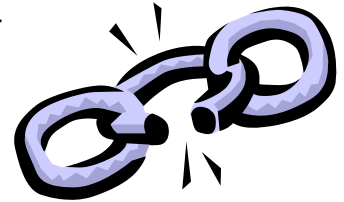


Career Development—The Missing Link

Employee Engagement

We've all been there. Whether you're a manager or an individual contributor, at some point in your career you've sat through the dreaded performance review.



For managers, the traditionally annual event usually means weeks of trying to recall various subordinates' performance against a template of "expectations"; completing a multi-page review form to document that performance; determining how to distribute budgeted increases (if any); preparing a (hopefully) positive delivery; and getting it all done in the timeframe determined by company policy.

For employees, it usually means weeks of agony and self-reflection ("Will my manager ding me for that slipped deadline?") culminating in a one-on-one meeting by which time they are so unnerved that the only thing they really listen for is the overall score and how it impacts their paycheck.

It's no wonder that when asked about performance reviews managers and employees alike grumble, "What's the point?"

Employees need feedback

The point is, employees need feedback. However, the feedback needs to be delivered in an ongoing and purposeful way. To be engaged and productive, employees need to be able to tie the feedback to both short term (current performance) and long term (career development) goals. Most performance review programs stop short of this key component in the performance continuum – career development.

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7 Tips for Effective Feedback

Here are seven tips to ensure that the feedback you give – both positive and constructive – is effective.

1. Choose an appropriate time and place.
2. Talk about the behavior not the person.
3. Be specific, and explain the impact of the action – positive or negative.
4. Make it timely.
5. Be sincere, and convey that you honestly want to help.
6. Ask for input, and really listen.
7. Follow up.



Karen Colligan

*"Feedback is the breakfast of champions."
-Ken Blanchard*

*About the author: Karen Colligan, founder and principal of PeopleThink, popular career and leadership speaker, and author of **The Get Real Guide To Your Career™** series of workbooks, is an industry-recognized leader in the field of career, leadership and team development. Contact Karen at kcolligan@peoplethink.biz.*

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Ongoing process vs. annual “event”

Adding a career development component to the performance review process makes it truly a performance management program – not an isolated, annual “event.” It becomes a continuous process whereby employees are developing with purpose, which improves their satisfaction and contributes to company growth.

Employees are ultimately in charge of their own careers. They need to decide what they want to do by when, and take advantage of education and experiences that will help them get there.

Career Development gives purpose to feedback

A formal career development program provides the structure for employees to develop and implement their plan. It demonstrates to employees that the company cares about their interests and their future. It gives purpose to feedback, and shifts the focus from “what you didn’t do well in the past” to “how you can develop to achieve your career goals for the future.” It provides the opportunity for more frequent, open discussions between employee and manager and a better alignment between individual and company goals.

Career development, as part of an overall performance management system, creates a partnership between the employee and his/her manager (as coach and mentor) to achieve goals and contribute to individual, team and organizational growth.

Benefits of a Career Development Approach

A Career Development Approach:

- Is future-focused, which is more inspiring and motivating to employees (less like a report card)
- Involves developing strengths, as well as improving development areas
- Provides the opportunity to align individual goals with company goals so employees understand how they directly impact the success of the company
- Gives a foundation for succession planning and contributes to retaining top talent
- Provides an opportunity for ongoing communication between employee and manager as manager becomes a “coach” for the employee’s career plan
- Reduces turnover because employees can visualize a “career” with the company vs. just a “job”

