

Manmohan Joshi

Redefining People Management

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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INTRODUCTION

Today business is all about people. There is a renewed focus on managing people in an organisation in a way different from what has been traditionally done. This has been necessitated because of various changes in the work environment. The rise of millennials – with their need for recognition, transparency etc. – and the development of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence has transformed the way work is to be performed.

The role of Human Resource professionals as well as other people in managerial positions is undergoing a rapid transformation. All the managers – HR as well as others – have now to play the role of people management professionals. They are expected to manage people – in an organisation – who have varied abilities, likes and dislikes, skills, attributes, aspirations etc. Managers need to possess a myriad of skills in order to manage a wide variety of personalities. They need to have strong people management skills.

This book is an attempt to suggest the rationale and the strategies for redefining people management skills so that business leaders are ready in all respects to be the agents of managing change, and is likely to be useful to existing as well as aspiring employees at all levels.

I would like to thank Sophie Tergeist, my Managing Editor, as well as the entire team of bookboon.com for publishing several of my books, including this one.

Manmohan Joshi

Note:

This e-book contains self-assessment exercises and/or activities at the end of each chapter. As it is not possible to add your own text into an e-book, I recommend that you use a separate notebook for completing these exercises.

1 EVOLUTION AND CONCEPT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Organisations have always had some sort of arrangement in order to look after certain general functions, such as, recruitment and placement of staff, ensuring good personnel relations, arranging training and development, ensuring amicable industrial relations, employee welfare measures etc. The activity of the department that looked after these functions was originally called as Personnel Management. With increasing focus on employees – under the influence of the Human Relations Movement – the name was changed to Human Resource Development, and then again to Human Resource Management. In the current scenario, there is a lot of focus on developing the personnel working in different organisations, which has resulted in this function being termed as People Management.

People management refers to the practice of recruiting, training, engaging and retaining employees to optimize their talent and maximize their productivity. In a broader sense, now every manager – apart from those looking after HR functions – is a People Manager. Hence the nomenclature People Management which is the future of Human Resource Management; it is already happening and several organisations have adapted their functioning in tune with the concept of People Management.

Human resources roles are currently undergoing a transformational shift that is changing the face of HRM to that of People Management. Previously, HR managers were primarily involved in manual administrative tasks – even now in a large number of organisations – such as recruitment, onboarding, performance management etc. Today the role has extended to much broader responsibilities across the entire employee life cycle. HR teams are now getting involved in various tasks related to people management, such as:

- Acquiring the right talent;
- Developing the employee's career;
- Using data and strategic mindset;
- Learning and development facilities;
- Designing a great employee experience and actively working to improve it; and
- Better collaboration with other departments.

1.2 CONCEPT OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

People management is a set of practices that encompass the end-to-end processes of talent acquisition, talent optimization, and talent retention while providing continued support for the employees of an organisation. It covers all aspects of how people work, behave, engage and grow at work.

The following are the key components of People Management:

- **Create:** building a workforce that builds a better future through:
 - Talent acquisition;
 - Choosing the right recruitment platforms;
 - Building effective teams;
 - Creating an employer brand that the candidates trust and want to work with; and
 - Providing an engaging candidate experience.
- **Comprehend:** understanding the present and the future better through:
 - Understanding the people who make up the organisation;
 - Their personalities;
 - Their motivations; and
 - Their personal and career goals.
- **Communicate:** through:
 - Opening channels to connect effectively;
 - Providing right channels of communication; and
 - Ensuring effective and glitch-free modes of communication.
- **Collaborate:** through:
 - Cooperating smarter, faster and stronger;
 - Sharing and delegating; and
 - Assigning responsibilities.
- **Confront:** through optimizing on healthy differences with diversity in a generation, thought, working preferences and actions, people perceive things differently and engage with issues with diversity.

1.3 FACTORS IMPACTING HRM/PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Human resource activities are quite often affected by several factors – both internal and external. These are mainly organisation culture and other internal as well as external influences.

- **Organisation culture:** HR specialists can influence the culture of an organisation. They need to be proactive so that they can anticipate changes and initiate timely and appropriate action. In different organisations there are different environments and different ways of doing things. There may be a lot of “shared beliefs and values”. When this shared understanding becomes a part of collective thinking of the personnel of the organisation, it leads to the establishment of an ‘organisation culture’.
- **Internal and external influences:** The interaction of the management with a variety of internal and external forces leads to the development of a particular organisation culture. Fig. 1/1 below gives an illustration of some important interrelationships which affect and are affected by an organisational culture.



Fig. 1/1 Internal & External Forces Influencing Organisation Culture

The purpose and goals of the organisation are responsible for establishing a culture, which are seen by top management as their ‘vision’. It is affected by the policies, structure, employee skills and attitudes, and leadership qualities. The external environment – comprising customers, competitors, government rules, suppliers, etc. – also play a significant role in shaping the organisation culture. The decision-making ability of the management, establishment of effective communication channels, and the use of latest technology are all the factors that affect an organisation’s culture.

1.3.1 HR/PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN MANAGEMENT

Even though it is the responsibility of HR personnel to look after the people in an organisation, everybody in managerial/supervisory role – managers, supervisors, foremen, etc. – have to perform certain HR functions. They may have to be involved in performing the following additional functions in cooperation with the HR department:

- Employee selection;
- Induction of new employees;
- Training and development;
- Performance appraisal;
- Working practices;
- Job structure;
- Implementing disciplinary procedures;
- Motivating;
- Providing communication channels;
- Implementing safety policy;
- Planning for effects of change on employees, etc.

HR department provides support in performing the above activities.

1.4 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ROLES

HR/People managers are responsible for onboarding new employees and coaching them on updated processes. They use the elements of people management to provide constructive feedback and mentor employees so that they can succeed in their positions. This helps increase the productivity and development of an organisation. Basically, they perform the following functions:

- Getting work done through others;
- Finding solutions for challenges in getting work done;
- Assigning work to team members;
- Prioritizing tasks.

1.5 SUMMARY

- Over a period, the title of the department that looked after certain general functions – such as employee recruitment, welfare, and industrial relations – got changed from Personnel Management to Human Resource Development, then to Human Resource Management. Now the trend is to call it People Management.
- HR teams are now getting involved in various tasks related to People Management.
- People Management refers to the result-oriented strategy and management of people.
- The key components of People Management are: (a) Create; (b) Comprehend; (c) Communicate; (d) Collaborate; and (e) Confront.
- The factors that impact People Management are organisation culture and internal as well as external influences.
- All managers are involved in People Management activities along with HR professionals.

1.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Complete the statements

- a. People Management is the future of _____.
- b. The components of People Management are _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.
- c. HR specialists need to be _____ so that they can _____ changes.
- d. The external environment of an organisation plays a significant role in _____ the organisation _____.
- e. Every manager must perform certain HR _____.

2 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Contrary to common belief, skills for people management are not the run-of-the-mill skills. People Management professionals are expected to manage people – in an organisation – who have varied abilities, likes and dislikes, skills, attributes, ambitions, aspirations, etc. While certain factors can be looked after in a routine manner, a lot of other factors need managers who have developed and practised a myriad of skills in order to manage a wide variety of personalities.

They need to have at least the following skills:

- **Sensitivity to events:** A manager must sense what is going on around them. They are open to information such as facts and figures, and also feelings of other people. Such a manager is able to take appropriate decisions in various situations.
- **Decision-making skills:** The job of the manager is concerned with making decisions. Therefore, the manager must develop decision-making skills and should be able to find a balance between logic and personal feelings.
- **Social skills:** A manager requires interpersonal skills. A manager must develop a number of abilities which are necessary in activities such as communicating, delegating, negotiating, persuading, using authority etc.

The following personal qualities differentiate an effective manager from an average one:

- **Emotional balance:** The manager must be able to maintain emotional balance and self-control so that they may face various situations confidently and successfully.
- **Creativity:** It means that the manager must have the ability to come up with new responses to situations.
- **Mental agility:** The manager must have the ability to grasp problems quickly, to think of many things at the same time, and see the whole situation quickly.
- **Being reactive:** The managers have some objectives to achieve. They cannot plan for everything in advance. Several times they must respond to the needs of the situation which has arisen suddenly.
- **Honesty:** Honesty is essential if a manager wants to build a strong team that trusts them and trusts each other.

