

Perfecting Performance Management



By Kylie Fay, employee resources associate, HireElements

Performance management is a funny thing. For such a powerful and positive tool, it either strikes fear in the hearts of many employees or has them laughing it off. The problem with performance management’s reputation isn’t the performance management itself, but instead the delivery of it. When done well, performance management doesn’t scare employees away—it encourages them to stay.

There is a huge misconception out there that performance management should be used as some sort of disciplinary tool. Performance management should be a process in which managers and employees continually work together to plan, monitor, and review the employees’ work and overall impact within the organization.

Performance management plans aren’t just some new fad pushed by H.R. departments across the country. They are bona fide business tools that not only help develop employees and improve business, but can actually encourage people to remain with the organization. Research has shown that the top challenges organizations face include retention, engagement and culture, improving employee learning, and developing a strong leadership pipeline. A strong performance management program can combat all those challenges and then some. Increased business and reduced turnover—who wouldn’t want that? However, creating a successful performance management program can be a daunting task, so to make it more manageable I’ve come up with a few Do’s and Don’ts.


LET’S START WITH THE DO’S:

- Do make the performance management process an open partnership between manager and employee. This means both sides should feel comfortable participating and being vocal about their expectations and progress.

- Do train managers on your performance management system. Managers who are unsure or unaware of their employer’s expectations will likely not be able to get the results from your system that trained managers could.
- Do ensure that your performance management plans are matched with measurable objectives. Just because the plan is in place doesn’t prove anything. You need to develop performance goals at the employee and organizational levels to measure the success of the plans.

NOW FOR SOME DON’TS:

- Don’t make performance management a priority just once a year. Would Wayne Gretzky or Derek Jeter have become all-stars if their coaches had waited to give them feedback once a year? No way. Performance management is an ongoing and daily process.
- Don’t make performance management promises if you aren’t willing to go through with them. For example, don’t promise yearly reviews if you don’t plan on enforcing them with managers. Lack of consistency is where performance management starts to look like a joke.
- Don’t wait until a performance management plan is needed to begin one. Performance management isn’t just for poor performers—it’s for everyone.

Have you thought about performance management lately? If not, maybe it’s time you start. You will be glad you did! 



Kylie Fay is an Employees Resources Associate with HireElements, the recruitment network for A.W. Hastings & Co. As a strategic partner, HireElements aligns people and opportunities, leveraging a thorough understanding of its clients’ corporate environment to provide the best human resources services for its culture. For more information, visit www.hireelements.com.