



## People Management Training Course

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# 1 - Introduction

Managers are a relatively new area of interest for the human race. Up to the industrial revolution, the role did not exist and it is only in the twentieth century that there has been such an enormous increase in the number of managers, mostly confined to the western world. If the existence of managers is recent, the study of management is even more recent and many of the practical problems facing managers do not have a sound theoretical basis. The researchers are still arguing while the managers struggle on with what they have learnt for themselves.

*Management is tasks. Management is a discipline. But management is also people. Every achievement of management is the achievement of a manager. Every failure is a failure of a manager. People manage, rather than 'forces' or 'facts'. The vision, dedication, and integrity of managers determine whether there is management or mismanagement.*

*Peter Drucker.*

Most managers would agree that successful management involves using resources efficiently. This can be viewed as having three main components:

**Managing Tasks**

**Managing Individuals**

**Managing Groups**

**Managing Tasks** includes Objective Setting and Planning, Organising and controlling and Time management.

**Managing Individuals** includes Delegation, Communication and Motivation.

**Managing Groups** includes Teambuilding and Leadership and Assertiveness.



## 2 - What is Management

Management is viewed as the process through which managers engage to achieve organisational goals.

Therefore managers can be viewed as individuals within organisations whose principle aims are to achieve organisational goals by holding positions of authority and making decisions about the allocation of the resources available.

Management tries to encourage individual activity that will lead to reaching organisational objectives and tries to discourage individual activity that hinders organisational goal attainment.

Most managers are responsible for directly supervising and managing operating employees and resources. They ensure that the plans developed at top level are fulfilled by those employees who produce the organisation's goods and services.

It is a critical position and there are several major functions that the manager must perform in order to maintain an efficient operation.

These include the manager assuming such diverse roles as figurehead to spokesperson, whichever the situation demands.



## 3 - Objective Setting and Planning

### Objective Setting

Objectives, goals, targets - it doesn't matter what word is used; they are what guides action at work and outside. Purposeful management requires a clear knowledge of the purpose. Every business, every department and every manager needs a clear set of objectives to determine how effort and resources should be expended. They also provide criteria against which success can be measured.

Developing your objectives can be difficult but is essential for effective management. Start by writing out a list of headings which describe the main areas of your job. For each heading write a single sentence which describes success in that aspect of your job. Ideally these objectives should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time framed

**Specific** - Specific means that the objective is clear and unambiguous. It should consist of only one sentence. If you can't write it in one sentence, you are probably unclear on what exactly you are trying to achieve.

**Measurable** - The best objectives are measurable. A measurement gives absolute information on how successful you are and how far you have achieved the objective. However, some objectives, particularly those to do with people, are very difficult to measure. They should still be included in your list; and you ought to spend time on them even if it is hard to measure your achievement.

**Achievable** - An objective should be achievable but may not be realistic, because it would require too much of your time, or because it would conflict in some way with other objectives. Your objectives should be achievable within the constraints of your ability and your resources. They should also be realistic within the constraints of all other things you have to achieve.



**Time framed** - An objective without a time frame is a wish. You just do not do things that have no deadline. All your objectives must have a time frame. A straightforward example of this is a sales target where you are expected to achieve sales of, say, £100,000 by December. However you should note that some objectives may have an on-going time frame.

Defining your objectives in this format can be very difficult, particularly when it comes to the management of people and other interpersonal issues.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile developing them as best you can as they will help you enormously in deciding how to spend your time.

## **Planning**

It is usual to classify plans according to a time scale.

Whatever the time frame, every plan contains the same elements. Many of these you decide subconsciously, nevertheless they are inherent in planning.

**An objective** - what we are planning to achieve

**Constraints** - These are the resources available to us to execute the plan. They are viewed as constraints because their importance lies in not having enough of them. If we had a limitless supply, they would not feature in planning.

**Course of action** - This involves evaluating the different options available to us which would achieve the objectives and are within the constraints. At its simplest, this might just mean making a list. However, in most cases, it will require considerable analysis and, probably, trial and error. The result is a series of steps which will achieve the objective.

**Sub plans** - Most plans except the very simplest, contain plans within plans. These might include budgets, logistics etc. Sub plans can be added as necessary. A complex plan will inevitably include sub plans and each one of these may be complex enough to have all the components of a plan.



**Contingency** - A special type of sub plan which asks "what if something goes wrong". Clearly it is impossible to plan for everything that could go wrong. However, it is advisable to plan for two types of contingency: the worst case scenario and the most likely things to go wrong.

