Overview

This learning resource will help you to understand the importance of performance feedback both for an organisation and to individuals or teams. Providing feedback plays a role in motivating employees and is an important process in the performance management cycle, as it allows an organisation to react strategically to performance evaluations.

Performance feedback has the potential to advance people beyond their current level of performance and also has the potential to remedy and halt unacceptable performance, if necessary.

You will examine what communication skills are necessary for those involved in the feedback process, and you will see why it is important to avoid bias in performance reviews.

Key terms

**Mentoring**

Coaching by role modelling. A mentor is a person who is experienced in a particular role, and who acts as a role model for the trainee over a period of time.

**Performance gaps**

Separation between defined or expected performance outcomes and actual performance levels.
Introduction

You will be aware that feedback is essential when developing performance management systems. Feedback enables employees to find out about the quality of their work and it provides opportunities for them to respond. It informs an organisation as to the contributions and impact employees have on its performance.

Feedback highlights both good and poor performance. Small business owners see their performance highlighted as their shopfronts advertise their products, as profits rise, and as they receive positive comments from customers and employees.

Large enterprises see their performance highlighted for them as their manufactured goods are loaded onto trucks or ships, and as the milk goes into cartons and the wine into bottles ready for waiting markets.

Government departments see their performance highlighted for them as trade delegations seize overseas opportunities, when lost sailors are rescued, when hostages are brought home, when new coins are minted, and when funding is provided for national events.

Employees like to have their good work performance highlighted and recognised. When individuals achieve their goals, when they extend their effort to do well, when they exceed all of their expectations and possibly the expectations of others, it is good practice to give positive feedback by offering a pat on the back, a complement, and possibly a bonus in pay. Positive feedback has a motivating effect.

Organisations and employees do not want negative feedback, as it can have a demotivating and demoralising effect. However, negative feedback serves an important role in performance management systems, in terms of adjusting services and products to better meet performance needs and expectations.

In this section, you will identify the aims of performance feedback, examine the elements that constitute feedback, and review the mechanics and techniques for giving and receiving constructive feedback. You will explore the differences between formal and informal feedback, and the effective and appropriate use of each.

You will see how to plan and train personnel for giving and receiving feedback for the purpose of improving employee performance, and for determining learning and improvement strategies. In addition, you will address the use of feedback to identify and decide upon interventions for poor or unacceptable work performance.
Develop performance feedback plans

Performance feedback, both negative and positive, must be provided to employees. It is crucial for advancing and improving organisational productivity.

To be worthwhile and effective, feedback requires forethought, care and skill.

The aims of performance feedback are to:

- exchange information regarding teams and individuals meeting performance expectations
- confirm expected standards of behaviour and work
- work towards closing performance gaps
- identify areas for learning and development
- develop learning and development plans
- set new performance targets/goals
- review job descriptions/position descriptions

Performance feedback, if it is to achieve its purpose, needs to be delivered in a constructive and positive way, with specific reference to detail, rather than with general comment. This detail must be checked and validated, so that the feedback is fair and the process is considered.

To generate an environment of trust and respect, you need to understand yourself and others through the use of self-disclosure and effective interpersonal communication during times of formal and informal feedback. This increases your prospects for giving and receiving the correct messages during the feedback process. It allows you to collect sufficient and relevant information for making a judgement on work performance.

To obtain the facts on employee performance, you need to:

- break down the barriers
- eliminate subjectivity
- avoid innuendo, presumptions and assumptions
- limit comparisons

There are a number of factors that will assist you in this process. When providing feedback, consider the following points that provide for a fair
process. These will also help you assemble factual evidence on employee performance:

- timing
- facts
- relevance
- frequency focus

Consider the timing

Feedback needs to be provided at a time and place that suits both parties. It also needs to be given near to the time of actual performance. The immediacy of feedback is important. For example, if a team leader wants to reprimand a team member, then feedback needs to occur as soon as possible after the event, and in a private place. Feedback given months later either removes or negates the message. Individuals may be unable to accurately recall the details of the event.

Feedback that is unable to be given close to an event needs to be recorded and noted by both parties at the time it occurs. This acknowledgement of the issue or concern makes it relevant and fair.

Keep to the facts

Feedback must be supported with facts. For instance, while a verbal reprimand or a pat on the back may be informal feedback, it is unfair if the facts are not evident (stated) to the person receiving the feedback.

Formal feedback that is unable to be substantiated with noted facts or evidence is inadmissible in a legal arena.

