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Study Notes

MANAGING PEOPLE & SYSTEM CAT Paper

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(Section D)

by

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SECTION D

CHAPTER 13

JOB DESCRIPTION

A job description specifies and describes the role and responsibilities of a particular job. It is a statement of the tasks, responsibilities and relationships involved in a given job. All employees should have a job description that specifies tasks, details responsibilities, sets authority limits, distinguishes accountability and outlines the organisational relationships that the job entails.

The following sections should be included in a job description;

- ◆ The identification of the job, including the job title, the department structure and the number of people doing the job.
- ◆ The purpose of the job – identifying its objectives in relationship to the overall objectives, e.g. to manage the purchasing section responsible for buying raw materials.
- ◆ The position in the organisation – indicating the relationships with other jobs and the lines of responsibility. Often an organisation chart is included here.
- ◆ The principal duties to be performed, with emphasis on key tasks and limits to the jobholder's authority. A more detailed breakdown might be included which identifies specific tasks in terms of precisely what is to be done, with some explanation, both in terms of quantity and quality.
- ◆ Responsibilities – a statement outlining any responsibilities for the resources e.g. staff and budgets.
- ◆ Job requirements and physical conditions – including details of noisy, dirty, dangerous conditions or pleasant office conditions and also hours of work, overtime, unsocial hours.
- ◆ Grade and salary range – details of the rate for the grade, incremental scales, piecework, bonuses and commissions. Additional benefits such as pension schemes and the provision of a company car would also be included in this section.
- ◆ Reporting structure – to whom the job holder reports and at what level, with possible indications about future succession, prospects of promotion or transfer.

FACTORS THAT DETERMINE METHODS OF WORK

The work methods and practices of your department and organisation arise from a number of factors;

- ◆ The nature of the specific task
- ◆ The requirements of the relevant laws , regulations and Codes of Practice established to ensure that tasks are completed safely, fairly and in accordance with the rights of individuals and society.
- ◆ The requirements of organisational policy, formulated to reflect the organisation's values, culture and intentions.
- ◆ The requirements of the organisation's systems, procedures and rules developed so that standard, safe, predictable and dependable methods are used to encourage everyone to work together towards achieving the objectives of the organisation.
- ◆ Formal instructions from people in positions of authority. Where there is no set policy, procedure or legal constraint, a manager can largely determine how things are done.
- ◆ Informal ground rules or customs, developed over time by the work group or the organisational culture.
- ◆ Methods of communication and coordination in place within the structure of the organisation – designed to ensure that all sections of the organisation are pursuing common objectives and that duplication of effort is avoided.

Procedural Manuals

Many organizations have a procedural manual which is useful source of information and a point of reference in case of dispute

This contains the following information;

- ◆ The organisation structure
- ◆ Product and services
- ◆ Health and safety procedures
- ◆ Disciplinary and grievance procedure

PERSONAL TIME MANAGEMENT***“Time is Money”***

the key principle of time management can be depicted as follows;

***Goals;*** Objective

Goals need to be

SPECIFIC

ATTAINABLE

MEASURABLE

REALISTIC

TIME BOUNDED

Action Plan; written action plans are required in order to achieve goals.

These need not be lengthy or formal plans.

They start with;

- Notes
- Lists
- Flowcharts

Priorities; Priorities involves arranging all the tasks facing you at the same time in order of preference.

What dictates preference?

What makes an item high priority?

- If it has to be completed by a deadline
- If other tasks depend on it
- If other people depend on it
- If it is important

Routine priorities include

- Weekly payroll
- Accounting reports
- Year end accounts

System for deadline

Monitor work for unexpected demand

Adapt your schedule accordingly

Request any assistance that you might need

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Focus;

One thing at a time

If a task cannot be completely finished in one session, complete everything that it is in your power to complete at that time and use a follow up system to make sure that it is not forgotten in the future.

Make sure that everything that you need is available before you start work.

Before you start a task clear away everything from your desk that you do not need for that particular task.

Urgency

Do not put off large, difficult or unpleasant tasks simply because they are large, difficult or unpleasant

Think for a moment about how you behave when you know something is very urgent.

Organisation

An ABCD theory:

Act on the item immediately

B in it, if you are sure it is worthless, irrelevant and unnecessary

Create a definite plan for coming back to the item: get it on your

Schedule, Timetable, To do list

Delegate it to someone else to handle

Techniques to Manage Time Effectively;

There are a number of things to bear in mind when trying to manage your time effectively. Firstly it is important to recognize that your use of time can be affected by the nature of the job you are doing, by your own personality and also by your colleagues and how they influence you and place demands upon you.