**Schedule** - A plan without a schedule will never be implemented. Each stage of the course of action should have it's deadline and each sub-plan should take it's schedule from that of the master plan.

Plans inevitably involve other people and planning should, therefore, always be considered as a written activity, since the finished document will become the principle means of communicating the detail to those concerned.



## 4 - Organising and Controlling

Organising is necessary to preserve time. It ensures that time is not wasted. Organising whatever process that is going to be done, involves making sure the following are available at the right time, in the right place and in the right quantity:

Material - raw materials used in the process

Equipment - the right machines in the right place and working reliably

Supplies - auxiliary material used in getting the work done

Information - used for reference purposes to support the work being done.

A successful process needs the right kinds of people with the right abilities. This involves **selecting** and **training** them.

**Selection involves:**

- 1 Defining the job in terms of both tasks and responsibilities
- 2 Defining the person - what sort of person would suit the job? Use the Seven Point Plan to determine the suitability of a candidate - how do they match up to the following criteria:
  - Physical
  - Circumstances (travel to work etc)
  - Attainments (qualifications/skills)
  - Aptitudes
  - Intelligence
  - Disposition (dependability etc)
  - Interests
- 3 Design a rating system to assess different candidates
- 4 Seek applicants
- 5 Screen applicants against the rating system
- 6 Test applicants, if appropriate
- 7 Interview applicants against the rating system
- 8 Take the person who comes closest to the person spec. and who, therefore comes out highest in the rating scheme.



It is also best to take the selection process as objective as possible to eliminate bias and to get the person most likely to succeed.

### Training involves:

- 1 Define the job, as in selection
- 2 Define the tasks which will have to be carried out
- 3 Define the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) the person will need to do these tasks
- 4 Assess the job holders against the KSA's
- 5 Identify the gaps and design training to fill them
- 6 Run the training
- 7 Evaluate if it has filled the gaps identified

Training should be carried out as a rational and continuous process. It may be carried out in a number of ways: in a formal setting, on the job by a more experienced colleague or as one to one coaching. The method doesn't matter as long as it fills the gaps successfully.

### Controlling

Controlling involves monitoring the process and its outputs and comparing these to what was supposed to be achieved. There will frequently be a discrepancy. This may not be anybody's fault, just a series of unforeseen events which have made things go wrong. Once these discrepancies have been detected, some corrective action must be taken.

At its simplest, that may just be to point out to an operator that things aren't quite right. More serious corrections may need to be applied to the process, the organisation or even the plan. In some rare circumstances, the objectives may even need to be changed.



## Monitoring is the key to controlling.

It simply means knowing what is going on in every aspect of the operation. This pre-supposes a sound understanding of the process, a good reporting system and being present regularly to observe the process in action. There are two kinds of monitoring - knowing what is going on at any given time and knowing what is going on in terms of trends. Matters of the moment tend to pre-occupy us in the working situation to the extent that slow and subtle changes can go unnoticed.



## 5 - Time Management

If you are disorganised or are doing the wrong things, it is almost impossible to manage effectively.

Effective time management skills enable you to:

Define clear objectives for your job.

Prioritise tasks more effectively.

Plan and schedule activities to achieve your goals.

Organise your time to get the important things done.

Manage interactions and interruptions.

Every day we are faced with hundreds of time use decisions.

These are usually identifiable when we ask ourselves: *"What shall I do next?"* A better question to ask is: *"What is the best use of my time right now?"*

Those who make consistently good decisions about what to do next are the achievers. Those who do not tend to be very busy but achieve very little. They also tend to have higher stress levels and spend much more of their time "firefighting". The only way to make that "what to do next" decision, is to know the priority of each task.

Prioritising involves two parameters: **Importance** and **Urgency**

**Importance** is the extent to which an activity takes you towards achieving your objectives.



**Urgency** is a measure of how soon a task needs to be done.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 - How do you spend your time?
- 2 - What are your objectives?
- 3 - How much of your time is spent involved in activities which take you to these objectives?
- 4 - How much of your time is spent operating as distinct from managing?
- 5 - Do you delegate enough?
- 6 - Do you get bogged down by paperwork?
- 7 - Do you spend far too much time in meetings?
- 8 - Do you put things off?

It is only by examining how exactly our time is spent that we can evaluate the situation and make improvements.



## 6 - People Management

One of the popular definitions of management is “getting things done through other people”. No matter how management is defined, people are an inherent part of it. They are the ones who are going to do most of the work and are also the ones who are going to provide the knowledge, ideas and skills which can make the operation successful.

