Developing Personnel Policies
Developing an Employee Manual
Sample List of Personnel Policies

Also see
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In addition to the articles on this current page, see the following blog which has posts related to Supervision and Leadership. Scan down the blog's page to see various posts. Also see the section "Recent Blog Posts" in the sidebar of the blog or click on "next" near the bottom of a post in the blog.

Library's Leadership Blog

=== INTRO TO MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION ===

What is "Management"? What Do Managers Do?

What is "Management"?

Traditional Interpretation

There are a variety of views about this term. Traditionally, the term "management" refers to the set of activities, and often the group of people, involved in four general functions, including planning, organizing, leading and coordinating activities. (Note that the four functions recur throughout the organization and are highly integrated.)

Another Interpretation

Some writers, teachers and practitioners assert that the above view is rather outmoded and that management needs to focus more on leadership skills, e.g., establishing vision and goals, communicating the vision and goals, and guiding others to accomplish them. They also assert that leadership must be more facilitative, participative and empowering in how visions and goals are established and carried out. Some people assert that this really isn't a change in the management functions, rather it's re-emphasizing certain aspects of management.

What Do Managers Do?

Both of the above interpretations acknowledge the major functions of planning, organizing, leading and coordinating activities -- they put different emphasis and suggest different natures of activities in the following four major functions. They still agree that what managers do is the following:

1. Planning

including identifying goals, objectives, methods, resources needed to carry out methods, responsibilities and dates for completion of tasks. Examples of planning are strategic planning, business planning, project planning, staffing planning, advertising and promotions planning, etc.

2. Organizing resources

to achieve the goals in an optimum fashion. Examples are organizing new departments, human resources, office and file systems, re-organizing businesses, etc.

3. Leading

Including to set direction for the organization, groups and individuals and also influence people to follow that direction. Examples are establishing strategic direction (vision, values, mission and / or goals) and championing methods of organizational performance management to pursue that direction.

4. Controlling, or Coordinating

This occurs with the organization's systems, processes and structures to effectively and efficiently reach goals and objectives. This includes ongoing collection of feedback, and monitoring and adjustment of systems, processes and structures accordingly. Examples include use of financial controls, policies and procedures, performance management processes, measures to avoid risks etc.

Another common view is that "management" is getting things done through others. Yet another view, quite apart from the traditional view, asserts that the job of management is to support employee's efforts to be fully productive members of the organizations and citizens of the community.

To most employees, the term "management" probably means the group of people (executives and other managers) who are primarily responsible for making decisions in the organization. In a nonprofit, the term "management" might refer to all or any of the activities of the board, executive director and/or program directors.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Management (Introduction)at http://managementhelp.org/management/index.htm

- Planning (many kinds) at http://managementhelp.org/planning/index.htm
- Leadership at http://managementhelp.org/leadership/index.htm
- Coordinating Activities at http://managementhelp.org/managementcontrol/index.htm
- Management Developmentat http://managementhelp.org/management/development/index.htm

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What is "Supervision"? What Do Supervisors Do?

What is "Supervision"?

There are several interpretations of the term "supervision", but typically supervision is the activity carried out by supervisors to oversee the productivity and progress of employees who report directly to the supervisors. For example, first-level supervisors supervise entry-level employees. Depending on the size of the organization, middle-managers supervise first-level supervisors, chief executives supervise middle-managers, etc. Supervision is a management activity and supervisors have a management role in the organization.

What Do Supervisors Do?

Supervision of a group of employees often includes
1. Conducting basic management skills (decision making, problem solving, planning, delegation and meeting management)
2. Organizing their department and teams
3. Noticing the need for and designing new job roles in the group
4. Hiring new employees
5. Training new employees
6. Employee performance management (setting goals, observing and giving feedback, addressing performance issues, firing employees, etc.)
7. Conforming to personnel policies and other internal regulations

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Basic Overview of Supervision at http://managementhelp.org/supervision/index.htm
- Supervisory Development at http://managementhelp.org/supervision/development/index.htm

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=== CORE SKILLS IN MANAGEMENT & SUPERVISION ===

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Much of what managers and supervisors do is solve problems and make decisions. New managers and supervisors, in particular, often solve problems and decisions by reacting to them. They are "under the gun", stressed and very short for time. Consequently, when they encounter a new problem or decision they must make, they react with a decision that seemed to work before. It's easy with this approach to get stuck in a circle of solving the same problem over and over again. Therefore, as a new manager or supervisor, get used to an organized approach to problem solving and decision making. Not all problems can be solved and decisions made by the following, rather rational approach. However, the following basic guidelines will get you started. Don't be intimidated by the length of the list of guidelines. After you've practiced them a few times, they'll become second nature to you -- enough that you can deepen and enrich them to suit your own needs and nature.

(Note that it might be more your nature to view a "problem" as an "opportunity". Therefore, you might substitute "opportunity" for "problem" in the following guidelines.)

1. Define the problem

This is often where people struggle. They react to what they think the problem is. Instead, seek to understand more about why you think there's a problem.

Defining the problem: (with input from yourself and others)

Ask yourself and others, the following questions:
a. What can you *see* that causes you to think there's a problem?
b. Where is it happening?
c. How is it happening?
d. When is it happening?
e. With whom is it happening? (HINT: Don't jump to "Who is causing the problem?" When we're stressed, blaming is often one of our first reactions. To be an effective manager, you need to address issues more than people.)
f. Why is it happening?
g. Write down a five-sentence description of the problem in terms of "The following should be happening, but isn't ..." or "The following is happening and should be: ..." As much as possible, be specific in your description, including what is happening, where, how, with whom and why. (It may be helpful at this point to use a variety of research methods. See .

Defining complex problems:

a. If the problem still seems overwhelming, break it down by repeating steps a-f until you have descriptions of several related problems.

Verifying your understanding of the problems:

a. It helps a great deal to verify your problem analysis for conferring with a peer or someone else.

Prioritize the problems:

a. If you discover that you are looking at several related problems, then prioritize which ones you should address first.
b. Note the difference between "important" and "urgent" problems. Often, what we consider to be important problems to consider are really just urgent problems. Important problems deserve more attention. For example, if you're continually answering "urgent" phone calls, then you've probably got a more "important" problem and that's to design a system that screens and prioritizes your phone calls.

Understand your role in the problem:

a. Your role in the problem can greatly influence how you perceive the role of others. For example, if you're very stressed out, it'll probably look like others are, too, or, you may resort too quickly to blaming and reprimanding others. Or, you are feel very guilty about your role in the problem, you may ignore the accountabilities of others.

2. Look at potential causes for the problem

a. It's amazing how much you don't know about what you don't know. Therefore, in this phase, it's critical to get input from other people who notice the problem and who are effected by it.
b. It's often useful to collect input from other individuals one at a time (at least at first). Otherwise, people tend to be inhibited about offering their impressions of the real causes of problems.
c. Write down what your opinions and what you've heard from others.
d. Regarding what you think might be performance problems associated with an employee, it's often useful to seek advice from a peer or your supervisor in order to verify your impression of the problem.
e.Write down a description of the cause of the problem and in terms of what is happening, where, when, how, with whom and why.

3. Identify alternatives for approaches to resolve the problem

a. At this point, it's useful to keep others involved (unless you're facing a personal and/or employee performance problem). Brainstorm for solutions to the problem. Very simply put, brainstorming is collecting as many ideas as possible, then screening them to find the best idea. It's critical when collecting the ideas to not pass any judgment on the ideas -- just write them down as you hear them. (A wonderful set of skills used to identify the underlying cause of issues is Systems Thinking.)

4. Select an approach to resolve the problem

When selecting the best approach, consider:
a. Which approach is the most likely to solve the problem for the long term?
b. Which approach is the most realistic to accomplish for now? Do you have the resources? Are they affordable? Do you have enough time to implement the approach?
c. What is the extent of risk associated with each alternative?
(The nature of this step, in particular, in the problem solving process is why problem solving and decision making are highly integrated.)

5. Plan the implementation of the best alternative (this is your action plan)

a. Carefully consider "What will the situation look like when the problem is solved?"
b. What steps should be taken to implement the best alternative to solving the problem? What systems or processes should be changed in your organization, for example, a new policy or procedure? Don't resort to solutions where someone is "just going to try harder".
c. How will you know if the steps are being followed or not? (these are your indicators of the success of your plan)
d. What resources will you need in terms of people, money and facilities?
e. How much time will you need to implement the solution? Write a schedule that includes the start and stop times, and when you expect to see certain indicators of success.
f. Who will primarily be responsible for ensuring implementation of the plan?
g. Write down the answers to the above questions and consider this as your action plan.
h. Communicate the plan to those who will involved in implementing it and, at least, to your immediate supervisor.
(An important aspect of this step in the problem-solving process is continually observation and feedback.)

6. Monitor implementation of the plan

Monitor the indicators of success:
a. Are you seeing what you would expect from the indicators?
b. Will the plan be done according to schedule?
c. If the plan is not being followed as expected, then consider: Was the plan realistic? Are there sufficient resources to accomplish the plan on schedule? Should more priority be placed on various aspects of the plan? Should the plan be changed?

