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The Art Of Peformance Evaluations

Most managers and employees view performance evaluations as necessary but difficult to do. Managers do not look forward to the process and most employees see it as a time when unfair demands or criticisms are made of them. They also see it as a one-sided (biased) view of their performance.

Reflecting on the performance evaluations many employees have experienced, there is good reason for the apprehension they feel about the process, which is the primary reason why evaluations are not done on time if at all. When an employee's performance deteriorates to a level that makes him or her expendable, it is often too late for performance evaluation. Yet if an evaluation is conducted, there is a good chance the employee could be saved. A retained employee increases company moral, reduces costs and increases productivity and profits.

Like many tasks in business, there is need for processes. Accounting needs them, customer service cannot operate without them, inventory management needs them, and so it is with performance evaluations.

Inside This Issue

Are You Hiring Top Talent?

How To Hire Top Talent

One of the biggest problems in businesses today entails making mistakes about who to deploy to perform specific roles within an organization. There are a number of tactics available to assist employers in hiring the top talent to meet the needs of their companies.

First, the company should devise a blueprint for the role that needs to be filled within the company. Rather than hire the well-rounded employee who can fill any role, managers should seek individuals who have specific talents for specific roles. Strive to hire the specialist rather than the generalist.

Conventional hiring practice sets goals to attract those individuals who have graduated from the best schools with the highest grades. However, recent research has shown that this practice does not necessarily lead to recruitment of candidates most suitable to a specific position.

The process should not be about hiring the best person. It should be about hiring the right person. Seek the candidate who has a 90% chance of achieving a set of outcomes that only 10% of a group of people could achieve. This could as easily lead to the young woman who ran her father's company instead of working toward that Harvard MBA. The key is to be sure about the person you are hiring and make sure they will be able to accomplish the goals set forth by your company once they are in the role.

The majority of successful companies are now beginning to use their own networks to source talented candidates for a position.

Processes minimize the influence of personal bias so the focus can be on the task and the outcome of it. One might ask, what measurable results can a manager and employee expect from a performance evaluation session. Below is a partial list of objectives that managers and employees are experiencing.

Performance Evaluation Expectations

- ✓ A bias free appraisal of the job related performance of the employee

- ✓ Review of the employee's performance of specific job related tasks

- ✓ Review of the employee's job related relations with internal and external customers

- ✓ Review of the most effective way for the employee to communicate with his/her manager

- ✓ Review of the employee's communication style, and how it affects those he/she works with

- ✓ Review of comments made about the employee by internal and external customers

- ✓ Review of the best way for the manager to communicate with the employee

- ✓ Review of the employee's perception of his/her work environment

- ✓ Establish clear job related objectives for enhancing the performance of the employee

- ✓ Establish a clearly stated and agreed upon dateline for meeting enhancement objectives

- ✓ Other expectations specific to the position and company culture

When companies benchmark positions to identify the personal talents and technical skills needed for the position, they create a set of key accountabilities the employee needs to adhere to and the manager must use to evaluate the performance of the employee.

Evaluations conducted after an employee has performed badly for a long time (a year or more) will produce a highly biased evaluation.

The greatest benefit for a performance evaluation is to provide employees with clear, unbiased directions and expectations for them to be successful. Managers may gain information about the employee's perception of the expectations that are not correct, *and how to correct them,* during an evaluation review. The need for better listening and communication skills between all parties going forward can be identified as well.

Identifying the key accountabilities of any position and holding the employee accountable for them is vital for building a company's ongoing success. Poor performing employees have impeded the progress of companies in all industries for a long time, which has contributed in no small measure to the current economic condition of our country.

When employees consistently receive accurate information about what is expected of them they perform better, with less stress on them and those they work with. ♦

Performance Evaluations work – they build teams that build successful companies.

Steve Jobs Quotes

"Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn't matter to me...Going to bed at night saying we've done something wonderful...that's what matters to me."
~ The Wall Street Journal (Summer 1993)

"We don't get a chance to do that many things, and everyone should be really excellent, because this is our life. Life is brief, and then you die, you know? And we've all chosen to do this with our lives. So it better be damn good. It better be worth it."
~ Fortune Magazine

In memory of Steve Jobs, American inventor and entrepreneur. Co-founder, chairman, and chief executive officer of Apple Inc.