It is possible to be a good manager by concentrating on the task side of management - but only in the short term or where operational demands require it, for example, in a start up situation or where the operation is undergoing radical change. Most managers know that they should spend more time with their people but don't get around to it for a variety of reasons: they don't have time; they don't know how; they are afraid of showing weakness; etc. Whatever the reason, failing to spend time managing your people is like buying a new car and never getting it serviced - you may get away with it for a long time but it will catch up with you eventually.

Your approach to leading and managing others will inevitably be based on your attitudes towards people and assumptions about human nature and behaviour at work. The two extremes are:

### Theory X

- The average person is lazy and has an inherent dislike of work.
- Most people must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment if the organisation is to achieve its objectives.
- The average person avoids responsibility, prefers to be directed, lacks ambition and values security most of all.
- Motivation only occurs at the physiological and security levels.



## Theory Y

- For most people work is as natural as play.
- People will exercise self-direction and self-control in pursuit of objectives to which they are committed.
- Commitment to objectives is a function of rewards associated with their achievement.
- Given the right conditions people will accept and seek responsibility.
- Creativity for solving problems is widely distributed in the organization.
- The intellectual potential of the average person is only partially utilized.
- Motivation occurs at the social, esteem and self actualisation levels as well (see below).

We firmly believe that an approach to management based on Theory Y is the best way to get co-operation from your staff. It is also less difficult for the manager in the long run. If you take the Theory X approach it implies that all information and all decisions flow through you, the manager. You have to know everything, decide everything and be involved in everything. This is an almost impossible load to carry and you will inevitably fail on occasion. Furthermore, you will get the blame and none of your staff will have any inclination to help you out. They may well take some delight in watching you fail. If you adopt a Theory Y approach, you share the load by getting each member of your staff to contribute what they can. The more you get them to contribute, the better, and the more effectively the whole operation will run.

Managing to gain co-operation is not easy and requires you to have good people management skills. The foundation of all people management is communication which we use to pass information, to build relationships and to sort out difficulties.



## 7 - Delegation

Delegation is a valuable tool for those with staff reporting to them. In many cases there are tasks which can be done by other members of staff, but you end up doing them yourself for a number of reasons: habit, fear etc

Delegation means getting members of staff to carry out tasks which are currently part of the manager's job. Effective delegation has two powerful results: It frees up the manager's time and it provides a means of developing staff.

There are a number of steps for effective delegation:

- 1) **Identify tasks which could be delegated.**  
These normally include everything except purely managerial functions. Look for tasks which are repeated or routine, they represent the best return on your time. Avoid delegating tasks which you dislike; they will tend to be regarded as dumping.
- 2) **Identify people who can take on these delegated tasks.**  
They must have the ability, the time and the willingness.
- 3) **Carefully define the task in terms of the outcomes which are expected.**  
Sell the task to the person and make a contract of the agreement. The more explicit the agreement, the less trouble you will have later on.
- 4) **Organise the task by providing the person with the resources, training, authority etc they need to carry out the task.**  
Agree when the person will report back and what will happen if they need help in the interim time.
- 5) **Walk away.**
- 6) **Provide support when required.**
- 7) **Thank them for doing part of your job.**



## 8 - Communication

Communication is one of the most important tools that a manager has to ensure the smooth running of an operation. For successful communication, a model involving six steps has been devised:

- Step 1      What are you trying to achieve with this communication?  
                 What are your objectives
- Step 2      Who do you need to communicate with in order to achieve those  
                 objectives?
- Step 3      What is the best method of communication to use?
- Step 4      Match the best method to the recipient.
- Step 5      Get feedback.
- Step 6      Respond to feedback.

There are four fundamental communication skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening

Surprisingly, out of this list, the two most important communication tools are **Speaking** and **Listening**.

**Speaking:**

Some important points to note when speaking are:

**Clarity** - Speak clearly, don't mumble

**Tone** - Sound friendly and interested

**Modulation** - Vary your voice so that it sounds interesting



## **Listening:**

For most people Listening is their weakest communication skill. Better listening comes from doing the following:

- Concentrate**
- Don't interrupt**
- Don't judge**
- Clarify understanding by asking questions**
- Reflect back**

Good listening is essential for the management of people. Those around us at work are continually sending us messages which we don't receive - sometimes because we didn't observe and sometimes because we didn't listen.