7. Verify if the problem has been resolved or not

One of the best ways to verify if a problem has been solved or not is to resume normal operations in the organization. Still, you should consider:
a. What changes should be made to avoid this type of problem in the future? Consider changes to policies and procedures, training, etc.
b. Lastly, consider "What did you learn from this problem solving?" Consider new knowledge, understanding and/or skills.
c. Consider writing a brief memo that highlights the success of the problem solving effort, and what you learned as a result. Share it with your supervisor, peers and subordinates.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Research Methods at http://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/index.htm
- Systems Thinking at http://managementhelp.org/systems/index.htm
- Collecting and Sharing Feedback at http://managementhelp.org/communicationsskills/feedback.htm
- Making Decisions at http://managementhelp.org/personalproductivity/problem-solving.htm
- Problem Solving at http://managementhelp.org/personalproductivity/problem-solving.htm
- Planning (Basics) at http://managementhelp.org/planning/index.htm
- Group-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making at http://managementhelp.org/groups/group-decision-making.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Planning

Quick Look at Some Basic Terms

Planning typically includes use of the following basic terms.

NOTE: It's not critical to grasp completely accurate definitions of each of the following terms. It's more important for planners to have a basic sense for the difference between goals/objectives (results) and strategies/tasks (methods to achieve the results).

1. Goals

Goals are specific accomplishments that must be accomplished in total, or in some combination, in order to achieve some larger, overall result preferred from the system, for example, the mission of an organization. (Going back to our reference to systems, goals are outputs from the system.)

2. Strategies or Activities

These are the methods or processes required in total, or in some combination, to achieve the goals. (Going back to our reference to systems, strategies are processes in the system.)

3. Objectives

Objectives are specific accomplishments that must be accomplished in total, or in some combination, to achieve the goals in the plan. Objectives are usually "milestones" along the way when implementing the strategies.

4. Tasks

Particularly in small organizations, people are assigned various tasks required to implement the plan. If the scope of the plan is very small, tasks and activities are often essentially the same.

5. Resources (and Budgets)

Resources include the people, materials, technologies, money, etc., required to implement the strategies or processes. The costs of these resources are often depicted in the form of a budget. (Going back to our reference to systems, resources are input to the system.)

Basic Overview of Typical Phases in Planning

Whether the system is an organization, department, business, project, etc., the basic planning process typically includes similar nature of activities carried out in similar sequence. The phases are carried out carefully or -- in some cases -- intuitively, for example, when planning a very small, straightforward effort. The complexity of the various phases (and their duplication throughout the system) depend on the scope of the system. For example, in a large corporation, the following phases would be carried out in the corporate offices, in each division, in each department, in each group, etc.

NOTE: Different groups of planners might have different names for the following activities and groups them differently. However, the nature of the activities and their general sequence remains the same.

NOTE: The following are typical phases in planning. They do *not* comprise the complete, ideal planning process.

1. Reference Overall Singular Purpose ("Mission")

or Desired Result from System
During planning, planners have in mind (consciously or unconsciously) some overall purpose or result that the plan is to achieve. For example, during strategic planning, it's critical to reference the mission, or overall purpose, of the organization.

2. Take Stock Outside and Inside the System

This "taking stock" is always done to some extent, whether consciously or unconsciously. For example, during strategic planning, it's important to conduct an environmental scan. This scan usually involves considering various driving forces, or major influences, that might effect the organization.

3. Analyze the Situation

For example, during strategic planning, planners often conduct a "SWOT analysis". (SWOT is an acronym for considering the organization's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats faced by the organization.) During this analysis, planners also can use a variety of assessments, or methods to "measure" the health of systems.

4. Establish Goals

Based on the analysis and alignment to the overall mission of the system, planners establish a set of goals that build on strengths to take advantage of opportunities, while building up weaknesses and warding off threats.

5. Establish Strategies to Reach Goals

The particular strategies (or methods to reach the goals) chosen depend on matters of affordability, practicality and efficiency.

6. Establish Objectives Along the Way to Achieving Goals

Objectives are selected to be timely and indicative of progress toward goals.

7. Associate Responsibilities and Time Lines With Each Objective

Responsibilities are assigned, including for implementation of the plan, and for achieving various goals and objectives. Ideally, deadlines are set for meeting each responsibility.

8. Write and Communicate a Plan Document

The above information is organized and written in a document which is distributed around the system.

9. Acknowledge and Celebrate Accomplishment of the Plan

This step is frequently forgotten, which can lead to increasing frustration and skepticism on the part of those people who are responsible to carry out the plan.

Guidelines to Ensure Successful Planning and Implementation

A common failure in many kinds of planning is that the plan is never really implemented. Instead, all focus is on writing a plan document. Too often, the plan sits collecting dust on a shelf. Therefore, most of the following guidelines help to ensure that the planning process is carried out completely and is implemented completely -- or, deviations from the intended plan are recognized and managed accordingly.

1. Involve the Right People in the Planning Process

Going back to the reference to systems, it's critical that all parts of the system continue to exchange feedback in order to function effectively. This is true no matter what type of system. When planning, get input from everyone who will responsible to carry out parts of the plan, along with representative from groups who will be effected by the plan. Of course, people also should be involved if they will be responsible to review and authorize the plan.

2. Write Down the Planning Information and Communicate it Widely

New managers, in particular, often forget that others don't know what these managers know. Even if managers do communicate their intentions and plans verbally, chances are great that others won't completely hear or understand what the manager wants done. Also, as plans change, it's extremely difficult to remember who is supposed to be doing what and according to which version of the plan. Key stakeholders (employees, management, board members, funders, investor, customers, clients, etc.) may request copies of various types of plans. Therefore, it's critical to write plans down and communicate them widely.

3. Goals and Objectives Should Be SMARTER

SMARTER is an acronym, that is, a word composed by joining letters from different words in a phrase or set of words. In this case, a SMARTER goal or objective is:

Specific:
For example, it's difficult to know what someone should be doing if they are to pursue the goal to "work harder". It's easier to recognize "Write a paper".

Measurable:
It's difficult to know what the scope of "Writing a paper" really is. It's easier to appreciate that effort if the goal is "Write a 30-page paper".

Acceptable:
If I'm to take responsibility for pursuit of a goal, the goal should be acceptable to me. For example, I'm not likely to follow the directions of someone telling me to write a 30-page paper when I also have to five other papers to write. However, if you involve me in setting the goal so I can change my other commitments or modify the goal, I'm much more likely to accept pursuit of the goal as well.

Realistic:
Even if I do accept responsibility to pursue a goal that is specific and measurable, the goal won't be useful to me or others if, for example, the goal is to "Write a 30-page paper in the next 10 seconds".

Time frame:
It may mean more to others if I commit to a realistic goal to "Write a 30-page paper in one week". However, it'll mean more to others (particularly if they are planning to help me or guide me to reach the goal) if I specify that I will write one page a day for 30 days, rather than including the possibility that I will write all 30 pages in last day of the 30-day period.

Extending:
The goal should stretch the performer's capabilities. For example, I might be more interested in writing a 30-page paper if the topic of the paper or the way that I write it will extend my capabilities.

Rewarding:
I'm more inclined to write the paper if the paper will contribute to an effort in such a way that I might be rewarded for my effort.

4. Build in Accountability (Regularly Review Who's Doing What and By When?)

Plans should specify who is responsible for achieving each result, including goals and objectives. Dates should be set for completion of each result, as well. Responsible parties should regularly review status of the plan. Be sure to have someone of authority "sign off" on the plan, including putting their signature on the plan to indicate they agree with and support its contents. Include responsibilities in policies, procedures, job descriptions, performance review processes, etc.

5. Note Deviations from the Plan and Replan Accordingly

It's OK to deviate from the plan. The plan is not a set of rules. It's an overall guideline. As important as following the plan is noticing deviations and adjusting the plan accordingly.

6. Evaluate Planning Process and the Plan

During the planning process, regularly collect feedback from participants. Do they agree with the planning process? If not, what don't they like and how could it be done better? In large, ongoing planning processes (such as strategic planning, business planning, project planning, etc.), it's critical to collect this kind of feedback regularly.

During regular reviews of implementation of the plan, assess if goals are being achieved or not. If not, were goals realistic? Do responsible parties have the resources necessary to achieve the goals and objectives? Should goals be changed? Should more priority be placed on achieving the goals? What needs to be done?

Finally, take 10 minutes to write down how the planning process could have been done better. File it away and read it the next time you conduct the planning process.

7. Recurring Planning Process is at Least as Important as Plan Document

Far too often, primary emphasis is placed on the plan document. This is extremely unfortunate because the real treasure of planning is the planning process itself. During planning, planners learn a great deal from ongoing analysis, reflection, discussion, debates and dialogue around issues and goals in the system. Perhaps there is no better example of misplaced priorities in planning than in business ethics. Far too often, people put emphasis on written codes of ethics and codes of conduct. While these documents certainly are important, at least as important is conducting ongoing communications around these documents. The ongoing communications are what sensitize people to understanding and following the values and behaviors suggested in the codes.

8. Nature of the Process Should Be Compatible to Nature of Planners

A prominent example of this type of potential problem is when planners don't prefer the "top down" or "bottom up", "linear" type of planning (for example, going from general to specific along the process of an environmental scan, SWOT analysis, mission/vision/values, issues and goals, strategies, objectives, timelines, etc.) There are other ways to conduct planning.