February 24, 1955 – October 5, 2011

In other words, if possible, hire from within. It is common sense, but not necessarily common practice to stay in close touch with and talk to a company's networks on a regular basis. Finding the right talent can be as simple as asking trusted co-workers and associates the question, "Who do you think I should hire?" There is no better, more successful or more cost effective way to generate a flow of the right talent. But if you don't know what you are looking for in a position, you won't know what to look for in the candidate!

Managers tend to fail at hiring the ideal candidates who possesses the right talents because they do not follow a rigorous enough hiring process. Interviews should walk through a candidate's entire career in chronological order. They will also need to know **how** a person will do the job, **why** they will do the job, and **will** they do the job.

This is the best way available to make a good hiring decision. You are not going to be able to distinguish the real talent from the average performer in a rushed, twenty-minute interview. Taking the extra time at the beginning of the hiring process is well worth the time and effort when that right candidate comes through for your organization.

If you have any questions about this article, or about how we can help you with your current hiring needs, contact us today! ♦

We encourage your participation and comments.

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Stop Wasting Time At The Airport

The Transportation Security Administration's website gives you updates on the average wait time for airport security. It is organized by airport, terminal, and time of day. Now you can avoid arriving too early for your flight and spending too much time in the terminal.

Check it out at: http://waittime.tsa.dhs.gov/index.html

On The Lighter Side

Success is a relative term – it brings so many relatives.

How do you keep a skunk from smelling? Hold his nose.

What did one crocodile say to the other crocodile? What's with the long face?

One Minute Ideas

Turn Negative Into Positive Action

"Learned optimism" – the ability to interpret negative events in positive terms-can boost your productivity. *To give yourself a mental edge:*

❖ **Devise three solutions** to any problem. By forcing yourself to identify a trio of options, you leave less time for anxiety. You'll also gain momentum by seeking more creative solutions.

❖ **Reframe from upsetting situations.** That's better than allowing your mood to deteriorate. *Example:* Replace thoughts of "That customer was so rude" with "That person must really be having a bad day."

❖ **Embrace each challenge** on its own terms. Don't assume problems are here to stay or that negative, unbreakable patterns must block your success.

Source: *Communication Briefings*, as adapted from *Shape*, Weider Publications

harmony
Coaching & Consulting

1650 Faxon Avenue
Memphis, TN 38112

Tel: 901-272-7390

E-mail: bburtch@harmonycc.net

Visit Our Web Site at:
www.harmonycc.net

Exceptional Leaders…*Invite The Truth*

To be effective, leaders must know what is really going on within their organization. Inherent in the nature of organizations and individuals is a tendency toward fear. This fear causes employees to not communicate bad news, lest they be held responsible.

Some leaders' negative reactions to bad news can cause employees to either soft pedal the truth or simply not communicate it. This causes "CEO's disease," the condition of being blind to what is really going on—a sure path to failure as a leader.

Some leaders invite the truth and react to communications in a way that drives out the natural fear that exists in most organizations. They create strategies and develop competencies that create a culture of trust.

They know what is going on, both the good news and the bad news, and can therefore respond appropriately in terms of the needs of the business.

CULTURE
VALUES
BELIEFS
STORIES

Thought Provoker

- ✓ Are you getting the truth?
- ✓ Are you aware of the natural tendency of employees to 'put the most positive slant on things'?
- ✓ Are you creating a culture of trust by your personal style that fosters others to provide ALL the information, both good and bad?
- ✓ How do you react to bad news? Do you kill the messenger?
- ✓ What systems can you put in place now to insure that you get the truth, i.e. all of the information that you need to be successful?

Studies have shown that organizations where fear is at a minimum and good news and bad news flows naturally are the most successful.♦

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Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are being offered to the public by Harmony Coaching & Consulting. Click on the associated link for more information on the program or to register.

Course Title	Date(s)	Time	For More Information/Registration
SHRM Learning System® is the preparation course for the HR Certification Exam *(Every other Saturday)*	**Sep 8 thru Dec 3**	**8:30am - 4:00pm**	www.cbu.edu/shrm
The Coaching Clinic® is a two-day workshop for executives, managers and leaders to experience and learn coaching skills and competencies.	TBD	TBD	www.harmonycc.net/coaching-clinic.php
Leading at the Speed of Trust™ is a two-day workshop for anyone interested in increasing revenues, decreasing costs, enhancing/repairing relationships, or improving their credibility with employees or customers.	TBD	TBD	Email: info@harmonycc.net

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