## **Body Language:**

Research has shown that less than half of the meaning we pick up in spoken conversation comes from the words themselves. More than half comes from the tone of voice and the non-verbal signals known as body language. From a supervisory managers' point of view, good body language involves:

### **Eye contact**

Look at the person when you are talking to them and when they are talking to you. Do not stare. Let your eyes scan the triangle on the person's face bounded by the eyebrows and the mouth.

### **Handshake**

Keep your hand dry and apply a moderate pressure for around six seconds. Make eye contact, smile briefly and break the eye contact downwards.

### **Personal Space**

Be careful never to stand too close to someone. Any encroachment is likely to be very uncomfortable for the person. Once rapport has been achieved, you can safely stand a little closer, but be aware of any body movements which show that they are uncomfortable and back off accordingly.



## Seating

Never stand when someone else is sitting unless it is your intention to dominate or intimidate them.

## Gestures

Open gestures are more welcoming and encouraging, whereas closed gestures e.g. folded arms, are defensive and discourage the other person. Hand gestures also send signals. Putting your hands behind your head or "steeping" in which fingers are joined to look like a church, both send the message that you feel in control - which can be off-putting for the person you are talking to.

## Reading other people's body language

- Approach each encounter with an open mind.
- Do not pay too much attention to faces.
- Detect anxiety by looking at hands and feet. Watch for "leakage" as inner tensions are relieved by small, subconscious controlled movements.
- Liars betray themselves in several ways. Watch for fewer than normal gestures and increased self touching. This usually involves the hands rubbing, pulling or stroking ears, nose or cheeks.
- Be careful when interpreting body language. The rules here are very general and apply to most people. However, they are strongly affected by culture and upbringing.



## 9 - Motivation

Having the right people in a well organised process is useless if those people don't work hard and expend effort to achieve the goals and objectives of the work groups. It is part of the manager's role to ensure, as far as possible, that staff are willing to make that effort - that they are motivated.

Getting this effort from your staff requires you to:

- Understand how motivation works.
- Be aware of what motivates each member of your staff.
- Identify the ways in which you can contribute to their motivation.

Motivation is the extent to which people apply effort to achieve goals so that their needs can be satisfied. Needs are complex and can be satisfied both inside and outside the workplace. Needs also tend to be very individualistic and what might greatly motivate one person, might not the next.

An example of this is money. An undeniable factor in influencing a person's motivation - through achievement, and the satisfying of material needs but sometimes financial rewards do get people to work, but not necessarily to work harder.

Managers must find out what factors have an effect on each member of their staff and how they can be influenced. Appropriate rewards must be chosen for each person and linked to performance. A clear link must be made between effort and performance as perceived by the members of staff.

Clear procedures must be established for the evaluation of individual levels of performance. One of the manager's primary roles is ensuring that staff can perform and that resources and organisation don't act as barriers. Undesirable outcomes from high performance must be minimised eg accidents etc.



### Jobs must be designed to:

- Enhance the personal satisfaction that people derive from work.
- Make the best use of people as a valuable resource.

### To ensure good motivation tasks should:

- Combine to form a coherent whole job.
- Provide some variety of pace, method, location and skill.
- Provide feedback on performance both directly and through other people.
- Provide some degree of discretion and control.
- Include some responsibility for outcomes.

### The whole job should:

- Provide opportunity for learning and problem solving.
- Have some career path.
- Provide opportunity for development that is relevant to the person.
- Enable the person to contribute to decisions affecting their jobs.
- Provide a sufficient social and group contact and support.
- Provide adequate resources.

Many of the jobs in your organisation may not provide much opportunity for motivation and satisfaction. By rethinking the job it may be possible to improve this situation.



## 10 - Managing Performance

The ultimate role of any manager is to ensure that the job gets done and while the manager may perform some of the tasks him or herself, most of the tasks will be done by members of staff. Therefore, making sure that the members of your staff perform to at least an acceptable level is fundamental to your success. This process of managing the performance of others may be part of a formal system, known as appraisal, but whether done formally or informally, it is the key element of the manager's job. It is also the point at which task and people management meet.

