

ENGAGING FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE – FROM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TO PERFORMANCE ENGAGEMENT

Leading Practices Paper - Synopsis

Have you ever felt that investing your time and energy in performance management systems was a waste of time and resources? If yes, you are not alone. Our experience in working with organisations to improve performance shows there are flaws in the design of many current approaches to performance management. This means that the intended outcomes are not realised and people at all levels question the value of the time and resources devoted to performance management schemes and systems. The good news is that there is a formula for success when it comes to designing and implementing a successful performance management scheme. In our leading practice paper “Engaging for High Performance from Performance Management to Performance Engagement”, we describe the common design pitfalls before presenting the key ingredients to achieve high organisational performance through performance engagement.

Many performance management schemes follow a well-trodden formula of having 12 month performance planning and review cycles which are driven through compliance with rigid policies, systems, and procedures. However these schemes fail to recognise the dynamic nature of performance and the shifting priorities which occur in normal organisational life. Also performance measurement and assessment processes are often meaningless for staff where objectives and accountabilities are unclear and where there is a lack of meaningful context and consequence for performance. In addition, a limited focus on improvement and innovation and over-promising and under-delivering on personal development, leads to a slow deterioration in the faith of performance management schemes. This is particularly so when managers feel they are not being supported in driving the changes needed to sustain these schemes within the existing culture.

However current research and experience tells us that there is a formula for success when it comes to achieving high organisational performance. Sustained high performance occurs when leadership engages staff on the performance journey rather than “performance manages” people or demands performance through compliance. More and more we are seeing high performance being achieved through managers focussing on a different way of connecting with employees. Through a focus on relationships, open performance conversations are possible, and performance partnerships are being established where feedback is the norm. However, true engagement is a pre-requisite for this to occur. Recent longitudinal research shows there is a strong correlation between employee engagement and organisational performance. Levels of employee engagement are influenced by some common factors which point to the following observations:

- Career and organisational engagement are not mutually exclusive
 - Employees must feel that their personal career goals are being catered for through planned development and job opportunities and must believe that their personal performance directly impacts the performance and reputation of the organisation.
- Belief in the stated values and accountability for performance are part of the bottom-line
 - There must be felt consequences for performance which are both seen to be applied, and actually applied, equitably and fairly.
- Leaders must be both visible and active
 - Ongoing support and coaching by managers is needed to gain the trust of their staff and to build the confidence and capability needed to achieve their goals
- Managers must work “on the business” not just “in the business”
 - Managers need to implement systemic approaches to removing performance obstacles with the involvement of their employees and develop performance standards that stack up with their industry’s leading practices



The following five proven pathways to performance engagement have been identified and developed by People and Performance Consulting through our work with a range of organisations over the past ten years:

1. Reinvigorate strategy and outcomes
2. Develop engagement capabilities of managers and staff
3. Develop and align performance agreements
4. Support leaders in implementation
5. Measure Progress

More Information...

Thinking about re-energising your performance schemes and approaches, or perhaps starting something new? *People and Performance Consulting* can assist you in designing and implementing an approach that is both achievable and sustainable.

For the full version of this Leading Practice Paper please contact People and Performance Consulting at contact@peopleperform.com.au or phone 07 31031525 or mobile 0422 007 554.

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