9. Critical -- But Frequently Missing Step -- Acknowledgement and Celebration of Results

It's easy for planners to become tired and even cynical about the planning process. One of the reasons for this problem is very likely that far too often, emphasis is placed on achieving the results. Once the desired results are achieved, new ones are quickly established. The process can seem like having to solve one problem after another, with no real end in sight. Yet when one really thinks about it, it's a major accomplishment to carefully analyze a situation, involve others in a plan to do something about it, work together to carry out the plan and actually see some results. So acknowledge this -- celebrate your accomplishment!

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Planning (many kinds) at http://managementhelp.org/planning/index.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Effective Delegation

The hallmark of good supervision is effective delegation. Delegation is when supervisors give responsibility and authority to subordinates to complete a task, and let the subordinates figure out how the task can be accomplished. Effective delegation develops people who are ultimately more fulfilled and productive. Managers become more fulfilled and productive themselves as they learn to count on their staffs and are freed up to attend to more strategic issues.

Delegation is often very difficult for new supervisors, particularly if they have had to scramble to start the organization or start a major new product or service themselves. Many managers want to remain comfortable, making the same decisions they have always made. They believe they can do a better job themselves. They don't want to risk losing any of their power and stature (ironically, they do lose these if they don't learn to delegate effectively). Often, they don't want to risk giving authority to subordinates in case they fail and impair the organization.

However, there are basic approaches to delegation that, with practice, become the backbone of effective supervision and development. Thomas R. Horton, in *Delegation and Team Building: No Solo Acts Please* (Management Review, September 1992, pp. 58-61) suggests the following general steps to accomplish delegation:

1. **Delegate the whole task to one person**
This gives the person the responsibility and increases their motivation.

2. **Select the right person**
Assess the skills and capabilities of subordinates and assign the task to the most appropriate one.

3. **Clearly specify your preferred results**
Give information on what, why, when, who and where. You might leave the "how" to them. Write this information down.

4. **Delegate responsibility and authority -- assign the task, not the method to accomplish it**
Let the subordinate complete the task in the manner they choose, as long as the results are what the supervisor specifies. Let the employee have strong input as to the completion date of the project. Note that you may not even know how to complete the task yourself -- this is often the case with higher levels of management.

5. **Ask the employee to summarize back to you, their impressions of the project and the results you prefer**

6. **Get ongoing non-intrusive feedback about progress on the project**
This is a good reason to continue to get weekly, written status reports from all direct reports. Reports should cover what they did last week, plan to do next week and any potential issues. Regular employee meetings provide this ongoing feedback, as well.

7. **Maintain open lines of communication**
Don't hover over the subordinate, but sense what they're doing and support their checking in with you along the way.

8. **If you're not satisfied with the progress, don't take the project back**
Continue to work with the employee and ensure they perceive the project as their responsibility.

9. **Evaluate and reward performance**
Evaluate results more than methods. Address insufficient performance and reward successes. See the next major section, "Employee Performance Management."

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Delegation at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/delegating.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Basics of Internal Communications

Effective communications is the "life's blood" of an organization. Organizations that are highly successful have strong communications. One of the first signs that an organization is struggling is that communications have broken down. The following guidelines are very basic in nature, but comprise the basics for ensuring strong ongoing, internal communications.

1. **Have all employees provide weekly written status reports to their supervisors**
Include what tasks were done last week, what tasks are planned next week, any pending issues and date the report. These reports may seem a tedious task, but they're precious in ensuring that the employee and their supervisor have mutual understanding of what is going on, and the reports come in very handy for planning purposes. They also make otherwise harried employees stand back and reflect on what they're doing.

2. **Hold monthly meetings with all employees together**
Review the overall condition of the organization and review recent successes. Consider conducting "in service" training where employees take turns

describing their roles to the rest of the staff. For clarity, focus and morale, be sure to use agendas and ensure follow-up minutes. Consider bringing in a customer to tell their story of how the organization helped them. These meetings go a long way toward building a feeling of teamwork among staff.

3. **Hold weekly or biweekly meetings with all employees together if the organization is small (e.g., under 10 people); otherwise, with all managers together**
Have these meetings even if there is not a specific problem to solve -- just make them shorter. (Holding meetings only when there are problems to solve cultivates a crisis-oriented environment where managers believe their only job is to solve problems.) Use these meetings for each person to briefly give an overview of what they are doing that week. Facilitate the meetings to support exchange of ideas and questions. Again, for clarity, focus and morale, be sure to use agendas, take minutes and ensure follow-up minutes. Have each person bring their calendar to ensure scheduling of future meetings accommodates each person's calendar.

4. **Have supervisors meet with their direct reports in one-on-one meetings every month**
This ultimately produces more efficient time management and supervision. Review overall status of work activities, hear how it's going with both the supervisor and the employee, exchange feedback and questions about current products and services, and discuss career planning, etc. Consider these meetings as interim meetings between the more formal, yearly performance review meetings.

For additional and advanced resources about face-to-face communications, see:

- Internal Communications at http://managementhelp.org/organizationalcommunications/index.htm#anchor919248
- Feedback at http://managementhelp.org/communicationsskills/feedback.htm
- Listening at http://managementhelp.org/communicationsskills/listening-skills.htm
- Presenting at http://managementhelp.org/communicationsskills/public-speaking.htm
- Non-Verbal Communications at http://managementhelp.org/communicationsskills/body-language.htm

For additional and advanced resources about interpersonal communications, see:

- Building Trust at http://managementhelp.org/interpersonal/building-trust.htm
- Conflict (Interpersonal) at http://managementhelp.org/interpersonal/conflict.htm
- Etiquette (Manners) at http://managementhelp.org/interpersonal/etiquette.htm
- Handling Difficult People at http://managementhelp.org/interpersonal/difficult-people.htm
- Valuing Diversity at http://managementhelp.org/interpersonal/multicultural-diversity.htm
- Negotiating at http://managementhelp.org/interpersonal/negotiation-skills.htm
- Office Politics at http://managementhelp.org/interpersonal/office-politics.htm

For additional and advanced resources about written communications, see:

- Communications (Writing) at http://managementhelp.org/businesswriting/index.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Meeting Management

Meeting management tends to be a set of skills often overlooked by leaders and managers. The following information is a rather "Cadillac" version of meeting management suggestions. The reader might pick which suggestions best fits the particular culture of their own organization. Keep in mind that meetings are very expensive activities when one considers the cost of labor for the meeting and how much can or cannot get done in them. So take meeting management very seriously.

The process used in a meeting depends on the kind of meeting you plan to have, e.g., staff meeting, planning meeting, problem solving meeting, etc. However, there are certain basics that are common to various types of meetings. These basics are described below.

(Note that there may seem to be a lot of suggestions listed below for something as apparently simple as having a meeting. However, any important activity would include a long list of suggestions. The list seems to become much smaller once you master how to conduct the activity.)

Selecting Participants

1. The decision about who is to attend depends on what you want to accomplish in the meeting. This may seem too obvious to state, but it's surprising how many meetings occur without the right people there.
2. Don't depend on your own judgment about who should come. Ask several other people for their opinion as well.
3. If possible, call each person to tell them about the meeting, it's overall purpose and why their attendance is important.
4. Follow-up your call with a meeting notice, including the purpose of the meeting, where it will be held and when, the list of participants and whom to contact if they have questions.
5. Send out a copy of the proposed agenda along with the meeting notice.
6. Have someone designated to record important actions, assignments and due dates during the meeting. This person should ensure that this information is distributed to all participants shortly after the meeting.

Developing Agendas

1. Develop the agenda together with key participants in the meeting. Think of what overall outcome you want from the meeting and what activities need to occur to reach that outcome. The agenda should be organized so that these activities are conducted during the meeting.

In the agenda, state the overall outcome that you want from the meeting
2. Design the agenda so that participants get involved early by having something for them to do right away and so they come on time.
3. Next to each major topic, include the type of action needed, the type of output expected (decision, vote, action assigned to someone), and time estimates for addressing each topic
4. Ask participants if they'll commit to the agenda.
5. Keep the agenda posted at all times.
6. Don't overly design meetings; be willing to adapt the meeting agenda if members are making progress in the planning process.
7. Think about how you label an event, so people come in with that mindset; it may pay to have a short dialogue around the label to develop a common mindset among attendees, particularly if they include representatives from various cultures.

Opening Meetings

1. Always start on time; this respects those who showed up on time and reminds late-comers that the scheduling is serious.
2. Welcome attendees and thank them for their time.
3. Review the agenda at the beginning of each meeting, giving participants a chance to understand all proposed major topics, change them and accept them.
4. Note that a meeting recorder if used will take minutes and provide them back to each participant shortly after the meeting.
5. Model the kind of energy and participant needed by meeting participants.
6. Clarify your role(s) in the meeting.

Establishing Ground Rules for Meetings

You don't need to develop new ground rules each time you have a meeting, surely. However, it pays to have a few basic ground rules that can be used for most of your meetings. These ground rules cultivate the basic ingredients needed for a successful meeting.
1. Four powerful ground rules are: participate, get focus, maintain momentum and reach closure. (You may want a ground rule about confidentiality.)
2. List your primary ground rules on the agenda.
3. If you have new attendees who are not used to your meetings, you might review *each* ground rule.
4. Keep the ground rules posted at all times.