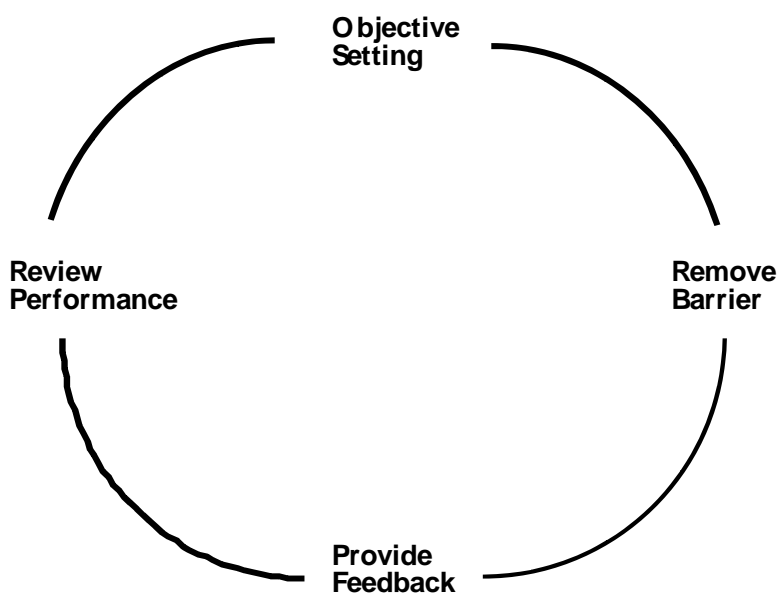
Performance management has its roots in three well-substantiated psychological principles. People work, learn and achieve more when they are given:

1. Clear attainable goals
2. Involvement in the setting of tasks and goals
3. Adequate feedback on how they are performing.

Done well it can be motivating, involving, empowering and give improved performance.

### Performance Management Cycle

Performance management follows a predictable cycle for each member of staff.



## Setting Objectives

In order to perform, everyone needs clear objectives. These goals or objectives work by directing attention and action towards performance; by mobilising effort; by increasing persistence to achieve them; and by motivating the search for ways of performing. Setting and reviewing objectives makes a review of the job and its priorities inevitable. The main purpose of the job and the contribution it makes are defined. The objectives also offer a yardstick against which performance can be measured as well as making job holders clear about what is expected of them. This is a well recognised motivation technique and makes job holders less defensive when discussing their performance.

The following must be in place for objectives to improve performance:

- 1 Objectives should fit the SMART criteria (see above)
- 2 Difficult objectives lead to higher performance than do easy ones.
- 3 Objectives must be accepted by the person; their involvement in setting them is desirable.
4. Feedback is essential for objectives to have the desired effect.
5. Objectives should be written down and agreed.
6. Objectives should be checked at regular intervals to make sure that they are still valid.

At its simplest, setting someone's objectives involves sitting down with them and telling them what performance is expected of them. It is best to formalise this slightly by writing down the objectives in SMART format and giving the person a copy. If you can involve the person in setting their own objectives, so much the better.

Note that the difficulties with getting 'soft' objectives into SMART format still applies - just do the best you can. But be aware that if the objectives are too 'woolly', you will have great difficulty reviewing them at a later stage.



## Removing Barriers

One of the biggest problems with performance management is the matter of control - control over resources and time. It is clearly unfair to expect someone to achieve their objectives when they don't have the materials, equipment, etc. to do the job; or when they are not given the time to do it due to other priorities. Situations like this are likely to lead to all the motivation problems associated with perceived unfairness.

The solution is to view the manager's job in a different light. In order to manage performance effectively, the manager must become a remover of barriers. This will involve mostly planning and organising and will make sure that the members of your staff have everything they need to perform to their optimum. It also involves you in delegating as much responsibility as possible and, ironically, you end up working for your staff.

## Giving Feedback

Feedback is an essential element in performance management. Without it, the person does not know how they are performing, does not know that you know how they are performing and is likely to become disillusioned, demotivated and negative. Yet most employees say they don't receive enough feedback, positive or negative. It seems that most managers neglect this crucial area of performance management.

Feedback is part of the control mechanism by which performance is identified and any deviations from what was desired (the objective) are corrected. In order to be effective, feedback must be:

- **Specific** - it must relate precisely to particular aspects of performance
- **Relevant** - it must be concerned with aspects of performance not personality, company policy, etc.
- **Timely** - it must be available as soon as possible after the performance has taken place.



This feedback can come from a number of sources:

- From the job itself. It may be obvious as the person works how well they are doing. This would be the case for a machine operator who knows how much has been produced. Other job performance information, e.g. quality, should be made readily available.
- From colleagues and others.
- From the manager. Even where there is ample feedback from the sources above, it is still necessary to give feedback. Everybody needs the assurance that their manager knows how they are performing.

