

Practical people management, step by step



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Help your managers to embrace their right to manage performance

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Help your managers to embrace their right to manage performance

“I don’t feel managing performance is appropriate for my staff, some of them are more experienced than I am – who am I to say what good performance in their job looks like?”

So frequently the managers I work with seem to feel the need to gain permission to undertake probably the most important part of their role – managing P&S. They clearly know there are expectations of them as managers (well, some at least do) but they don’t feel they have somehow earned the right to manage.

Employees’ rights at work are a well debated and largely well understood concept. Most managers have some understanding of the organisations legal duties to the care of employees. And rightly so. Most managers, however, spend little time thinking about their ‘rights’ as managers of people’s performance. Here are some of the rights I believe managers must have:

The managers’ rights

- To explain and agree standards of performance for the job
- To expect their staff to consistently meet the agreed standards for the job
- To monitor performance against the standards
- To give focused specific feedback on performance – the positive and negative aspects
- To identify areas of under performance and to address those areas of under performance with their staff member
- To expect the staff member to take agreed actions to improve areas of under performance.

I guess you can think of some more?

Can I bring your attention to the word ‘agree’ in the above statements? I’m not suggesting here that managers have the right to demand, cajole or bully good performance out of their staff. I am suggesting that managers have the right to explain clearly and directly their expectations of their staff and to have positive assumptions about their staff’s willingness to perform to a high standard.

I've introduced the concept of 'management rights' to many managers and many of those managers have told me that understanding this concept has had a profound impact on their confidence. If we don't believe we have the right to do anything, are we ever going to do it consistently and well?

Practical Action Options

You could:

- a) Open a conversation with the managers in your business around the issue of the right to manage – what they perceive to be their rights and identifying any barriers to asserting those rights
- b) Agree what rights the managers your business have and what asserting those rights would look like in practice
- c) Develop a 'managers rights' charter
- d) Use the concept of right to manage in coaching sessions with managers who appear reluctant to manage
- e) Contact me to explore the options