

## ***Managing People in a Small Organisation***

### ***Introduction***

The nature of management in Small organisations is unique. One person may be in charge of almost every aspect of management, including the management of personnel. This paper is prepared, with tips to refresh the minds of employees who hold leadership positions and also intervene on employees concerns and welfare of the group.

To manage people in a work environment requires the ability to recruit, develop, motivate and maintain people to work for the organisation. The manager should have experience to organise and to control teamwork, to direct and inspire, and to handle problems which may arise. Sometimes, people join an organization through voluntary (free will) or legally binding (contract). Whether recruited or voluntarily working for an organization, the aim is to contribute to the attainment of the organization's objective, through carrying out assigned tasks.

### ***Demands on the employee***

People come to a work group with three sets of demands on them. These are the family demands, the community demands and the work place requirement.

#### ***1. Family demands***

They relate to spouse, children's and relationship demands. While the supervisor manages the worker in a work place, the worker manages their own families.

Knowledge of family status helps to guide the manager to know how to better handle work relationships with each worker. A manager who cares about performance and welfare of the worker must be able to appreciate each employee's family situation and how they affect the worker in the work place.

#### ***2. The community demand***

As a member of the community, the worker has societal obligation. These would include the payment of taxes, community contributions (especially in the developing states), and social responsibilities towards other members of the society. Responsibility for social and environmental justice and human rights

#### ***3. The organisation's work requirements***

The organizational chart expresses job responsibilities through the organisation.

Basically, work requirements are enshrined in the individual's job description. They dictate the roles and responsibilities of each worker. High performing workers (Workers with consultative initiative will work beyond the job description).

These categories of workers are the most sought after in an organization. They are capable of setting standards for others to follow. They may modify objectives through creative initiatives, and this through consultations with hierarchy. Workers of this category may change jobs within short intervals.

They are a source of inspiration to the manager, and the driving force that underpins attainment of objectives. They are recognized and motivated. Recognised performance is repeated, but when the organization does not recognize individual achievements, that person may be de-motivated with declining performance.

#### ***4. The Manager and staff performance***

The manager acquires responsibilities of their job position through accepting the job, by virtue of which they are required to perform according to the requirements of the job position. Once assuming the position, the manager can delegate work to their immediate assistants but are still responsible for the actions of their subordinates on the tasks so delegated. The manager delegate work to the person they have trained, and who are capable of performing and delivering required outputs. It is for this reason that professional managers move from a “what is” thinking to a “what can be” thinking position, in order to develop the right work force for the organization.

The “what is” factor relates to set standards and rules while the “what can be” factor relates to creative approaches that may bring innovations for attainment of objectives. Once these practical factors are recognised, a manager will fish out pigeon-holed workers (narrow focused employees), to train and develop for better performance.

On the other hand, high performing staff may direct the way forward for the organization, through good performances and initiative. This type of worker may move beyond the boundaries of their job position to the pleasure of the manager. This is a situation where de-jobbing (employee not restricting themselves to rigid job description) is common, and this is tolerated as long as performance assures quality of pre-plan activities.

#### ***5. Good practice***

The manager of a small organisation should recruit qualified staff, carry out induction sessions with new recruits, provide appropriate trainings, appraise, motivate good performance, counsel, coach and encourage slow learners. A good manager is a good leader, setting plans and practically leading the team to accomplishment.

## **6. The managers' responsibilities towards those they manage:**

- Giving feedback (good and bad); this is the most neglected aspect of the supervisors responsibility
- Thanks and praise should be given to employees whenever possible
- Overall performance reviews should be given regularly
- Feedback should be two-way, allowing the employee to make comments on issues.

Above all, the manager should avoid always being looked upon as a critic, where the supervisor is styled a critic, which can demoralize and de-motivate workers who are particularly sensitive to criticisms.

## **7. Checklist 1: How to identify a Poor performer**

- Complaints on decisions taken
- Unwillingness to work in a group
- Low people oriented leadership
- Poor communication ability, lack of proper expression or the inability to communicate clearly
- The know it all, but with no results
- Critics of every situation or decision
- Works around rigid job description

## **8. Checklist 2: How to investigate reasons for poor performance**

When you identify a poor performer, and then investigate as follow:

### *a) Is it a Job requirement problem?*

Check the facts of the job against the requirements of the job. The latter is normally set out in a job description. Is there a variation between the document and the actual work load that merits further investigations? Has the person been persuaded to accept a heavier workload when perhaps he or she was being non-assertive? Therefore you need to compare any yardsticks available with details of work actually being carried out.