### Giving Constructive Feedback

Feedback should always be constructive and should follow these guidelines:

- Give both positive and negative feedback but don't put negative feedback in a 'sandwich'
- Don't give too many aspects of negative feedback together. It seems that people can deal constructively with only two items of negative feedback at a time
- Give feedback as soon after the event as possible
- Give feedback to every member of staff on a regular basis and not only when they do something wrong.
- Give feedback on behaviour, what the person has done, not who they are
- Be descriptive but don't use labels
- Don't exaggerate and restrict your feedback to things you know for certain
- Don't be judgmental and, where the feedback is contentious or personal, speak about yourself, not the other person.
- Phrase the feedback as a statement, not a question.
- Help people hear and accept your compliments when giving positive feedback. We have been brought up to be overly modest when it comes to acknowledging our successes.
- Give feedback at an appropriate time and place.

As part of this process, it is likely that you will also receive feedback. In many cases, it will be your actions or inaction's which have caused or contributed to lack of performance. You, too, will have to be able to accept this feedback in a positive and constructive way even though it may well be critical of you and may not be given



in an appropriate way.

### To Receive Feedback

- Breathe deeply - this prevents you making that instant comment which will almost certainly be defensive
- Listen carefully - apply the guidelines given earlier
- Ask questions to clarify what is being said
- Acknowledge the feedback
- Acknowledge any points which you can see are valid
- Take time to sort out what you have heard. When you have had time to think calmly about what has been said, arrange a meeting with the person to solve the problem.

Within the guidelines above, there are two approaches you can take to giving negative feedback. You can give your feedback and tell the person what you want done about it or you can try to solve the problem.

The latter tends to work much better and would follow this format:

1. State the performance problem using facts only.
2. Ask the person if there is a problem. It may well be that some barrier has prevented them performing or that they have prioritised their efforts inappropriately.
3. Discuss and agree a solution which may include training, resources or a change of practice on your part.
4. Monitor the solution until you are satisfied that performance is being achieved.

In almost all cases of under performance this will be all that is required to correct the situation. Even if this does not lead to satisfactory performance immediately, providing there is progress and a willingness on the staff member's part to try to correct it, you should persist, even going through the process several times.

In a small number of cases, under performance is more difficult to correct. There may be any number of reasons for the problem and it is important to explore as many of these as possible before proceeding to more drastic action.



## Reasons for Poor Performance

### *Personal characteristics outside the organisation's control*

Intellectual ability	Physical ability
Emotional stability	Domestic circumstances
Family break-up	Health

### *Aspects of the organisation outside the individual's control*

Assignment and job	Investment in equipment	Planning or improvisation
Job changed	Physical conditions	Location and transport
Pay	Lack of training	Inappropriate training
Poor discipline	Inappropriate permissiveness	Poor management

### *Individual reasons arising from a mismatch with the organisation*

Poor understanding of the job	Sense of injustice
Inappropriate levels of confidence	Motivation
Conflict of religious or moral values	Group dynamics
Personality clash within the group	Personality clash with manager

Whatever the reasons for poor performance, as a manager you have to decide how much time and effort to expend in trying to correct it. Where the person is not co-operating in trying to improve performance, the final tool is the disciplinary system. This is a series of graduated sanctions, the ultimate being dismissal. Most employees who come into contact with the disciplinary system bounce back fairly quickly and benefit from the shock they get. Their performance is usually restored to a satisfactory level and they are unlikely to under perform in future. A very small proportion of those who under perform will end up being dismissed. It is normally better for the organisation and the person involved that they part company. It is, however, very costly for the organisation and every effort should be taken in the



selection and induction stages to ensure that those entering the organisation are likely to be successful.

A good disciplinary system is:

- Clearly understood by everyone
- Applied because of what is done (or not done)
- Applied to everyone consistently

Do not be afraid to use the disciplinary system as a tool for performance management. Without it, there would be a number of under performers about whom nothing could be done. This is demoralising for you and for those who are performing.

### Reviewing Performance

The tools above provide a means of managing performance on a day to day basis by acknowledging performance as it happens and making slight adjustments when things go wrong. This can lead to a short term view which fails to take account of the changes which take place in people and organisations over time. It is useful to sit down with each person on a regular basis (maybe every six months) to discuss the trends in their performance, the changed needs of the organisation and of the person.

This might result in training and development plans, ideas for gaining more experience and a chance to discuss promotional possibilities. This needs to be a fairly serious chat for which you both need to prepare. It should take place in private and be uninterrupted. The results of this meeting should be documented and the final part will involve the setting of objectives for the next period which starts the cycle all over again.