When planning your time you will need to identify your key tasks – those tasks that are most relevant to achieving your objectives. This is like sorting out what you must do, what you could do and what you would like to do. Once you have identified your key tasks you need to priorities these in terms of their importance, the time needed to complete them and against any deadlines or specific time spans. Once you have prioritized you can then schedule your work, or set out a timetable for completion. It is sometimes helpful to assign start and end times to tasks. It is important to include ways of controlling your time and the plans you have made for using it effectively.

This means that you will need to minimise disruption by unexpected events and requests. It is also important to monitor how you actually use your time – keep a note of how you spent your time and how valuable you think time spent on specific activities was. Also make a note of typical interruptions so that you can develop strategies for either avoiding these or dealing with them as effectively as possible if they cannot be avoided

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PERSONAL WORK PLANNING

Work planning, as the term implies, means planning how, when and by whom work should be done, in order that objectives can be efficiently met.

All levels of management are involved in work planning. At the top level, decisions are made on what to do, and as you come down the hierarchy the plan is developed to incorporate how it is to be done, when and by whom.

The basic steps in work planning for a department include the following:

- (i) The establishment of departmental priorities, for example making decisions around which tasks and activities are important and/or urgent.
- (ii) Scheduling or timetabling tasks and allocating them to different individuals within appropriate timescales (e.g. continuous routine work and arrangements for priority work with short-term deadlines), to achieve work deadlines and attain departmental goals.
- (iii) Coordinating individual tasks within the duties of single employees or within the activities of groups or individuals so that both individuals and teams can work as effectively as possible within a department.
- (iv) Establishing checks and controls to ensure that priority deadlines are being met and that work is not falling behind, and that routine tasks are achieving their objectives.
- (v) Agreeing the mechanism and means to reschedule ordinary work within the department to facilitate and accommodate new, additional or emergency work by drawing up contingency plans for unscheduled events.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PERSONAL WORK PLANNING.

PERSONAL WORK PLANNING AIDS include lists and checklists, bar charts, precedence networks, action plans, timetables, diaries, and personal organisers.

(i) Lists. Lists are a useful way of identifying and remembering what needs to be done and of monitoring how you have got on. Lists can be used to plan a coming week and can also be generated on a daily basis. You can prioritise items on a list in order of priority or in an order in which you intend to deal with the items on the list. Lists can help to keep you focused if you stick to what is on the list and don't do anything that is not on your list for the day/week. At the end of each day/week it can be useful to take all of the items on the list and transfer them to the list for the following day/week. The physical act of writing tasks down on paper is an important part of the process and helps fix them in your mind.

(ii) A checklist is a particular type of list that allows ticking or checking off each task as it is completed. Checklists can be helpful if you need to indicate when you start and finish an activity, or even for the stages of an activity (for example where a particular document is at a given date) – or elements of all of these.

(iii) Bar charts. A bar chart has two main purposes: firstly to show the time needed for a personal work activity, and secondly to display the time relationship between one activity and another. Bar charts can be especially useful for checking the time schedules for a number of individual activities that are interdependent. A bar chart can show the overall progress of a project or a piece of work to date, thus assisting in monitoring the progress attained at an individual stage of a multistage process.

(iv) Precedence networks or time schedules. These are helpful if you are having difficulty converting your list or checklist into a workable sequence of personal actions. A simple precedence network shows which activities need to be completed before others. A major advantage of this approach is that it allows you to show when a number of activities need to be done at roughly the same time.

(v) Timetables and diaries. These are useful to remind you of key times and dates, to remind you to undertake advance preparations or follow up actions and to help you to allocate and coordinate your time effectively.

(vi) Personal organisers (including electronic ones) are often a combination of timetables and diaries with additional features such as the ability to store contact details, notepad and file management facilities.

(vii) Software packages such as Microsoft Project and Outlook, which ease the task of planning by enabling changes, updates and projections to be produced quickly. Once data has been entered, bar charts, networks and reports can be produced.

MANAGING RESOURCES

Every task and every moment required organization's resources.

Obtaining Resources

Identifying appropriate resources required to meet work demands.

Requisitioning resources in time to maintain workflow and meet deadlines.

Monitoring the usage rate of resources, in order to re-supply without interruption to workflow

Organizing Resources

Ensuring that regularly used resources are conventionally accessible. Clearly labeling, indexing and separating resources for ease of identification.