Keep it relevant

Feedback needs to be relevant to the performance and the performance ability of individuals. Feedback on a role relationship problem between two people is inappropriate when it is an interpersonal relationship problem, rather than a recognised role relationship.

While this may still pose a workplace problem, the feedback needs to take a different approach, eg, focused on the impact that this problem is having on work tasks or work colleagues. If there is no work-related reason to address this problem, then feedback needs to state that up-front.
Consider the need for frequency

The frequency of feedback needs to take into account the above factors, and will be determined by the need for immediacy, timeliness and relevance. It can be given now, tomorrow, next month, or at the end of a formal period set by the organisation.

Informal feedback tends to be on-the-job, immediate and frequent. Formal feedback may be less urgent, less frequent, and at predetermined times and locations.

Stay focused

Feedback must remain focused on the performance being addressed. It is a common error for both parties to stray onto unrelated or side issues. Be aware of this, and if the focus shifts, refocus back to the performance matter being addressed in the feedback session.

Planned formal feedback sessions have the advantage over informal feedback in that you can take these elements into account and plan for them. With informal feedback you do not have the benefit of foresight. Practise these elements at all times in your daily routine as you give feedback, such as giving a nod of agreement or a word of correction. Practise a fair and effective exchange of information on the performance of the other person.

Formal review sessions need to be organised and conducted with an environment that facilitates honest and open feedback. Have each person informed of the date, time and location and conduct the session in a quiet and private place. Allow adequate free time for both parties to provide feedback.

Have the required documents for review, supporting evidence on performance achievements, and organisational forms to record the results of review and feedback. In addition, assemble the forms that will be used for planning future performance, for planning improvement and development, and for recording any performance interventions that have been identified.

When there are interruptions, or when either party is too busy to be able to focus on the task at hand, then feedback is likely to be distorted. The feedback stage is as likely to be rendered unfair and invalid, as with any other stage of performance management systems, if it is not planned and conducted skilfully with a view to providing a fair, constructive and productive process.
Read

Recommended additional reading on feedback and self-disclosure, and the giving and receiving of feedback, can be found in Communicating for Team Building by Baden Euson, on pages 70–80.

Feedback with trust and respect

Open channels of interpersonal communication engender trust. Closed channels of communication breed mistrust. Managers speak of an “open door” style of management to encourage employees’ trust. Governments speak of being open and transparent to gain political trust, and companies talk of opening their “books” for scrutiny in the hope of fostering trust.

How then do people at work create trusting relationships among themselves, in a way that allows for honest and fair feedback to take place?

Think

Consider the attributes of people whom you trust. Sometimes this is immediately obvious to you, sometimes it takes time and experience with that person. Likewise, some individuals are slow to trust, while others trust more quickly.

Try it

Identify qualities of trust that facilitate the giving and receiving of feedback.

The following points identify some of the qualities that create trust. Use examples from your own work experience of these qualities in people you know, then respond with feedback that will in turn create a reciprocal relationship of trust.
1. Someone who says ‘hello’ every time they see you.

Would you respond? How would you respond? Would you give them feedback on how much you appreciate or reject their daily greeting?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Someone who tells you they have made a mistake.

What would be your response to them when they tell you this?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. Someone who asks you how you are going in your job.

How would you respond?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. Someone who always keeps promises.

Would you give this person feedback on how this enables you to trust them?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. Someone who gives you positive reinforcement, such as “I like the way you do that”, or “I like your style of writing”.

How would you use your body language to give feedback in this instance?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
6. How would you know (from verbal or non-verbal feedback) that someone:

(a) is being honest with you?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

(b) is sincere in what they say?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

(c) trusts you?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

(d) respects your views or opinions?

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

Communicating feedback

Interpersonal communication skills that are particularly relevant to giving and receiving feedback are: active listening, appropriate questioning, reflective listening, and reframing and paraphrasing.

Active listening

Active listening means indicating to the other person that you are with them by:

• maintaining eye contact
• turning your body towards the other person
• inclining your body posture towards the other person

• body movements that respond to what the other person is saying, such as an opening of your hand, a head nod or a shoulder shrug

• facial expressions that respond to what is being said, such as a smile or grimace, a raised eyebrow, a tightening or relaxing of the mouth

• using verbal encouragers, such as “okay”, “I see”, “right”, “mm”, “ah haah”, or “go on…”

• responding verbally or non-verbally to questions

Questioning

Questioning is an essential component of formal and informal performance feedback. Questions in a performance feedback situation are used to:

• confirm performance actions and results
• determine the degree of performance achievement
• identify performance gaps
• draw out underlying concerns, conflict and grievance
• check understanding and misunderstanding
• reinforce directives

Questioning is an interpersonal skill that needs practice, both in the types of questions used, and in relation to the appropriateness of questioning to address particular situations.