Time Management

1. One of the most difficult facilitation tasks is time management -- time seems to run out before tasks are completed. Therefore, the biggest challenge is keeping momentum to keep the process moving.
2. You might ask attendees to help you keep track of the time.
3. If the planned time on the agenda is getting out of hand, present it to the group and ask for their input as to a resolution.

Evaluations of Meeting Process

It's amazing how often people will complain about a meeting being a complete waste of time -- but they only say so after the meeting. Get their feedback during the meeting when you can improve the meeting process right away. Evaluating a meeting only at the end of the meeting is usually too late to do anything about participants' feedback.
1. Every couple of hours, conduct 5-10 minutes "satisfaction checks".
2. In a round-table approach, quickly have each participant indicate how they think the meeting is going.

Evaluating the Overall Meeting

1. Leave 5-10 minutes at the end of the meeting to evaluate the meeting; don't skip this portion of the meeting.
2. Have each member rank the meeting from 1-5, with 5 as the highest, and have each member explain their ranking
3. Have the chief executive rank the meeting last.

Closing Meetings

1. Always end meetings on time and attempt to end on a positive note.
2. At the end of a meeting, review actions and assignments, and set the time for the next meeting and ask each person if they can make it or not (to get their commitment)
3. Clarify that meeting minutes and/or actions will be reported back to members in at most a week (this helps to keep momentum going).

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Meeting Management at http://managementhelp.org/misc/meeting-management.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Managing Yourself

There are many sources of additional information and advice referenced at the end of this section.

Role of New Manager or Supervisor of Often Very Stressful

The experience of a first-time supervisor or manager is often one of the most trying in their career. They rarely have adequate training for the new management role -- they were promoted because of their technical expertise, not because of their managerial expertise. They suddenly have a wide range of policies and other regulations to apply to their subordinates. Work is never "done". They must represent upper management to their subordinates, and their subordinates to upper management. They're stuck in the middle. They can feel very alone.

Guidelines to Manage Yourself

Everyone in management has gone through the transition from individual contributor to manager. Each person finds their own way to "survive". The following guidelines will help you keep your perspective and your health.

1. **Monitor your work hours**
The first visible, undeniable sign that things are out of hand is that you're working too many hours. Note how many hours you are working per week. Set a limit and stick to that limit. Ask your peers or boss for help.

2. **Recognize your own signs of stress**
Different people show their stress in different ways. Some people have "blow ups". Some people get very forgetful. Some people lose concentration. For many people, they excel at their jobs, but their home life falls apart. Know your signs of stress. Tell someone else what they are. Ask them to check in with you every two weeks to see how you are doing. Every two weeks, write down how you are doing -- if only for a minute. Stick in it a file marked "%*#)%&!!#$".

3. **Get a mentor or a coach**
Ideally, your supervisors is a very good mentor and coach. Many people have "been there, done that" and can serve as great mentors to you.

4. **Learn to delegate**
Delegating is giving others the responsibility and authority to carry out tasks. You maintain the accountability to get them done, but you let others decide how they will carry out the tasks themselves. Delegation is a skill to learn. Start learning it.<

5. **Communicate as much as you can**
Have at least one person in your life with whom you are completely honest. Hold regular meetings with staff -- all of them in one meeting at least once a month, and meet at least once every two weeks with each of your direct reports. A common problem among new managers and supervisors (or among experienced, but ineffective ones) is not meeting unless there's something to say. There is always something to communicate, even if to say that things are going well and then share the health of your pets. New managers and supervisors often assume that their employees know as much as they do. One of the first signs of an organization in trouble is that communications break down. Err on the side of too much communication, rather than not enough.

6. **Recognize what's important from what's urgent -- fix the system, not the problem**
One of the major points that experienced manages make is that they've learned to respond to what's important, rather than what's urgent. Phone calls, sick employees, lost paperwork, disagreements between employees all seem to suddenly crop up and demand immediate attention. It can seem like your day is responding to one crises after another. As you gain experience, you quit responding to the crisis and instead respond to the problem that causes the crises. You get an answering machine or someone else to answer the phone. You plan for employees being gone for the day -- and you accept that people get sick. You develop a filing system to keep track of your paperwork. You learn basic skills in conflict management. Most important, you recognize that management is a process -- you never really "finish" your to-do list -- your list is there to help you keep track of details. Over time, you learn to relax.

7. **Recognize accomplishments**
Our society promotes problem solvers. We solve one problem and quickly move on to the next. The culture of many organizations rewards problem solvers. Once a problem is solved, we quickly move on to the next to solve that one, too. Pretty soon we feel empty. We feel as if we're not making a difference. Our subordinates do, too. So in all your plans, include time to acknowledge accomplishments -- if only by having a good laugh by the coffee machine, do take time to note that something useful was done.

For additional sources of information to manage your productivity, see:

- Delegation at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/delegating.htm
- Decision Making
- Organizing Yourself at http://managementhelp.org/personalproductivity/organizing-yourself.htm
- Problem Solving at http://managementhelp.org/personalproductivity/problem-solving.htm
- Time Management at http://managementhelp.org/personalproductivity/time-stress-management.htm
- Getting Coached at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/coaching.htm#anchor4294655486
- Getting a Mentor at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/mentoring.htm#anchor4294745062

For additional sources of information to manage your well-being, see:

- Assertiveness at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/assertiveness.htm
- Attitude at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/improving-attitude.htm
- Burnout at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/burnout.htm
- Cynicism at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/cynicism/index.htm
- Emotional Intelligence at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/emotional-intelligence.htm
- Financial Fitness at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/personal-finance.htm
- Job Satisfaction
- Motivating and Inspiring Yourself at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/self-motivation.htm

- Physical Fitness at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/physical-fitness.htm
- Self-Confidence at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/self-confidence.htm
- Stress Management at http://managementhelp.org/personalproductivity/time-stress-management.htm
- Work-Life Balance at http://managementhelp.org/personalwellness/work-life-balance.htm

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=== DESIGNING ORGANIZATION, STAFF & TEAMS ===

Designing Organization and Staff

Overall, the organization and its various groups should be organized in the configuration that reaches business goals in the most effective and efficient fashion. Guidelines in this section will help you ensure your organization and its various groups are organized in the best configuration possible.

NOTE: Sources for additional and advanced information are included at the end of this section.

If You Are In An Already Established Organizations, Then Organizing Will Be Easier if You Have Been ...
1. Conducting strategic planning to regularly review the purpose of your organization, its overall goals and who should be doing what to meet those goals
2. Using sound principles of employee performance management to regularly review what employees should be doing to produce results, how they're doing toward their results, and what must be done to help them do a better job of achieving results

If You Are In An Already Established Organizations, Then Typical Problems That Suggest Need for Organizing (or Re-Organizing) Are ...
There are several problems that seem to keep coming up in small businesses, whether for-profit or nonprofit. These problems include:
1. An employee keeps complaining (and you agree) that he or she is overloaded with work.
2. Employees complain that their activities overlap.
3. An employee indicates (and you agree) that he or she does not have enough work to do during a work day.
4. Employees complain that they're reporting to more than one boss, or supervisor.
5. An employee complains that their work includes very different tasks. For example, they may have a highly complex and demanding project (e.g., leading strategic planning) and a large routine, recurring task (sorting a great deal of the organization's daily mail).
6. Management notices a large amount of employee turnover, that is, employees don't stay long enough with the organization.
7. A department, or major function in the organization, has recurring problems.

NOTE: It is not always problems that provoke the need for organizing. For example, if the organization has been conducting strategic planning and produced new goals, these goals may require the organization to reorganize. For example, if the business wants to expand marketshare in a certain region, then the organization may need a new office in that region, more sales people, etc.

General Principles to Remember
Whether you're in an already established or a new organization, the activity of organizing and re-organizing can be a major undertaking that has substantial effect on everyone in the organization. Therefore, before we visit some specific guidelines for carrying out change, it's important to keep the following general principles in mind:
1. Don't get wrapped up in doing change for the sake of change. Know why you're making the change. Know what overall goal(s) do you hope to accomplish.
2. Successful change must involve the strong, ongoing, visible participation of top management.
3. Usually there's a champion who initially instigates the change by being visionary, persuasive and consistent.
4. A change agent role is usually responsible to translate the vision to a realistic plan and carry out the plan.
5. Take care of yourself first. Organization-wide change can be highly stressful.
6. The process won't be an "aha!" It will likely not be as bad as you might expect, but won't be as good as you'd prefer either.
7. Keep perspective. Keep focused on meeting the needs of your customers.
8. Don't seek to control change, but rather to expect it, understand it and manage it.
9. Change is usually best carried out as a team-wide effort.
10. Communications about the change should be frequent and with all organization members.
11. To sustain change, the structures of the organization itself should be modified, including strategic plans, policies and procedures.

General Guidelines for Planning the Organizing
Recurring problems often seem to have little to do with the business's overall purpose and goals. However, any attempts at reorganizing may be just fine tuning, or tweaking, if not done with the long term in mind. In fact, the recurring problems may be a symptom of the organization's not having clearly thought out what its overall purpose and goals are. Without visiting the overall purpose and goals, redesign is usually a highly reactive and very short-term fix. Therefore:
1. Carefully consider conducting a strategic planning process to guide you through reviewing your organization's purpose.
2. Consider using a consultant. Ensure the consultant is highly experienced in organization-wide change. Ask to see references and check the references.
3. Plan the change. How do you plan to reach the goals, what will you need to reach the goals, how long might it take and how will you know when you've reached your goals or not? What will you need in resources and how much will they probably cost? Focus on the coordination of the departments/programs in your organization, not on each part by itself. Have someone in charge of the plan.
4. Document a plan. Forums should be held for organization members to express their ideas for the plan. They should be able to express their concerns and frustrations as well. Note that plans do change. That's fine, but communicate that the plan has changed and why.
5. Include closure in the plan to acknowledge and celebrate your accomplishments.

