

Managing for Performance is about managing all performance – **not just poor performance**

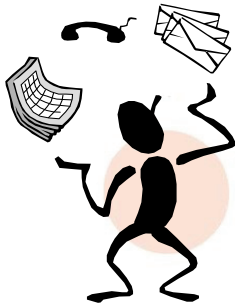
Managing Performance

What contributes to performance?

skill [capability]

will [motivation]

something stopping them [capacity]



Something stopping them could relate to lack of resources, unclear expectations, emotional issues, stress, issues at home, inability to see what is actually happening (eg lack of self awareness) etc



Diagnosing Poor Performance

Exploring the Causes

Common Performance Problems

- Staff don't know what to do
- Staff don't have the knowledge or skills to do the job expected of them
- Staff don't know how well or how poorly they are performing due to lack of feedback
- Staff lack motivation, confidence or interest or may be bored or anxious
- Staff don't have sufficient support or resources
- Staff may have poor work relations with colleagues or managers
- Staff may have personal issues

What are some possible causes of poor performance by an individual at work?

The process of managing performance begins with identifying possible causes. These can include:

Organisational

- Lack of clarity about, alignment to **vision**, unclear standards of performance, lack of understanding about people's role in delivering the vision
- **Cumbersome procedures or systems** – or a lack of procedures / poor systems
- **Poor tools, equipment, technology**
- **Insufficient budget, resourcing**
- Unclear lines of **authority or accountability** within the organisation
- Influence of '**culture**' on how people relate to each other (eg always seek permission)

Managerial / Supervisory / Team

- **Inadequate communications to the worker concerning performance** – organisation does not clearly communicate expectations about job performance and/or does not give feedback about deficiencies that need correcting or achievements made, unclear objectives, unclear PD, unclear measures, unclear expectations about expected behaviours
- **Inadequate communication about resourcing, support or reporting lines** – manager / organisation does not clearly communicate reporting lines, resources and support
- **Negative influences within the workgroup / team** – Informal work group influences that are counterproductive for the organisation
- **Counterproductive work environment** – environmental factors, which interfere with or prevent satisfactory, job performance
- **Poorly designed job** – it does not enrich an employee, may limit growth, restricts opportunities to build experience / expertise
- **Expectations are inappropriate / unrealistic** – the expectations for performance are overly ambitious, unrealistic given the circumstances, difficult to measure (subjective), impossible within the time
- **Poor communication** – information that assists a person to do their job well is not forthcoming – up, down or across, there are nor opportunities to contribute to decisions or have reasons for decisions explained
- **Leader not setting a good example** – poor role modelling of what is acceptable
- **Lack of support by manager of employee**– insufficient training and development, empowerment, delegation, “chance to” building block (they need the necessary tools, equipment, resources, support, authority and time to do their job)
- **Tension in relationship with manager**- conflict / strained relationships with their manager, lack of trust
- **Tasks are too difficult for the position** – the expectations may be unrealistic for a typical person in this role

- **Insufficient consequences for poor performance** – poor performance is tolerated and becomes more accepted by others in the team as ok
- **Reluctance to consider flexibility within the work conditions** – eg working from home, different hours

Individual / Personal

- **Insufficient skill or experience** – undeveloped skills or ability, lack of opportunities to develop them, insufficient training
- **Inability to respond to feedback** - poor resilience, unprepared to be open to feedback, unable to cope with feedback, lack of self awareness
- **Lack of buy-in / alignment to what the team / organisation is trying to achieve**
- **Low worker motivation** – generally demonstrate a lack of interest in the job and/or general lack of effort on the job, lack of engagement, insufficient involvement in decisions
- **Tension in the workplace / with team members** - conflict / strained relationships with others
- **An inability to organise themselves effectively** - poor time management, procrastination
- **Insufficient general ability** - lack of ability to understand, learn or express oneself well
- **Insufficient job knowledge** – Lack of adequate information about job duties and/or job requirements or lack of experience with a particular type of job (job fit?)
- **Counterproductive emotional states** – emotional states that interfere with or prevent satisfactory performance on the job
- **Use of drugs or alcohol** – being under the influence of, or the after affect of, drugs or alcohol
- **Physical limitations** – insufficient personal physical capacities for a particular job
- **Family stress / crisis** – unusual family situations, which interfere with or prevent satisfactory, job performance
- **Predominance of family considerations over work demands** – worker is more responsive to family demands than to job demands in non-crisis family situations
- **Low standards of work** – a worker defining success in terms of a very low personal standard and/or experiencing satisfaction at low levels of performance
- **Conflict of personal values and job requirements** – worker's personal values, derived from family and culture, prevent or interfere with satisfactory performance

Other Questions to consider

- What is previous performance on this task?
- What is performance on other tasks?
- How do other people perform on this task?
- Is it an ability problem?
- Is the ability frequently used?
- Does the person have potential?

Figure 9.2 Kris Cole, *The Supervisor's Survival Guide*. Pearson 2002