Sometimes you want a straight “yes” or “no” answer, while at other times you want more of an explanation. Ask a closed question, such as “Did you do that?” and you will receive a single word answer. Ask an open question, such as “Can you tell me how you did that?” and you will get an explanation.

At other times you want to ask a question that clarifies a point, such as “Am I right in assuming that you want to refocus your attention on this project?” or “Are you saying that no-one believes you?”

Often during individual and team performance planning situations, feedback requires stocktaking questions to check or confirm progress, such as

• “Where do we want to be?”
• “How much have we achieved?”
• “Have we met our time lines yet?”

A question such as “Can I leave it to you to put that on the Action Plan?” propels the action forward by putting the onus for action on the person asked.

There are probing questions to ask when you want to look further into actions, behaviours and attitudes that are vague or inexplicable. You may want to explore behaviour with “Can you explain to me why you did that?”

Or, you may want to explore a belief with, “Can you give me instances that might explain why you believe Mary is conducting a vendetta against you?” To determine why a goal has not been achieved, you may ask, “In the light of these results, do you think your output target was too high?”

Remember when you are questioning to stay focused on the performance or behaviour in question. Limit the amount of repetition you use, because repeated questioning can be threatening. For instance, to repeatedly ask “Did you take it to Jim? Did you?” (as your voice gets louder and firmer).

This can shut down communication. Rephrasing your question will often draw a response, especially if you can give a reason for your question. For example:

• “Did you take it to Jim?”

• “I just need to know whether you took it to him or not.”

• “Mary, it really is important that I know.”

To accompany and complement questions in your efforts to get to the crux of a matter, you may use:

• reframing, such as “Let me put it another way”.

• paraphrasing, such as “So what you are saying is that you don’t understand what to do in those situations”.

• reflective listening, such as “Yes, I can see your point”.

These techniques help obtain information that is not always clear or immediately evident. It may help you to reiterate or confirm facts or understanding for yourself and the other person.

You could, for instance reflect on the feelings being shown by Mary with “You seem reluctant to tell me whether you took it to Jim or not”. This reflection needs to be accompanied by sincere body language and a softer tone of voice that indicates your show of empathy or concern. If Mary says “Yes” or nothing, you could pursue this with “Would you like to tell me about it? It seems to be worrying you.”
Recommended additional reading on active listening, questioning and reflective listening for providing performance feedback can be found in the following two texts:

**Communicating for Team Building** by Baden Euson, on pages 80–89.

**Managing Performance Improvement** by Tovey, on pages 285–295.

So far you have explored some of the issues and elements of feedback that will facilitate your effort to provide a fair, constructive and productive process, and which will obtain true and detailed facts. This applies as much to the planned formal process, as it does to informal day-to-day feedback on work performance.

Performance management systems enable formal and informal feedback to be provided for teams and individuals at any point during the employment period, as illustrated below in Figure 12.

**Figure 12** Performance feedback as an added cyclical process in the cycle of performance management
Performance feedback plans

The plans that are developed for conducting formal performance feedback are integral to performance management systems. You identified this previously. Figure 13 is an extract from Figure 6 which illustrates how formal performance plans emanate from performance review, and precede performance development and improvement.

Figure 13 Extract of performance management, highlighting performance feedback

Figure 14 serves as a reminder of the inclusiveness of performance review and feedback activities in performance management systems, and the need to plan for feedback with organisational, team and individual performance achievements in mind.
Review of formal performance feedback plans

Formal planned performance feedback needs to take into account the organisation’s requirements, which you explored previously. These include applicable policies, procedures, standards and legislation.

Formal employee performance feedback processes for satisfying organisational requirements are determined by the organisation. There may, for example, be policies and procedures in place that explain who provides performance feedback and how and when it is provided.
Think

Are there policies and procedures relating to performance feedback in your organisation?

