Providing Effective Performance Feedback and 360 Performance Appraisal

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Performance management involves an ongoing process of establishing goals, evaluating the activities undertaken to achieve those goals, as well as assessing the final outcomes within an organization. This ongoing process allows management to assess the performance of the employees within the organization and how effective the organization is in meeting their strategic goals.

The performance management process can take many forms, ranging from periodic performance reviews between the manager and subordinate to 360 degree performance appraisals which involve gathering information from varied sources such as from peers, subordinates of the individual being assessed and maybe even from external clients. Typically, these performance reviews are conducted on a formal basis whereby the manager will meet with the subordinate on a periodic basis to assess the performance over that period and to provide feedback to the subordinate. The feedback component of the performance review process is very important as it provides subordinates with information regarding the areas in which they meet expectations or excel as well as areas where they may require further development. These provide advice and guidance for improving their performance. When conducted properly, this feedback process can serve as a source of encouragement and motivation.

With this in mind, it is critical for organizations to provide effective feedback during their performance review processes. This is done by providing specific feedback on behaviours that can be changed so as to improve performance. General feedback regarding possible negative behaviours would likely undermine the confidence of the employee and may cause the employee to become more defensive. Thus it would be more effective to provide examples of ideal behaviour that would help to improve performance. It is also important to maintain the confidence levels of the employee by providing them with support and encouragement in their capacity to improve and meet their potential.

Another point to keep in mind for performance reviews is to ensure that the process is not directed at criticizing the employee. It should focus on problem solving and identifying potential solutions in a

collaborative manner. In this way, the employee will not feel that they are being criticized on his or her job performance thus enabling both parties to have a discussion to identify possible ways for that performance to be improved. Even when covering performance issues, it is very important to treat employees with respect so that they do not feel that they are being personally criticized.

Although performance reviews are commonly conducted formally on a periodic basis, the inclusion of informal performance reviews can be of considerable benefit. This allows the managers and subordinates to meet on a more frequent basis to discuss their ongoing processes, identify performance issues and provide advice regarding potential solutions. This can be especially useful for employees dealing with new duties and responsibilities when feedback is provided in a timely manner and immediate remedial solutions can be explored instead of waiting for the formal performance review period when such feedback may not be as urgent or relevant.

These are just some suggestions whereby organizations can help to mitigate some of the stigma and negative public perceptions that are widely held regarding performance reviews. In addition, the motivation benefits that are associated with providing effective feedback during performance reviews can improve both individual and organizational performance.