Maintaining resources

Storing, using and cleaning resources in such a way as to preserve efficient working and longevity. Monitoring the condition of resources and replacing those which are no longer fit for their purpose

Mobilizing resources

Allocating the right resources to the right processes at the right time to meet work demands efficiently and effectively. Sharing or coordinating resources to meet the need of others. Adjusting resources allocations in the face of new demands, changed priorities or difficulties in meeting deadlines

CHAPTER 14

WORK RELATIONSHIP

A good working relationship allows or facilitates work. A good working relationship allows or facilitates ongoing and mutually satisfying interpersonal relations.

ROLE

roles are sometimes described as part that people play or hats that people wear. People adopt different roles in different circumstances. Roles define who a person is in these circumstances and in relation to others. Roles have certain characteristics associated with them, so that a style of behaviour is expected of a person in a given role.

An important skill in working with others is being able to identify two things.

- ❖ What roles other people play and what role should be in relation to them
- ❖ The behaviour and role designs expected of you in a given role.

There are three basic relationships between roles,

- ❖ **Subordinate role** you work for and report to others
- ❖ **Equal Role / Peer Role** you work with others towards a shared goal
- ❖ **Authority Role** other people work for and report to you.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AT WORK

Interpersonal skills are skills used in interactions and relationship b/w peoples

examples of interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills are particular types of communication skills and include

(i) Building a rapport or a sense of 'being in tune with' another person, which draws them into a relationship.

(ii) Building trust and respect, so that the relationship is maintained and co-operation facilitated.

(iii) Managing conflict in such a way that the relationship is preserved.

(iv) Persuading or influencing another person to do what you want them to do or to share your beliefs.

(v) Negotiating or bargaining in order to reach mutually acceptable or compromise solutions to problems.

(vi) Communicating assertively, so that you uphold your rights and get your needs met – without violating the rights or ignoring the needs of others.

(vii) Communicating informally, so that you give (and receive) relevant and timely information.

(viii) Communicating supportively, so that you encourage the other person and gain their commitment.

Importance

Interpersonal skills are particularly important for processes such as

(i) Motivation: persuading and inspiring employees to committed performance.

(ii) Teamworking and team building: building trust, encouraging communication, forming co-operative relationships and managing conflict.

(iii) Customer care (including internal customers): winning trust, managing conflict, exchanging information and persuading.

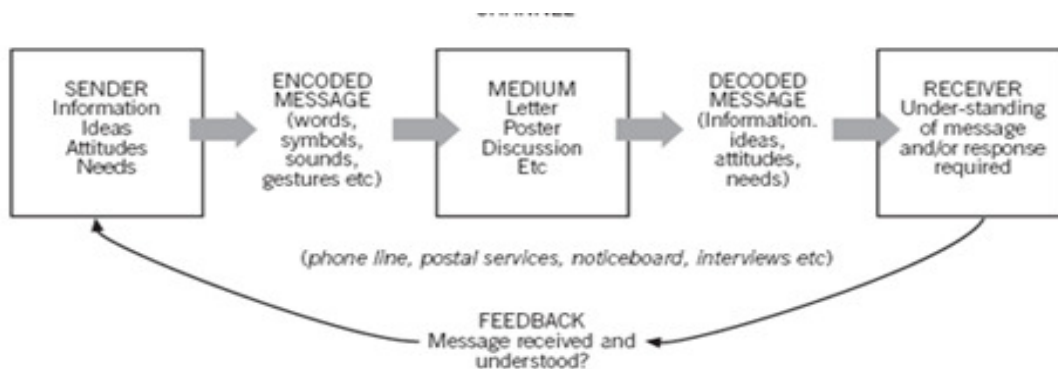
(iv) Human resource management: negotiating, interviewing, conducting appraisals, managing formal disciplinary and grievance procedures.

(v) Negotiation: maintaining relationships despite conflicting interests, working towards mutually acceptable solutions.

(vi) Workload management: being able to delegate effectively, negotiating assistance, saying 'no' assertively.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the transmission and exchange of information and is a two way process. Signals or messages are sent by the communicator and received by the other party who sends back some form of confirmation that the message has been received and understood. Encoding and decoding are important elements within the communication process/cycle; words are merely the symbols or 'stand-ins' for your ideas and intentions in communicating. In other situations, a gesture, pictures, symbols or numbers will be the most appropriate to use. Whatever codes are used, it is important that they are understood by both parties. Feedback is another important element in the communications cycle. It is the reaction of the receiver that indicates to the sender that the message has (or has not) been received and enables him or her to assess whether the message has been understood and correctly interpreted. Feedback can range from a smile or a nod to a blank look or a shrug of the shoulders. Feedback can also range from the desired action being taken to no action, or the wrong action, being taken. The communications process/cycle is often represented diagrammatically as follows:



BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

There can be many barriers to effective communication including the following

(i) Distortion – this is the term used for a process through which the meaning of a message is lost in the coding or decoding stages. Misunderstandings may arise from technical or ambiguous language, misinterpretation of symbols and tones of voice.

