

## Performance Management

### Performance Management

Management fads brought to us by evangelistic and entertaining speakers and writers annually engulf managers, then quickly recede because there is little research to support their premise. In contrast, Performance Management is a proven and successful process used in organizations to measurably change and maintain individual and group performance. Performance Management offers scientific underpinnings and demonstrable results which can be replicated. It is based on the laws of human behavior discovered by behavior analysts in thousands of scientific studies using measurable, observable, and objective data. The Performance Management approach is effective with all human beings and organizations regardless of job level or education and in organizations of every type, size or world-wide location.

### **Key Principles of Performance Management - *Review the key ingredients of Performance Management***

#### **1. Do a Performance Improvement Analysis**

First, measure the frequency of behavior (what the individual says or the physical movements made) and the outputs (the physical evidence of completed work produced by those behaviors) prior to any management change. This analysis can be done for just one behavior and output or for many by job category, department and organization. Through this analysis, one measures present performance, establishes standards, specifies why behavior is deficient, calculates the net economic value of improvement after the cost of solutions, and places them in priority order. The result of this analysis is identification of potentially high-payoff behaviors and outputs that can be improved - an important first step, because, surprisingly, key behaviors and outputs are often overlooked or undervalued in organizations.

Then, introduce the procedures used in Performance Management and quantify the amount of change that occurs in specific time periods. Because the investment in changing behavior is often very low and the economic payoffs may be high, the potential high return on investment usually excites top management

#### **2. Be Specific**

Describe and communicate desired performances and the standards for judging them in terms that are measurable, observable and objective. A description of the events that are signals prompting the response should be included. In training, coaching, measuring performance, feeding back performance data, conducting a performance appraisal, writing procedures, and delivering positive reinforcement, it is essential to be specific. Alas, if the language used is vague, the desired behavior may not occur.

#### **3. Measure**

For any performance shown by the analysis to have sufficient economic value to an organization, measure the frequency of the performance against the desired standards. While

most organizations measure some performance, there are, unfortunately, many key outputs and behaviors that are not measured.

#### **4. Give Feedback**

Provide feedback on performance to the individual involved and to the individual's manager, supervisor, or group leader, rapidly-preferably immediately-with sufficient information to allow for self-correction. Too often, feedback systems for many key behaviors and outputs are either absent or flawed.

#### **5. Deliver Positive Consequences**

Deliver to each individual positive consequences immediately after completion of the performance of the desired behaviors and outputs. The frequency of an individual's behavior is affected by the consequences that follow it. If the consequences are positive to that individual, the behavior tends to increase; if they are negative, the behavior tends to decrease. Consequences should be delivered for as long as the performance is desired, or until naturally occurring consequences are strong enough to support the behavior. How frequently you provide positive consequences is determined by how often the behavior occurs, the phase of behavior change you are in (causing the first new behavior to occur, changing its frequency, or maintaining it) and the pattern of responses you desire (steady, maximum output, peak for certain periods, etc).

Unfortunately, in many organizations the wrong consequence system is in place. Consequences of desired behavior are often negative or neutral. Undesired behavior may be rewarded. The reinforcers are badly delayed. They are delivered only on a group basis (annual company-wide profit sharing). The rewards are short-lived (contests) for behavior that is desired long-term. And almost always the positive reinforcement is too infrequent.

### **Behavior-Based Training - *What you need to know about designing and delivering training based on Performance Management principles.***

When designing and delivering training based on Performance Management principles, one must:

Define in advance what the measurable, observable, and objective behaviors and outputs are to be on the job and the measurable standards that will be used to evaluate them.

Present in training the exact events to which the trainee must respond on the job, or a close approximation of them.

Require each trainee to make the exact response to those events that must be made on the job until the standards are met.

Deliver to each trainee in the classroom and on the job immediate feedback as to the appropriateness of the response and positive consequences, as described in steps 4 and 5 in Key Principles.

In most organizations, training is often ineffective because the principles above are violated. The objectives of the training are not specific. The situations presented differ from what the trainee encounters on the job. There is a lack of responding by each trainee to each stimulus situation (listens to a lecture) or an inappropriate one (multiple choice test).

In the classroom, there is both too little positive reinforcement and too little feedback (the only feedback is to the instructor: How did you like me?). On the job, both positive reinforcement and feedback are usually absent. Less than 2% of all training programs have on-going measurement and feedback of on-the-job behavior.

**The Benefits of Performance Management** - *Why use the principles of behavior-based performance management? Here are a few good reasons to note.*

The benefits of utilizing a Performance Management approach in your business include:

- Measurable before-and-after improvement in performance in the targeted area that can be demonstrated to an appreciative top management,
- Rapid improvement, frequently occurring the first day or hour it is implemented; (This is preceded, however, by a period of analysis, design of solutions and implementation),
- Long-lasting improvement which will continue for as long as you use the procedures, and only as long,
- Universal application to any human performance area for any behavior or output, and with any individual, department or organization,
- A large return on investment, produced by focusing on the higher payoff areas, combined with a typical low cost solution,
- Predictable improvement,
- A larger improvement than is achieved by other management methods,
- Reinforcement - such as increased authority, a promotion, and larger budgets - for the user who introduces and uses Performance Management, and
- Better employee relations and environment.