and approaches are required by law or logic).
- How what they are doing is important to the team and the business. Most of the time, if we know why we are doing something, we will do it better.
- How they can contribute to the success of the team and the business through a positive attitude and great ideas.
- That they are valued, trusted and appreciated.
- When they have got it right and when they haven't.

You might be surprised to learn that most people aren't psychic; they can't read your mind and don't remember every sentence they read in handbooks and procedures (despite the fact that they have signed to say they've 'read and understood').

Communicating the points above will go a long way to ensuring you will build a great team, and are core to effective performance management.

Businesses depend on having healthy and productive staff, and we know that, when employees feel their work is meaningful and they are valued and supported, they tend to be more committed to their work and perform better. Your capabilities as a line manager go a long way to achieving better performance taking these simple steps to support and develop your team:

- ensuring you factor in regular catch-ups with each member of your team (performance reviews);
- provide clear priorities;
- celebrate individual and team successes;
- involve staff in decision making;
- adapt your management style to suit the individual's needs.

Regular and frequent reviews are an important part of management and should not be underestimated.

1.4 ARE ALL THOSE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES NECESSARY?

I'd like to tell you they aren't, and that we can all be part of a flexible, innovative and thinking workforce. The reality is that those 'bits of paper' (or computer systems) that record employment activity are crucial to managing performance. Having up-to-date records, policies and procedures informs staff what is expected of them, and provides managers with the mechanism to monitor work and behaviour.

The volume and style of these systems and processes is dependent on the nature of your business. What you will find in subsequent sections of this book are ideas of the type of records, systems and processes you need. In the appendix you will find a table summarising the various documents and records that are useful.

What they look like is down to you – some of you will like manual systems and some electronic. What you use should be something that is manageable and that will be used by you and your staff. There is a balance to be reached between reams of paper, giant spreadsheets, over-formality and simple systems that may not provide the information you need.

- Don't over complicate things – they won't be used.
- Don't over simplify – you and your team won't have the information you need.

1.5 DATA PROTECTION

In May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force, encouraging a review of the personal data we hold on individuals. This may have necessitated some changes to your systems and processes with regards to the personal information you hold on your employees, workers and associates.

It's not my place to explain what you need to do (as I assume you have already done what you need to), but I do feel I should point out that in developing systems to monitor, record and feedback on performance, you should be mindful of GDPR requirements. You need to consider what information you are holding, why you are holding it, how long for and who will have access. This applies to manual and electronic systems and includes HR apps, time-monitoring software, IT behaviour-monitoring software, CCTV and tracking devices.

There will be occasions when you will need consent from the data subject (your employee, worker or associate in this case), and by issuing a privacy notice or statement, you can explain what will happen to their data and that you are relying on legitimate interests or legal basis rather than consent for the information held for managing performance. You might want to note that if you are using psychometric tests that are carried out on-line and produce automated-profiling, the data subject has certain rights – about which the test provider should advise you.

For more information on GDPR contact The Information Commissioner at <https://ico.org.uk>

**Ask yourself:**

- Am I guilty of expecting my team members to be fully formed, without any
- input or support from me?
- Do I clearly communicate the 'what', 'how', 'standard' and 'why'?
- Do I tell my staff how much they are valued and appreciated?
- Do I keep relevant records?
- Do I have systems and processes to gather the information I need?

Read on to find out how to turn any negative answers to these questions into positive answers.

If all your answers were positive – read on anyway to pat yourself on the back for a job well done and to gain more hints and tips on how to manage performance.

2 THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT JOURNEY

2.1 THE FLOWCHART

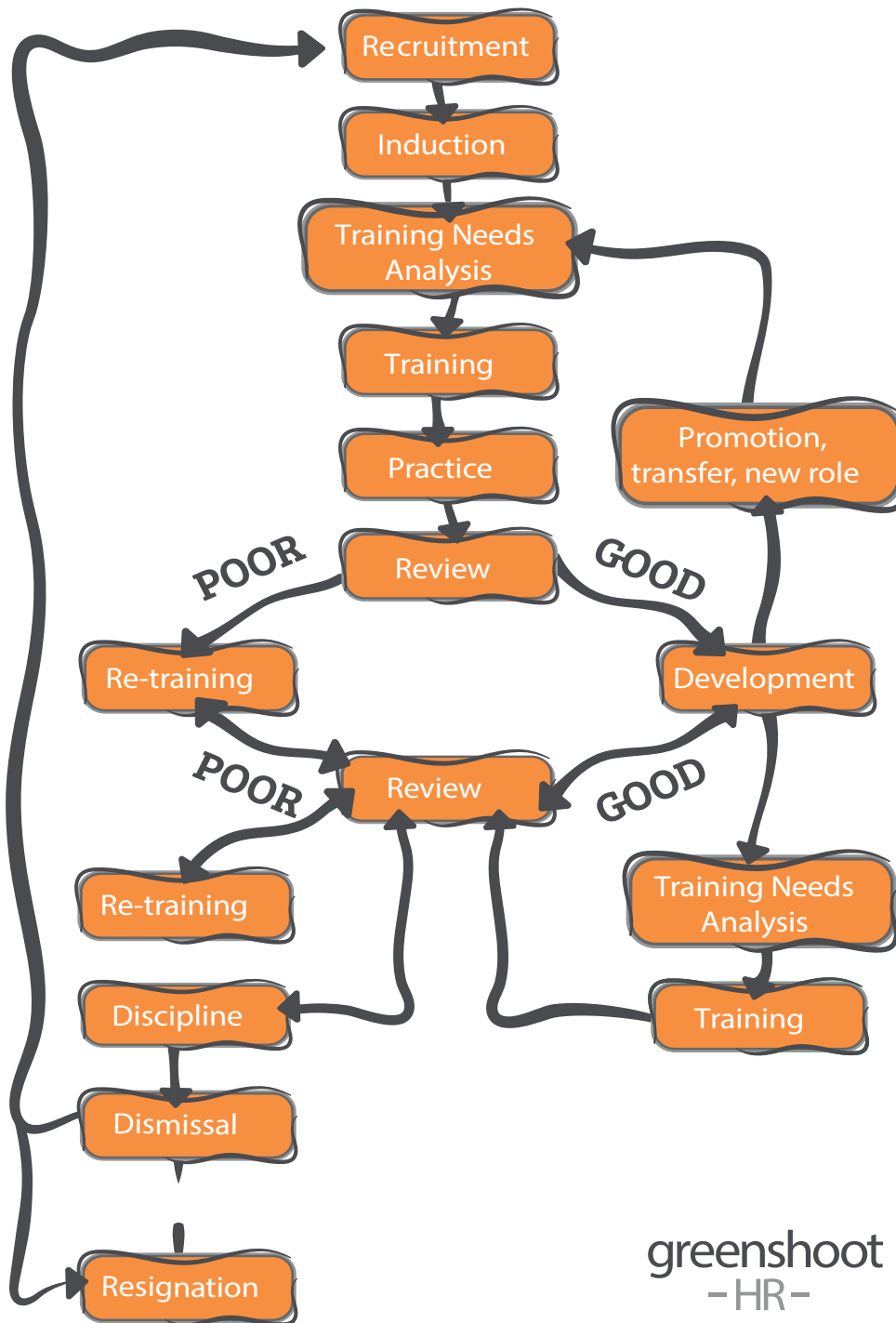
The diagram opposite (Figure 1) shows you, at a glance, the various stages of a person's employment and how those stages interlink to provide opportunities to manage performance effectively.

Whether you are taking on your first employee or your hundredth, the stages in the performance management journey apply; what will be different is the complexity of the monitoring system. Whatever the size of your business or organisation, you should pay attention to ensuring the information gathered and records kept meet your needs for managing performance.

'Review' is at the heart of the process. Unless you are reviewing a person's performance and taking relevant action, all the tools and systems become redundant.

The review meeting can be called whatever suits your business – performance review, performance management, development review, supervision, one-to-one – the important point is to ensure that information is gathered, frequent meetings are held and action/development plans are created.

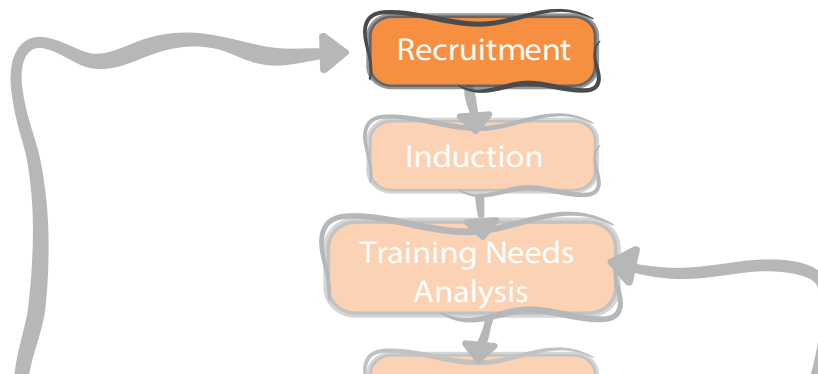
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Figure 1 The Performance Management Journey

3 RECRUITMENT



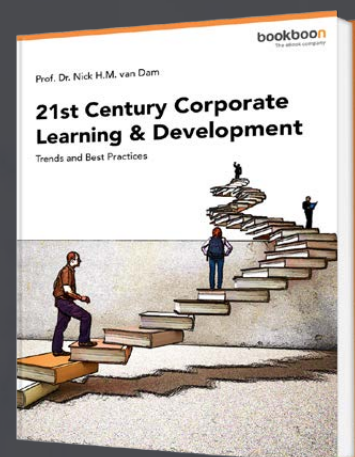
3.1 WHY RECRUITMENT IS THE START OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The recruitment process – which starts before you even see your first applicant – is a great place to start managing the performance of your staff.

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Prior to looking for applicants you need to:

- have an up-to-date job description – reviewing the existing one or creating a new one;
- determine the person you want for the role – the skills, experience and qualities you need;
- confirm the terms and conditions – salary, holiday, benefits, etc.;
- check that your handbook is up to date and accessible.

You have probably thought that giving consideration to these areas is just good recruitment and selection practice – and, of course, it is (although, unfortunately, many managers give little time to these, assuming they know what they want or ‘it’s the same as before’).

However, in this book, we are considering how and why good recruitment and selection form the starting point of effective performance management.