(ii) Noise – this refers to general interference in the environment of communication which prevents the message getting through clearly. This might be physical noise e.g. passing traffic or machinery operation, technical noise e.g. a bad internet connection or a poor telephone line, social noise e.g. differences in personalities, status or education or psychological noise e.g. anger, stress or prejudice which can distort what is heard.

(iii) Misunderstandings, due to lack of clarity or poor explanation.

(iv) Non-verbal signs e.g. gestures or facial expressions which contradict the verbal message.

(v) Failure to give feedback.

(vi) Overload – a person being given too much information to digest in the time available.

(vii) People only hearing what they want to hear- i.e. being selective in how they receive the message.

(viii) Differences in social, cultural or educational background.

(ix) Poor communication skills on the part of either the sender or the recipient or both.

IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

There are many ways in which the communication system in an organisation could be improved. Depending on the problem, some measures might be as follows:

- (i) Encourage, facilitate and reward effective communication. Status and functional barriers can be minimised by improving opportunities for formal and informal networking and feedback. This means creating a culture where effective communication can take place.

- (ii) Give training and guidance in basic communication skills, including consideration of recipients, listening and giving feedback.

- (iii) Minimise the potential for misunderstanding. Make people aware of the differences in culture and perception and teach them to consider others' viewpoints.

- (iv) Adapt technology systems and procedures to make communication easier; making it more effective through clear mobile phone reception for example or by making it faster by providing laptops for e-mailing instructions or decisions, making it more consistent through regular reporting routines and making it more efficient through reporting by exception.

- (v) Manage conflict and politics in the organisation so that no basic unwillingness exists between business units or departments.

- (vi) Communication is generally improved when interpersonal trust exists – especially between subordinates and superiors.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

All organisations are likely to use some combination of formal and informal communications.

Formal communication channels and systems are usually set up by management within the organisation and would include regular meetings, formal presentations and conferences where both written and verbal information can be presented. These will be considered to be legitimate forms of communication and will be sanctioned by the organisation i.e. they will be officially recognised by the organisation. The larger the organisation, the more likely it is to have more formal communication channels and systems.

Informal communication channels are much less structured and would include informal telephone conversations, discussions in the staff canteen or any other form of informal contact with colleagues, supervisors and managers. Informal communications usually take place outside of the more formal organisation structures and processes that have been set up by management.

Advantages of formal communication

Some of the advantages of formal communication are that they are recognised by all members of the organisation, they form part of the overall command and control structure of the organisation, they are based on legitimate and accepted power bases within the organisation; they provide effective co-ordinating mechanisms, they provide records and evidence of points of agreement and disagreement and of decisions made, they are transparent and available for all. However, there are also disadvantages to formal communications and some of these are as follows: they can be time consuming and involve an unnecessary amount of people; they may act merely as a 'rubber stamp' for issues and procedures that have been agreed informally; they can become unwieldy.

Disadvantages of formal communication

The advantages of informal communications are that they are more flexible and responsive, they permit speedier decision-making, they permit all members of the organisation to contribute and participate, and they can identify issues of concern within the organisation. The disadvantages include the fact that they may conflict with the formal communication system and recipients may receive mixed messages; they may be used subversively, they may be biased and inconsistent, they may encourage rumours, or they may lead to too much information being available and cease to be effective coordinating mechanism

FORMAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

There are many forms of communication within an organisation, both formal and informal. Formally communicated information often flows in one of three main directions: downwards, upwards and lateral. However, all organisations also have informal communication channels and management must understand their importance.

Formal communicated information flows in three main directions.

Downwards This form of communication is often the one most easily recognised and understood. The purpose of downward communication is to give specific directives, to provide information about procedures and practices and to provide information about work practices. It also serves to tell employees about their performance and provides information on organisational and departmental objectives.

Upwards communication is generally non-directive in nature and often takes two forms: personal problems or suggestions and/or technical feedback as part of the organisation's control system.

Lateral or horizontal. Traditional communication assumes a hierarchical structure with only vertical communication, however horizontal communication has become important and necessary in less formal organisations. It takes the form of coordination with departmental managers or supervisors meeting regularly, problem solving with department members meeting to resolve an issue or information sharing and it also describes interdepartmental sharing of ideas or conflict resolution where there is a need to resolve interdepartmental friction.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The *grapevine* and *rumour* are the two main types of informal communication.

