

ANALYSIS OF NEED FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyze the process of performance management and its impact on strategies employing this practice at workplace. This paper also argues that the appraisal meetings can significantly improve the performance of teams. These meetings provide an opportunity for team members to know about weaknesses and strengths of their team. They can also learn about their individual roles and performances.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of performance has achieved a great significance for achievement of organizational goals. Performance of teams and individuals has become a key element in the analysis of success or failure of any organization which seeks to achieve its targets. Thus performance is not only way in which performance is delivered but it also focuses on the achievement of the goals set by teams (Rees 2004:75). In other words, performance is a process in which rules and procedures are followed to achieve agreed targets. In order to achieve desirable performance, it is important to manage the process of performance.

It is the duty of the team leader to make sure that team members know exactly about what is expected from them. If they do not know about their objectives of tasks the evaluation of their performance would be a fruitless exercise. The team leader has to match the outcome of services provided by his team members in specified time with their role specifications. This exercise will enable the management to examine the performance and to find out what can be done further to improve the services. They can also find out the underperforming areas of team and develop the strategy to deal with them. In this way performance management

can be used as an instrument of team revival and team development. It would have a very positive impact on the culture of organization. There is a great need for performance management in public sector organizations in Pakistan including universities. For instance, in the University of Sindh as an organization, this practice would be very useful in organizing team work and accelerating the efforts to promote efficiency, responsibility and accountability. The aim of this paper is to analyze the process of performance management and its impact on strategies employing this practice at workplace.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT

Performance management is essential for the success of a team and the organization. According to Armstrong and Baron (1998:7), performance management can be used as an integrated and strategic approach to deal with overall success of the organization by developing capabilities of the team members in order to improve their performances. According to this definition, there is a strong relationship between the development of team capabilities and effective performance. It indicates that performance can be improved with the development of skills of team members and enhancement of their knowledge and confidence. Nevertheless, the development of capabilities needs strong motivation. Members of team always need motivation and feedback for the work they do. They need to know how they are performing their duties. They also need to know about the areas they have not performed up to the mark. The team member is like a driver of a vehicle who needs feedback about driving activity in order to improve his skills. This information could be provided by those who drive on the same road or those people who are involved in traffic maneuvering. Similarly, the performance of team member is observed by both the team leader and customers. Feedback from customers about the team or an individual member of team indicates the quality of service provided by team member.

However, sometimes the customers have high expectations about the service which pose several challenges for team. The first challenge for the team is to follow the rules and policy regulations

set out by organization. Their violation is not tolerated in any organization. Thus, every member of team has to abide by rules. The second challenge is to manage customer expectations and promote customer loyalty. In these circumstances team members are always expected to help the customers and find ways where they could give them favours without violating rules of business. Nevertheless, sometimes the big gap between the customer expectations and services they receive causes customer dissatisfaction which affects the feedback about individual member or team. The third challenge for team members is to remain consistent in providing services. The team has to provide all customers same services. Inconsistency in customer service can cause serious dissatisfaction among them. Thus, performance of the team is judged in many ways.

REDUCING COMMUNICATION GAP

The best way is to reduce communication gap between the team members and their leaders by arranging one-to-one meetings to understand the point of views of one another. These meetings could be more useful if they are conducted on a regular-basis. These one-to-one meetings can be used to monitor targets for members of team. In meetings it can be identified that what targets have been achieved so far and what needs to be done if some of them are not achieved. In addition, the meetings are a very important source of learning for both team leaders and team members. For team leaders the meetings are important to know about the basic issues in achieving targets. They also understand the nature of circumstances and challenges faced by their team members. This information can be used to develop collaboration and coordination. Team leaders can also know the causes of weakness and strength of a team. Nevertheless, members of the team also can use this opportunity to discuss their problems with team leaders and express their own point of views about their achievements.

The one-to-one meeting would be conducted after every 6 weeks. The agenda and interview in the meeting would be structured and documented properly. The outcome of the meeting

would be implemented and performance of member of team would be monitored in the light of mutually agreed plan of objectives for the future. The record of meetings would be maintained to provide guidelines for annual appraisal meetings.

MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND APPRAISAL

The performance management is a process to monitor the performance of individual or team and manage it on daily basis. The team leader has not only to provide feedback but also motivation. This helps to manage the performance of team members. Motivation and positive feedback make the team members feel good about the work. Thus, Organizational activities including encouragement, motivation and a process of facilitating learning can enable every member of team to improve his skills (Gillen 1997:4). In order to manage performance of team, the team leader is required to set out the goals and objectives and monitor the performance of his team through positive feedback.

However, the appraisal is normally conducted annually to review the past performance of the team members. It is a summary of past performance of duties. Therefore, appraisal is a process of reviewing performance, setting objectives and making strategies to achieve them. In other words the appraisal focuses on the need to look ahead and plan for the future.