It’s obvious really; by reviewing, updating and reflecting on the job description, person specification, and terms and conditions of employment, you are starting to think about exactly what you want the person to do, how you want them to behave and what they will get in return to balance out the employment relationship. Knowing this will inform your communications with the potential applicants – the advert, interview, selection techniques, any documents you send out, etc. You can be clear from the start of your relationship about what you expect. This leads to a positive relationship and lays the foundations for future performance management.

3.2 KEY RECRUITMENT TOOLS & DOCUMENTS

There are a number of documents that are important to the recruitment and selection process, and that continue to be important throughout employment – especially in managing performance. The template you use might well be a combination of job description and person specification, with some terms and conditions thrown in, too.

For our purposes, we will consider each separately as they have different uses and need different consideration.

Job descriptions

This is quite simply a description of the duties of the role (job). It doesn't need to go into the detail of 'standard operating procedures' (we look at those later in Chapter 5), but does need to contain active (doing) words and give the scope of the job (Figure 2).

It is useful to section the job description into work areas, starting with the primary one. By developing job descriptions in this way, you ensure that all the areas and tasks related to that job are covered.

Reviewing or creating a job description prior to recruitment is obviously useful for developing the advert and preparing for candidate selection, through interviews or tests. But you should also recognise that telling applicants what they will be doing in the role not only allows them to self-select themselves (or de-select, as the case may be) but also starts to set the scene of what's expected.

Person specification

The person specification is crucial to effective recruitment and how to create one can be found in other books and sources. Briefly, the person specification outlines the essential and desirable qualities, skills, and experience needed by the person who will do the job.

You can build into this document the qualities that you see as important to your business, such as team work, personal development, innovation etc. You'll be thinking 'don't all companies want these qualities in their workforce'? Probably – but if you can show how important these qualities are to your business and how you will assess them during selection, you will give a clear message to applicants.

Terms and conditions of employment

Most of the terms and conditions of employment will be fairly standard across employees in your business and across different businesses. However, it is worth reviewing aspects such as salary and hours. These will have a bearing on the quality of the people who apply, and providing good conditions sets the tone for your expectations.

It is useful (although not essential) to provide applicants with a job description, person specification, and terms and conditions of employment as an application pack. This enables them to determine if the job in your company is for them. And, if they continue with their application, they will realise what is expected of them and your performance management journey has started.

JOB DESCRIPTION	
JOB TITLE:	Accounts Assistant
REPORTS TO:	Accounts Supervisor
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	
BASED AT:	Company A
CURRENT INCUMBENT:	

SUMMARY OF ROLE:
<p>Mainly responsible for purchase ledger, but providing assistance in all accounting tasks associated with both companies.</p> <p>Undertake the accounting duties for Company B, a division of Company A.</p> <p>A positive attitude is expected at all times, especially with customers.</p> <p>Assist colleagues when necessary.</p>

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES	
Purchase Ledger	
1.	Supplier invoices – put onto system, query inaccuracies, note supplier credits.
2.	Check supplier statements against internal records and invoices.
3.	Send out remittances.
4.	Deal with any supplier queries.
5.	Note problems in the discrepancy file.
6.	Prepare the Aged Debtor report.
Sales Ledger	
7.	Send out customer statements.
8.	Chase payments and deal with queries.
9.	Put cheques paid onto system.
10.	Check Sage Pay for payments made via this method.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES	
General Accounts & Admin	
11.	Distribute incoming post and organise outgoing post.
12.	Assist with sales ledger and banking tasks, as required.
13.	Deal with any problems, making accounts supervisor aware of actions.
14.	General filing to be kept up to date.
Company B	
15.	Place orders for supplies, put onto the system and organise payment.
16.	Raise invoices and chase payment.
17.	Talk to customers with regards to a variety of queries.
18.	Arrange transport for goods.
General Duties:	
19.	Carry out any reasonable request – this could include cleaning, attending events, shopping for supplies, etc.
20.	Maintain a healthy and safe environment for yourself, colleagues and visitors – reporting and dealing with any hazards, as necessary.

Figure 2 Sample Job Description

3.3 THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Once you have prepared your documents and agreed the position to be filled, you can start the process to find the best person for the job.

We all know that the process involves:

- advertising the position – on your website, publications, job sites, etc.;
- shortlisting applicants;
- selecting – interviewing and testing (skills, psychometrics, aptitude, and ability)
- recruiting – offering the position and rejecting the unsuccessful applicants.

How does this process contribute to performance management?

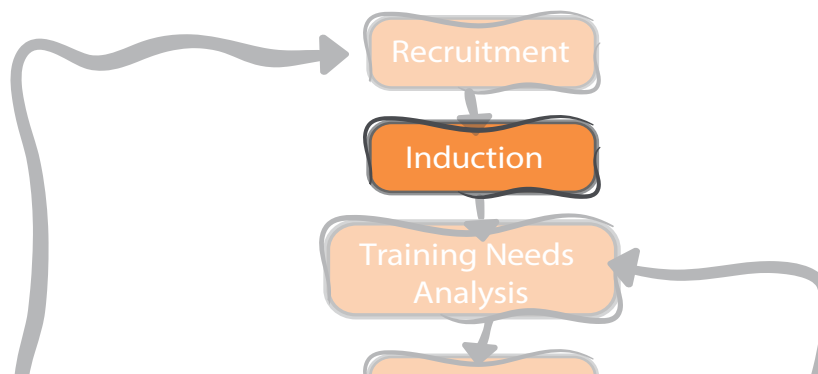
- The advert is an opportunity to communicate, through the use of key words, what your values, ethos and expectations are, so, even if you don't send out application packs, potential candidates get a feel for what it might be like to work for your business.
- Make sure your website reflects your values, ethos and standards – attracting the right people and setting the scene for future employment.
- The selection process, whether interviews and/or tests, allows applicants to see firsthand how you work and what you expect from employees. You don't need to be overly prescriptive at this point – you don't want to scare them off – but you can start to paint a picture of what is expected and determine whether they will respond favourably.
- Good communication throughout the process demonstrates how you value and respect people. This is a good indication of how you will treat employees once recruited. The core principle of effective performance management is good and regular communication.

Ask yourself:



- Do I rush into recruitment without giving thought to changes in the job role or the person needed?
- If recruiting for a new position – do I fully explore what I want them to do and how that position will relate to other roles in the company?
- Do our job descriptions, person specifications, and terms and conditions include clear pointers to how we expect people to perform and behave?
- Are we using the selection process to present our values, ethos and expectations?

4 INDUCTION



4.1 WHAT IS INDUCTION?

‘Induction refers to the process where employees adjust or acclimatise to their jobs and working environment. As part of this, “orientation” can be used for a specific course or training event that new starters attend, and “socialisation” can describe the way in which new employees build up working relationships and find roles for themselves within their new teams. Some people use the term “onboarding” to cover the whole process from an individual’s contact with the organisation before they formally join, through to understanding the business’ ways of working and getting up to speed in their job.’ (CIPD Factsheet 2015)

My experience of induction ranges from a couple of hours going through the statement of terms and conditions of employment, the staff handbook, and health and safety requirements to a planned programme spread over two or three weeks, which aims to provide orientation and socialisation for the new recruit. Getting induction right has numerous benefits, which we’ll look at later.

Activities during induction usually are (or are a combination of):

- Issue the Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment, if not sent as part of the offer letter.
- Issue the handbook, pointing out key information.
- Issue passes, badges, uniform, equipment, etc.
- Collect information from the new recruit – P45/46, bank details, personal information, next of kin, etc.
- Explain the health and safety requirements of the role and environment.
- Give a tour of the building, especially the facilities, kitchen, canteen and toilets.

- Introduce the immediate boss and team, and people in other relevant departments, e.g. payroll, departments to liaise with.
- Have a plan for job training – a fuller plan for the novice, or ‘our way’ for the more experienced person, allowing time to settle in to the role.
- Give a history of the company, current aims and objectives, mission statement and values, products and services.
- Describe how the new recruit role fits into the organisation, how to achieve objectives and links with other departments.

4.2 WHY IS INDUCTION IMPORTANT?

Induction gives a number of benefits to both the employer and the employee. A good induction that welcomes the employee and provides them with useful job information goes a long way to ensuring they do not leave within the first 12 months. Recruitment is an expensive process and reducing staff turnover through effective induction is clearly a benefit to a business’ bottom line and staff morale.

The benefits of induction for the employer are:

- It creates a positive perception of the organisation, and an understanding of the culture, values, vision, mission and goals.
- It can set a precedent for ongoing training, by showing the employee that the organisation is serious about developing his skills to perform his job competently.
- It can also help to motivate the existing employees, who will feel valued and respected to be included in the process.
- A good induction programme can also help by cutting down recruitment costs as the new staff member is more likely to give a longer-term commitment to the organisation.
- The business can benefit from the insights, objectivity and fresh ideas of a new employee. A new employee can also give insights into how the company is perceived externally.

The benefits for employees are:

- Feeling welcomed and comfortable, quickly starting to build relationships.
- It confirms the employee’s decision to join the organisation.
- It helps to build the self-esteem, morale and motivation of the new employees and the existing team.

- It establishes good communication and a good relationship between the employee and his supervisor from the first day.
- It makes the employee familiar with the environment, rules, systems and regulations.

Despite the clear benefits of a good, well-planned induction programme many managers consider induction to be very low down on their list of priorities. However,

'Charlotte Wolff, training editor at XpertHR, said that an effective induction programme can make the difference between high and low retention rates for new joiners. It is a unique opportunity for employers to capture the hearts and minds of their employees from the start, helping to build a productive, engaged workforce.'

– Chamberlain L. November 2010

For our purpose, induction is the next step in effective performance management. By capturing hearts and minds, and building productive, engaged teams, it is the perfect opportunity to point out the rules and expectations of your business, and start to embed your values and ethos. All areas of society need to have rules to enable them to function effectively and in co-operation and work is no different. If it is, made clear from the start what will be accepted and what will not, new employees will settle in much better; they will understand where they fit and how to behave.

A full, well-planned induction is just the place to start this process. Not having an induction, or having one that is rushed and dull (focusing on contracts, and health and safety), misses this opportunity and can lead to the impression that employees aren't important.