The grapevine is probably the best known type of informal communication. All organisations have a grapevine and it will thrive if there is lack of information and consequently employees will make assumptions about events. In addition, insecurity, gossip about issues and fellow employees, personal animosity between employees or managers or new information that has not yet reached the formal communication system, will all drive the grapevine.

Rumours are the other main informal means of communication and are often active if there is a lack of formal communication. A rumour is inevitably a communication not based on verified facts and may therefore be true or false. Rumours travel quickly (often quicker than both the formal system and the grapevine) and can influence those who hear them and cause confusion, especially if bad news is the basis of the rumour. Managers must ensure that the formal communication system is such that rumours can be stopped, especially since they can have a serious negative effect on employees.

To get the best out of people, managers need to have effective communication skills. Professional accountants as managers need to understand the difference between ***aggressive and assertive behaviour***. Often an exchange of communication can be interpreted as a belligerent response from an employee. However, a slight difference in approach can communicate different feelings and achieve a more positive result.

Aggressive behaviour is competitive and directed at defeating someone else. It is standing up for oneself at the expense of other people. It is defending one's rights but doing so in such a way that violates the rights of other people. Aggressive behaviour ignores or dismisses the needs, wants, opinions, feelings or beliefs of others.

Characteristics of aggressive behaviour include excessive 'I' statements, boastfulness, and the individual's opinions expressed as fact, threatening questions or postures from the individual, sarcasm and other throw-away remarks and a constant blaming of others.

Aggressive behaviour can be self defeating. It may cause such antagonism in the others in the organisation that they will refuse to co-operate or work with the person showing aggressive behaviour.

Assertive behaviour on the other hand is based on equality and co-operation. It involves standing up for one's own rights and needs but also respects the rights and needs of others. It is not overbearing or aggressive but can be described as clear, honest and direct communication.

Assertive individuals defend their rights in a way that does not violate another individual's rights. They express their needs, wants, opinions, feelings and beliefs in direct and appropriate ways.

Characteristics of assertive behaviour include statements that are short, clear and to the point, distinctions made between fact and opinion, suggestions weighted with advice and evidence. Constructive criticism is the norm and offered without blame or assumptions. Questions to establish the wishes, opinions and thoughts of others are used as ways of getting around problems. There are no 'ought' or 'should' conditions, the first statement is often held, the individual's own feelings are expressed and not those of others. Assertive behaviour can be successful if it displays a willingness to deliver a mutual compromise as an aid to achieving a clear objective.

COUNSELLING

Counselling can be defined as ‘when a person agrees explicitly to offer time, advice, guidance and support to another person (or persons) temporarily in the role of client; in the organisational context, the client being a fellow employee or subordinate.’ It may be used in giving career development advice and in coaching and mentoring staff.

Requirement for Counsellor

In assuming the role of the counsellor, the manager should be able to:

- help others to identify problems, issues and possible solutions to problems
- adopt a passive role and avoid leading or suggesting
- encourage reflection and discussion of past issues
- allow the employee to lead and talk around issues
- use open questions to help the employee explore ideas and feelings
- maintain active listening and not interrupt the employee
- speak only to clarify issues and elicit answers when appropriate

Advantages of Counselling

For the organisation, the advantages of counselling are that:

- it provides a confidential service to the employee to discuss problems
- allows human resources policy to be developed based upon an understanding of individual problems
- provides a service to external agencies to assist with personal problems if appropriate
- prevents under performance and increases commitment
- demonstrates organisational commitment to the employees
- demonstrates commitment for particular matters such as career development, redundancy or retirement

CONFLICT IN ORGANISATIONS

Conflict takes place in organisations because they function by means of adjustments and compromises. People's views often conflict because individuals and teams have their own goals, interests and priorities which may not always be compatible. In addition there can be personality clashes. Conflict can arise when there is change because change may be seen as a threat to be challenged or resisted. Power and resources in organisations are limited and people compete for them - this can also lead to conflict. There may also be differences and incompatibilities of work methods, timescales and working style so that individuals or teams frustrate each other with apparent lack of co-ordination. Poor communication can often lead to conflict.

Resolving conflict approach

This approach suggests that there are three basic ways in which a conflict or problem can be worked out: win-lose, lose-lose or win-win.

- ◆ Firstly, win-lose – this is quite common and describes a situation where one party gets what it wants at the expense of the other party.
- ◆ Secondly, lose-lose – this describes a situation where neither party gets what it really wanted – in essence a poor compromise. This is often a common outcome to resolving conflict.
- ◆ Thirdly, win-win – this is not necessarily common but working towards it often leads to the best solution. It describes a situation where both parties get as close as possible to what they really want. It is critical to this approach to fully understand what both parties really want, and what they really don't mind giving up.