6. Get as much feedback as practical from employees during planning and implementation of the change, including what they think are the problems and what should be done to resolve them. If possible, work with a team of employees to manage the change.
7. Widely communicate the plan, including the need for change. The best approaches to address resistance to change is through increased and sustained communications and education.

Guidelines During Organizational Design
One of the most frequent and straightforward means to guide decisions about organizational design is to examine similar businesses, including similar design and nature of services and products. However, management should still undertake careful examination of the design of their business. The following guidelines will help you in this activity.

Lewis, Lewis and Souflee, in *Management of Human Service Organizations* (Books/Cole, 1991, p. 80) list several key questions developing an organizational design. These questions apply, whether for-profit or nonprofit organization. [Items in brackets "[!!]" were inserted by Carter McNamara.!!]
1. What are the primary goals and objectives that the organization should be designed to meet? (Strategic planning will help you determine what these goals are.)
2. What continuing activities need to be performed in order to implement the strategies that have been selected as part of the planning process? (Strategic planning will help you determine the answer to this question, too.)
3. How can the necessary activities to be divided so that individuals or groups can be assigned responsibility for performing them [that is, organized into separate roles and jobs!!]? [Activities should be grouped into related and similar activities as much as possible so that individuals are working on tasks that are related and similar.!!]
4. Once activities have been grouped into specific jobs, what kind of authority and responsibility should be assigned?
5. How and by whom should decisions be made? [Attempt to always and ultimately have one person who is singularly responsible for decisions!!].
6. How specialized should roles be?
7. Who should control the work being performed?
8. How can communication and coordination among members of the organization be facilitated?
9. How can job and role descriptions be developed to take into account both functions and accountabilities?
10. How can coordination and communication with the external social environment be facilitated?

Also strive to have:
11. Every employee ultimately reporting to one person, if possible, and they should know who that person is. Job descriptions are often complained about, but they are useful in specifying who reports to whom.
12. Carefully consider the span of control, that is, how many people are reporting to whom. Can each manager really supervise that many people in an effective fashion?
13. When done designing the group, always build structure into the new design through the use of organizational charts, job descriptions, policies and procedures that document the design and who is doing what in it.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Strategic Planning at http://managementhelp.org/plan_dec/str_plan/str_plan.htm
- Specifying Jobs and Roles at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/job-descriptions.htm
- Common Dimensions in Organizations (features to consider about organizations) at http://managementhelp.org/organizations/dimensions.htm
- Key Concepts in the Design of an Organization at http://managementhelp.org/organizations/concepts.htm
- Organizing (many kinds) at http://managementhelp.org/organizing/index.htm
- Organizational Change at http://managementhelp.org/organizationalchange/index.htm

Return to Top if Desired

=== STAFFING ===

Defining a New Job Role

1. Recognizing the need for the new role
Often, managers realize the need for a new organizational role when employees continue to report being short-handed and mention the same tasks are not being done. Ideally, planning for a new role is done during strategic planning or when a new product or service is added to the organization.

- For additional information, see Workforce Planning at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/planning.htm

2. **Draft a job description**
Management should draft a job description which specifies the general responsibilities of the position along with some of the specific duties to be conducted by the role, the title for the position, and any special skills, training or credentials required. (Do not seek job descriptions from other organizations and merely adopt those. Your open position is unique and job descriptions are very important so you should develop your own -- the process of completing the job description is usually enlightening.) Note which job activities are essential and which are non-essential. Add whom the position reports to and note if the position is full-time or part-time. Consider if the position requires any special physical skills (this may be important when considering accommodations to candidates with physical disabilities and effects from the Americans with Disabilities Act). If the position must be filled by a paid employee (see the next paragraph to consider if a volunteer or consultant is more appropriate), consider if the position is exempt or non-exempt (exempt from being paid overtime). Usually, highly skilled and/or professional roles are exempt, while entry-level positions are non-exempt and will be paid for over-time. Invite employees to review and edit the drafted job description. Consider including a six-month probationary period for the new position and if you do so, be sure to update your personnel policies to describe your organization's use of the probationary conditions. A

probationary period allows you to fire an employee during the six months if you have concerns and greatly decreases the chances you will be sued for wrongful termination.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Conducting Job and Task Analyses at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/job-descriptions.htm
- Job Descriptions at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/job-descriptions.htm

3. **Would a volunteer (in the case of nonprofits) or consultant be appropriate?**
At this point, consider if the new position might be filled by a volunteer or consultant. If the activities associated with the role are highly critical for an extended duration, e.g., over six months, and require both critical and general skills, you may be better off to count on hiring an employee. On the other hand, if the role's activities are entry-level and if you are not sure that the position is really needed for the long term, consider getting volunteers to fill the role. If the role requires highly skilled personnel for a fixed duration, consider hiring a consultant.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Hiring a Consultant at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/consulting.htm
- Volunteer Programs at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/volunteers.htm

4. **Determine the approximate cost of the new role**
Estimate the salary range for the new position. Set this range by talking to other organizations with similar product or services, or by scanning classified sections of newspapers with ads for similar roles. Finalize how much the position will cost the organization by adding "fringe" to the salary. For planning purposes, fringe might be estimated at 40% of the salary. Fringe includes costs of benefits planned for the new role, including health and dental and life insurance, and retirement benefits, along with required unemployment taxes, worker's compensation and any pension plans. Note that, depending on the state in which you live, you may be required to required to pay certain employment taxes for part-time people, often if they are at or over half-time. Additional costs of the position result from training, equipment, rental of space, postage, copying, etc. (You should develop a compensation program, with policies that outline the procedure for determination of salary and benefits.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Benefits and Compensation at http://managementhelp.org/payandbenefits/index.htm

5. **Get feedback and authorization from the board (in the case of corporations)**
You may want to work with the board chair to prepare for communication of the new job to the board. Propose the new position to the board by attaching a proposal letter to the drafted job description along with description of how the position will be funded and sending it to all board members for their review before the next board meeting. At the board meeting, invite open discussion and questions about the new role. Seek their authorization for the new position.

6. **Finalize the job description**
Update the job description with relevant feedback from the boar (in the case of corporations). It's important that the job description be as accurate as possible because it is the basis for determining initial compensation, conveying the role to the new employee and conducting regular performance appraisals. Be sure to note the version of the job description by including the date on the bottom. The job description should be reviewed and updated annually, usually by the employee and supervisor during the performance review cycle (described later on in this section).

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Job Descriptions at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/job-descriptions.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Hiring (Advertising, Screening and Selecting)

1. **Advertise the position**
Post ads in classified sections of local major and neighborhood newspapers. In the ads, include the job title, general responsibilities, minimum skills and/or education required, whom they should send a resume to if they are interested and by when. Consider having a closing date after which you won't accept resumes. Mention the role to customers. Send cover letters and job descriptions to professional organizations. Be sure to mention the role to all employees to see if they have any favorite candidates.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Advertising for Employees at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/recruiting

2. **Current employees should be able to apply for the job.**
Considerations in hiring them for the new role will have to include the impact on the organization if the employee leaves behind a critical and unfilled role in the organization. Some organizations may elect to give internal candidates the first shot at the job.

3. **Screen resumes**
When screening resumes, note the candidate's career objective -- or the lack of it. If not specified, the candidate may not have considered what they want to do in the future, which may impact their commitment to your new role. Note if they stayed at jobs long or left quickly. Are there holes in their work history? Note their education and training. Is it appropriate for the new role? Consider what capabilities and skills might be evidenced in their past and current work activities. If you have lots of resumes, it helps greatly to enter in a word processor, the "highlights" and "concerns" information about each candidate; otherwise, after about 10 resumes, they all look the same. Having information online helps you keep perspective and you can go back later and have a strong overview of the candidates. Consider routing resumes past key employees to collect their rankings. Interview all candidates that meet the minimum qualifications. (At this point, be sure that you're not excluding candidates because of unfair biases.)