4.3 PRESENTING THE RULES OF YOUR BUSINESS

We've seen that induction is important to welcoming and settling the new recruit, but it is also the first opportunity to present the rules of your business. Telling people what they can and can't do, how they need to behave, and what their rights and responsibilities are can be very dry and dull, and not the positive start you would want for your new recruit. However, you can't rely on them picking them up as they go, or applying common sense to what is right and wrong in your business.

The key document here is the handbook (or staff/employee handbook). This acts as a reference point for all staff to look up what their rights are and how they will be treated if things go awry. Your staff handbook will contain information about statutory rights, but

more importantly it should contain general information on how you would like your staff to behave whilst employed by you.

The handbook is an opportunity to describe, for example:

- how and when to book holiday;
- when staff will be paid and the information that is needed for this to happen;
- how overtime or time off in lieu is approved;
- standards of appearance;
- how you feel about smoking, drinking, social media and internet activity, working elsewhere, etc.
- the code of conduct for your business;
- what the procedure is for when staff are sick or need to be away for other reasons;
- what actions may result in disciplinary action and how to raise a grievance.

The contents of a handbook can be quite extensive and the resulting document quite large. I would suggest that, at induction you point out the table of contents, pick up and reinforce important pieces of information, answer any immediate questions and then allow the new recruits to take it in at their leisure. The handbook can be presented manually or electronically; just make sure that it can be easily accessed when information is needed and that everyone is informed of updates.

Once key bits of information have been given early on in induction and the new recruit has received his handbook, the details of all the rules can be given during the early weeks of training and reinforced at several opportunities by a variety of people. This has the benefit of not only spreading out the dull bits of induction but also shows the new recruit that these rules and behaviours are embedded throughout the business.

The induction training plan will also include tours, introductions and job training, at which point other documents will be presented, such as operating procedures, manufacturer's instructions, standards of performance and job-specific health and safety requirements.



Ask yourself:

- What does our induction look like?
- Is it all contracts, health and safety, and tons of information?
- How can we make it more engaging to make the new recruits feel welcome, but also present the rules of our business?
- What is covered in our handbook?

5 DURING EMPLOYMENT: MEASURES

5.1 MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

If you have already read my book *Managing Team Members: The Good, The Bad and the Okay*, you may want to skip the next three sections, but feel free to have a refresher. Section 5.4 is specific to this book.

To be able to effectively manage performance and have a transparent review process, it is important to have clearly determined the key measures within a role. But what they are for your business will depend on a number of factors.

Measures can be related to standards of performance, targets and key performance indicators (KPIs). You will know what these are in your business or organisation. If you don't, now would be a good time to identify them.



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The benefit of having a measure is that it makes a conversation about performance factual; it depersonalises discussions, making them about a failure to meet the measure; and it gives a clear factual goal to aspire to. Key measures should be able to be measured by everyone – the manager, individuals and colleagues. This provides a degree of transparency. Dealing with difficult people, especially, is much easier when dealing in facts.

What can we measure?

Often jobs have their own innate measures, especially in production or sales. In these cases, you can determine a baseline measure for acceptable performance, setting higher expectations to improve performance, and develop the individual or team.

In other jobs you might need to create the measure, ensuring it is based on information that is collected regularly and is understood by all. Measures might be:

- Output – how many items should be produced in a timescale.
- Sales – measured in volume or financial terms.
- Costs – measured as a reduction in costs, proportion of sales, etc.
- Profit – how much profit is made per job or per item/unit.
- Quality – measured as part of a quality control process or by amount of rework, returns, repairs or complaints. This is a measure that can be applied to administration work.
- Deadlines – how frequently deadlines are met or missed, e.g. submitting reports or information.
- Company standards – e.g. answer calls within so many rings, reply to e-mails within 24 hours, follow up all customer feedback or issue invoices within so many days.

In addition to job related measures, you can also review personal ones such as time-keeping and absences, and how the individual has communicated with you in relation to absences. Other data, from trackers, phone records, e-mails, CCTV, etc. can provide useful information, albeit usually when there is a problem. Remember, you need to let them know you are collecting data in this way.

Measuring personal attributes

The above are all relatively easy to apply a measure to that is both transparent and understood by all. The trick is to have good systems that are used effectively to provide up-to-date information. However, there are other things we like to discuss in performance reviews that

are harder to measure objectively. These are related to personal traits and include enthusiasm, flexibility, positive attitude, general behaviour, motivation, co-operation, leadership, etc.

How do you review these personal attributes? The difficulty here is that, no matter how positively or negatively we view these in others, that view is often subjective and related to our own perspective of what that attribute should look like. It is in this area of the review meeting that we can err towards subjectivity or comparison (with ourselves or others).

In preparing for the meeting, note examples of when you believed that attribute or quality to be lacking, and be able to explain why you see it that way. Your perception is valid – as is theirs. Listen to what they have to say and explore ways in which they can demonstrate a more positive aspect to that attribute. In this way, you are letting them know what good or positive looks like. If you adopt a 360° review process (whereby the views of everyone in the business connected with the individual are elicited) or include customer feedback, you may well have additional qualitative and quantitative data to back up your view.

To be fair, if you want to praise someone's personal attributes, examples often come easily and are rarely challenged, e.g. 'you are often seen supporting others to do a better job', 'you regularly stay late to finish a job', 'you took control of that situation well', 'you are always full of positive, good ideas in meetings'.

5.2 HOW TO ASSESS AGAINST THE MEASURE

In a previous life I was a qualification assessor and in determining whether someone met a standard or criteria I needed to ensure:

- The standard required was clear to me and the student, with us both knowing what was expected.
- Validity, in that what they were doing was relevant to the standard.
- Authenticity, in that it was their work.
- The work produced was current, demonstrating they were up to date and hadn't lost any skill or knowledge over time.
- Reliability, indicating they could consistently perform at that level.
- Sufficiency of evidence to show they fully met the requirements over and over again.

Using this approach in performance reviews might help you determine the nature and value of key measures and how you will provide evidence that a standard has been met (or not). You should consider:

- Identifying the required standard for the job and the associated duties, and how that will be measured.
- The validity of what you are measuring to ensure it is relevant to the job and that individual. If you are reviewing performance against things that are out of their control, or are irrelevant to their job or development, the individual will lose faith in the process.
- It might seem an obvious one, but review their work in relation to the measure, and try to avoid comparison with others or measuring their performance based on the performance of others.
- Be current; look at what is being done now, not how they performed in the past. Try to avoid the ‘halo or horns’ effect, i.e. only seeing good in those you like, or only seeing poor performance in those you don’t like or who have had some problems in the past. People change – they can improve or slip, so be mindful to be current.
- One of the purposes of frequent performance reviews is to ensure reliability; that staff consistently work to the required standard and even look to improve that standard over time.
- Sufficiency in a work situation perhaps links with reliability. We want our staff to work to, and beyond, the standard every time and reviews are one way to encourage this to happen.

Agreeing an action plan at the end of a review session also provides a measure in that the action will either have been achieved or not, leading to a discussion in the next review meeting. Actions are agreed to achieve objectives – in the case of performance reviews, those objectives are for improvement or personal development.

So, this would be a good place to mention SMART. SMART is a technique for setting objectives and attributing actions towards achieving the objectives. I’m sure you’ve all heard of SMART objectives, but here’s a reminder, just in case:

Specific – be specific about what is to be achieved. ‘To be more organised’ is an aim, but ‘to make better use of software packages and apps’ becomes one of the specific objectives in achieving that aim.

Measurable – find the measure of success (or otherwise). This might be a specific reduction in complaints or costs, an amount or percentage of sales or profit, or (using the example above) that after a period of time those software packages or apps are in use.

Achievable – this relates to whether the individual has the aptitude, capacity, skills, ability and knowledge to achieve the objective, and whether the business can provide the resources, e.g. ‘answer the phone in three rings’ is unachievable if there are two phones and only one person.

Realistic – is that the achievement of the objective is realistic and is usually within a time frame; e.g. ‘I’ll become CEO in 12 months’ depends on current position, qualifications, experience and ability, and is probably unlikely, but ‘I’ll become CEO in 10 years’ is more achievable as it allows time for qualifications and experience to be gained. This can also be related to the individual’s own innate abilities – I can assure you, no matter how hard I train, I will never play football for England at any level!

Timely or Time-bound – putting a deadline on an objective helps to ground the objective. An objective without a timeframe has no urgency and just becomes ‘one day’. Setting the deadline enables review dates to be planned. These can be on achievement or at significant points to determine progress and be revised, if necessary. Weightwatchers use this approach to monitor how their clients are progressing towards their end objective and celebrate smaller milestone achievements.

5.3 RECORD KEEPING

We cannot run our businesses without information and this includes carrying out effective performance reviews. And, to have good information, we need to keep good records. The more accurate, up to date and varied the information is, the easier it makes reviewing performance to gain improvement or personal development from an individual.

The trick with records is to make them as easy to update as possible, relevant to what we need, not duplicated and easy to retrieve information from. For the purpose of this book, I’m not advocating electronic or manual records, only insisting that you maintain whatever system you adopt. There is a wealth of software out there that can help, but, ultimately, it is the effectiveness of the person inputting the data that determines its effectiveness. You need to decide on the best system for your business.

Review your systems regularly to ensure that you get what you want or need to know, and that there are no duplications or gaps.

What needs to be recorded?

Measures – in section one of this chapter, we mentioned a number of measures that are either inherent in your business or perhaps you need to add. Many of these are already recorded as part of the business – what you might need to do is record these on an individual basis if you want to use them in personal review meetings. You should also look at the format in which the information can be retrieved and determine whether this gives you the information you need.

You could ask the individuals to input the data about their own performance against these measures. People are more inclined to record information if it later benefits them.

Measures such as time-keeping and attendance are probably already being recorded as part of payroll. You just need to be able to extract that information.

The performance review – details of the performance review need to be recorded. This can be as simple as a blank sheet of paper (I've used an exercise book per individual in very small businesses) where the date, time, key points raised and action plan are recorded. Or you can develop a range of forms that standardise the process and can be completed manually or electronically. There are, on the market, a number of software packages that allow individuals to upload evidence towards their objectives, which can be accessed by the manager, too.

As an example, Figure 3 is a half-way house between a blank sheet and an overly complicated annual appraisal format.