Factors

Conflict often arises within and between teams, because of a number of factors.

- (a) Power and resources are limited (and sometimes scarce) in the organisation. Individuals and groups compete for them, fearing that the more someone else has, the less there will be to go round.
- (b) Individuals and teams have their own goals, interests and priorities – which may be incompatible.
- (c) There may be differences and incompatibilities of personality between individuals, resulting in ‘clashes’.
- (d) There may be differences and incompatibilities of work methods, timescales and working style so that individuals or teams frustrate each other with apparent lack of coordination.

Competition & Conflict

Differences and competition by themselves do not lead directly to conflict, they can be positive forces; however, they can escalate or deteriorate into destructive conflict if:

There is poor or limited communication

assumptions go unchallenged, misunderstandings are not clarified and feelings are ignored.

There is poor coordination

working relationships are not managed or structured and so are subject to interpersonal problems or unchecked competition.

There are status barriers

problems in the relationship are glossed over by the superior asserting authority.

Work demands put pressure on individuals and teams

competition may escalate, feelings may become less manageable under stress and there may be little time allowed for interpersonal problem solving.

Constructive Conflict

Conflict which is constructive can lead to outcomes which can be seen as beneficial to the organisation because it often challenges existing business practices and ideas. It can introduce different ideas, solutions to problems and define power, authority and responsibility limits. It can also encourage creativity, innovation and change and is capable of bringing problems into the open.

Destructive conflict

Destructive conflict can lead to outcomes which can be seen as damaging to the organisation overall. It can undermine personal relationships, distract attention from the task, dislocate group cohesion and alienate individuals and groups from another.

CHAPTER 15

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Accountants as managers should develop and understand the process that links employee performance with organisational goals and organisational success. However, before the process of performance management begins the organisation must itself have developed a clear, planned strategy.

Performance management is a mean of getting better results by managing performance within an agreed framework of goals, standards and competence requirements. It is a process to establish a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to managing and developing people in order to achieve it.

The process of performance management typically involves five stages:

Stage One – identify and describe the essential job functions and competencies and relate them to the objectives of the organisation as laid out in the corporate plan.

Stage Two – develop realistic and appropriate performance standards which will form the basis of a performance agreement.

This defines the expectations of the individual or team and includes the establishment of performance standards and indicators, together with the skills and competencies needed.

Stage Three – draw up an individually agreed performance and development plan. This details the action needed to improve performance and involves identification of areas in need of development, agreement on performance and development and training requirements.

Stage Four – performance is evaluated throughout the year, counselling and guidance is given as appropriate. Activity requirements are updated and control action taken. Communicating constructive performance evaluation is important as is the giving and receiving of feedback about performance.

Stage Five – the performance review. At an agreed time during the year, actual performance is measured against the agreed performance plan. The meaningful part of stage five is the planning and providing of education and development opportunities to build upon and improve employee performance in the future.

Appraisal

The purpose of any appraisal system is to improve the efficiency of the organisation by ensuring that the individual within it are performing to the best of their ability and developing their potential for improvement

Key stages of the appraisal interview process

The four key stages of an appraisal interview are:

prior preparation,
the interview itself,
gaining commitment,
follow up actions.

There are a number of **activities and actions** that might take place at each of the four stages.

(i) Prior preparation. At the preparation stage it is important that the appraiser ensures that the time and place planned for the interview are appropriate and that there will be no interruptions. The appraiser should ensure that he/she has all of the information needed to be able to conduct the interview effectively e.g. he/she should review the employee's history and any previously agreed targets or objectives. Other sources of feedback should be consulted if necessary e.g. liaison with other work teams or consultation with other department managers if the appraisee has been involved in more than one area of the business. Finally it is important that the appraisee is given time to prepare and to undertake their own self-appraisal before the interview and to gather any information that they may need.

(ii) The interview itself. It is important that the interview is seen as a two way process and exchange. The appraiser must be able to demonstrate effective listening skills. The employee should be encouraged to share views freely and to review his/her work performance objectively and honestly. Any problems or development needs should be identified.

(iii) Gain commitment. At this stage it is important to agree a plan of action that both parties can agree and commit to. There may be actions for both parties and it is important that these are recorded accurately. Usually at this stage all of the associated appraisal documentation is completed and development plans are put in place.

(iv) Follow up. This is an important stage of the appraisal interview process and involves making sure that any agreed actions are carried out and that progress is monitored. It also involves making sure that both parties are kept informed of progress.