The following is an example of the performance development and review process undertaken by the Open Learning Institute, in which feedback is provided at a number of points throughout the process. The notable points of feedback by the employee to other people are at boxes 7, 25, 16, 15, 14, 26 and 27. There are also points for self-feedback at boxes 2, 3 and 4 combined; and 5, 9 and 6 combined.
Individual performance feedback

A formal, periodic, organisationally-determined, individual performance feedback plan focuses on and addresses the following items:
Individuals

- job description
- performance objectives
- action plans

There are planned stages through which the performance feedback process for individual employees proceeds. This involves:

1. Preparatory feedback undertaken by the individual to:
   - determine what needs to be communicated regarding any changes to the job description in relation to goals and work activities based on the duties and roles of the job description
   - prepare to provide feedback on the extent to which individual goals have been met
   - prepare to provide feedback on the fulfilment of individual action plans
   - prepare to identify new goals/objectives to meet team KRAs
   - prepare to develop new action plans to meet goals/objectives
   - identify learning and development needs for addressing performance improvement

2. Combined feedback on performance achievements between the individual and team leader to:
   - critique job description and decide on any needs for change
   - deliberate on the evidence of goal achievement
   - agree on new goals/objectives for the next performance period
   - deliberate on action plan outcomes
   - agree on a further plan of action to address new goals/objectives
   - communicate learning and development needs
   - identify any interventions

3. Both the individual and team leader complete all relevant documentation on feedback outcomes to:
• agree on a date for the next review and feedback

• agree on action, signed by both parties, which will include:
  • new goals/objectives and plans to meet goals/objectives
  • any points for merit
  • learning and development activities
  • any interventions

4. Problems and grievances arising from performance feedback are acknowledged and addressed by both the individual and the team leader with:

  • reference to applicable organisational policies, procedures, standards or legislative instruments (legal or industrial)
  • documented evidence to support the grievance
  • relevant senior personnel, if unresolved
  • specialist assistance, if unresolved

**Try it**

Provide an outline of the stages of an individual performance feedback plan from your own or another organisation.

If you do not have a formal feedback process as part of a performance management system, devise your own feedback plan by making a list of dot points to indicate what has to be addressed as part of the feedback process.
Functional team performance feedback

Formal performance feedback will also need to address functional team performance, whether at a time determined by the organisation, or on an incremental or needs-basis determined by the team. Team performance feedback will emerge from a review of the following four areas:

**Functional/operational teams**

- key performance results areas
- key performance indicators
- performance targets
- performance objectives

1. A team meeting is planned for the purpose of feedback on performance information/data collected from performance review, and to:
   - give and receive feedback to determine the degree to which team KRAs (Key Results Areas) have addressed organisational KRAs
   - give and receive feedback with a view to determining any need to refocus team KRAs
   - give and receive feedback to determine the degree to which KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) have been addressed
   - provide feedback on target/goal achievement
   - provide feedback on the extent to which objectives have been met
2. Compile an Action Planning Sheet to provide a record of:

- intentions to redress team KRAs
- achievement or lack of achievement of KPIs
- new targets/goals
- new objectives
- who, when, where and how actions will be initiated and/or managed

3. Enable team members to use the Action Planning Sheet to plan individual performance by:

- reviewing their job description in view of team changes
- setting new performance objectives
- writing new action plans

The cyclical nature and continuous process of performance management systems means that individual performance will impact on teams, and team performance will impact on the individuals in the teams.

There is no need for subjective informal or formal feedback, other than to know that each individual has set new goals and made new plans for moving forward with the team, and that day-to-day feedback propels individuals and teams forward in pursuit of team and individual goal achievement.

**Train for performance feedback**

You need particular knowledge and competent skills to carry out successful feedback. When feedback is good, that is, when it is positive and enlightening and to the satisfaction of both parties, then feedback skills seem less critical.

However, it is at those times when you suspect that all is not well, that feedback is challenging. Feedback moves beyond the realm of being just a challenge at times when performance is overtly poor, that is, when the person has done something wrong or illegal, or is under-performing, or has sub-standard work. It can be difficult to be:

- empathetic while at the same time feeling angry
- caring yet needing to reprimand
• failing to develop someone to what you perceive to be their full potential

• terminate the employment of an employee who fails to meet work standards

Most people need training to provide performance feedback.

Who needs training?

Anyone who is going to be receiving and giving performance feedback will need to be competent for the task. If they are not yet competent, then they need training. These people will be team leaders, managers and supervisors who are involved in the formal feedback process.

There will also be people who will be expected to give and receive informal or formal feedback on a day-to-day basis. They are the mentors, counsellors, workplace trainers, team leaders and the team members who coach and act as mentors to other team members.