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Screening Applicants at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/screening.htm

4. **Interview candidates**
Send the job description to candidates before they come to the interview meeting. While interviewing candidates, always apply the same questions to all candidates to ensure fairness. All questions should be in regard to performing the duties of the job. Ask about their compensation needs and expected or needed benefits. Attempt to ask open-ended questions, i.e., avoid "yes-no" questions. Talk for at most 25% of the time -- for the rest, listen. Don't rely on your memory -- ask permission from the interviewee to take notes. Find out when they can start if offered the job. Consider having multiple people at the interview; although this can be intimidating to the interviewee, this practice can ensure them a much more objective and fair presentation. Have the same interviewers in all of the interviews if possible. Consider asking some challenging, open-ended questions, such as "What skills do you bring to this job?", "What concerns do you have about filling this role?", "What was your biggest challenge in a past job and how did you meet it?" Don't ask questions about race, nationality, age, gender, disabilities (current or previous), marital status, spouses, children and their care, criminal records or credit records. Have all interviewers share/record their impressions of the candidate soon after the interview meeting. Explain to the candidate that you'll be getting back to them soon, and always do this. Ask if you can get and check any references. Always check references and share them with the interviewers. Be sure to tell candidates of any relevant personnel policies terms, such as probationary periods. (The best way to deal with a poor performer is not to hire him or her in the first place. It is often wise to have a probationary period of, e.g., six months, wherein if the employee does not meet the responsibilities of the position, you can terminate the employee.) If practical, look into the applicant's background to ascertain if they have a criminal record.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Interviewing Job Candidates at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/screening.htm
- Background Checks at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/screening.htm

5. **Select the candidate**
Usually, this is not as easy as one would like because two or three candidates come in close. Have a highly focused meeting with all interviewers. Have each suggest their favorite candidate. If there is disagreement, focus discussion to identify the one or two areas in which interviewers disagree about the candidates. Then have each interviewer explain their impressions. At this point, interviewers usually come to consensus and agree on one candidate.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Selecting (Hiring) New Employees at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/hiring.htm

6. **If there does not seem to be suitable candidate**
Consider if the job requirements are too stringent or are an odd mix. For example, you might not find someone who's highly interested in a certain technical skill or service and who also shows strong interest in general skills. Reconfigure the job so that required skills and training are somewhat similar and the role becomes more standard. Or, consider hiring the candidate who came in closest and plan for dedicated training to bring their skills to the needed levels. Or, re-advertise the position. Consider getting advice from a human resources professional (at this point, your need for them is quite specific, so they might provide services on a pro bono basis). Or, consider hiring a consultant on a short-term basis, but only as a last resort as this may be quite expensive.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Workforce Planning at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/planning.htm
- Hiring a Consultant at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/consulting.htm

7. **If everyone turns down the job**
The best strategy is to ask the candidates why they turned the job down. Usually, you'll hear the same concerns, e.g., the pay is too low or the benefits incomplete, the organization seems confused about what it wants from the role, the interview process seemed hostile or contentious, etc. Reconvene the interviewers and consider what you heard from the candidates. Recognize what went wrong and correct the problem. Call back your favorite candidates, admit the mistake and what you did, and why you'd like to make an offer to them again.

8. **Offer letter**
If they accept an offer, always follow-up with an offer letter, specifying the compensation, benefits, and starting date and reference an attached job description. Ask them to sign a copy of the offer letter and return it to you.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- For additional and advanced information, see Job Offers at http://managementhelp.org/staffing/hiring.htm

9. **Start a personnel file**
Include in the file, the signed offer letter, tax withholding forms, the job description and any benefits forms.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Personnel Records at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm

Return to top of document if desired.

Building Teams

Management experts assert that most work (and most learning) occurs in teams. Therefore, it's important to know how to design, build and support highly effective teams.

NOTE: There are several major "breakthroughs" in how teams are designed and carried out. These activities can be done. These breakthroughs are in regard to the extent of independence of the teams, producing, for example, self-organized teams, self-directed teams and self-managed teams.

NOTE: Additional and advanced information is referenced at the end of this section.

Major Types of Teams (or Groups)

There are many types of teams. The type used depends very much on the nature of the results the team is to accomplish.

Formal and informal teams

are "official" parts of the overall organization, assigned to a major, ongoing function, for example, quality management, patient care, etc. Management appoints formal teams. Informal teams are usually loosely organized groups of people who volunteer to come together to address a non-critical, short-term purpose.

Committees

are organized to address, major ongoing tasks in an organization and membership is based on position, for example, committees in boards of directors, grievance committees, etc.

Problem solving teams

These teams are formed to address a particular, major problem currently faced by the organization. Often, their overall goal is to provide a written report that includes recommendations for solving the problem. Membership is comprised of people who perceive and experience the problem, as well as those who can do something about it.

Self-directed and self-managed teams

These increasingly used types of teams afford members great latitude in how they achieve the overall results preferred from the team. For example, they may select their leader who serves for a limited time and purpose, depending on the particular point in the group's process. This type of team is used especially when the team is working in a complex, rapidly changing environment.

Stages of Team Development

It helps a great deal to have some basic sense for the life of a team. Teams go through several major phases including the following:

Forming:

Members first get together. Individually, they consider "What am I here for?", "Who else is here", "Who am I comfortable with?", etc. During this stage, it's important to get members involved, including to introduce themselves to each other. The team may require clear leadership to facilitate clarity and comfort for involvement of members.

Storming:

During this stage, members are beginning to voice their individual differences, trying for join with others who share the same beliefs, trying to jockey for position in the group. Therefore, it's important for members to continue to be highly involved, including voicing their concerns in order to feel represented and understood. The team leader should focus on clarity of views, achieving consensus (or commonality of views) and recording decisions.

Norming:

In this stage, members begin to share common commitment to the purpose of the group, including its overall goals and how it will reach those goals. The team leader should focus on achieving clarity of roles, structure and process of the group.

Performing:

In this stage, the team is "humming". Members are actively participating in the team process in order to achieve the goals of the group and its organization. During this stage, the style of leadership becomes more indirect as members take on stronger participation and involvement in the group process.

Closing and Celebration:

At this stage, it's clear to members and their organization that the team has achieved its overall purpose (or a major milestone along the way). It's critical to acknowledge this point in the life of the team, lest members feel unfulfilled and skeptical about future team efforts.

Guidelines for Designing Teams

1. **Set clear goals for the results to be produced by the team**
The goals should be designed to be "SMARTER", that is, be specific, measurable, acceptable to members, realistic, and have a time frame to be started and stopped, extend the capabilities of members and provide reward for their accomplishment. As much as possible, include input from other members of the organization when designing and wording these goals. Goals might be, for example, "produce a project report that specifies project plan, schedule and budget to develop and test a complete employee performance management system within the next year". Write these goals down for eventual communication to and discussion with all team members.

2. **Set clear goals for the effectiveness of the team process**
The goals should also be designed to be "SMARTER". Goals might be, for example, attain 90% participation of all members during the first 6 weeks of weekly attendance, achieve 90% satisfaction ratings among members, each person takes at least one turn at facilitating the group, meetings start and stop on time, etc. Write these goals down for eventual communication to all team members. Write these goals down for eventual communication to and discussion with all team members.

3. **Determine time frames for commencing and terminating the team, if applicable**
Write these times down for eventual communication to and discussion with all team members.

4. **Determine the type of team**
Various types of teams have various purposes. Consider use of permanent teams, committees, self-directed teams, problem solving teams, etc. (See additional information provided at the end of this section.)

5. **Determine the membership of the group**
Consider the extent of expertise needed to achieve the goals, including areas of knowledge and skills. Include at least one person who has skills in facilitation and meeting management. Attempt to include sufficient diversity of values and perspectives to ensure robust ideas and discussion. A critical consideration is availability -- members should have the time to attend every meeting.

6. **Determine the structure of the group**
Structure includes the number of people in the group, how often they will meet and when and who will be the leader of the group.

7. **Determine the process of the group**
Depending on the nature of the results to be produced by the group, the process might be focused on open discussion, action planning, problem solving and decision making, generating recommendations, etc.

8. **Identify any needs for training and materials**
For example, members might benefit from brief overview of the stages of development of a team, receive training and packets of materials in regard to their goals and the structure and process of their team, etc.

9. **Identify the costs to provide necessary resources for the team**
Consider the cost of paying employees to attend the meeting, trainers and/or consultants, room rental, office supplies, etc.

10. **Plan the first meeting**
In the first meeting, communicate the goals of the team, why each member was selected, the overall benefit of the goals to the organization, the time frame for the team effort, who will lead the team (at least, initially), when the team might meet and where, etc. Have this information written down to hand out to each member.

11. **Early on, plan team building activities to support trust and strong working relationships among members**
Team building activities can include, for example, a retreat in which members introduce themselves, exercises in which members help each other solve a short problem or meet a specific and achievable goal, extended period in which members can voice their concerns and frustrations about their team assignments, etc.

12. **Support team meetings and processes**
At this point, it's critical that supervisors remain available to provide support and resources as needed. Monitor that team goals are being met. Provide ongoing encouragement and visibility to members. One of the most important forms of support a supervisor can provide is coordination with other supervisors to ensure that team members are freed up enough to attend team meetings.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Goals and Objectives Should Be SMARTER at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm
- Committees at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm

- Conflict Management in Groups at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm
- Facilitation at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm
- Group Dynamics (about nature of groups, stages of group development, etc) at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm
- Group-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm
- Meeting Management at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm
- Self-Directed and Self-Managed Work Teams at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm
- Team Building at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/records.htm

Return to Top if Desired

=== TRAINING ===

Orienting New Employees

Develop an employee orientation checklist and consider the following activities for inclusion on the list. The following activities should be conducted by the employee's supervisor.

1. **Before the employee begins employment, send them a letter welcoming them**
to the organization, verifying their starting date and providing them a copy of the employee policies and procedures manual. Note that you'll dedicate time for them to discuss with manual with you later.

2. **When the employee begins employment, meet with them**
to explain how they will be trained, introduce them to staff, give them keys, get them to sign any needed benefit and tax forms, explain the time-recording system (if applicable), and provide them copies of important documents (an organization chart, last year's final report, the strategic plan, this year's budget, and the employee's policies and procedure manual if they did not get one already).