2.2 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

There are a number of skills that enable a manager to deal with people working in an organisation. They can be classified as follows (though some could be included in personal qualities and/or vice versa):

- **Trust building:** Building trust is a crucial people management skill to have. Managers who inspire trust, make their team members feel that they have their back.
- **Empathy:** It is the ability to be able to not only put oneself in another person's shoes but rather truly being able to see the world from their perspective and understanding their motivations, fears, challenges, and strengths.
- **Motivation-mapping:** A people manager needs to be an effective motivator. This leads to better decisions.
- **Appreciating:** The process of appreciation – praising and rewarding people for a job well done (beyond monetary bonus) – goes a long way in leading to a culture of gratitude at work.
- **Knowledge-seeking:** In a world where data rules, knowledge is power. As a people manager, having access to the right data is as crucial as what you choose to do with it.
- **Ability to listen:** The bulk of your activity should be listening rather than talking. Take the time to listen to what your employees have to say without interrupting. Then think about what you want to say before responding.
- **An open mind:** An open mind is predicated on the idea that you may not have all the answers, or even the best answer for a given situation. Someone else's notion of what to do may be better than yours. Keeping an open mind creates trust and respect.
- **Patience:** Patience is one of those skills that everyone thinks they have until work really gets tough. It is true that some are born with more patience than others, but you can still develop your ability to keep a level head in a stressful situation.
- **Ability to relate:** Business is all about people. So being able to relate to other viewpoints is vital to success, whether you are a manager or not.
- **Good judgment:** A good judgment is based on sensory signals. If you have a 'feeling' about something that you cannot necessarily explain, use that feeling as a basis for your decision-making.
- **Positivity:** If you want to encourage positivity in your employees, you need to first exhibit positivity yourself.
- **Planning:** People management requires managers to plan for multiple contingencies. This will continue to be important even after a particular pandemic has been neutralized.

- **Mentoring:** Most employees want to progress in their careers and will appreciate a manager who takes the time to mentor them and helps them to succeed.
- **Flexibility:** It means understanding that there are often multiple ways to complete a task. Just because one team member chooses to tackle a problem differently than you would have does not mean that the approach is wrong.
- **Supportiveness:** It is when your team is at their lowest that your support becomes essential. Reassure them. Encourage them. Bring them together as a team. Be the solid foundation they need to feel secure in their abilities again.
- **Accountability:** It means taking responsibility for your work and the work of your employees. Effective managers take responsibility for failure as well as success.
- **Ability to adapt:** Adaptability means rolling with the changing circumstances. Within the business itself, an effective leader with strong management skills needs to be able to adapt their leadership style to the personalities of their team.
- **Problem solving:** Problem-solving is a crucial skill in people management. Not only do you have to solve problems with projects, but you need to work together with employees to come to solutions.
- **Feedback giving:** A good people management requires managers to give feedback – positive and negative. Effective people managers need to provide feedback in an accurate, kind and timely way.

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- **Feedback receiving:** Feedback can come from their superiors, customers, or direct reports. All this information needs to be processed, and the manager determines what they should not change. Using feedback in the proper way results in better people management.
- **Good communication:** It encompasses a wide range of skills, including:
 - Your ability to get along with others;
 - The clarity of what you say; this is particularly important because time is limited, and the overwhelming presence of mobile devices in our society demands constant communication.Effective managers will be as clear as possible in what they say, and will make sure that all employees understand.
- **Emotional intelligence:** A people manager with emotional intelligence looks for when people are at their limits and looks for ways to fix it. Emotional intelligence is a key to effective collaboration in the workplace and will continue to be a critical skill in the future too.
- **Understanding stakeholders:** Employees need a manager's guidance on how to value each stakeholder. Sometimes the stakeholders in a project may not be clear – and this can result in a manager placing the wrong emphasis on project completion. This can put an employee at risk, which is bad people management.
- **Managing performance:** Under the circumstances of WFH, managers must know how to judge an employee's work not by their face time, but by the employee's results. This may be a switch for some managers.
- **Macro-management:** Macro-management – contrary to micromanagement – is an independent style of organisation. Managers step back and give employees the freedom to do their jobs how they see fit. As long as employees reach the desired result, the manager does not have to 'hold their hands', or hover over their shoulders looking for mistakes. This is good for your employees because it gives them the freedom to solve problems, perfect their skills and become the best team members they can be.
- **Leadership skills:** Effective leaders motivate their team to do great things. Give employees what they need to succeed: Be optimistic; give praise where praise is due; lead by example; be confident in your abilities.

2.3 BUILDING PEER NETWORKS

It is important to build peer networks in an organisation. To do so, managers need to do the following:

- Identify those with whom you already have a relationship. Focus on how to help them and develop stronger relationship.
- Identify those who wish to be in your network and why. Think what you can do for them.
- Take initiative. Do not wait for others to approach you, but do not be hasty.
- Identify a mentor. Take your time, assess and then approach. Think whether it will be a successful mentor-mentee relationship.
- Strengthen your relationships and return favours.
- Communicate effectively.
- Be honest in your dealings with people.
- Participate in virtual discussion groups.

The following advantages accrue if you have effective peer networks:

- You are more engaged and better connected;
- You are able to make organisation-wide improvements through consensus and dialogue;
- There is scope for sharing of knowledge and information;
- There is scope for collaborative learning;
- The task of problem-solving becomes easier;

In an organisation there are a lot of people in various departments/sections who are not under your authority. Still, you need their cooperation in order to complete your projects and/or need support for various schemes you want to suggest for further development of your organisation. Given below are some things you can do to influence those not under your authority:

- Look for their values;
- Seek a favour;
- Make them feel good;
- Share information and resources;
- Demonstrate positive attitude;
- Visit people and consult them;
- Create the right environment;
- Build credibility and trust;
- Find common ground;
- Let go of your ego.

2.4 MANAGING DIFFICULT EMPLOYEES

In any organisation there are always some employees who are difficult to deal with. To deal with them, managers need to be very creative and patient. The following actions would go a long way in helping you deal with such employees:

- Criticise behaviour, not people;
- Listen to feedback;
- Give clear direction;
- Document problematic behaviour;
- Work together toward a solution;
- Identify expectations;
- Set specific consequences;
- Monitor progress;
- Recognise hopeless situation.

2.5 DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Everyone experiences conflict. It is a factor of human interaction. Whenever two or more people are involved in communication, there is potential for misunderstanding, and hence, conflict. How we handle conflict is the key to our own well-being and to developing and maintaining good relationships.

There are three basic ways to deal effectively with conflict situations:

- Listen carefully to determine the nature of the conflict;
- Identify areas of agreement; and
- Allow the other person a way out.

The starting point for negotiating in conflict situations is to realise who the distressed, unhappy or concerned individual is. Human nature often causes us to assume it is 'the other person'. We say to ourselves, "It's their problem". In reality, we actually are the distressed party in the conflict. Once we realise that we have control over only our own behaviour, we have taken the first step in resolving conflict. Remember, your behaviour is in your control. You cannot control the other person's behaviour, except by changing your own actions toward that individual. There are at least three tools to use to effect behaviour change:

- **Negotiation:** Arranging or managing through discussion or compromise;
- **Persuasion:** Moving your argument to a new position or belief;
- **Mediation:** Intervening in conflict with intent to resolve through discussion.

All three require you to present information in the form of facts. Information involves identifying who, what, where, when, why, and how. Agreement or at least presentation of information can lead to discovering ways to persuade individuals involved in conflict. Persuasion involves using information to convince others that there is more than one way to look at an issue. Mediation usually introduces a third party to the conflict in an attempt to resolve problems.

There are a variety of negotiation solutions to conflict. One that is easy to learn and use is the 'one-point' solution. This technique involves getting feedback in the communication process, and involves open-ended questions,

The one-point solution is the difference between asking for:

- General feedback like: *"What is it you really want?"* or
- Specific response like: *"What is the **one** thing that will make you change your mind?"*

If you get only one response, it is usually something specific to use as the basis for negotiating a solution.