### *b) Is it an attitude problem?*

Your discussions with colleagues may well have identified this if it exists. You have to try to find out why the person apparently has the wrong attitude. Is it some else's fault? Can it be put right?

*c). is the problem to do with the individual?*

Is it something affecting their physical or mental health? Is it a problem of confidence or motivation? Is it to do with understanding the job correctly?

*d) Is the situation created because of domestic circumstances?*

Has there been a family bereavement? Is a close relative or friend ill? Are there problems with a partner?

Obviously this area will need to be handled very sensitively indeed, and maybe some expert counseling would help which possibly the organization can provide.

*e).Is there a problem in the work group?*

This possibility should be covered to try to identify such areas as personality clashes or relationship problem with colleagues.

*f) Is there a problem because of an organizational factor?*

Difficulties can be caused for employees by such things as the design of the job, the organization being over-strict or over-lax, perhaps, or may be a lack of appropriate training or induction. Perhaps the poor performer feels that the organization does not care.

*g) Does the situation of the workplace cause problems?*

Many workers make extremely long journeys to work, particularly into the large conurbations. Is this causing problems? If so, could you find others in a similar position that could travel together? Does your organization have a work place nearer to the employee's home? Could the organization provide transport if a large enough group exist to benefit those who live in the same locality?

## **9. Solving the problems of poor performing worker**

Issues concerning a poor performer should be handled with care. Using disciplinary procedures to solve any of these problems should only be considered as the last resort. Maureen Guirdham suggests a course of action, of four stage process as follows:

- Secure the agreement of the individual to the facts identified, the causes and remedy
- Make sure that the consequences of poor performance for everyone in the organisation are fully and clearly understood

- Concentrate on the behavior of the poor performer, not on his or her personality
- Facilitate a mutually acceptable way for the poor performer to put things right for the future. The nature of the problem and the agreed solution must be accepted by the supervisor and the worker.

On their own contributions to improvements on the poor performing staff, V Stewart and A Stewart suggest the following slightly different approach for dealing with a poor performer:

- Agree the standard or amount of work that is expected
- Agree that there has been a gap between actual performance and expected output
- Agree on the size of the gap
- Agree on who has the responsibility for closing the gap, it may be that both the employee and management have action to take
- Agree on the action to close the gap
- Set a time for follow-up meetings

### **10. Checklist 3: Positive work principles**

- Ability to work with other people (teamwork)
- The drive to seek for high productivity
- Ability to use initiative consultatively with hierarchy
- Ability to aspire for personal and organizational growth
- Willingness and initiative to resolve conflict (when it arises)
- The willingness to embrace other workers irrespective of their status
- Willingness to de-job for positive and high performance willingness to work beyond the job description
- The ability to find a need and to fill it

In principle each worker should have only one supervisor or manager that they report to. This is to ensure that each worker has only one thereby avoiding confusion and passing on work instructions. The subordinate delegates work but does not delegate his or her responsibility over the activity.

Managing the worker refers to building, developing, and maintaining working relationships to foster achievement of objectives. This means grouping and assigning activities into distinctive areas of work, so that work is carried out effectively. Formal lines of authority are established.

## 11. Checklist 4: People management skills

- Training, retraining and experience
- Visionary leadership skills
- Team building and cohesion skills
- Setting structures most desirable for the achievement of objectives
- Ability to counsel, coach and assure poor performing employee

The ability to manage a low performing staff relates to counseling and coaching for improvements; controlling team work in ways that gives each team member room for self-improvements and professional development on the job. This is achieved through communicating most appropriately, listening to complaints and workers concerns. Matching individual ambitions with team aspirations and making the most of meeting of obtaining required information for targeted solutions.

### Conclusion

In managing workers and evaluating their performances, the manager should be honest to pinpoint whether they are or they are not part of the worker's short coming. The work situations of today demands that professional life is enhance by learning and acquisition of new knowledge to cause the job to be interesting. It is a fact that skill-poor people are most likely to be financially poor, whether they work for organizations or they work on their own. But hardworking staffs who are motivated to work and deliver results are assets to the organizations. That is why result oriented organizations will try as much as possible to nurture entrepreneurial spirit within the organization, as a leeway to developing core competencies, one of which is good leadership qualities.

### References

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