There may be specialist staff who occasionally need to provide performance feedback, such as quality controllers, technicians and occupational health and safety officers. They may be working with teams and individuals in circumstances ranging from special projects to fire drills and audits.

Training methodologies

There are a number of methods that are particularly suited to training for performance feedback. Feedback is a skill that is learned through practice. While some underpinning knowledge is necessary, the thrust of training is to address the skills required for real-life performance feedback situations.

This is accomplished in the following ways:

• by illustrative and interactive training with the use of videos, CD-ROM and commercially available computer training programs

• by interactive practice in workshops and workgroups

• by role playing

• by supervised coaching and mentoring on-the-job

• with a combination of any of the above, coupled with basic information (printouts, booklets, kits, videos), either beforehand or together with the interactive training.

Coaching and mentoring is best used as a complementary training activity, following a more formal comprehensive training program. You can return to
the role of coaching and mentoring after you have considered the formal training alternatives for acquiring performance feedback skills.

Interactive training in any form is particularly worthwhile for skills acquisition involving interpersonal relationships. If you are introducing performance management systems organisation-wide, or even into a number of functional areas, an interactive training program is a cost effective way of preparing a number of people at one time.

Role plays, workshops and work groups can all be planned to provide the opportunity for people to train and interact with each other in simulated performance feedback situations. The training can also be undertaken as a combined off-the-job/on-the-job training program with the assistance of workplace trainers and assessors.

Assessing skills

In addition to planning the training workshop, you need to devise a means of assessing trainee learning achievements, and evaluating the process and content of your training program.

A competency skills checklist would be an appropriate option for individual assessment. To develop a competency check, list the skills that each person needs to demonstrate by the end of training. Allow two columns for each skill check.

Then, either duplicate the two columns (one pair for the trainee to self-check and one pair for the trainer to check), or make copies of each sheet, one for the trainee to make a self-assessment, and one for the trainer/facilitator to make an assessment.

Both assessors need to answer whether the trainee “is able or unable to demonstrate the skill”.

As an example, the following (part) competency checklist could include relevant performance feedback skills checks:

Table 1: (Part) competency checklist (3 cols)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainer's copy</th>
<th>Is able to</th>
<th>Is not yet able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrates active listening by:</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• maintaining eye contact</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inclining towards the other person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Trainer's copy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>using appropriate facial expressions</th>
<th>Is able to</th>
<th>Is not yet able to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>using short verbal encouragers.</td>
<td></td>
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2. **Uses questioning techniques by asking:**
   - open questions
   - probing questions
   - reflective questions
   - leading questions.

3. **Assembles required documents for recording feedback outcomes which include:**
   - new goal record
   - plan of action
   - individual job description
   - update sheet
   - learning and development plans.

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### Coaching and mentoring

Follow your formal training program with coaching and mentoring. Coaching and mentoring is undertaken by competent individuals in the workplace, who have the ability to motivate individuals from where they are, to where they need to be, to perform their jobs.

There are a number of reasons for using coaching and mentoring. Each addresses new or emerging job needs, as well as updating knowledge, skills or behaviours specific to the job. Coaches and mentors work with individuals to provide practical, on-the-job experience and guidance.

Coaching is more structured than mentoring, and is used for on-the-job training, whereas mentoring is used to guide, and expands on the current abilities of a person.

Mentoring is coaching by role modelling. The mentor is a person who is experienced in performance feedback; they act as a role model for the trainee over a period of time. Mentoring is useful when a person has some knowledge and experience in feedback situations, but possibly needs to apply it to performance feedback in the particular organisation or functional area.
Think

Consider opportunities for coaching and mentoring in your workplace. Identify a person, or a number of people, in your own workplace whom you would place in a coaching or mentoring role.

Read

The recommended additional reading, Coaching, mentoring and managing by Holliday, addresses many of the issues for successful team and individual performance through coaching and mentoring. This reading also contains a number of forms that can be used by coaches and mentors for performance assessment and evaluation.

Evaluating training

A training program evaluation entails a systematic inquiry to determine the value of the program, both in terms of process and content. It draws on a number of sources to determine whether the training provided the required skills for selected employees to undertake performance feedback.

Evaluation requires feedback on the program from the participants at the end of training. Generally, trainees are asked to complete a questionnaire or feedback form about both the process and content of the training. Feedback is sought on the suitability of the arrangements for training, including the environment and training methodologies for successful learning.