To use the one-point solution just keep the number 'one' in mind when asking questions. Here are some examples:

- *"What is **one** thing I could change in my behaviour?"*
- *"What **one** training programme could I attend to help me the most?"*
- *"What is **one** question I should ask that I haven't yet?"*
- *"What is **one** new service we could offer to put us ahead of competitors?"*
- *"What is **one** thing you think we need to do to work together better?"*

To resolve conflict, we must:

- Seek agreement on common ground;
- Refuse to argue;
- Seek commitment and action to change;
- Plot the follow-up; and
- Deliver on promise.

Another situation that needs to be dealt with carefully is the situation involving criticism. When we hear the word 'criticism' we usually think of an unfavourable judgment. It is easy to understand how the word generates a negative meaning. If we set out to analyse the worth of one person compared to another, by definition one must look better or worse than the other.

- **How do you deal with criticism?**
 - Try to take responsibility if it is yours to have.
 - Ask yourself if there is anything that you have done to deserve the criticism.
- **When and how to criticise?**
 - Avoid criticising publicly. Do it privately.
 - Avoid using others as good example because this compares one person to another and can embarrass people.
 - Choose the teachable moment and offer a one-point solution.
 - Use phrases that foster teamwork.
 - Offer suggestions for improvement, not merely blame.
- **How to criticise effectively?**
 - Direct your criticism at behaviour, not the person.
 - Say something positive.
 - Identify behaviour that can be fixed or changed.
 - Avoid use of the word 'you'.
 - Avoid negative words like 'No', 'Not', 'Never', 'Shouldn't'.
 - Offer specific ways to make changes in behaviour (doable action).

2.6 MANAGING SELF

A people manager needs to do introspection and think about what they can do to manage people successfully. To do so, they need to know how to manage their own selves first. Doing a SWOT analysis will help in realising their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

After analysing your strengths, think how you can use them to your advantage. You may have certain weaknesses which need to be addressed and either eliminated or at least reduced. Critically analyse your threats and think how you can turn them into your opportunities. Every manager has to be a people manager. To succeed in this mission, they need to act and behave in different ways as per the situation and the people of different varying temperaments, abilities and problems. At different stages they need to function as follows:

- **As executive:** top coordinator of the group activities and overseer of the execution of policies.
- **As planner:** deciding the ways and means by which the group achieves its ends. This may involve both short-term and long-term planning.
- **As policy maker:** the establishment of group goals and policies.
- **As expert:** a source of readily available information and skills, in spite of some resistance on technical expertise and advice from other members of the group.

- **As external group representative:** the official spokesperson for the group, the representative of the group and the channel for both outgoing and incoming communications.
- **As controller of internal relations:** determining specific aspects of group structure.
- **As purveyor of rewards and punishment:** having control over group members by the power to provide rewards and apply punishments.
- **As arbitrator and mediator:** controlling interpersonal conflicts within the group.
- **As exemplar:** a model of behaviour for members of the group setting an example of what is expected.
- **As symbol of the group:** enhancing group unity by providing some kind of cognitive focus and establishing the group as a distinct entity.
- **As substitute for individual responsibility:** relieving the individual members of the group from the necessity of, and responsibility for, personal decision.
- **As ideologist:** serving as the source of beliefs, values and standards of behaviour for individual members of the group.
- **As father figure:** serving as a focus for the positive emotional feelings of individual members and the object for identification and transference.
- **As scapegoat:** serving as a target for aggression and hostility of the group, accepting blame in case of failure.

A people manager also needs to build a personal development plan for oneself. For this, you need to act in the following manner:

- Be clear about your vision. Start with the ultimate goal in mind. Decide where you want to go and how to get there.
- Do your SWOT analysis.
- Decide on the specific actions to be taken.
- Review and modify, if necessary.

2.7 SUMMARY

- Managers need to have strong People Management skills.
- People Management skills include: trust building, empathy, motivation-mapping, appreciating, knowledge-seeking, ability to listen, an open mind, patience, ability to relate, good judgment, positivity, planning, mentoring, flexibility, supportiveness, accountability, ability to adapt, problem solving, feedback giving, feedback receiving, good communication, emotional intelligence, understanding stakeholders, managing performance, macro-management, and leadership skills.

- It is important to build peer networks in an organisation as it will help managers in several ways, including being able to influence people outside one's authority.
- To manage difficult employees, several actions can be taken, e. g. criticising behaviour and not people, working toward a solution, listening to feedback, etc.
- The methods of Negotiation, Persuasion and Mediation can be adopted in order to deal with situations involving conflict.
- A manager must perform several roles depending on the situation and the behaviour of subordinates.

2.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write True or False

- a. Motivation-mapping is not necessary for a manager.
- b. Emotional Intelligence is the hallmark of an effective manager.
- c. A manager should wait for others to approach them for building peer network.
- d. There is not much scope for collaborative learning in a peer network.
- e. A manager can never influence people outside their authority.
- f. It is OK to criticise behaviour.
- g. Negotiation is attempted through giving clear instructions.
- h. It is better to give example of good behaviour of an employee while trying to criticise another employee.
- i. A manager plays the role of an expert and a scapegoat at different times.
- j. Offering a one-point solution does not help in resolving conflict.

3 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is the most vital ingredient for success in any organisation – in fact, in all walks of life. Communication plays a major role in dealings with stakeholders of every enterprise. It must not be overlooked by managers that in many situations some or all of the stakeholders in their respective organisations are themselves communication professionals – people who earn their living from, or otherwise depend on, their own abilities to communicate effectively.

It is essential for all managers to appreciate the importance of communication. Managers must devote adequate attention to understanding the nature of communication and learning how to develop their skills in communicating with their colleagues, employees, subordinates, suppliers, customers and/or clients, and all the many other types of stakeholders with whom they have come into contact or seek to know better.

In fact, the importance of effective communication is more today – and will continue to be so – as the circumstances (after-effects of Covid-19 pandemic) have forced people to avoid face-to-face meetings, as far as possible, and concentrate on doing business through electronic means such as virtual meetings and conferences. That means people should first understand the principles and process of effective communication, and then use modified and digitally strengthened ways to communicate. It is essential because the new norms are going to be wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing.

The following are the characteristics of effective communication:

- **Two-way traffic:** Communication is a two-way traffic. If a person transmits a message without it being received or understood by anybody, the communication will not be complete.
- **Identical meaning:** The sender's message should be understood by the receiver in the same sense.
- **Substance in message:** The transmitted message should give out ideas, information or facts which should be of interest to the receiver.
- **Modes of communication:** Messages may be transmitted orally, in writing, or through appropriate gestures.

3.2 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

As digital technology becomes more integrated into our everyday lives, most jobs and industries have experienced significant changes. As a result, consumer expectations have increased, competition has grown, and employees have had to adapt to their ever-changing roles. In fact, digital communication assists people when dealing with business partners or colleagues who work in different time zones. We use digital means in nearly all aspects of our lives without even realising it.

Digital systems are important because they:

- Can provide accuracy in transmission;
- Are less prone to error; and
- Ensure the suitability of data representation for error detection and correction.

The following purpose is served by digital systems:

- They provide two-way communication in real time;
- Participants can engage in ways that meet their needs and desires;
- People can use them at their convenient time and place; and
- They are easier to access and be targeted with relevant content.

3.3 VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

Since the focus is increasingly shifting more to virtual communication in a large number of organisations, managers (and others, too) must understand the necessity to:

- Elevate from being merely digitally literate to digitally fluent;
- Collaborate with others using appropriate virtual tools and systems;
- Establish productive and trusting virtual working relationships; and
- Select and use appropriate communication tools to generate shared understanding.