The important thing is that the meeting is recorded – whether positive or negative. This allows for both parties to refer back to the meetings for evidence of no progress or to see how far they have come, and be able to celebrate achievements and consider the next step.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW FORM

Name:	Job title/position:	Date of review:
Reviewer's name:	Position:	Review no.:
Period covered by the review	From:	To:

	Team Member	Reviewer	
<p>What went well – WWW List the achievements and successes that have occurred over the review period.</p> <p>Thoughts on the company in general are welcome.</p>			
<p>Even better if – EBI List those activities and behaviours that would have improved performance over the review period.</p> <p>Thoughts on the company in general are welcome.</p>			
Actions to improve/develop:			
Action:	Resources/support needed:	Review date:	Comments:
Training/development:			
Topic:	Method:	Cost:	Completed by:
<p>Aspirations/ambitions: (if appropriate to this discussion)</p>			

Next review date:			
Signature of reviewer:		Signature of team member:	

Figure 3 Sample performance review form

5.4 USEFUL DOCUMENTS

There are a number of documents that we use during employment that are useful to the review process:

- Job description (role analysis) – we've mentioned this before, in the section on recruitment, but it is also useful to refer to during employment when reviewing performance. Individuals can be reviewed against what they are doing compared to what they should be doing. This comparison also allows for a regular review of the job description itself, discussing with the individual how the role is evolving.
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) – are more usually found in manufacturing or maintenance, but could be developed for a range of tasks. SOPs differ from a job description (which details the tasks a person needs to do in their role) in that they describe the method and standards for a task. These are clearly useful documents for training and the subsequent review of performance. They provide a clear description of the standards to all involved.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) – are the measures a business uses to demonstrate achievement – as a business, team and individual. KPIs can relate to financial factors, quantity, quality, HR measures (such as staff turnover, absence levels, or 'happiness'), efficiency etc. The systems that produce the evidence of these, in whatever form, are useful to the review process as they provide evidence of over or under performance. KPIs are often the basis of targets and, as a manager reviewing a team member, it is important that achievement (or not) can be clearly seen via records created within the business. The term KPIs might seem a bit 'corporate' to some of you, but you all have them in your business and if you don't, how do you measure your success?
- Code of conduct – having a code of conduct for your business and/or even having a document that outlines the core competences (personal skills, behaviours and attitudes) required in your business is useful to be able to use to reflect on an individual's approach to their job. This document might include showing initiative, leadership, customer relations, communication, team work, personal development, financial acumen, etc. The code of conduct or core competences document may be

part of the company handbook and therefore introduced at induction. Where the roles in your business are linked to external bodies – professions, trade associations, etc. – you can use their code of conduct, too, to review an individual's performance.

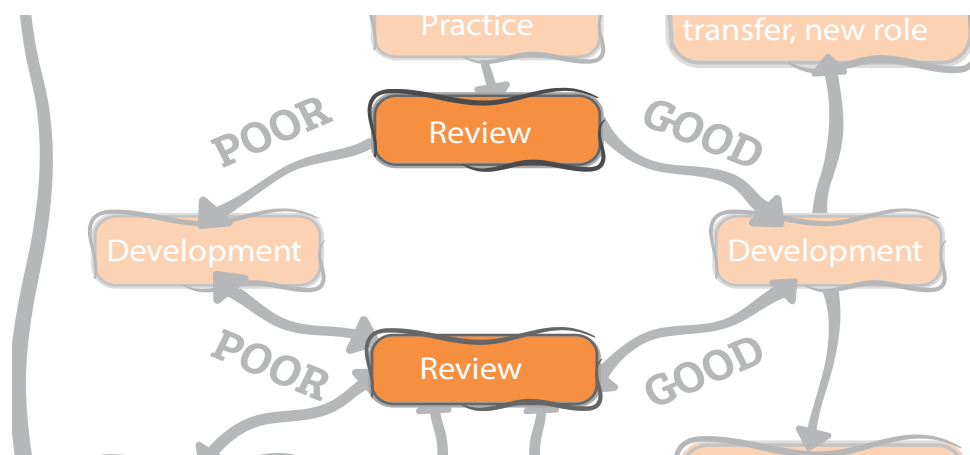
I'm sure you don't want to be bogged down with lots paper, but having these documents available and up to date will make monitoring and reviewing performance much easier. So, consider what is most important to each role and develop systems that support their use.

Ask yourself:



- What measures are currently in place? Are there measures for every job role?
- How will I measure personal attributes?
- Practise writing SMART objectives – for yourself, to start with, and then your team.
- Challenge whether or not they are really SMART.
- What records do we currently keep? What records do I need to start keeping?
- Do I have the key documents in place?
- How will I record performance review meetings?

6 DURING EMPLOYMENT: REGULAR REVIEWS



6.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EFFECTIVE AND REGULAR REVIEW PROCESS

Again, much of this chapter may be familiar to those of you who have read my book *Managing Team Members: The Good, The Bad and The Okay*. But do read on as a refresher, or scan or skip as you see fit. Section 6.6 is specific to this book.

The ILM report *Beyond the bonus: Driving employee performance* (2013), based on over 1,000 people surveyed, recommended that employees should have regular performance reviews to provide meaningful feedback to improve performance. Interestingly, the ILM research found that 69% of managers say that they always give feedback, whilst only 23% of employees agreed.

Many of us do not engage in regular reviews with our staff – why is that?

- My team members know how they are doing – they know what I think about their performance.
- Talking to individual team members on a regular basis is time-consuming and takes me away from other important tasks.
- We have regular team meetings and briefings.
- I catch up with team members every day through general office conversation.
- I talk to my team members at their annual appraisal and if they have done something wrong.

Let's look at why these just aren't good enough:

- Some team members may know how they are doing as they are quite self-aware, but others (probably the majority) will either think they are much better than they really are; lack confidence and believe they are underperforming; or may be focusing on the wrong aspects of their work. And, actually, even those who are self-aware of their own level of performance and ability like to have a second opinion – from you, a person who matters in their employment.
- Yes, talking to each team member individually will require you to make time in a busy week, but the benefits to the team and business can be huge. Even those of us who schedule regular reviews with individuals cancel or postpone them if a customer or the boss calls. The message that gives to the individual is 'I don't really value you' or 'I value you less than...', which leads to a spiral of low morale and under performance. The best advice is to schedule regular reviews; make them short (maximum 30 minutes); and only cancel or postpone if it really is an emergency that only you can deal with. If you have a large team – consider a restructure to be able to delegate this aspect of direct people-management. Just to repeat – the benefits of regular reviews to the team and business can be huge. Content, happy

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- It is fantastic if you are a manager who has regular team meetings and briefings. They are a core part of internal communications, and keep everyone informed and on track. However, for all sorts of reasons, team meetings do not always allow or support individual contribution or development. Review meetings with individuals enable you to address personal issues and aspirations, making for a better team.
- General office chit-chat – over lunch, at the copier, coffee machine, etc. – is great for getting to know each other, but it is just that – a general conversation. Individuals will be reluctant to raise their aspirations or concerns and it is an inappropriate occasion for you to raise your concerns or to discuss your plans for that individual in that situation.
- Is an in-depth discussion once a year (with, possibly, a six-month review) good enough? A year is 365 days in which a lot can happen – positively or negatively – to the business, the team and the individual. Regular reviews will enable you to pick up on these events and changes, and act accordingly.
- And as for only speaking to someone when they have done something wrong, this makes you the bad guy. It makes them suspicious of any interaction with you as the only private conversation they have with you is about something they have done wrong. Having meetings that include positive items as well as negative items is much better for both of you, and much more likely to result in any required changes being made.

So, why am I advocating a regular performance review process?

Quite simply, it works. I'm choosing to call it a 'performance management review', but in reality you can call it what you like – performance review, supervision or development review. The important bit is to schedule these reviews on a regular and frequent basis – put them in the diary – and record them.

By having regular reviews, any underperformance is dealt with swiftly and informally; it being discussed openly as soon as it is noted and not ignored, condoned or allowed to escalate. Any action plan to improve is followed up within a short period of time, as part of the regular review schedule, and positive change praised or further action agreed if the issue persists.

By having regular reviews, good performance is recognised, leading to a feeling of well-being, and furthers the development of that individual through challenges and identifies

them for promotion. This will enable great things to happen more regularly because it is at the forefront of everyone's mind.

If we only talk about aspirations once a year, change for the team or the individual can be slow. Conversations and plans get forgotten, which leads to a lack of trust, low morale and team members leaving.

What's regular? I'd love to encourage monthly meetings, but recognise that time flies, so how about aiming for every six weeks. Get them booked in the diary – choose a day and time that mutually suits (less likely to be cancelled) and practise good time management – don't be late and stick to the time allocated (30 minutes maximum).

The other advantage of this approach is you do not have to see all your team in the truncated 'appraisal season'. Depending on the size of your team, you can see one or two people each week, which is much more manageable to fit into a busy diary.

6.2 THE AGENDA

Any meeting benefits hugely from preparation, structure and time for open conversation, and you will run a better review meeting if you have an agenda (even informal) and have done some preparation.

What should be in a review meeting?

- A welcome and summary of the purpose of the meeting.
- A review of the last action points if there are some. Reference should be made to notes made at the time. Start by asking them how they have got on with these action points, and then add your views and whether you have carried out your agreed actions.
- Celebrate what has gone well over the period and address any concerns from both parties. Again, give them the chance to speak first. You should have prepared the facts to support any concerns you have, or at least have considered how you will present these concerns – especially where the concern is to do with attitude, flexibility, enthusiasm, etc. (personal qualities and behaviour).
- Discuss concerns and possible solutions.
- If appropriate, ask about ideas and aspirations.
- Conclude with an action plan and agree the date of the next review.

Go for the sandwich approach – i.e. anything negative is sandwiched between the positives. Start by noting achievements and successes, move on to things that still need improvement, and end with an action or development plan; this in itself will be positive as it shows you support their commitment to change.

Stick to your agenda – the meeting should be about the person, and the agenda will help you keep the conversation on track and manage your time. My recommendation is that these should be relatively short – 30/40 minutes maximum. A tip is to say at the start of the meeting how long the meeting will be, e.g. ‘in the next half an hour, I would like to...’. Make brief notes during the meeting, at least ensuring that the key points are summarised and action points recorded, to be reviewed in future meetings.

6.3 CONDUCTING THE MEETING

Here are some basic guidelines for conducting performance review meetings. Essentially, they apply to each situation, whether you’re reviewing a good, a bad or an okay performer.