Evaluation also needs to incorporate collated information and analysis from individual assessments, in this case the competency checklists, e.g:

- are there too many instances of individuals unable to perform certain skills?
- are there any individuals who are unable to perform an unacceptable number of skills?

When this information is analysed, it can provide a basis for taking action.
Evaluate performance management system

Evaluation judges outcomes, yet many organisations fail to conduct performance management evaluations. Despite the temptation to avoid evaluation, it is essential that performance management systems are reviewed. Evaluation can determine the value and worth of performance management systems to the organisation.

What is to be evaluated?

To be effective, evaluation must be carried out in such a way that a judgement can be made regarding whether or not the systems are delivering what they are expected to deliver. The following areas need to be examined:

1. The extent to which performance management systems support the organisation’s strategic:
   - mission
   - goals and objectives
   - key results areas (KRAs)

2. The extent to which performance management systems empower functional teams to address their:
   - key performance areas
   - key performance indicators (KPIs)
   - performance targets
   - performance objectives

3. The extent to which performance management systems enable individual employees to:
   - relate job descriptions to performance expectations
   - set performance objectives
   - develop action plans

4. The extent to which performance management systems encourage employee development.
5. The ability of performance management systems to intervene to rectify unacceptable performance.

6. The degree of difficulty in using and administering performance management systems.

Read

Recommended additional reading can be found in Chapter 24 “Evaluating performance management”, in Performance Management by Armstrong and Baron.

Methods of evaluation

You can use any one or a number of the following methods to evaluate performance management systems:

- questionnaires
- observation
- surveys
- focus groups
- diagnostic checklists
- audits
- statistical analysis

Questionnaires

Questionnaires check the understanding, attitudes, processes and content of performance management systems. They can be completed by teams as a combined effort or by individuals. Questionnaires can ask straight questions, such as “What is the business focus of your organisation?” with multiple-choice tick boxes to answer.

Or, a questionnaire can be in the form of a rating scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” in answer to a statement like, “Performance management systems motivate you to perform exceptionally well”.

Developing performance feedback plans: Worksheet
Reading

Recommended additional reading can be found in Appendix A in Performance Management by Armstrong and Baron. This contains a number of questionnaires that can be used to evaluate staff understanding and use of performance management systems.

Observation

Observation with the use of checklists can evaluate practices and procedures. This could be a useful method for making a judgement on team processes. You can arrange with a team to observe, using a checklist to identify and develop key performance areas, key performance indicators, performance targets and performance objectives.

Surveys

Surveys can be used to determine attitudes or behavioural responses towards performance management systems or any component of the systems, such as review processes. Similarly, surveys can be done to discover the extent of understanding by staff of performance management systems or systems components.

Read

Recommended additional reading can be found in Appendix B in Performance Management by Armstrong and Baron. This provides examples of employee attitude surveys towards performance management systems.

Focus groups

Focus groups are structured and facilitated groups, formed for the purpose of discussing planned, open-ended questions to gain information. Such groups, when in the hands of skilled facilitators, are considered time-efficient and able to yield high quality information, particularly in the early stages of research. Focus groups are a useful means for evaluating the initial introduction, implementation and management of your systems.
Diagnostic checklists

Use diagnostic checklists to check all aspects of performance management systems. For instance, check whether:

- organisational culture is ready for performance management systems
- teams are sufficiently empowered to develop KRAs and KPIs
- performance measures determined by an individual can be undertaken according to the skills of the individual identified in the job description

Audits

Audits are inspections and investigations. Audits can be conducted, for example, to investigate whether ISO standards are being upheld and to assess behaviour in a client relationship. Audits can be used as planned activities or randomly. They may be used randomly, for example, to:

- monitor progress in achieving outputs
- inspect measurement tools for safety purposes
- scrutinise work practices for legal compliance

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis can be undertaken using computer generated data. For example, evaluation of legal compliance or non-compliance data records provides evidence of the ability of performance management systems to reduce non-compliant behaviour or practices. The response to this would be to improve on an unacceptable record.

Statistical analysis can also be used to evaluate time frames for team implementation of any element of performance management systems. This could provide evidence that indicates a need to work with teams struggling with timeframes.

Statistical analyses can also be used to evaluate the ability of performance management systems to address individual performance.

Consider statistics compiled for performance learning and development activities on employees. Are there reductions or additions to the number of individuals activity engaged in tertiary study programs on a year-by-year basis? If so, should an effort be made to improve on this and for what reason?

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