## 11 - Dealing with Difficult People

When managing their performance, or in other situations, some people can present great difficulty.

We can't seem to get through to them no matter how hard we try. These "difficult" people are a fact of life and may be a boss, colleague or member of our staff. Dealing with these people is essential for successful management - you can't ignore them and they won't go away.

When faced with these people, we normally describe them in very negative terms and blame them for everything. We rarely consider our own part in the process; it does take two to tango. There are a number of flaws in our approach to these people:

- 1 We describe the person and the situation in a very negative way to ourselves. This becomes self-fulfilling as it colours our approach and behaviour when we encounter these people.
- 2 We blame them. It surely isn't all their fault and they normally get on well with most of the people around them.
- 3 Our behaviour doesn't help the situation, we tend to react. We may be dismissive, insulting, cool etc.
- 4 We don't tell the person about the problem, we complain to others instead.
- 5 We don't take responsibility for the problem, we tend to let it slide.

The key to changing this sorry situation is to take responsibility. This will involve a number of steps which can be quite difficult at first. However, when you have tried it once and realised that it does not work, you will wonder why you let the situation drag on for so long.



## How to deal with difficult people:

- Identify the person and the situation in which you have the most difficulty.
- Describe the person and the situation. Notice how negative your description is and what emotions this situation brings out in you.
- Consider your biases towards the person.
- Consider how this situation makes them feel and makes you feel.
- Consider why this person has an effect on you - what do they do?
- Describe how you normally respond to this person. Does it help or hinder the situation.
- What do you say to yourself when having to deal with this person? Do you "psyche" yourself up? Does it help?
- What can you do to change your approach which may improve the situation? Maybe by being a little more approachable yourself, you could get them to respond more effectively to you.
- Tell them about the problem you have. Use the guidelines for giving feedback but phrase it in a specific way:
  - "When you (do certain things)..."*
  - "It affects me (in a certain way)..."*
  - "I would prefer if you could (act in a different way)..."*
  - "What do you think?"*
- Be prepared to get feedback as well. They may regard you as the problem person.
- Discuss your differences and agree how you might go about improving the situation.

This method is difficult to put into practice because we are frequently afraid of the reaction we may get. It doesn't always work, either and when it does, it can take some time and several discussions. However, it is the best chance you have of making things better. If it doesn't work, at least you tried.



## 12 - Teambuilding and Leadership

For many businesses, teamwork is used as a key tool in improving effectiveness. A "team" differs from a "group" because of these identifiable features:

- A definable membership
- Common goals
- Interdependence
- Interaction
- Ability to act as a unit
- Group consciousness

### Benefits of teamwork:

There are five positive contributions which teams and teamwork can make to an organisation:

**Co-ordination** - Teamwork is needed to co-ordinate complex tasks which involve a number of operations or stages. This is particularly true where a range of knowledge and skills is required.

**Ideas** - Creativity thrives on interaction between people. Different viewpoints and experiences encourage new ideas.

**Decisions** - There are two advantages in using teams to make collective decision. First, a range of different suggestions can be considered and debated. Second, people will have more commitment to decisions when they are involved.

**Support** - Because teams can give individuals a place and an identity in a larger organisation, they offer a way in which individuals can feel recognised, appreciated and looked after. They are also great fun.

**Induction** - The team can introduce new recruits to the style, methods, values and priorities of the organisation (and of the team)



## Leading teams:

In order to supervise, manage and lead a team successfully, you must first ensure that the team is intrinsically sound.

The best teams have the following eight ingredients:

- 1 Clarity in team goals
- 2 Clearly defined roles
- 3 Clear communication
- 4 Beneficial team behaviours
- 5 Well defined decision procedures
- 6 A balanced participation
- 7 Established ground rules
- 8 Awareness of group process

Effective leadership is about achieving results.

The leader has three main areas of responsibility:

- 1 Achieving the task
- 2 Building and maintaining the team
- 3 Developing the people in the team

There are also certain leadership functions which must be carried out in order to ensure that a team achieves its purpose and goals.

<b>Initiating</b>	Getting the work of the team going and keeping it moving. This is very important in the early stages of a team's work.
<b>Regulating</b>	Influencing the direction and pace of the team's work.
<b>Informing</b>	Bringing information or ideas to the team. Becomes increasingly important as the team carries out its tasks.
<b>Supporting</b>	Creating an emotional climate which makes it easy for members to contribute and which holds the team together. This is needed throughout the team process.
<b>Evaluating</b>	Helping the team to evaluate its decisions, goals, processes and performance. Especially needed as the team comes to the end of its work, or of one phase.