Disadvantages of Appraisal

There can be many reasons why the outcomes of an appraisal system are not satisfactory, including the following. There can be uncertainty, lack of clarity and lack of a shared understanding regarding the overall objectives of the appraisal system. Sometimes appraisals are seen as confrontational or as an opportunity to tackle major problems which have not been dealt with effectively in the past. This means that the overall purpose and objective of the appraisal is not achieved and people do not approach the appraisal with a positive attitude. In these circumstances the outcomes are not always satisfactory e.g. it is not always possible to reach agreement on performance levels or to get objective feedback. Feedback at an appraisal is often delivered badly, the appraisal may be based on most recent performance and not on the whole year and there can be a lack of attention to the development needs of the employee.

Sometimes appraisal can be seen as a one sided process, where the interview provides an opportunity for the manager to sit in judgement on the employee. This can lead to the employee feeling threatened and he/she is put on the defensive. In some cases, the introduction of an appraisal system can lead to increased labour turnover.

Appraisal can sometimes be seen as nothing more than an informal, friendly chat with no real purpose or outcome. Some managers may be embarrassed by the need to give feedback and may do so inappropriately. In some organisations, the appraisal system is over bureaucratic and involves a great deal of form filling. This can lead to it being seen only as a form filling exercise, with no real outcomes. In some cases, organisations do not allocate sufficient resources to the appraisal system; this means that development needs might be identified but cannot be fulfilled. The underlying purpose of the appraisal, to improve individual and organisational performance, can be overlooked.

APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

Appraisal systems are central to human resource management and understanding the difficulties of such schemes and the correct approach to them is necessary if the appraisal process is to be successful and worthwhile.

The manager conducting the interview might base it on one of three approaches.

The Tell and Sell Method. The manager explains to the employee being appraised how the appraisal assessment is to be undertaken and gains acceptance of the evaluation and improvement plan from the employee. Human resource skills are important with this approach in order for the manager to be able to provide constructive criticism and to motivate the employee.

The Tell and Listen Method. The manager invites the employee to respond to the way that the interview is to be conducted. This approach requires counselling skills and encouragement to allow the employee to participate fully in the interview. A particular feature of this approach is the encouragement of feedback from the employee.

The Problem Solving Method. With this method the manager takes a more helpful approach and concentrates on the work problems of the employee, who is encouraged to think through his or her problems and to provide their own intrinsic motivation.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

The appraisal system should be well constructed and fair to both the individual and the organisation. However, there are a number of barriers, often because employees see the appraisal as one or more of the following:

Confrontation due to lack of agreement on performance, badly explained or subjective feedback, performance based on recent events or disagreement on longer term activities.

Judgement the appraisal is seen as a one sided process based entirely on the manager's perspective.

Chat is the worst of all worlds. The appraisal interview is seen as an informal, loosely constructed and badly managed conversation without purpose.

Unfinished business is when the appraisal is not seen as part of a continuing process of performance management.

An annual event when the appraisal is seen as largely irrelevant and simply an event to set annual targets that quickly become out of date.

CHAPTER 16

BENEFITS OF TRAINING

There are many benefits of training to **organisations**, including:

(i) Increased motivation. Training programmes can increase commitment to the organisation's goals, by satisfying employee's self-actualisation needs.

(ii) Managing change. Training can help organisations manage change by letting people know why the change is happening and give them skills to cope with it.

(iii) Developing corporate culture. Training programmes can be used to build the corporate culture or to direct it in certain ways.

(iv) Staff retention. Training can lead to internal transfers and promotions.

(v) Recruitment and succession planning.

(vi) Increased organisational flexibility. Training ensures that people have a variety of skills.

(vii) Fewer accidents and better health and safety.

(viii) Less need for supervision – properly trained people can get on with the job.

(ix) Better job performance resulting from improved skills.

There are many benefits of training to **individuals**, including:

(i) Psychological benefits. The employee feels reassured that he or she is of value to the organisation. Increased skill, knowledge and competence also enhances self-esteem and confidence.

(ii) Enhanced portfolio of skills. Even if not specifically related to the current job, training can be useful to the employee in different contexts and can make a valuable contribution to the enhancement of their CV.

(iii) Training can also provide the necessary skills and competence that an employee needs for future promotion.

(iv) Social benefit. People's social needs can be met through training and they can also develop a network of contacts.

(v) The job itself. Training can help people to do their job better, thereby increasing job satisfaction, promotion and earning prospects.

THE LEARNING CYCLE

Honey and Mumford (building on the work of Kolb) have produced a simple model called the learning cycle, which shows how individuals can turn everyday work into learning opportunities. This is known as experiential learning or 'learning by doing'.