Plan and prepare

- Clearly identify, in your own mind, what the key points of the meeting are. You need to be able to articulate these clearly to the team member in the review meeting, particularly if dealing with poor or average performance.
- Collect information from your records to be able to present the facts about their performance. You may or may not need to present this in the meeting. Be wary; too much factual evidence can feel like a ‘court’ or formal discipline, particularly when dealing with poor or average performance. At this stage, the idea is to resolve the issue informally and positively, but having the ‘evidence’ to hand will, be useful, if needed.
- Put yourself in their shoes – give some thought to what they might say by way of excuse or reason for their performance. This will prepare you for what might come up, and may also provide you with some solutions and challenges to be discussed in the meeting. **Warning!** Whilst I would encourage you to give some thought to their point of view, don’t think by doing this you know the answer. You must still have an open conversation in the meeting.
- Prepare an agenda – write this down, so you remember to cover everything you want to discuss. It will also help you keep to time.
- If the meeting is part of a regular review schedule, the team member will be expecting to have the meeting and it should go ahead as scheduled.

Conducting the meeting where there is an issue or concern

- Find a private place. If you have an office, ensure you have no interruptions. Other team members need to know that both you and the person you are talking to are not available. If part of a regular review schedule, everyone will be aware of this and respect your need for privacy.
- If the meeting is part of a regular review schedule – the format will be familiar to the person you are speaking to. You should pick up on any actions from last time and discuss how they addressed these; ask what has gone well over the intervening period, agreeing and adding to where you can. This is the positive start.
- If the meeting is specifically to discuss poor performance, or an issue or particular concern, my approach would be to state right at the beginning why the meeting is being held. This makes it clear what the main topic of discussion will be.
- Once the topic is in the open, you can then give some positive input about what they do well.
- Present the issue – tell them what the problem is and how it affects you, the team and/or the business. Ask them to explain why it is happening.
- Give them the time and space to express themselves. Listen carefully to what they have to say.
- It is at this point that it is hard to give advice, as so much depends on how they react, what they say, and how you feel about their comments, ideas, reasons or excuses.
- Keep in mind that you want a positive outcome – don't get aggressive, emotional, judgemental or dominating (even if they do!) with poor performers, and don't be pushy or domineering with good and okay ones.
- Question and probe, as required, to get to the core of the poor performance. Discuss as needed.
- Agree an action plan, which might require actions from both of you, and how and when you will be monitoring and reviewing their performance to review progress.
- Agree the date of the next meeting. When this is will depend on the content of the action plan. My recommendation would be no more than four to six weeks away.

Conducting the meeting with great performers

- Find a private place – as for a poor performer.
- As for a poor performer, pick up on any actions from last time and discuss how they addressed these; ask what has gone well over the intervening period, agreeing and adding to where you can. This is the positive start.

- In a meeting with a great performer, you may feel there is nothing more to say. However, this is an opportunity to:
 - ask them for ideas to improve the team and business;
 - discuss their personal aspirations and what you can do to support these;
 - present challenges to them that will help them to personally develop within the business.
- Give them the time and space to express themselves. Listen carefully to what they have to say.
- It is at this point that it is hard to give advice, as so much depends on how they react, what they say, and how you feel about their aspirations and ideas. But don't force your point of view, give them time to consider the opportunities you might be offering. Whilst you might feel they are ready, they might not. The advantage of having regular reviews is you can raise it again, giving the individual time to consider and reflect on the opportunity.
- Agree an action plan, which might require actions from both of you, and may include development activities to achieve the challenges and opportunities agreed.
- Agree the date of the next meeting.

Conducting the meeting with average performers

The review meetings with an average performer will follow a format that is a mixture of those for the poor and great performers. Remember – the average performer may not be actually doing anything wrong and are often the core of the business, getting on with things and quietly supporting the team. They could be working to required standards, have a good attendance, and may be meeting targets. However, where there are little niggles and irritations you want to address; you should look to adopt the format for the poor performer; or you might be generally happy with their performance, but would like a little bit more (e.g. show more initiative, have a more positive attitude or take on additional tasks) so you should follow the format for the good performer. It is important to make sure that you do not demotivate this worker, possibly turning them into a poor performer. Don't push too hard when it doesn't really matter. Give them time and support to come round to what you're asking of them.

6.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

An effective performance review process relies on having an open and honest discussion to be able to resolve issues, create opportunities for development and achieve aspirations for all involved. Open and honest discussions will only happen if the team member being

reviewed feels comfortable and trusts their manager to keep the details confidential and not use anything that is said in a negative or manipulative way.

We all expect confidentiality, but we don't always practise it. So be mindful of what you record, where you store those records and who you tell. Where employees know or suspect that confidences get broken, any trust will disappear and your relationship with that person will break down. Good performance management relies on open communication and to have that there must be the trust of confidentiality.

There will be times when your team member says something that you feel needs to be passed on to someone else for a resolution or action. Where this is the case, you should listen to what they say, offer suggestions and look to deal with it between yourselves, and where you need to involve others say so to gain their permission.

6.5 WHO SHOULD CARRY OUT PERFORMANCE REVIEWS?

The easy answer is, in my opinion, the line manager and preferably someone who has some authority to provide resources for support – time, money, help from colleagues, training, etc.

However, if you are in control of a large team, you may need to delegate the responsibility of carrying out reviews to team leaders or supervisors. If you do this, it is important that you:

- clearly provide information around budgets, timeframes, business plans and work parameters to allow the reviewer to make informed decisions on the solutions to any issues, and on the actions to achieve the individual's aspirations;
- allow them a degree of authority in agreeing action plans;
- listen to them when they advocate on behalf of the individual being reviewed;
- support their decisions.

The benefits of delegating performance reviews are that the reviewer gains valuable experience in managing people (as they are often in junior management roles), the relationship between the two strengthens, it can help to prevent individuals 'going over the head' of their immediate supervisor/manager and it saves you time.

The disadvantages of delegating performance reviews are they could become just a 'how do you feel chat' as the reviewer has no authority to effect any change, the individual does not fully participate for that reason or he loses faith in the process because nothing happens.

6.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT JOURNEY

During employment, regular and frequent reviews are essential. The reality is that you are probably doing an informal review of your team members every day – or at least after training, after a change, after an issue or after a request to do something different. You may have even shared your thoughts with the individual, but chances are you may not have and if you have you haven't recorded the review – the good and bad points.

You'll have seen throughout this book so far, and in the flow diagram in Chapter 2, that reviews are a vital part of the performance management journey. Recruitment, induction and dismissal are a small part of the journey; the bulk of the work happens during employment, which is where you need to get into the habit of regular reviews.

My mission is to encourage all managers to turn the informal into a formal process. If you knew me better, you'd be surprised. Like you, I have conversations that I don't record – either because I forget or because I think it will be remembered. Adding a bit of formality by recording review conversations enables both you and the team member to look back at what was agreed to improve performance and develop opportunities, which is important for ensuring progress through the implementation of action and development plans.

Why isn't the annual appraisal enough? A review once a year loses impact; there is a risk that the discussion only focuses on recent performance (good or bad) and if there is a follow-up in 6 months, this may be too long for a review of some objectives and actions. There may even be no follow-up at all. Managers can feel bogged down with the annual approach as they all happen at once and tend to be lengthy conversations that take up precious time. If an annual appraisal meeting needs to be cancelled, it is often not re-scheduled and the opportunity is missed.

By having frequent regular performance reviews:

- the achievement of objectives and actions can be monitored better;
- issues and concerns are aired and resolved more frequently;
- development activity is implemented quicker;
- overall performance is improved and you have a better team and a successful business.

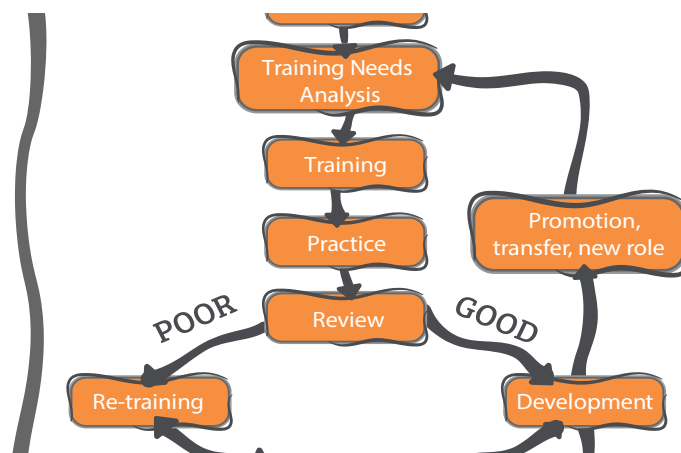
If you are determined to maintain the annual appraisal, for whatever reason – pay reviews, bonuses, or training and development needs, then by all means do so but use it as a consolidation of the frequent reviews, and as an overview of performance and aspirations.

Ask yourself:



- When can I start the regular review process?
- Should I blend regular reviews with an annual appraisal or ditch the annual appraisal?
- How will I introduce the concept of reviews to my team?
- What will my standard agenda look like? A template is useful, particularly one that can be adapted to the needs of individuals.
- Who will be trained to do reviews in my organisation?

7 DURING EMPLOYMENT: TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT



Effective training and having access to development activities are crucial to ensuring good performance and growing your business.