## 13 - Assertiveness Skills

Assertiveness is something that can be practised and learned. There are four basic Assertiveness Techniques. These are:

- 1 State your case clearly and directly
- 2 Construct responses through active listening
- 3 Use the broken record technique
- 4 Strive to find a workable compromise

These techniques are adaptable. They can be manipulated and developed, and should be used more as a tool, rather than a rule set in stone.

### 1 How to state your case clearly and directly

- Be specific.
- Get straight to the point. Preambling tends to lose any listener and make them wonder when the speaker will get to the point.
- This is the key to this technique - decide what exactly your point is and state exactly what it is without all the necessary padding that we tend to use when we are anxious e.g.

*"Oh, I'd love to say yes, but, you know, really, with the way things are, if only you had asked last week, I mean you haven't given me much notice, and actually this time I have to say no"*

- The padding here often weakens your statement and confuses the listener.
- Practise making a clear statement or request without the preamble.

**Say what you know you want to say and keep to the point.**

- Be direct and clear.
- Once you have decided on your request or statement the second hurdle is to be able to say clearly and directly what it is you want or feel.
- If you only hint or complain at what you want, you will rarely get it.
- Check whether or not you have made a clear request, or if you think the other person ought to know what you want and feel without having to spell it out for them.
- Do not rely on the telepathic abilities of the other person, as they may not always be up to scratch!



## 2 How to construct responses through active listening

Show that you are attending to what a speaker is saying to you through:

- Appropriate body language:
  - Leaning forward slightly to show interest.
  - Keeping eye contact.
  - Nodding your head in agreement.
- Using non-verbal reaction such as "Mmm" and "Uh huh".
- Using verbal reinforcements such as "I see" and "Yes, go on".
- Offering emphatic statements such as "I understand".
- Asking questions to clarify or gain greater understanding.
- Summarising what has been said, with phrases like "Let's stop there and go over what we have been through so far" or "I would like to make a list of the main points that you've made, as a reminder of what has just been covered"
- Paraphrasing what has been said with phrases such as "So you are saying that...." or "Would it be true to say that you mean..."

The benefits of active listening:

- It lets the speaker know that they are being attended to.
- It prevents the speaker making false assumptions about being understood.
- The speaker receives feedback in the impression being made.
- The listener stays involved, instead of switching off until it is their turn to say something.
- It enables the listener and the speaker get to the heart of the matter very quickly.
- It helps both parties to decide what needs to be done.
- It demonstrates that the listener values what the speaker is saying.

## 3 Use the broken record technique

- This is where statements are made, and repeated, calmly and clearly.
- If the other person responds aggressively, changes the subject or refuses to listen, the statement is repeated.
- The tone of voice is calm and polite.
- This technique helps to concentrate the mind of both people on the issue, and will help prevent you from being manipulated into the other person's strategy, or having your objection dismissed out of hand.



#### 4 Strive to find a workable compromise

- This is useful in deadlock situations.
- It can lead to discussion and negotiation and lay down foundations for agreement, where there is a log jam.
- You have to give something in order to get something, e.g. "I realise we're stuck in this so if you are prepared to reconsider the timings, I will rethink my deadline"
- Workable compromise can open tightly shut channels of communication when it is done calmly and genuinely.



## 14 - Conclusion

Being a good manager is one of the most challenging roles you can take on. It involves being continuously in the middle and having to meet the expectations of many individuals and groups, as well as yourself.

This can only be achieved if you have very clear objectives, both for your work operation as well as for your personal ambitions. After that, the range of skills you require is vast.

You must be competent in your knowledge and understanding of the processes in which your staff operate. You need this knowledge and skill to have credibility with your staff and to enable you to carry out the task management necessary; the planning and controlling which achieve the results.

You must also be an excellent communicator; able to give clear instructions, build relationships, handle conflict, motivate your staff to greater performance and deal with the people who cause difficulty.

Your staff need clear objectives and constant feedback on their performance. There will also be a need to manage poor performance. It is up to you to make sure that each member of your staff is performing to the required standards and to do something about it if they are not.

Finally, you must be able to build, develop and maintain team work amongst your staff. This requires you to take the role of facilitator or helper, encouraging the people who work for you to take increased responsibility and ownership, while you give them the scope to fulfill their potential.