For participating in virtual meetings and/or conferences, it is advisable to take care of the following:

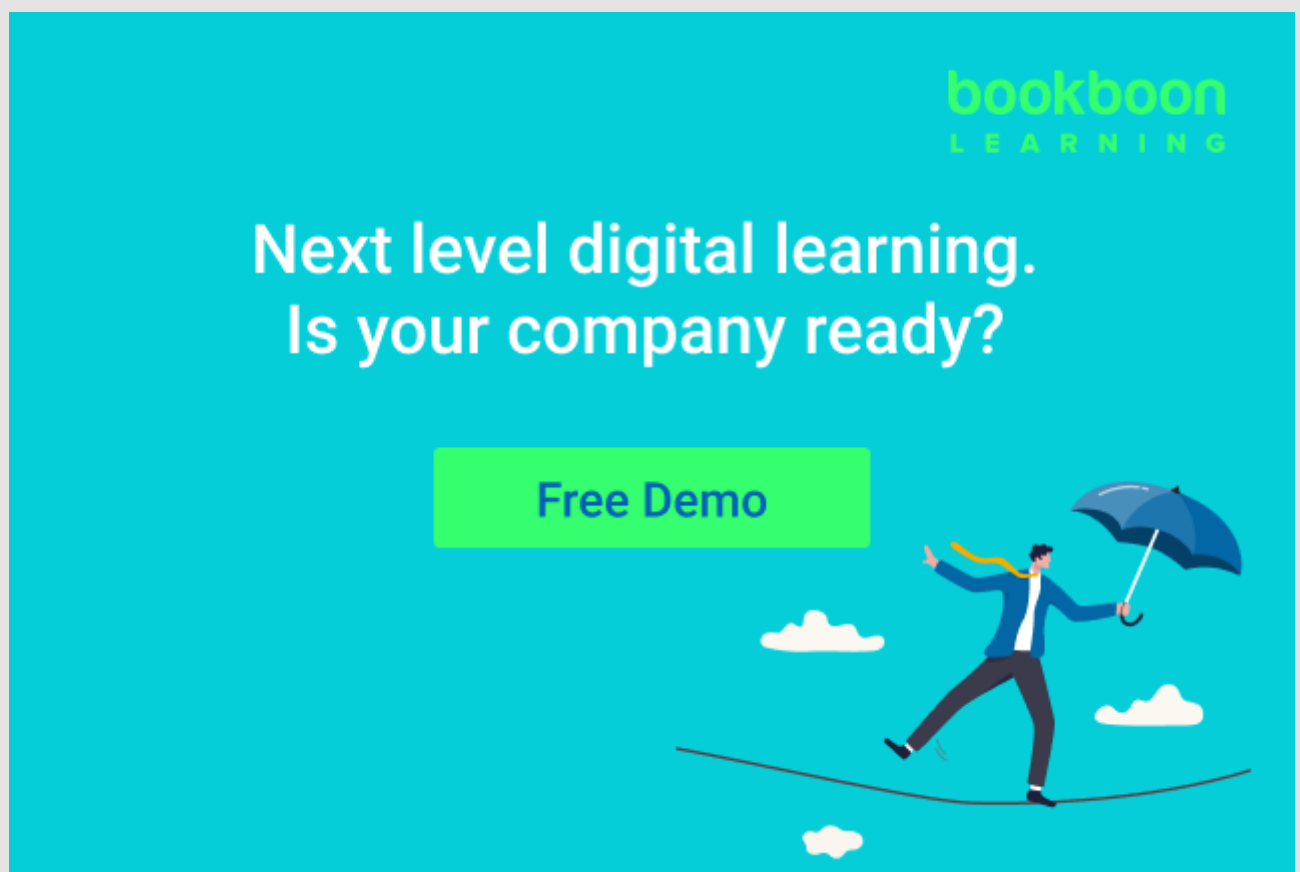
- Care needs to be taken about maintaining positive facial gestures lest you may be misunderstood;
- There should be clarity in words, thoughts and expressions;

- Managers need to have trust in and respect for their employees;
- Stay in sync because face-to-face meetings are as important as the physical ones;
- Be responsive and supportive.

3.4 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND REMEDIES

Barriers to effective communication may occur because messages may not be received or sent as intended for many different reasons, and those may be summarised as follows:

- **Selective attention:** It happens when receivers do not read or pay attention to the whole message. Particularly if a message is long or complex, human nature being what it is, many people look at or listen to only part of a message.
- **Selective distraction:** This is the situation when receivers 'twist' the message to how they would like it to be.
- **Selective recall:** It happens when receivers remember only part of the message. Again, this might be a subconscious or conscious reaction.

An advertisement for Bookboon Learning. The background is a solid teal color. In the top right corner, the 'bookboon' logo is written in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font, with the word 'LEARNING' in a smaller, all-caps, light blue font directly beneath it. Centered in the upper half of the image is the text 'Next level digital learning. Is your company ready?' in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this text is a bright yellow rectangular button with the words 'Free Demo' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized illustration of a man in a blue suit and yellow tie, walking a tightrope. He is holding a blue umbrella in his left hand and has a yellow scarf trailing behind him. The tightrope is a thin black line, and there are several white, fluffy clouds scattered around the man and the rope.

bookboon
LEARNING

Next level digital learning.
Is your company ready?

Free Demo

There are many other possibilities, and action to be taken by senders of messages might depend on whether the intended receivers are experienced persons, beginners or laymen.

The following need to be considered carefully:

- **Expectations:** Attitudes tend to condition expectations, so that changes are made to messages when they arrive. Sometimes there are additions. In any event, they fit with the receiver's perspective, so they seem totally plausible, at least at the time.
- **Memory:** It also presents a challenge to the sender. For managers, the challenge is to create and convey messages which positively help and encourage their subordinates to remember, so that no relearning of routine performance criteria and procedures is required of them in matters relating to their work.
- **Personal conflict or antagonism:** This creates emotions such as anger, fear and frustration that can infect communication and distort or deny transmission of information.
- **Differing personalities:** Sometimes problems arise simply because differing personalities create tension. There are said to be some distinctly different types of people found in the workplace, so it is only to be expected that some might have differing approaches to life in general as well as to work in particular, giving rise to differing values and beliefs.

All these hazards can create some unexpected problems in marketing communications, where messages are designed to ultimately achieve sales. Bernstein (1986) offers the example of a television advertisement (or 'commercial') which depicted a small child with toy bricks on a kitchen floor. The purpose of the advertisement was to sell disinfectant. To emphasize visually where germs lurk, each area of the floor had been numbered and, as an added touch, so had the bricks, which turned out to be a major distraction. Viewers contacted the television station to enquire about where they could buy the numbered toy bricks – not disinfectant! This clearly illustrates 'channel noise'; the **way** in which the message was communicated hindered its effective reception.

3.5 SUMMARY

- Managers must devote adequate attention to understanding the nature of communication.
- Digital communication has become an indispensable part of life – both personal and professional.
- Digital systems enable participants to engage in two-way communication in real time.

- Barriers to effective communication may occur because messages may not be received or sent or intended for many different reasons.
- Now it is essential that people at all levels in the organisation elevate themselves from being merely digitally literate to digitally fluent.
- A lot of attention is to be devoted to ensure that virtual meetings are successful and participants achieve the intended objectives.

3.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. **Complete the statements.**
 - a. Digital systems are prone to _____.
 - b. Communication must be a _____ traffic, with _____ meaning.
 - c. Now we need to be digitally _____, and not merely _____.
 - d. Approach towards discussion in virtual meetings should be _____.
2. You must have participated in virtual communication at some point of time. What tools did you use? What was your experience? Discuss with a colleague, a friend, or a family member.

4 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Performance management system is the process for measuring the performance of employees. It reflects the individual performance of an employee, and keeps track of all the employees of the organisation. We can say that it is the systematic process by which the HR department involves its employees, as individuals and members of a group, in improving organisational effectiveness in the accomplishment of its mission and goals.

Armstrong (1994) has rightly said that:

“Performance management is a strategic and integrated process that delivers sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of people who work in them and developing the capabilities of individual contributors and teams”.

The purpose of implementing performance management system in an organisation can be described as follows:

- The organisational strategic goals can be linked with each activity performed by an employee or a group of employees;
- Competency and skill level of employees can be mapped, which enables the organisation to make decisions regarding further training, promotion, termination, etc.
- It provides an effective communication channel to indicate the areas of improvement required by the employees;
- It helps in measuring and evaluating the performance gaps through various tools and techniques;
- The documentation of reviews and feedback helps in setting new targets, designing developmental needs, designing training programmes, and career progression of employees.