The diagram shows the four stages in the learning cycle. Having a concrete experience – this is about being fully involved in an action or interaction, utilising your current knowledge and skills. This is followed by reflection and reviewing the experience – this is about looking back after the event, describing it and reflecting on how effective you were and what you could do differently or better. People often use personal development journals to write about events and interactions to help reflect on these issues. Concluding from the experience (Kolb referred to this phase of the cycle as abstract conceptualisation) – this is about forming general principles or theories that suggest how you might do something different next time in order to achieve different results. Planning the next steps (active experimentation in Kolb's terms) – this is about planning specific opportunities to apply and test your conclusions in action. This provides a new experience with which to start the cycle again.

DISTINCT LEARNING STYLES

The way in which people learn most effectively differs according to individual psychological preferences, which have been categorised as distinct learning styles. Peter Honey and Alan Mumford have drawn up a popular classification of four learning styles:

Theorists

- (i) Prefer to understand principles.
- (ii) Take an intellectual 'hands-off' approach.
- (iii) Learn best from programmed and structured training which allows time for analysis.
- (iv) Learn best from teachers who share their preference for concepts and analysis.

Reflectors

- (i) Prefer to think things through first.
- (ii) Observe phenomena, think about them and then choose how to act.
- (iii) Need to work at their own pace.
- (iv) Find learning difficult if forced into hurried programmes.
- (v) Produce carefully thought out conclusions after research and reflection.
- (vi) Tend to be fairly slow, (non-participative unless to ask questions) and cautious.

Activists

- (i) Prefer to try things 'hands-on' and require training based on 'hands-on' experience.
- (ii) Deal with practical, active problems and do not have patience with theory.
- (iii) Are excited by participation and pressure, such as new projects.
- (iv) Are flexible and optimistic but tend to rush at some things without undue preparation.

Pragmatists

- (i) Prefer to work with real tasks and problems.
- (ii) Only like to study if they can see its direct link to practical problems.
- (iii) Good at learning new techniques in on-the-job training.
- (iv) Aim is to implement action plans and/or do the task better.
- (v) May discard good ideas which may only require some development.

TYPES OF TRAINING

Computer based training (CBT) sometimes referred to as Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) is a user friendly, hands on self learning system that allows the trainee to learn at his or her own pace sometimes without direct supervision. This type of training often involves the use of interactive pre-set programmes.

Job rotation is aimed at developing employees' wider experience and skills within the organisation. The trainee is moved in succession from one job to another, thus broadening experience and making him or her aware of the range of skills required within the organisation.

Work shadowing is often used to encourage employees with potential for promotion and is a straightforward, inexpensive training method. It involves one employee 'shadowing' or assisting another – often a senior – to learn the skills involved at a higher level.

Coaching involves the trainee being assisted by another, experienced employee. It is a specialised, systematic learning programme based on communication, defined targets and continuous learning. It encourages constructive feedback between the trainee and trainer.

Mentoring, not to be confused with coaching, involves training on a wider range of activities, often aimed at career development of employees at supervisory or management level. The trainee is provided with a development programme and is under close supervision. The mentor should not be the trainee's immediate supervisor or manager.

Job instruction is a one to one method of training through which the trainee is shown how to fulfill a task and then allowed to get on with that task. It is a systematic approach to training involving immediate supervision and by allowing the trainee to complete the task is a cost effective way of training.

TUCKMAN TEAM

Much has been written about the need for teams and team working; they have to develop, mature and often eventually terminate. It is possible to identify distinct stages of development through which teams pass.

B W Tuckman has described these stages as:

Forming – the members meet and decide upon the purpose of the team and how it will operate. At this stage the team is no more than a collection of individuals, finding out about one another and about the task, although objectives may be unclear. This stage is wasteful and time consuming, although essential since the prospective team members are not at this stage comfortable with each other.

Storming – the phrase ‘storming’ is a deliberate reference to this stage which is characterised by conflict. Previous ideas, ideals, norms, attitudes and behaviour is challenged and often rejected. There is competition for the roles within the team. This is a constructive and often fruitful stage with trust developing. If the individuals come successfully through this stage then a stronger team will result.

Norming – the norms under which the team will operate are established. The team is settling down, members investigate ideas and test the reactions of the team as a whole and consequently, norms are established. In addition, it is at this stage that the team establishes patterns of behaviour, levels of trust and the methods by which decisions will be taken.

Performing – the team is now complete and able to perform to its full potential. Difficulties with team roles, individual conflicts and problems of adjustment have been resolved.

Dorming – has been suggested as a final and fifth stage. This is when the team becomes complacent, has lost interest in the task and exists only for self preservation.