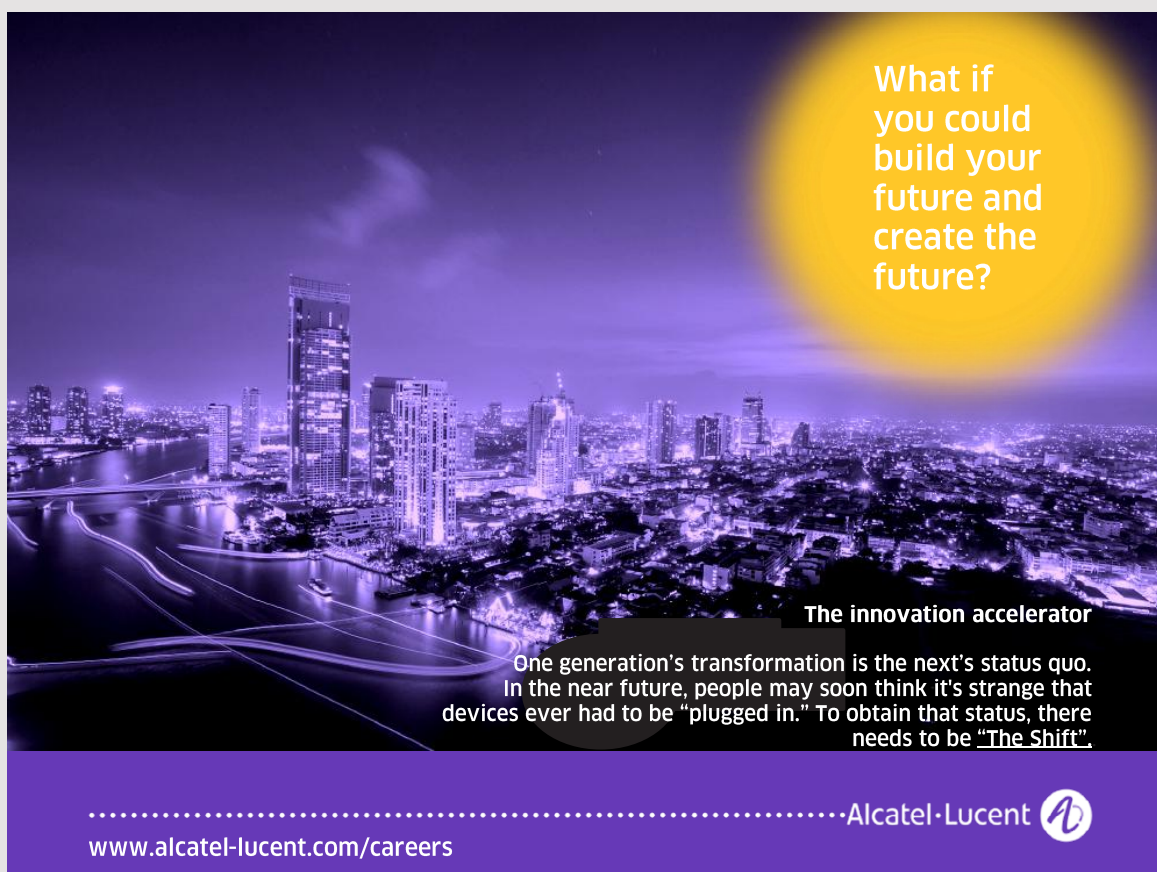
In this chapter, we will look briefly at how to plan, implement and monitor training and development activities, but it is worth investing time and money in understanding and implementing these concepts better.

7.1 TRAINING & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Training is vital to effective performance management. Your employees need to be trained in a variety of things to ensure they know and understand the required standard and your business' approach. Without training, you can't expect your employees to perform adequately. People don't join your business fully formed; they need support and training. Looking at the performance management journey flowchart (Figure 1), you can see that training and or development activities come out of the review meetings to either address poor performance or develop the great performer. Some objectives or actions from a performance review may not involve training, they may require quick updates, or just managerial support and encouragement for the individual to be successful.

Training starts at induction and continues throughout a person's employment. Areas to be covered by training include:


- Job skills/tasks – using standard operating procedures (SOPs), those new to the work need to be shown how to do the task to the standard required by your business, and those already skilled need to be trained to show them 'your way'.
- Personal skills such as communication, customer service, leadership and management, dealing with conflict, being assertive at work, etc.
- Additional general skills such as train-the-trainer, first aid, fire marshalling, food hygiene, health and safety, etc.
- Change – when a new process, system or piece of equipment is introduced it is important to train all users rather than letting them use their experience to guess how it might work.
- The culture and ethos of your business – through specific events and also by having it embedded throughout all training.
- Development activities that support an individual's personal development, e.g. professional and technical qualifications, and that encourage succession planning.



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The above require planning on your part and may be delivered by external providers, although job skills and tasks are usually delivered internally as on-job training. It is important that the training is carried out well, by trained trainers; that the content meets the needs of the business and the individuals; and that everyone who needs the training receives it.

7.2 PLANNING TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Like any activity, training and development will benefit from a planned approach. Planning happens at a number of levels, and at each level the main objective or outcome needs to be clearly understood by everyone. Any training activity that fails to meet its objective undermines the value of that training. So often, training activity is undertaken as a knee-jerk reaction without a thorough analysis of why it is needed and what is hoped will be achieved.

Company level: Having an overview of the training and development needs within the business is a good idea. A training plan for the business means that any training and development fits with overall strategy, training delivery can be cost-effective, and opportunities for training are provided across the business. To plan at this level, each department should submit requests to meet their needs and records need to be maintained to identify gaps – not limited to but certainly including legal requirements such as first aid, and health and safety.

Matching training and development activity to overall strategy ensures it is targeted and, consequently, cost-effective.

Department or team level: Each department and team should have a plan to ensure that each team member can carry out their own job effectively, as well as aspects of other people's jobs. The team leader or manager should also be looking at team performance, identifying gaps and arranging training to address those gaps. The department training plan may also include development activities for succession planning and delegation, and planned new equipment or processes, as well as any legal requirements.

Individual level: It's a good idea to create individual training plans. This will, no doubt, be done when they start and will include induction and follow up job training. During their employment, as a result of regular performance reviews, each person should have their own plan. Obviously, we need to plan when something new is introduced or retraining is needed because performance has slipped, but also to encourage and support them to take on new (or additional) challenges and opportunities, e.g. train-the-trainer, coaching/mentoring, department health and safety or some of your managerial duties. Identifying potential successors early and developing them into the role is certainly preferable to their taking on more senior or challenging roles with no notice, and probably limited training.

7.3 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

My take on the difference between training and development is that:

- Training is any activity that gives individuals the skills and knowledge to be able to do their current job.
- Development is any activity that looks to prepare someone for a different job or challenge. This may be part of a succession plan, for a promotion, for additional roles or to take on delegated work. Development activities may involve training, or being coached or mentored.

Any training and development activity should be planned and evaluated. Training is not merely presenting information. The key difference between a presentation and a training event (on- or off-job) is that learning **MUST** take place, as opposed to the passive acquisition of information that might be the case in a presentation. Therefore, the activity should be structured in such a way as to facilitate learning and be able to assess that learning has taken place. Following the training cycle (Figure 4) will also ensure learning takes place.



Figure 4 The Training Cycle

With this in mind, careful consideration needs to be given to content, timing, the trainer and the delivery method. There are essentially two types of training delivery:

On-job: This is training that happens whilst the task is being done and is usually done on a one-to-one basis. Often, the problem with this type of training is that we fail to appreciate the amount of planning needed to deliver it effectively, believing that it is enough to just ask the trainee (new starter or existing team member) to shadow an experienced member of staff. It isn't enough. The experienced member of staff may have no interest in training; they may even be over keen, attempting to impart all their knowledge; the trainee may get

limited time to 'have a go'; or they are just expected to sit and watch for long periods of time, which is boring, leads to distractions and, consequently no learning.

On-job training requires a structured planned approach:

- Think about who is best to deliver the training; you may choose them for their technical skills, but they should also have good interpersonal skills too.
- Give them time to plan what needs to be shown to the trainee, the order of the steps involved, the standards to which the task needs to be done, key pieces of information (legal, safety, security, etc.) and how they will train the individual. They should also ensure they have enough resources for the training.
- The demonstration/explanation bit should not be overly long and the trainer should plan frequent opportunities for the trainee to have a go, and breaking the task into stages. This relieves boredom and distraction, and allows the trainer to see how the trainee is picking up the task, fulfilling the needs of the training cycle.
- Create a schedule of tasks to be trained in, even when refresher training is needed. This will provide structure for the trainer and motivation for the trainee.
- Make on-job training an event, in the same way you would off-job training, focusing on the training and minimising interruptions.

On occasion, the on-job training might take a few minutes because the individual just needs a bit of a refresher to achieve an objective or outcome from their review. Whilst I can appreciate that this will involve a quick approach, I would recommend basic principles of learning and training are adhered to.

Off-job training: This is any training activity that occurs away from the work, i.e. not while doing the job. The range of topics commonly trained off-job are:

- Communication and relationship skills, including customer service.
- Simulated situations to train for dangerous or rare occurrences.
- Technical skills that are best taught away from the job to allow concentration and avoid distractions.
- Attitudinal training – innovation, team building, leadership and management skills.
- General training common to all businesses, e.g. first aid, health and safety, or train-the-trainer.

The delivery of such training can be in groups or on a one-to-one basis and can be:

- Internal – delivered to employees by an employee in a training room on site or at a venue away from the workplace.
- Internal – delivered to employees by an external trainer on site or elsewhere.
- External – open courses where people from other organisations attend.
- External – online programmes that allow people to work at their own pace. There are companies that will write such programmes specifically for your business.
- Blended training – this might be a mixture of face-to-face, online and on-job.
- Qualifications – more about personal development, but many combine theoretical input with practical application.

Whatever approach, or mix, you adopt, you need to keep a focus on what the objective of the training is – is it to develop a skill, affect an attitude, motivate a team member, build team spirit or a mixture of all of these? Planning is important to picking the right approach, as is evaluating the success of the training in achieving the objectives. So, don't just do it, measure the impact through evaluation sheets, observations of practice and performance review discussions.

7.4 COACHING & MENTORING

Training activity is the start of the process of learning and improving within a role. To become competent, an employee will need to be coached and, perhaps, mentored.

Coaching has many definitions, which, whilst similar, focus on slightly different processes and outcomes. The definition from Miles Downey (2003), who suggests that coaching is 'the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another', is a useful definition to apply to the workplace. Bearing in mind this definition, coaching can be quite informal (perhaps not even realising that you are actually coaching) in that you, as the manager, or another member of the team supports and encourages an individual (following training) to practise the skill, tweaking their technique to become faster and/or better, and embedding that task or skill as a habit.

Alternatively, or alongside informal coaching, you can appoint coaches to formally help the individual acquire and maintain the required standard. These sessions should be recorded in some way and information about progress can be fed into the performance reviews. If the coach and performance reviewer (the manager or supervisor) are the same person, the coaching record can become part of the regular performance review.

For some tasks, coaching is an ongoing process, often for those tasks that involve a high level of interpersonal skills – supervisory, management, communication, handling conflict, customer service, carrying out performance reviews, disciplinary hearings, etc. – or tasks that require a particular technique. We are used to seeing sportsmen and women working with a variety of coaches to perfect their technique and style, and introducing a more formal approach to coaching in the workplace will also pay dividends to your business.