A typical performance management system has several components. The manager must ensure that the following components of performance management are organised and implemented:

- **Establishing performance standards:**
 - Identifying relevant standards;
 - Selecting the indicators;
 - Specifying goals and targets.

- **Ongoing communication:**
 - Communicating expectations;
 - Following up on what the direct reports are working on;
 - Keeping them motivated;
 - Giving them timely suggestions.
- **Performance review:**
 - Giving reviews about the performance of direct reports;
 - Allowing employees to first rate themselves (self-evaluation);
 - Peer evaluation;
 - 360 Degree feedback.
- **Feedback and suggestions:**
 - Giving feedback and suggestions to improve performance;
 - Telling employees exactly where they need to improve;
 - Telling employees how to make improvement possible.
- **Recognising good performance:**
 - Recognising the effort of employees;
 - Rewarding employees for their contribution.
- **Performance measurement:**
 - Refining the existing indicators;
 - Defining the measures;
 - Developing data systems;
 - Collecting data.
- **Quality improvement process:**
 - Decision making using the data;
 - Improving policies, programmes and outcomes;
 - Change management;
 - Creating a learning organisation.
- **Progress reporting:**
 - Analysing the data;
 - Providing feedback to all concerned;
 - Establishing a proper and regular reporting cycle.

Fig. 4/1 below depicts the above components.

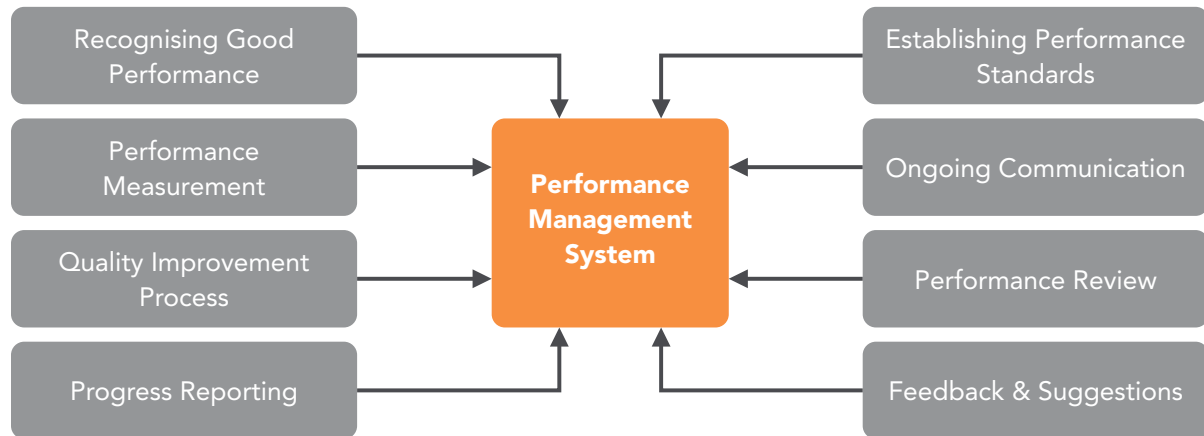


Fig. 4/1 Components of Performance Management

Generally, the following factors affect performance management:

- Being influenced by first impressions leads to a situation when wrong decisions are likely to be made.
- A manager may have the tendency to be lenient in order to avoid confrontation.
- Separating emotions from objective assessment is quite often very difficult.
- A manager may keep effort level over performance results when they typically give higher ratings to those whom they think have put in more efforts.

4.2 EMERGING TRENDS IN HRM

Privatisation, economic liberalisation and globalisation of economies adopted by various countries has led to increased competition in global markets. The role of HR manager has transferred from that of a protector and scanner to the role of a planner and change agent. Now a days it is not possible to show a good financial or operating report unless personnel relations are in order in an organisation. Over the years, highly skilled and knowledge-based jobs are increasing while low-skilled jobs are decreasing. This calls for future skill mapping through proper HRM initiative.

The system of competency mapping needs to be established. Employee skills, knowledge and abilities are not sufficient to achieve the desired goals. Additional skills such as mind-set, values, beliefs and commitment are required by employees to achieve their desired performance. To ensure compliance, competencies must be mapped.

The steps involved in competency mapping with a result of job evaluation include the following:

- Conduct a job analysis by asking incumbents to complete a Position Information Questionnaire (PIQ). The primary goal is to gather, from incumbents, what they feel are the key behaviours necessary to perform their respective jobs.
- Using the results of the job analysis, you are ready to develop a competency-based job description. A sample of a competency-based job description generated from the PIQ may be analysed.
- With a competency-based job description, you are on your way to begin mapping the competencies throughout your human resources processes. The competencies of the respective job description become your factors for assessment on the performance evaluation.
- Taking the competency mapping one step further, you can use the results of your evaluation to identify in what competencies individuals need additional development or training. Figures 4/2 and 4/3 below depict the competency mapping and assessment.

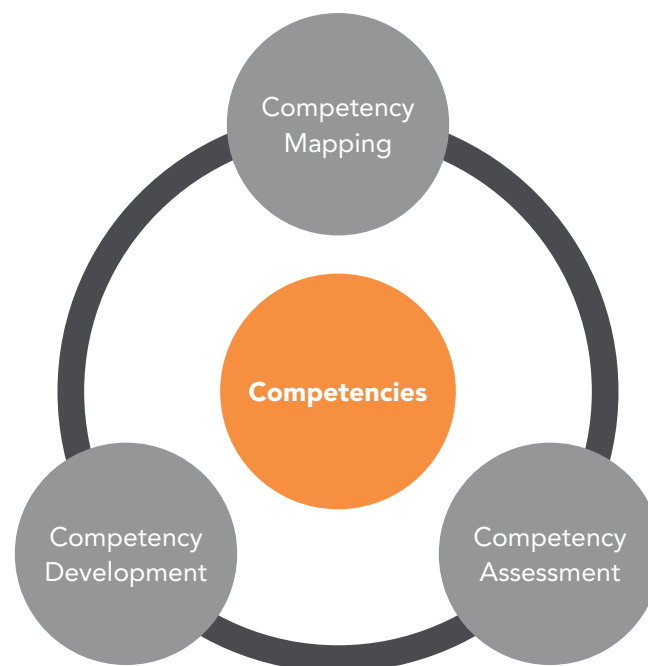


Fig. 4/2 Competency Mapping

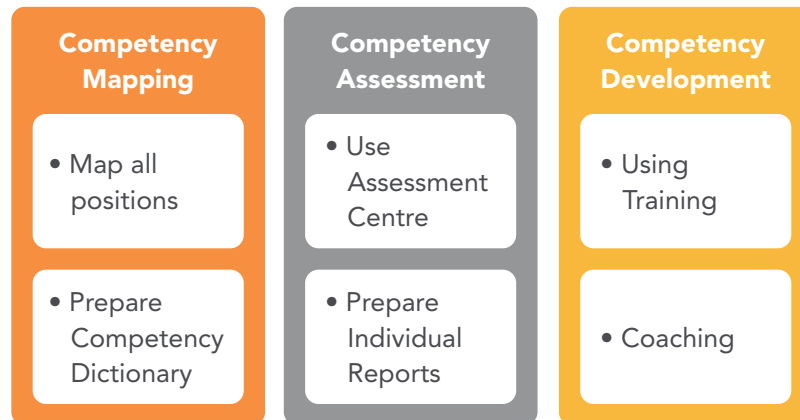


Fig. 4/3 Competency Mapping & Assessment

(Source: http://www.nahrs.in/our_services.aspx?id=8)

In this exercise line managers are in the best possible position to advise, guide, train and evaluate those working with them. They need to be vigilant about the skills, efficiency and needs of the employees. Whenever there is a necessity, they need to take appropriate action. It is on the advice of line managers that the management relies heavily in order to ensure that the performance management system is implemented successfully.

4.3 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

This component is a sub-component of feedback and suggestions. A performance management system that allows a manager to give suggestions to their direct reports for their improvement should also promote active learning and development.