3. **Show them the facilities**,
including layout of offices, bathrooms, storage areas, kitchen use, copy and fax systems, computer configuration and procedures, telephone usage, and any special billing procedures for use of office systems.

4. **Schedule any needed computer training**,
including use of passwords, overview of software and documentation, location and use of peripherals, and where to go to get questions answered.

5. **Review any policies and/or procedures about use of facilities**.

6. **Assign an employee to them as their "buddy"**
who remains available to answer any questions.

7. **Take them to lunch on the first day**
and invite other employees along.

8. **Meet with them at the end of the day**
to hear any questions or comments.

9. **Meet with the new employee during the first few days**
of employment to review the job description again. Remind them to review the employee manual and sign a form indicating they have reviewed the manual and will comply with its contents. Review any specific goals for the position, e.g., goals from the strategic plan. In the same meeting, explain the performance review procedure and provide them a copy of the performance review document.

10. **Have one-on-one meetings with the new employee on a weekly basis for the first six weeks**,
to discuss the new employee's transition into the organization, get status on work activities, hear any pending issues or needs, and establish a working relationship with their supervisor.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Employee Orientation at http://managementhelp.org/training/employee-orientation.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Job Training

Some Basics to Know About Training

Variety of Reasons for Training

Employee job training can be initiated for a variety of reasons for an employee or group of employees, e.g.,:
a.) When a performance appraisal indicates performance improvement is needed
b.) To "benchmark" the status of improvement so far in a performance improvement effort

c.) As part of an overall professional development program
d.) As part of succession planning to help an employee be eligible for a planned change in role in the organization
e.) To "pilot", or test, the operation of a new performance management system
f.) To train about a specific topic

Very Basic Types of Training

When planning training for your employees, it helps to understand some basics about training. Let's look at four types of training.

Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning is where the learner decides what he or she will learn and how.

Other-Directed Learning

Other-directed learning is where other people decide what the learner will learn and how.

Informal training

Informal training has no predetermined form. Examples are reading books to learn about a subject, talking to friends about the subject, attending a presentation, etc.

Formal Training

Formal training has a predetermined form. The form usually includes specification of learning results, learning objectives and activities that will achieve the results, and how the training will be evaluated. Examples might be college courses, workshops, seminars, etc. Note that because formal training has a form, it does not necessarily mean that formal training is better than other forms.

Informal Means of Training

This is probably the most common type of training and includes, for example, on-the-job training, coaching from supervisors, using manuals and procedures, advice from peers, etc.

Coaching

Probably the most common form of informal training is job coaching.
1. The supervisor, or some other expert at the subject matter or skill, tells the employee how to do something.
2. The employee tries it.
3. The expert watches and gives feedback.
4. The employee tries it until he or she gets it right.

The above approach works best in tasks or jobs that include straightforward procedures or routines. As jobs and roles become more complex, employees often require more formal training.

Common Pitfalls in Employee Training

1. New managers and supervisors often underestimate the value of training.
2. Or, they perceive it as occurring only in classrooms.
3. Or, they assume that because an employee has attended a course, workshop or seminar, than he or she must have learned what they needed to know.
4. Or, they believe that good training can only occur from highly trained professionals.

Learn How to Plan Your Training

Supervisors and employees can accomplish highly effective training by following certain guidelines.

The following guidelines (along with additional advice and resources to fill out your training plan) are included in the Complete Guidelines to Design Your Training Plan at http://managementhelp.org/training/systematic/guidelines-to-design-training.htm

Determining Your Overall Goals in Training

1. Are there any time lines that you should consider in your plan?
2. Are you pursuing training and development in order to address a performance gap?
3. Or, is your plan to address a growth gap?
4. Or, is your plan to address an opportunity gap?
5. Get feedback from others
6. Should you conduct a self-assessment?
7. Is a list of competencies, job descriptions or job analysis available to help you identify your training and development goals?
8. Begin thinking about how much money you will need to fund your plan.
9. Write down your training goals.

Identifying Your Learning Objectives and Activities

1. What new areas of knowledge or skills are needed to reach the training goals. Each of these new areas is a learning objectives. Write down the learning objectives.
2. In what sequence should the learning objectives be attained?
a. Carefully consider -- When you have achieved all of your learning objectives, will you indeed have achieved all of your overall training goals?
b. What are the best learning activities (methods) for you to achieve your learning objectives? Do your learning activities include your ongoing reflections about your learning?
c. What observable results, or evidence of learning, will you produce from your learning activities that can be reviewed for verification of learning?
d. Who will verify that each of your learning objectives were reached?
3. Now that you know what activities that will be conducted, think again about any costs that will be needed, e.g., for materials, facilities, etc.
4. How will you handle any ongoing time and stress management issues while implementing your plan?

Developing Any Materials You May Need

1. Consider if you need to obtain, or start:
a. Enrolling in courses
b. Buying books
c. Scheduling time with experts
d. Getting a mentor
e. Scheduling time with your supervisor, etc.

Planning Implementation of Your Training Plan

1. During your training, how will you be sure that you understand the new information and materials?
2. Will your learning be engaging and enjoyable?
3. Are you sure that you'll receive the necessary ongoing feedback, coaching, mentoring, etc., during your training and development activities?
4. Where will you get necessary administrative support and materials?

Planning Evaluation of Your Training Plan and Experiences

1. Who's in charge of implementing and tracking your overall plan?
2. Consider having a local training expert review the plan.
3. Are approaches to evaluation included in all phases of your plan?
For example, are your methods being pretested before being applied? Do you understand the methods as they're being applied? Are regularly providing feedback about how well you understand the materials? How will the you (and your supervisor, if applicable) know if implementation of the plan achieves the training goals identified in the plan? Are there any plans for follow-up evaluation, including assessing your results several months after you completed your plan?

Budget Necessary Resources for Training

1. Consider costs of trainers, consultants, room rental, books, tuition, labor to pay the employee while attending training, etc.

Additional general resources about training and development

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Employee Training Programs at http://managementhelp.org/training/methods/formal-isd-and-addie.htm
- Self-Directed Learning in the Workplace at http://managementhelp.org/training/methods/formal-and-informal-methods.htm
- Basic Terms in Training and Development at http://managementhelp.org/training/basics/terms-in-training.htm
- Reasons and Benefits for Training and Development at http://managementhelp.org/training/basics/reasons-for-training.htm
- Basics to Know About Adult Learning at http://managementhelp.org/training/theory/adult-learning.htm
- Basic Requirements of Learners in Training and Development at http://managementhelp.org/training/roles/of-learners-in-training.htm
- Basic Requirements of Supervisors With Employees in Training and Development at http://managementhelp.org/training/roles/of-management-in-training.htm
- Suggestions to Enrich Any Training and Development Plan at http://managementhelp.org/training/theory/guidelines-to-enrich-trainings.htm
- Some Typical Ways of Learning at http://managementhelp.org/training/methods/index.htm#anchor931247
- Some New Ways of Learning in the Workplace at http://managementhelp.org/training/methods/index.htm#anchor789424

Additional resources about designing training plans

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Complete Guidelines to Design Your Training Plan at http://managementhelp.org/training/systematic/guidelines-to-design-training.htm
- Management Development at http://managementhelp.org/management/development/index.htm
- Leadership Development at http://managementhelp.org/leadership/development/index.htm
- Supervisoral Development at http://managementhelp.org/supervision/development/index.htm

Return to Top if Desired

=== EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ===

Setting Goals

New Managers and Supervisors Often Lack Perspective on Performance of Employees

One of the common problems that new managers and supervisors experience is no clear, strong sense whether their employees are really being effective or not. The first step toward solving this problem is to establish clear performance goals.

Some people have a strong negative reaction toward setting goals because they fear goals as "the law" that must be maintained and never broken. Some people fear they will not achieve the goals. Others have disdain for goals because goals seem to take the "heart" out their work.

Advantages of Goals

Despite the negative views that one can have about goals, they hold certain strong advantages in the workplace. They:
1. Provide clear direction to both supervisor and employee
2. Form a common frame of reference around which the supervisor and employee can effectively communicate
3. Clearly indicate success, and can facilitate strong sense of fulfillment for employee and supervisor
4. Help clarify the roles of the supervisor and employee.

Goals for Performance Gaps, Growth Gaps, Opportunity Gaps and Training Gaps

Goals can be established for a variety of reasons, for example, to overcome performance problems, qualify for future jobs and roles, take advantage of sudden opportunities that arise and/or give direction to training plans.

Performance gaps are identified during the employee performance management process. Ideally, performance gaps are addressed by performance improvement plans. In these plans, goals are established to improve performance, and may include, for example, increased effort on the part of the employee, support from the supervisor, and certain training and resources to assist the employee in their development. Dedicated employees can greatly appreciate having specific performance goals for them to achieve in order to keep their jobs, verify their competence to their supervisor and accomplish overall professional development.

Growth gaps are identified during career planning. Employees perceive certain areas of knowledge and skills that they would like to accomplish in order to qualify for certain future roles and positions. Employees often appreciate having clear-cut goals that mark what they need to do to advance in their careers.

Opportunity gaps are identified when a sudden opportunity arises for the employee. If the employee is highly interested in taking advantage of the opportunity, then he or she will appreciate knowing exactly what they need to accomplish (what goals they need to achieve) to grab the opportunity.