Mentoring is a different concept to coaching. ‘A mentor is a more experienced individual willing to share knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust’ (David Clutterbuck, n.d.). To attempt to distinguish between coaching and mentoring, my view is that whilst coaching is about achieving a high level of competence in a skill or task mentoring is about developing an individual into a whole role – current or future. Mentoring is often used to develop people into management roles or roles that involve a high degree of interpersonal skills, where experience, knowledge and reflection are important to the effectiveness of the role. Consider who might be the mentors within your business; in some cases, you may need to engage an external mentor. This may be the case in small organisations or where roles are particularly niche or specialised.

Choose your coaches and mentors carefully. You want them to be someone who will get the best out of individuals and they themselves may need training to be fully effective in the role. Being selected as a coach or mentor is a good opportunity that may re-motivate and engage experienced team members.

7.5 ASSESSMENT

We normally think of assessment as being a test or exam; something that is a separate and often a one-off event. And of course it is, but in this context I would like you to consider when and how you are assessing your team members, and when and how are you making the judgement about their competency.

Assessment takes place whenever we assess, formally or informally, an individual’s competence. For a formal assessment, this will be against set criteria or standards outlined in the SOPs, job descriptions, handbooks, etc. You might even have some sort of checklist to provide evidence of such a formal assessment. Informally, we are being assessed continually by our managers and peers, and this assessment, combined with any formal assessment, will be part of the performance review.

One of the pitfalls of assessment is that we may make the assessment too early. It is, unfortunately, a common complaint that immediately following training we expect the person

to be able to implement the training and ‘be competent’. The reality is that we need time to practise. The length of time needed to practise and hone the skill, or apply the knowledge learnt, will depend on the individual, the skill of the trainer, and the nature of the task, skill or knowledge. In assessing performance, we should also be mindful of recognising effort. If someone is ‘not quite there yet’, recognising the effort they are making, rather than just criticising their output or outcome, will result in more engagement and motivation; the required result coming sooner – the ‘wish to achieve’ in the training cycle Figure 4.

The diagram in Figure 5 shows what the individual – the trainee – needs to do to be assessed as competent and what type of support they need at each stage.

Insert ‘becoming competent’ – centralised

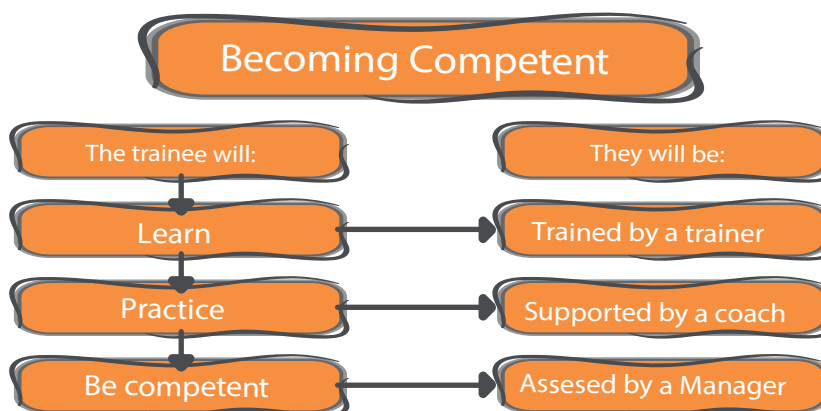


Figure 5 Becoming Competent

The person providing the support – trainer, coach or assessor (manager) – may be different; however, for various reasons, it may be the same person. If this is the case, it is useful to understand the purpose of each role as you might find that the distinction becomes blurred. It is important to know what ‘hat’ you are wearing at what point, i.e.:

- When training, you are teaching – giving instruction. Be patient, don’t expect complete competence immediately.
- When coaching, you are just there to support and encourage a better performance through observation, questioning, feedback and possibly a little bit of refresher training.
- When assessing, you are looking for competence against a range of agreed criteria. Ideally, at this stage no instruction or coaching is needed as the individual can demonstrate competence.

We don't have the space here to go into the detail of each of the roles to fully appreciate what is required; therefore, I would highly recommend investigating this further through training, reading and having your own mentor:

- Learn the principles of training – learning theory, the structure of training, models for on-job and off-job training, and giving feedback.
- Develop the skills to be a good coach and mentor – observation, listening, questioning, offering suggestions, reflection and giving feedback.

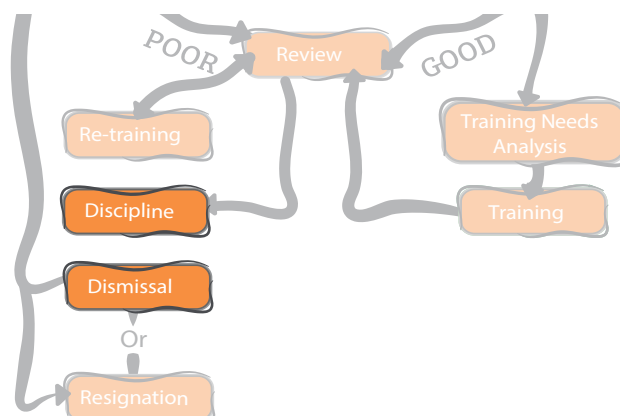
Getting the training, coaching and mentoring of team members right will have huge benefits to the individual, the team and the business.

Ask yourself:



- Do we plan our training and development events?
- Is on-job training structured and planned?
- Am I using the best trainers and coaches, or just the people who are the 'best at the job'?
- Am I expecting perfection after one short training session?
- Are we, as a business, able to provide development activities for our staff?

8 DISCIPLINARY ACTION



So far, we have considered the more positive side of performance management – induction, training, development and performance reviews, which look to improve and motivate team members. However, what do you do if there is no improvement in a person’s performance?

You need to carry out disciplinary action, which will result in improvement or dismissal. Sounds harsh? Not really. If done properly, fairly, consistently and according to your policy, the person being disciplined will either improve their performance or change their behaviour, or they won’t and will leave, allowing you to recruit someone who, perhaps, fits better with your business.

There will be occasions when the individual has done something that immediately results in a disciplinary hearing and consequent action. You will deal with that at the time of the incident or breach, following your procedure. This, too, is part of performance management, as the purpose is not to punish but to encourage improvement.

What I want to address in this section is how disciplinary action fits with performance management reviews, when the issues raised have often been niggles, irritations and frustrations as opposed to clear breaches of discipline.

Performance management reviews are a great opportunity to address these issues in a positive and supportive way, by having open discussions and agreeing an action plan. But what do you do when these conversations are not delivering the required improvement? Unfortunately, you need to move to formal disciplinary action. When you do this will depend on:

- the individual – how much effort they are making and whether they have the necessary ability or aptitude;
- the nature of the task;

- the importance of deadlines, security and safety factors that are affected by the poor performance;
- the impact of any shortfall in performance, behaviour or attitude on the team and business.

In moving to a formal hearing, you will either be looking at:

- Capability:
 - There is an issue of competence; the individual cannot or will not raise their performance to the standard required.
 - Absence – regular, frequent or even long-term illness. Unfortunately, if someone cannot attend work, they will find it difficult to meet the standards for a variety of reasons. This situation does need to be handled very carefully for a number of reasons, not least the motivation of the individual.
 - It may be that, for capability and sickness issues, your policy calls these meetings something other than a ‘disciplinary hearing’, e.g. they may be referred to as a ‘capability hearing’ or a ‘medical review’. However, the outcome will be the same – discussion, an action plan for agreed improvement and an indication as to what will happen if improvement is not made.
- Conduct:
 - The behaviour and actions of the individual are such that they are causing problems in the team or to the business.
 - Attitude towards work, team members or managers. A poor attitude often manifests itself in poor behaviour or an unwillingness to be flexible, embrace challenges or change, show innovation, or be motivated.
 - It might be to do with continual poor time-keeping – arriving late or leaving early on breaks as well as at the start and end of the day.
 - Time-wasting – looking busy, chatting, internet surfing, etc. Again, this might be one of those irritating issues that for some reason does not get resolved through the performance review process.

It’s important when carrying out formal disciplinary action that you follow your business’ laid down procedure, which should be in line with the *ACAS Code of Practice*. This code of practice is well established and most disciplinary procedures match this. Check that yours does. ACAS has also produced a guide, *Discipline and grievances at work: The ACAS guide*, which will help you carry out any disciplinary action effectively and correctly. Remember, if you have a separate procedure for capability and sickness absence, it is these that you should follow when moving to a more formal approach.

Key points to remember:

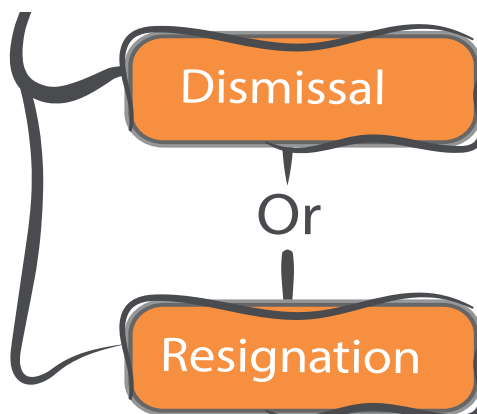
- Your procedure **MUST** be followed.
- The person should not be dismissed for a first offence (unless that offence is gross misconduct). This will normally be the case in the situation we are talking about. Where your regular performance reviews have not resulted in the required improvement, the first stage of formal discipline is likely to be a first warning. Where this does not produce the required response in the individual, a further warning may be issued, followed by dismissal if this second warning fails to encourage the right result.
- Base your decision on facts, which can be supported by the records of the performance reviews. This can be hard for issues around attitude, but the review records will help, along with your observations (and those of others if they are willing to be named).
- The person **MUST** be invited to a hearing to be able to present their side of the issue and this should be considered when deciding on any disciplinary action.
- The person has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or union representative at the hearing. You don't need to recognise a union for the union to attend and neither does the individual need to be a member of a union.
- You should present your decision verbally and support this with written confirmation of the level of disciplinary action, the reason for the warning (or dismissal), what needs to be done to effect improvement, how long the warning will remain on file and that they have the right to appeal against the decision.