There are many individual platforms that can be integrated into a performance management system that help to create courses and assign them to the employees. Either way, learning and development should be a continuous process and managers should encourage employees to learn more and develop their performance potential.

4.4 SUMMARY

- Performance management is a process which continually identifies, measures, and develops the performance of the workforce in the organisation.
- The components of a typical performance management system are: Establishing performance standards, Ongoing communication, Feedback and suggestions, Recognising good performance, Performance measurement, Quality improvement process, and Progress reporting.

- To ensure effective performance management, managers must be objective in their assessment, and not influenced by first impressions or any other subjective elements.
- Competency mapping is one of the latest HRM initiatives, which identifies key competencies.
- The steps involved in competency mapping are job analysis and job description. These become factors for assessment on the performance evaluation.
- The results of competency mapping can be used to identify competencies which may need further training and development.
- The role of line managers is very important because it is on their advice that the management relies heavily.

4.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Complete the statements

- a. Performance management is a _____ and _____ process.
- b. _____ evaluation is a part of performance _____.
- c. Employees need to be _____ for their contribution.
- d. Developing _____ system is a part of _____ measurement.
- e. Competency mapping is a process of identifying _____ for an organisation.
- f. Job analysis can be conducted using a _____.
- g. Competency mapping includes preparation of competency _____.

5 NEW CHALLENGES IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Remote working is here to stay, even after the Covid-19 pandemic has subsided. It does not mean that all companies will go virtual, but WFH will certainly become an important trend in HRM/People Management.

With the possibility of remote working or Working from Home (WFH) or Working from Anywhere (WFA) for extended periods of time or being introduced intermittently, managers and other employees need to be provided with effective tools and applications that would make work seamless and efficient. Cloud-based services are being actively considered to enable easy access to most applications and data without hindrance to the employees. It is not just migrating on-premise applications and services to the cloud that would be necessary, but redesigning them as required would also be important to get optimal performance on the cloud.

5.2 IMPLEMENTING WFH PROGRAMME

The future scenario of WFH could have flexible working days/hours as follows:

- **General:**
 - Plan to implement regular work from home guidelines for 2 – 3 days of the week. Look at 2 – 3-day WFH model for 30 – 50% of corporate office staff.
 - As per a Knight Frank Survey (2020), over 70% companies are likely to continue the WFH policy for a percentage of their total staff.
 - Maybe 50% staff will work from home permanently.
 - Flexible working days will have impact on the necessity of keeping large office spaces.
- **Banking operations:**
 - While the initial idea of flexible work hours may not be aimed at reducing office space, the mid-and-long term space requirements may go down as the banks look forward toward hot seating models.
 - More and more people are already doing Internet/Mobile banking, and using ATMs for withdrawing cash (if necessary) instead of visiting bank branches.

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, many companies asked their employees to work remotely. This change has brought new ways of working digitally, and some teams have experienced an easier transition than others with the help of cloud technology that is automating their business processes and allowing them to better cope with closing the books remotely. Covid-19 has been the gasoline that has fuelled the workplace programmes, policies and procedures that have existed but were not widely adopted such as remote work, employee assistance and virtual learning.

When employees work from home on a regular basis, they are liable to confront various situations:

- As social distancing measures become common and workers adjust to their new professional environments, even from their own living rooms, there is potential for personal and working lives to blur into one.
- The 'new normal' that workers are now facing is starting to have an impact on their work-life balance. A large number of workers have increased the amount of time they spend on personal activity. This particular change may have come about because workers are now not having to commute or travel as much as they used to do before.

The characteristics that are attributed to remote working may be described as follows:

- **Remote learning:** Employees need to learn and develop so they can work with new technologies – attend virtual classrooms, enrol in upskilling programmes.
- **Virtual team building activities:** HR teams will have to redesign an employee's journey. An employee's connections, collaborations, and work-life balance have to be considered. For instance, virtual video conferencing allows employees to feel like a part of a team, rather than working alone.
- **Digital collaboration platform:** The focus is now towards improving an employee's experience on a digital platform so that it mirrors the human-to-human interaction in offices. Most organisations have already turned towards Cloud (SaaS) solutions to solve this problem.
- **Digital tracking:** In the WFH trend, tracking undergoes a 360° shift. Companies now must depend upon online tools.
- **Virtual employee experience:** HR is faced with the challenge of doing several activities virtually e. g. hiring and firing an employee, onboarding, and training.
- **Data-driven HR:** The world is moving towards data-driven strategies. Smart technologies like automation and AI can help HR with their screening and recruitment processes too.

- **Virtual employee engagement:** Virtual board games, virtual Karaoke etc. are some examples where employees from different teams work together. This helps employees feel comfortable, collaborate better, and enhance their work quality.
- **Automation tasks:** Repetitive tasks could be automated so that HR staff could focus on important decision-making.
- **Mobile-friendly recruitment:** Companies need to switch towards a mobile-friendly recruitment process. Video interviews through phones, skill tests, and digital reference checks are some new trends.
- **AR/VR breakthrough:** AR/VR (Augmented Reality & Virtual Reality) are two technologies that are changing the game today. Using VR applications employees can be trained.

Despite the necessity and privilege of WFH, this is not a catch-all situation. Organisations need to focus on the following:

- Assessing remote working strategy;
- Addressing strains on a company's existing information technology and communications infrastructure in order to support remote working during the crisis, or even later.

Managers need to consider the above challenges, and find ways and means to implement and manage the WFH model in the best interest of the organisation as well as the employees.

5.3 LEADING A REMOTE TEAM

Managers need to understand factors that can make remote work specially demanding. The challenges inherent in remote work could include:

- Lack of face-to-face supervision;
- Social isolation;
- Distractions at home;

Leading a remote team can be challenging, but with the right strategies, you can keep your team aligned and productive no matter where they are located. The following actions will help you achieve your goal:

- Trust your employees;
- Set up recurring one-on-one meetings;
- Host daily meetings for ongoing projects;

- Set clear expectations;
- Involve the team in new hires;
- Use technology to your advantage;
- Encourage communication;
- Let employees know you are invested in them;
- Have shorter meetings;
- Ensure everyone feels included;
- Keep everyone on the same page;
- Create meeting routines;
- Do not avoid video calls;
- Celebrate successes.

Managers need to follow the leadership style that motivates their employees. This can be easily and effectively done by following the path of team recognition. When employees are asked what type of recognition they want most, it is not always money. More often, it is knowing that they are valued and appreciated. When people feel valued, they are most positive, productive, innovative, and upbeat. To ensure this, a manager could choose from among the following ways to reward excellence:

- **Company-wide recognition:** Send a company-wide email or recognise someone in the company newsletter.
- **Hand-written note:** Send a hand-written note to each team member expressing appreciation and include a copy of the note in the employee's performance file. Also upload it on the company website.
- **Time-off:** If a team finishes a project ahead of time and on budget, give each member time off.
- **Applaud their efforts:** At a staff meeting, recognise accomplishment by giving them a round of applause – even a standing ovation.

5.4 SUMMARY

- Remote working – WFH or WFA – are here to stay in one form or another. Several methods may be used to ensure that this system works effortlessly in the interest of the organisation concerned.
- The characteristics of remote working are: Remote learning, Virtual team building activities, Digital collaboration platform, Digital tracking, Virtual employee experience, Data-driven HR, Virtual employee engagement, Automation tasks, Mobile-friendly recruitment, and AR/VR breakthrough.
- There are several challenges in WFH model, which managers need to address.

- Leading a remote team could be successful if managers plan their activities well and take full advantage of digital technology.
- Managerial action in virtual team activities could include: Trust your employees, set up recurring one-on-one meetings, host daily meetings for ongoing projects, set clear expectations, involve the team in new hires, use technology to your advantage, encourage communication, let employees know you are invested in them, have shorter meetings, ensure everyone is included, keep everyone on the same page, create meeting routines, do not avoid video calls, and celebrate successes.
- The above actions will ensure effective virtual motivation.