There are four major types of appraisals. They include pay related, performance focused, development focused and a blend of the three. However, the success of appraisal schemes is based on the principles of neutrality and objectivity. The outcomes of appraisal meetings could be misleading if the appraiser is a biased person. Therefore, appraiser needs to review past performance of team members and their achievements objectively. Team members expect fair and judicious decisions from the appraiser because he not only witnesses but also judges performance simultaneously.

This process of appraisal enables both team leader and team member to discuss future objectives and to develop a mechanism to achieve these objectives. It is a very useful activity for the team. It gives feedback to team members about their work and helps them to improve further their performance. In this way, appraisal

schemes contribute positively to team strength. They are also important for organizations to understand the problems and learning needs of teams. In the light of appraisals, strategies can be made to support team members and develop good relationship with them. Appraisals enable management of organization to identify new areas of career developments. For instance, encouraging team members to undertake some courses or trainings to improve their knowledge and skills play a vital role in creating efficiency and peak performance. This encouragement motivates teams to develop positive attitudes for organization. However, follow up action is necessary for success of appraisal schemes. Both the appraiser and appraisees have to share responsibility for implementation. Thus appraisers have to make sure that appraisees are equally responsible for the post appraisal actions. They need to be involved in all post appraisal activities (Fletcher 2004:94).

PLAN FOR APPRAISAL MEETINGS

1. The appraiser has to arrange one to one meeting at a place suitable for both appraiser and appraisee.
2. The appraiser needs to explain the objectives and benefits of appraisal scheme. He should tell the member staff to prepare for their appraisal in order to make most of the appraisal meeting. The appraisees would be able to think about their training and development needs.
3. The appraiser has to explain the scope of meeting and provide overall feedback on the past performance of the appraisee.
4. The appraiser needs to set new objectives for a new financial year.
5. The appraiser needs to discuss personal development needs of appraisee and give him career advices.
6. Before the conduct of meeting the appraiser should be able to structure the content of interview. The interview should start with an open question in order to give full opportunity to appraisee for expressing his ideas. However, following types of questions can be asked by appraiser to make the appraisal meeting useful.

Open question is good for developing conversation. Whereas, probing question is good for discovering more details about any issue. Close question is asked to test the choices of appraise. For instance 'Do you like the job? Nevertheless, other rhetorical questions could be asked in order to engage the appraise.

7. By the end of the meeting both the appraiser and appraise should be able to agree on the future objectives and strategies. In case of underperformance, the appraise would agree that he would undertake personal development plans to improve the performance. The appraiser has to make sure that appraisal form is completed for official record and monitoring purposes. The teams in public sector universities including the University of Sindh can set out objectives for the improvement of their performance according to their own needs however, following examples are given to highlight the process of goal-setting and a plan to achieve the objectives.

PERFORMANCE RELATED OBJECTIVES OF TEAM

Implement and monitor a new Task Objectives Achievement (TOA) policy: Task allocation and completion of task are two components of performance. Thus, it is important to distribute tasks among the members of team in such a way that every member of team can be able to undertake various tasks. This practice would prevent monopoly of some members of team over the important tasks. In order to make sure that all members have equal opportunities of undertaking tasks, the TOA would be implemented within the team. By this every team member would be able to sign at the relevant space to indicate that he completed the task and task oriented responsibilities. This form would be used to monitor the performance of team members.

Service-oriented training for team members who have underperformed: Diverse nature of service has created a need to upgrade skills of the team members who are involved in providing efficient service. Up-gradation of skills is required for dealing with various issues. These issues can be divided into various categories including regular and non regular issues, matters related to students

and members of staff. However, gender and cultural diversity is another determinant for categorizing these issues. Thus, the skills can be honed at various levels. Nevertheless, by the end of the training they would be able to know how to manage various expectations. By the end of training they would be able to use internet to communicate electronically. This would save time used in posting letters to the employees. It would also help to reduce printing letters and forms. In addition, team members would be able to use web portal of the university. They would be able to book their holidays online by logging in the website. In addition, they would be able to print their pay slips and other documents required for official use. Their new additional skills would be monitored through observations.

Conducting Appraisal Meetings: By the end of appraisals, the management would be able to find out the underperforming team members and it would devise strategies to improve their performances. Appraisal meetings will provide an opportunity for team members to discuss their difficulties and learning needs with the manager. The appraiser will also be able to know about the circumstances of team members. This will help him to find out the way of helping them.

CONCLUSION

The performance management has become an important function of the organization. Performance management is a process of goal-setting and a strategy to achieve objectives of performance improvement of the teams. It increases the efficiency of the organizational tasks and improve the delivery of services.

However, performance can be further improved by identifying developmental and financial needs of employees. Financial incentives and good working conditions are main elements of performance improvement. Thus, it is clear that the major constituent elements of success of the organization include the objectives, coordination, cooperation and capacity building within a team.

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