Ask yourself:



- Do we have a disciplinary procedure and does it match the *ACAS Code of Practice*?
- Do we have, or do we need, separate capability and sickness absence procedures?
- Do we keep records of performance reviews and other information in case disciplinary action is needed?

9 ENDING EMPLOYMENT



9.1 LOSING EMPLOYEES

Inevitably you will lose employees – either they will resign or they will be dismissed, and, whilst not an obvious fit with performance management, it provides you with an opportunity to explore the reason or reasons they left and review your policies, procedures, and terms and conditions which will perhaps help with the performance management and motivation of existing and future members of staff.

Let's have a look at why they might leave:

- **Dismissal:** If you have had to dismiss someone for any of the issues discussed in Chapter 8, or due to gross misconduct or repeated breaches of discipline, you should look closely at why this happened. Ask yourself: Do you need to change policies or procedures? Do you need to improve resources? Do you need to review management style and record keeping?
- **Resignation:** If employees resign, it is useful to have an exit interview. You can develop a standard form to use and an example is provided in Figure 6. However, whether you use a standard form or a blank piece of paper, finding out a bit more about why someone is leaving will provide good information that can help you plan for the future. Make the effort to sit down with the leaving employee to go through what final pay they will receive, what information you need from them and what equipment, etc. you need them to return; this is also an opportunity to carry out the exit interview. The more relaxed the meeting is, the more honest they will be. Alternatively, you may just ask them to fill in the form and submit their views in private.

- **Retirement:** There is no default retirement age in the UK, so if an employee wants to retire, they will need to resign in the normal way. Hopefully, through your regular reviews with them, you are aware of their plans and their resignation will not come as a surprise.

9.2 EXIT INTERVIEW

In Figure 6, you'll find a template for an exit interview form or, as mentioned earlier you can record the interview on a blank piece of paper. The important thing is to ask the questions, record the answers, and analyse them to make possible changes to improve retention and morale for existing and future employees.

Here are suggestions for the questions to be asked in an exit interview:

1. Why are you leaving? A bit of an obvious one, but worth asking and carefully listening to the answer. You might even want to probe a little bit. It's too easy for people to say 'more money', 'promotion' or 'personal reasons'. Delve a little to find out if that is the whole truth or whether there is something behind it; bear in mind that there may not be anything more to their leaving.
2. What could we have done better?
3. What does your new company/position offer that made you decide to leave?
4. What three things could your manager/the company do to improve?
5. Were you comfortable talking to your manager about work problems? This, and the next question, is looking to get some feedback about communications within the business and, perhaps, about management style.
6. Did you feel you were kept up to date on new developments and company policies?
7. Were you given the tools to succeed at your job?
8. What was your best and worst day on the job?
9. What did you like most about your job? And what would you change about it?
10. If you had a friend looking for a job, would you recommend us? Why or why not?
11. Are there any other unresolved issues or additional comments?

It is tempting to skip exit interviews as you may feel you know why a person is leaving, or you may believe that you won't get honest answers as the leaver may hold back so as not to burn bridges. You might feel that the leaver will be too honest, letting rip into unwarranted and personal criticism, or that they may have a personal axe to grind, exaggerating any issues. However, they are worth doing. You don't need to deal with every complaint, but the analysis may show a pattern emerging that needs to be dealt with.

Exit Interview Form

Thank you for your candid comments. All responses will be kept confidential.

Name:						
Job title:						
Start date with organisation:						
Leaving date:						
1	Please describe the primary reason(s) you are leaving your current position:					
2	Did dissatisfaction with any of the following influence your decision to leave?	YES	NO			
	Type of work					
	Working conditions (setting, schedule, travel, flexibility)					
	Pay					
	Supervisor					
	Location					
	Cost of living in area					
	Commute					
3	Please rate the following aspects of the job you are leaving:	1 Poor	2	3 Average	4	5 Excellent
	Type of work performed					
	Fairness of workload					
	Salary					
	Working conditions					
	Tools and equipment provided					
	Training received					
	Co-workers					
	Supervision received					
	Level of input in decisions that affected you					
4	Please rate the following aspects of the organisation overall:	1 Poor	2	3 Average	4	5 Excellent
	Recruitment process					
	New employee induction					
	Training opportunities					
	Career development opportunities					
	Employee morale					
	Fair treatment of employees					
	Recognition for a job well done					
	Support of work-life balance					
	Cooperation within the agency					
	Communication between management and employees					
	Performance and development planning and evaluation					
	Interest and investment in employees					
	Commitment to customer service					
	Concern with quality and excellence					
	Administrative policies/procedures					
5	Please rate your supervisor on the following factors:	1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Often	4 Usually	5 Always
	Gave usable performance feedback					
	Recognised accomplishments					
	Clearly communicated expectations					
	Treated you fairly and respectfully					
	Coached, trained, and developed you					
	Provided leadership					
	Encouraged teamwork and cooperation					
	Resolved concerns promptly					
	Listened to suggestions and feedback					
	Kept employees informed					
	Supported work-life balance					
	Provided appropriate and challenging assignments					
6	If you have accepted another job, please complete the following:					
	Name of new employer					
	Location of position					
	Title of position					
	Nature of work of position					
	Salary of position					
	What the new position and/or organisation offers that we do not					

Figure 6 Sample exit interview form

9.2 OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE

The information gathered from the exit interviews, and feedback from performance review meetings and surveys (if you do them) gives you the opportunity to review your policies, procedures, and terms and conditions. Areas that may, on reflection, require change are:

- Job description for that role. Has the job evolved? What tasks and responsibilities need to be added or removed?
- Person specification. Having reviewed (and possibly amended) the job description, you should look at what you are looking for in the person appointed. Have you been looking for someone over or under qualified to perform the role?
- Terms and conditions of employment. Do you need to review the pay and benefits for this role to attract and retain good (if not the best) people?
- Benefits package available to all levels of staff.
- Communication within the business – between managers and their teams, between individuals, and between the directors and all employees.
- Frequency of performance reviews and follow up action, including dealing with issues and concerns from both parties.
- Training and development strategy.
- Restructure (minor) to facilitate development and promotion opportunities.

Whilst some of these points are not directly related to managing performance, they do link to the motivation and morale of staff, which in turn does affect how effective we are at managing the performance of our staff.



Ask yourself:

- Do we carry out exit interviews?
- Do we carry them out with all levels of staff?
- If we don't, why not? Would our business benefit from the information we could gain?

10 SUMMARY

Having read this book, I hope you can appreciate that all activity related to your employees' links into managing their performance, and that having good processes, policies and records will support you in dealing with poor performers, motivating the average performer and developing the great performer.

Giving information about what is required and expected in your business starts with recruitment and continues until employment ends. Throughout a person's employment, your business should also be gaining feedback about what works, what doesn't and what will encourage all employees to be great, and the information gained from exit interviews can be reflected upon providing the opportunity to improve and change, and feeding into the recruitment of future employees.

Frequent performance reviews are crucial to the whole process of managing performance. They are a great opportunity to deal with minor issues with a team member and also to gain feedback on how the business is performing in your employees' eyes.

Therefore, you should regularly review and reflect on all your human resources policies and procedures, looking to ensure you are giving and receiving the information you need to manage performance, and thus growing and developing your business.

In the appendix you will find a table of the various documents referred to in this book, which you might find useful to use in managing performance.

APPENDIX

Table of systems, documents and records used in performance management

You may decide that you do not need all of these. The complete list below follows what has been identified in this body of the book. You should pick those appropriate to your business, the roles, the tasks and the individuals.

System, document or record	When used	Link to performance management
Job description	Recruitment. Training. Performance reviews.	Outlines the duties of the job
Person specification	Recruitment and promotion.	Gives applicants an understanding of what qualities, skills and experience they should have.
Terms and conditions of employment	Issued at the start of employment and again at times of significant change.	Salary and benefits reflect expectations of the role. Contractual obligations.
Induction checklist	During induction, to ensure all key points are carried out according to the induction training plan.	The opportunity, before bad habits set in (or are transferred from previous jobs), to issue the company handbook and point out the rules of your business.
Company handbook	Issued during induction.	Key points are highlighted, and recommended to be read. Will be referred to by both the manager and the employee. Useful in managing associates, too.
Standard operating procedures (SOPs)	Training. As a reference point whilst doing the job.	Comparison of the individual against the standards of a task, during training, practise and assessment of competence.
Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Measures of the role. Target setting.	Successful (or not) achievement of KPIs and targets are reviewed in performance management meetings.

System, document or record	When used	Link to performance management
Code of conduct	Induction and throughout employment as a guide to expected behaviour. Contained in the company handbook.	Comparison of an individual's behaviour against the code of conduct.
Attendance management system	Throughout employment to record holiday, sicknesses, other absences and time-keeping.	Provides factual information that may be pertinent to how that individual is performing or behaving.
Core competences of our business	Induction and throughout employment as a guide to the expected general skills, knowledge and attitudes towards the work, the team, personal development and the business. Contained in the company handbook.	Comparison of an individual's attitude against what you require as core competences within your business.
Electronic monitoring systems and software	To monitor behaviour and activity via software: time-logging, work-rate, web usage, telephone usage, tracking devices on vehicles, CCTV.	These systems are used to monitor an individual and can provide evidence of under-performance of breach of rules or can be used to manage excessive workloads.
Performance review form (record)	In performance reviews, to record a summary of the meeting and subsequent actions. Evidence for non-performance or not following up on actions by either party. Celebrate successes.	Using the record in the next performance review meeting to reflect on progress, build on achievements, and decide on next actions development and challenges.
Checklists for training and assessment	Checklists are always useful to remind you, as a manager, what you need to train staff in and for assessing competence. Sharing with individuals provides transparency and may encourage the individual through seeing items being 'ticked off'.	As evidence that training has happened and all areas are covered.

System, document or record	When used	Link to performance management
Pro forma letters for disciplinary hearing invitations and confirmation of action	Obviously, when needing to invite an individual to a disciplinary hearing and then writing the follow-up letter. Having pro forma letters will ensure nothing is missed and the procedure is followed.	If the disciplinary action isn't dismissal, the actions required in any warning will be part of future performance reviews. This is a good way of formally acknowledging that the poor performance or behaviour has ceased or changed.
Exit interview	An interview and/or a sample form to be completed when an individual leaves – ideally for any reason and at any level.	Provides information that may help with the motivation and performance of remaining and future employees.

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