5.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

1. **Write True or False.**
 - a. WFA does not mean Work from Anywhere.
 - b. Cloud-based services are not necessary for WFH model.
 - c. Banks have a better opportunity to make effective use of the WFH model.
 - d. The 'new normal' does not have negative influence on work-life balance.
 - e. Digital tracking is not really an effective tool.
 - f. Repetitive tasks can be easily automated.
 - g. Mobile-friendly recruitment is likely to be ineffective.
 - h. Mentoring is more important than managing a remote team.
 - i. Virtual meetings need not be very short.
 - j. Enabling cross-functionality may not provide the desired motivation.
2. You must have participated in virtual meetings/discussions either at college or/and at work. Write your impressions about the same. Then discuss with a colleague, a friend, or a family member.

6 RE-IMAGINING CHANGE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic forced businesses to reset priorities and develop new operating models. Many are still struggling to adapt. As norms continue to evolve, HR must adopt a people-first mindset that prioritises empathy, resilience, and empowerment. It is also necessary to take uncertainty out of change. It is true that understanding and managing change are the dominant themes of management. Adaptability to ever-changing present is essential for success in the unpredictable future.

Robert Heller (1998) has rightly said:

“Change affects every aspect of life: taking a proactive approach to change is the only way to take charge of the future, either as an individual or as an organisation. Approach it with an open mind, and learn to develop its positive elements”.

What we can be sure of, is that change is a constant element in our lives, and we must make the best of it. In periods of rapid change, managers must be extremely adept at trying to ‘master’ change for the benefit of their respective organisations.

Managers need to discard past practices and concentrate on resources where they are likely to optimise results quickly. When the pace of change slows, managers must seek new opportunities by capitalizing on the new conditions created by the preceding surge in activity.

6.2 MANAGING CHANGE

To deal effectively with increasing rates of change, one needs to understand various factors. Specific changes in an organisation’s internal structure and external markets often derive from wider changes in society, economics, or technology.

Change which affects organisations might occur in several dimensions, including the following:

- **The environment**, in all its complexities;
- **Technologies**, and the laws and regulations attaching to them;
- **Society and culture**, attitudes, ‘cultures’ within organisations, policies and commitments;
- **Organisation size and/or structure**, determining how things get done;
- **Competitive rivalry**, within industries.

Several methods can be adopted to limit resistance. Some of these could be the following:

- Detecting resistance in a timely manner and interpreting it;
- Recognising active and passive resistance, and taking steps to understand the root cause:
 - **Active resistance:** opposition to ideas inside and outside meetings, angry memos and emails, threat of industrial action etc;
 - **Passive resistance:** delaying tactics, not contributing in meetings etc.
- Making people feel that their contribution is strategically important for the organisation;
- Treating people gently and winning them over;
- Using frequent meetings – individual as well as group – to break down barriers to proposed changes.

The manager is required to concentrate on looking after the interests and welfare of personnel who are affected by the proposed change. They must also ensure that the change is conducted effectively and efficiently to the optimum benefit of the organisation.

In fact, managers must seek to:

- Identify and understand the implications for their subordinates, and negotiate any desirable modifications to the proposal;
- Determining the most appropriate means of communicating the ‘change proposal’ to subordinates, and emphasise the positive aspects while recognising the costs;
- Involve subordinates in determining the best practice for implementing the change.

The responsibility to the organisation necessitates the demonstration of commitment – depending on the particular circumstances or situation – through such activities, as for example:

- Creating teams which are charged with ‘thinking the unthinkable’;
- Holding brainstorming sessions and creating ‘quality circles’, designed to stimulate creative thinking amongst people – based on their practical working knowledge and experience – about how they might improve their processes and procedures;
- Searching outside the organisation for successful examples of innovation which might be adapted and applied to advantage;
- Including evidence of creativity and originality of thinking in criteria for job applicants;

- Encouraging customers and shareholders to ‘come forward’ with suggestions and ideas;
- Allocating adequate funding to research and implementation of change to give proposals their best chance of success.

6.3 A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

Managements should have a planned framework within which they can:

- Properly consider what the needed changes are;
- Plan the changes and implementation of those changes;
- Help all stakeholders – especially employees – to accept the changes;
- Follow up and assess the change process;
- Identify any further actions required.

A useful framework within which to do this – and which may be modified in line with particular situations and environments – is suggested below:

- **Plan for change:**
 - Develop a list of objectives to be achieved from the change(s);
 - Identify significant steps in the change process;
 - Develop a mission or requirements plan for the change(s);
 - Communicate the stages of the plan to those involved;
 - Develop a planned timetable which avoids unnecessary haste and carelessness;
 - Plan how each stage or step of the change process can be controlled and monitored.
- **Engage people in the process:**
 - Maintain a controlled approach, and inspire confidence in those affected by the change(s);
 - Consider how employees and other stakeholders will be affected;
 - Consider why change may be resisted, and develop plans to overcome or minimise that resistance;
 - Make controversial or unpopular change(s) as gradually as possible;
 - Maintain a firm but flexible outlook, accept comments and advice;
 - Monitor the change(s).
- **Monitor, control and follow up:**
 - Check if desired results are achieved; if not, investigate why not;
 - Analyse whether the process, or parts of it, could have been done differently or better;
 - Analyse if there have been any unexpected benefits or problems;
 - Investigate whether further change, or modifications, are required;

It is necessary to incorporate feedback and communication mechanisms for each stage of the change process. Useful points and questions are made against each stage of the process, which if nothing else, should help provoke thought and remind those leading the change process about important issues not to be overlooked.

There is obviously considerable overlap between the three identified stages, which are fluid and will interact together throughout the process of change. It should not be thought – and cannot be expected – that the change process will start at one single point, or finish and be completed at another specified point in time.

6.4 HR TECHNOLOGY

HR technology is an umbrella term for software and associated hardware for automating the human resources function in organisations, such as:

- Employee payroll and compensation;
- Talent acquisition and management;
- Workforce analysis;
- Performance management;
- Benefits and administration.

It refers to the software to track, manage, pay, understand, find, inform, remember and deliver to the people in an organisation. Cloud-based HR technology is available via mobile devices and remotely, making it easier for HR teams and workforces to communicate and share information. This technology stores data in a complete and secure way, automated routine processes and provides analytics to create management reports and insights for better business decision-making.

HR technology changes the way HR departments contact employees, store files and analyse employee performance. In fact, HRIS (Human Resources Information System) is a central repository of information about employees. Its role in organisation charting is indispensable when the operation is required to adjust due to layoffs or changing business conditions.

As technologies around people analytics develop, HR's role will increasingly focus on how to design a workplace that coexists with new tech. Hence, creating an environment where technology works for all is of the utmost importance.

However, we must not forget the people for whom we need to create worthwhile jobs. This we can do alongside automation where we need to ensure that data is used transparently and ethical rules are followed. In addition, we must ensure that we bring up people through training and development.

The following types of technology can be used – depending on the type and nature of organisation (some are already being used):

- **Data and Analytics (D & A):** It ensures to effectively understand how the organisation operates.
- **Employee Communication (EC):** EC function includes engagement surveys, email campaigns, feedback loops, recognition software and collaboration systems.
- **Talent Management Technology (TM):** Its function is focused on the match between employees and the actual work. It identifies staffing requirements and is responsible for the development of employees, such as:
 - **Applicant Tracking System (ATS):** It usually contains a searchable resume database and the elements of hiring.
 - **Sourcing:** It is the discovery of potential employees. It includes over 35 discrete functions that range from job postings to email campaigns to database tools.
- **Pre-hire Assessment and Screening (A & S):** Drug testing, background checks, polygraphs, personality tests and data flows:
 - **Onboarding:** This software is used to standardise the completion of regulatory forms, the allocation of software and passwords, and sometimes, to enhance the new employee's move to productivity.
- **Performance Management (PM):** This technology is used to track goals and assess employee performance.
- **Succession Planning (SP):** SP software tracks and manages the decisions associated with the management of replacements. It contains the promotion plan and the executive succession plan.
- **Compensation Plan (Comp):** It contains market-based compensation studies, job descriptions and (sometimes) competency libraries. It is used to ensure that the company is adhering to its compensation philosophy and offering wages that are competitive.
- **Learning Management System (LMS):** This software is used for acquisition, development, design, delivery and recordkeeping of company training.

