

Practical people management, step by step



Joan Henshaw
WWW.LADDERCONSULTING.COM



Help your managers understand why performance management is important to their staff

www.ladderconsulting.com

joan@ladderconsulting.com

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Web www.ladderconsulting.com | **Email** info@ladderconsulting.com | **Tel** 0208 878 8993

Help your managers understand why performance management is important to their staff

"I feel embarrassed about managing performance, we're all friends. They won't like it if start acting 'all managerial'"

There's an interesting assumption, I've heard voiced again and again by managers, which is that people don't actually like 'being managed'. They're afraid their staff will feel patronised, controlled or distrusted if they begin to behave 'managerially'. And nothing could be further from the truth.

What People Want From Their Manager

Here's a question I've asked hundreds of managers and staff members; "What do you, as an employee, want from your manager?" Here are the typical answers:

Clarity / feedback / recognition / communication / learning / praise / assistance / advice / support / responsibility / challenge / clear direction / incentives

I'm guessing you can see that many of these 'wants' are directly related to effective P&S. In fact they quite neatly describe effective P&S. A few examples:

- √ Clarity is the basis of all effective management – clarity of expectations, both the managers and the staff members.
- √ It is almost impossible to give useful feedback without effective performance management. Without the ability to make objective comments based on observed performance against agreed standards how can you?
- √ Recognition, praise, reward, incentives – all part and parcel of effective performance management practice.

Take a look at the research from the savvy people which brings a very different perspective

What the research says

In a Gallup study of performance at unit level, covering more than 200,000 employees across a dozen or more industries, teams that rated managers highly on four factors were more productive and more profitable. They also had lower staff turnover and higher customer satisfaction ratings.

The four factors

- 1) Having a manager who shows care, interest and concern for each of them
- 2) Knowing what is expected of them
- 3) Having a role that fits their abilities
- 4) Receiving positive feedback and recognition regularly for work well done

In a further Gallup study 80% of British workers said they lack any real commitment to their jobs and most blame poor management for their low level of motivation. Workers said they don't know what's expected of them, their managers don't care about them as people, their jobs aren't good fit for their talents and their view counted for little.

So what people really want is...

What people seem to want, and want quite badly, is to be well managed. They want a strong, mutually supportive relationship with their manager based in interest and clarity. No surprise there then. What maybe is more of a surprise is that much of what 'well managed' means is effective P&S management. The manager's role in the satisfaction and the engagement of their staff can't be overstated. Here's a quote that for me sums it up:

"Manager great, company great. Manager terrible, company terrible. That is, even if a company's chosen corporate strategy is exciting, ground – breaking and awe – inspiring, even if the pay and perks are second to none, the workers will still be thoroughly unenamoured with the organization if they simply don't like their own manager"

David Bolchover 'The Living Dead – Switched Off, Zoned Out.
The Shocking Truth About Office Life'

Practical Action Options

- a) Analyse your business
 1. How do you think the staff in your business would rate you / your managers against the four Gallup factors?
 2. If you have data from a staff satisfaction survey, exit interviews, or feedback from staff what does that tell you about the importance your staff place on being 'well managed' and their current level of satisfaction with the way they are managed?

- b) Ask your managers to assess how their staff would rate them / the business against the four factors. Share any data collected from your analysis. Use the outcomes as a vehicle for discussing with your managers the vital importance of their role as performance managers
- c) Incorporate the information at this step into the management team meeting agenda - 'Managing our staff's performance – what exactly is the point?'
- d) Circulate this report, or this section, to your managers asking for comments
- e) Contact me to explore the options.