6.5 LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Workplaces, in which everyone expects as a matter of course to be routinely acquiring new knowledge and skills, which do not better perform their existing responsibilities, but in anticipation of the expected changes to come, have been described as being 'learning organisation'. Creating a learning organisation can be one of the most satisfying results of leadership by any HR manager, and one which can have long-term benefits both for the organisation and its workforce.

The occurrence of learning takes different forms. The same rules cannot be applied to all types of learning. The approaches to learning are dependent on two factors – skill-based learning and knowledge-based learning:

- **Skill-based learning:** This type of learning has a practical component. People learn the rudiments of doing a job while actually working with the requisite equipment, for example, electricians, carpenters, typists, data entry operators, mechanics, drivers, etc.
- **Knowledge-based learning:** This can be classified into two categories:
 - **Skill and knowledge based:** Learning which involves knowledge of concept at a higher level combined with practical experience falls in this category, for example, doctors, engineers, software developers etc.
 - **Concrete or abstract idea based:** This type of learning takes place only when one can grasp both concrete and abstract ideas, for example, teachers, public speakers, analysts, management professionals etc.

6.6 CHANGING ROLES AND WORK CULTURE

In modern times work culture is changing and so are the roles of various categories of employees. In coming years, the learning and development professionals will have more responsibilities and a greater commitment to employees' learning programmes. They will need to tackle challenges in an integrated way and use their expertise in learning in the organisation by working closely with team members and other teams.

Managers need to shift their focus from training needs to performance needs approach. Quite often employees know how to use the system, but choose to not do so. It is possible that they do not care to learn about it. In such a situation management personnel must ask themselves:

- Is there anything missing in the system?
- Can the system be redesigned to ensure employees' performance level to go up?
- What steps are needed to ensure effective performance levels?

After analysing the above, it is desirable that any learning programme is designed to suit the performance needs as well as aspirations of employees. It means that the roles of various categories of team leaders need to change. Managers – at all levels – need to understand the following:

- **Senior management support:** The employees' manager is the key to their enhanced learning experience. They have a role to:
 - Provide feedback to team members about their performance;
 - Create an environment which ensures sharing of knowledge, skills and experience with co-workers;
 - Employ the system of job rotation; and
 - Mentor their teams.
- **People managers:** Today's – and tomorrow's – work environment requires that a manager behaves as the leader of their team, is an important part of the team, and considers themselves as nothing more than first among equals. For this purpose, they need to do the following:
 - Develop and sustain two-way communication channel with the rest of the team;
 - Treat every individual in the team as an efficient contributor to team effort;
 - Ensure that the team remains a cohesive group;
 - Encourage free and frank discussion – not considering disagreement as opposition;
 - Be ready to guide and support the team in all their endeavours;
 - Give credit to the whole team for good performance;
 - Own responsibility for any failure;
 - Assign tasks to practise new skills that go beyond the existing competencies;
 - Describe expectations in clear terms; and
 - View employees' mistakes as learning opportunities.

A manager needs to understand that they are not merely managers but learning leaders too. They must act as mentors to their employees. Employees have on-the-job opportunities for acquiring new skills. Managers must allow them to practise the existing skills and to learn new skills through the completion of innovative tasks.

To support this type of learning the manager must have a good feedback system which will ensure a fairly accurate knowledge of shortcomings and what they will need to focus on in the future.

Since social learning is the main component of increased learning efficiency, managers need to stimulate it through effective team development and management. For this to succeed, managers must set new objectives that are challenging enough to promote learning, yet are realistic and achievable.

Changes in the system of learning have also come about because of the intervention of technology. These changes get a fillip when people have an innovative idea and have access to a wide range of technology to help them transform their dream into reality.

Boyan Slat, founder of “Ocean Clean-up” – a Netherlands-based non-profit organisation which aims to clean up the oceans from plastic waste – has remarked:

“I believe technology is the most powerful agent of change we have. It creates entirely new building blocks and opens up a massive number of possibilities”.

Similarly, technology plays a significant role in ensuring an effective learning environment. Learning management modules provide a link between the training interventions and the job roles people play. These interfaces add to the efforts of learners and provide them an expert and user-friendly platform to acquire new knowledge and skills. These are the following:

- **Virtual reality and online resources:** A lot of virtual reality is available in modern times to learn from others’ experiences and their will to share what they have learned or done. People can use the platform of virtual reality through the following methods:
 - Downloading and browsing through videos on YouTube, SlideShare, etc;
 - Pushing learning context to learners using online platform.
 Engaging in learning activities using online resources connects formal learning with experiential learning and motivates learners to learn at their own pace while engaged in performing their assigned tasks at their workplace.
- **E-learning:** E-learning or digital learning has made great inroads in the realm of education and training. Since learning modules in this system provide self-paced learning as per the work schedule and convenience of learners, it has an immense potential. E-learning opportunities are available not only for usual professional modules but also cater for technical subjects. Moreover, eLearning solutions support the idea of personal learning environment which encompasses not only eLearning opportunity but also provides a wholesome learning experience.
- **E-learning resources:** There are several eLearning sites where one can access eBooks for their reference, and/or engage in virtual lectures or discussions, and/or pursue online courses offered by several universities and other organisations across the world. Some of the prominent and popular resources are these:
 - Bookboon.com (eBooks on a wide variety of subjects);
 - MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) in association with EdX, Pearson, Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Future Learn, and many more;
 - Moodle – Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM), Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI);
 - SlideShare.

Managers need to provide the requisite motivation to all the employees. Various methods can be employed to ensure a high level of motivation of employees.

These are:

- Making them understand that learning does not take place only in a classroom environment, and that it can be achieved anywhere and anytime;
- Clarifying expectations while engaged in learning through this system;
- Asserting that information generated and assimilated at workplace is easier to understand and apply in real work situation rather than getting it through an isolated formal training programme;
- Assuring them that managers and L&D professionals will provide full guidance and performance improvement support;
- Explaining and insisting on the fact that learning in this way will aid their own personal development.

To conclude, it may be useful to understand what Lombardo and Eichinger (1996) have remarked. They said:

“Development generally begins with a realisation of current or future needs and the motivation to do something about it. This might come from feedback, a mistake, watching other people’s reactions, failing or not being up to a task – in other words, from experience. The odds are that development will be about 70% from on-the-job experience, working on tasks and problems; about 20% from feedback and working around good examples of the need; and 10% from courses and reading”.

6.7 SUMMARY

- Understanding and managing change are the dominant themes of management.
- Managers must ensure that the change is conducted effectively by doing the following:
 - Understand the concerns of subordinates;
 - Use appropriate channels of communicating to them;
 - Involve them;
 - Hold brainstorming sessions;
 - Encourage suggestions.
- HR technology is extremely useful in performing various routine HR functions.
- The types of technology that can be used are: Data and Analytics, Employee Communication, Talent Management Technology, Pre-hire Assessment and Screening, Performance Management, Succession Planning, Compensation Plan, and Learning Management System.

- Creating a learning organisation can have long-term benefits both for the organisation and its workforce.
- The approaches to learning are dependent on two factors – skill-based learning and knowledge-based learning.
- The role of the manager is changing. Today's – and tomorrow's – work environment requires that a manager behaves as a leader of their team. They need to be learning leaders too.
- Learning can be done through virtual reality and online resources.
- Employees need to be motivated and helped to take advantage of various types of learning resources.

6.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Choose the best option for each statement.

1. *It is necessary to embrace change because* _____
 - a. It happens without intending to.
 - b. We cannot escape it.
 - c. Somebody wants it.
 - d. It is a constant element in our lives.
2. *While trying to bring about any significant change, managers need to* _____
 - a. Ask their colleagues to suggest what to do.
 - b. Hold discussions with their superiors to understand what to do.
 - c. Identify and understand the implications from their subordinates.
 - d. Leave it to others to do the needful.
3. *Technology impacts HR functions in the area of* _____
 - a. Employee retention.
 - b. Analysis of performance.
 - c. Firing employees.
 - d. Running the business operations.
4. *The software that is used for background checks is called* _____
 - a. A & S
 - b. PM
 - c. ATS
 - d. TM

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