Training gaps are identified when hiring a new employee, during employee performance management or career planning. Gaps are usually in terms of areas of knowledge, skills or abilities. Training plans can be designed with clear-cut training goals to give direction to the employee and trainer.

Whatever the type of goal, it's critical that the employee have strong ownership and commitment to achieving the goal.

Goals Can Be Agreeable to Supervisors and Employees

These views can be addressed, largely by
a) ensuring that employees are strongly involved in identifying them,
b) goals are conveyed as guidelines and that they can be missed as long as there is clear explanation for missing the goals before they are missed, and
c) the goals are "SMARTER" (more on this below).

When setting goals with employees, strive to design and describe them to be "SMARTER". This acronym is described in this guide, in a subsection listed above, and stands for:
1. Specific
2. Measurable
3. Acceptable
4. Realistic
5. Timely
6. Extending capabilities
7. Rewarding

If goals seem insurmountable to the employee, then break goals down into smaller goals, or sub-goals or objectives. Each of these should be SMARTER, as well.

(For further explanation, see the above subsection " Goals and Objectives Should Be SMARTER" included in the above topic "Planning".)

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Goal Setting with Employees at http://managementhelp.org/employeeperformance/goal-setting.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Supporting Employee Motivation

Clearing Up Common Myths About Employee Motivation

The topic of motivating employees is extremely important to managers and supervisors. Despite the important of the topic, several myths persist -- especially among new managers and supervisors. Before looking at what management can do to support the motivation of employees, it's important first to clear up these common myths.

1. **Myth #1 -- "I can motivate people"**
Not really -- they have to motivate themselves. You can't motivate people anymore than you can empower them. Employees have to motivate and empower themselves. However, you can set up an environment where they best motivate and empower themselves. The key is knowing how to set up the environment for each of your employees.

2. **Myth #2 -- "Money is a good motivator"**
Not really. Certain things like money, a nice office and job security can help people from becoming less motivated, but they usually don't help people to become more motivated. A key goal is to understand the motivations of each of your employees.

3. **Myth #3 -- "Fear is a damn good motivator"**
Fear is a great motivator -- for a very short time. That's why a lot of yelling from the boss won't seem to "light a spark under employees" for a very long time.

4. **Myth #4 -- "I know what motivates me, so I know what motivates my employees"**
Not really. Different people are motivated by different things. I may be greatly motivated by earning time away from my job to spend more time my family. You might be motivated much more by recognition of a job well done. People are motivated by the same things. Again, a key goal is to understand what motivates each of your employees.

5. **Myth #5 -- "Increased job satisfaction means increased job performance"**
Research shows this isn't necessarily true at all. Increased job satisfaction does not necessarily mean increased job performance. If the goals of the organization are not aligned with the goals of employees, then employees aren't effectively working toward the mission of the organization.

6. **Myth #6 -- "I can't comprehend employee motivation -- it's a science"**
Nah. Not true. There are some very basic steps you can take that will go a long way toward supporting your employees to motivate themselves toward increased performance in their jobs. (More about these steps is provided later on in this article.)

Basic Principles to Remember

1. **Motivating employees starts with motivating yourself**
It's amazing how, if you hate your job, it seems like everyone else does, too. If you are very stressed out, it seems like everyone else is, too. Enthusiasm is contagious. If you're enthusiastic about your job, it's much easier for others to be, too. Also, if you're doing a good job of taking care of yourself and your own job, you'll have much clearer perspective on how others are doing in theirs.

A great place to start learning about motivation is to start understanding your own motivations. The key to helping to motivate your employees is to understand what motivates them. So what motivates you? Consider, for example, time with family, recognition, a job well done, service, learning, etc. How is your job configured to support your own motivations? What can you do to better motivate yourself?

2. **Always work to align goals of the organization with goals of employees**
As mentioned above, employees can be all fired up about their work and be working very hard. However, if the results of their work don't contribute to the goals of the organization, then the organization is not any better off than if the employees were sitting on their hands -- maybe worse off! Therefore, it's critical that managers and supervisors know what they want from their employees. These preferences should be worded in terms of goals for the organization. Identifying the goals for the organization is usually done during strategic planning. Whatever steps you take to support the motivation of your employees (various steps are suggested below), ensure that employees have strong input to identifying their goals and that these goals are aligned with goals of the organization. (Goals should be worded to be "SMARTER". More about this later on below.)

3. **Key to supporting the motivation of your employees is understanding what motivates each of them**
Each person is motivated by different things. Whatever steps you take to support the motivation of your employees, they should first include finding out what it is that really motivates each of your employees. You can find this out by asking them, listening to them and observing them. (More about this later on below.)

4. **Recognize that supporting employee motivation is a process, not a task**
Organizations change all the time, as do people. Indeed, it is an ongoing process to sustain an environment where each employee can strongly motivate themselves. If you look at sustaining employee motivation as an ongoing process, then you'll be much more fulfilled and motivated yourself.

5. **Support employee motivation by using organizational systems (for example, policies and procedures) -- don't just count on good intentions**

Don't just count on cultivating strong interpersonal relationships with employees to help motivate them. The nature of these relationships can change greatly, for example, during times of stress. Instead, use reliable and comprehensive systems in the workplace to help motivate employees. For example, establish compensation systems, employee performance systems, organizational policies and procedures, etc., to support employee motivation. Also, establishing various systems and structures helps ensure clear understanding and equitable treatment of employees.

Steps You Can Take

The following specific steps can help you go a long way toward supporting your employees to motivate themselves in your organization.

1. **Do more than read this article -- apply what you're reading here**
This maxim is true when reading any management publication.

2. **Briefly write down the motivational factors that sustain you and what you can do to sustain them**
This little bit of "motivation planning" can give you strong perspective on how to think about supporting the motivations of your employees.

3. **Make of list of three to five things that motivate each of your employees**
Read the article How to Motivate Today's Worker. Notice the list of motivating factors in the section "Assessing Your Approach." Fill out the list yourself for each of your employees and then have each of your employees fill out the list for themselves. Compare your answers to theirs. Recognize the differences between your impression of what you think is important to them and what they think is important to them. Then meet with each of your employees to discuss what they think are the most important motivational factors to them. Lastly, take some time alone to write down how you will modify your approaches with each employee to ensure their motivational factors are being met. (NOTE: This may seem like a "soft, touchy-feely exercise" to you. If it does, then talk to a peer or your boss about it. Much of what's important in management is based very much on "soft, touchy-feely exercises". Learn to become more comfortable with them. The place to start is to recognize their importance.)

4. **Work with each employee to ensure their motivational factors are taken into consideration in your reward systems**
For example, their jobs might be redesigned to be more fulfilling. You might find more means to provide recognition, if that is important to them. You might develop a personnel policy that rewards employees with more family time, etc.

5. **Have one-on-one meetings with each employee**
Employees are motivated more by your care and concern for them than by your attention to them. Get to know your employees, their families, their favorite foods, names of their children, etc. This can sound manipulative -- and it will be if not done sincerely. However, even if you sincerely want to get to know each of your employees, it may not happen unless you intentionally set aside time to be with each of them.

6. **Cultivate strong skills in delegation**
Delegation includes conveying responsibility and authority to your employees so they can carry out certain tasks. However, you leave it up to your employees to decide *how* they will carry out the tasks. Skills in delegation can free up a great deal of time for managers and supervisors. It also allows employees to take a stronger role in their jobs, which usually means more fulfillment and motivation in their jobs, as well.

7. **Reward it when you *see* it**
A critical lesson for new managers and supervisors is to learn to focus on employee behaviors, not on employee personalities. Performance in the workplace should be based on behaviors toward goals, not on popularity of employees. You can get in a great deal of trouble (legally, morally and interpersonally) for focusing only on how you *feel* about your employees rather than on what you're *seeing* with your eyeballs.

8. **Reward it soon after you see it**
This helps to reinforce the notion that you highly prefer the behaviors that you're currently seeing from your employees. Often, the shorter the time between an employee's action and your reward for the action, the clearer it is to the employee that you highly prefer that action.

9. **Implement at least the basic principles of performance management**
Good performance management includes identifying goals, measures to indicate if the goals are being met or not, ongoing attention and feedback about measures toward the goals, and corrective actions to redirect activities back toward achieving the goals when necessary. Performance management can focus on organizations, groups, processes in the organization and employees.

10. **Establish goals that are SMARTER**
SMARTER goals are: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, timely, extending of capabilities, and rewarding to those involved.

11. **Clearly convey how employee results contribute to organizational results**
Employees often feel strong fulfillment from realizing that they're actually making a difference. This realization often requires clear communication about organizational goals, employee progress toward those goals and celebration when the goals are met.

12. **Celebrate achievements**
This critical step is often forgotten. New managers and supervisors are often focused on a getting "a lot done". This usually means identifying and solving problems. Experienced managers come to understand that acknowledging and celebrating a solution to a problem can be every bit as important as the solution itself. Without ongoing acknowledgement of success, employees become frustrated, skeptical and even cynical about efforts in the organization.

13. **Let employees hear from their customers (internal or external)**
Let employees hear customers proclaim the benefits of the efforts of the employee . For example, if the employee is working to keep internal computer systems running for other employees (internal customers) in the organization, then have other employees express their gratitude to the employee. If an employee is providing a product or service to external customers, then bring in a customer to express their appreciation to the employee.

14. **Admit to yourself (and to an appropriate someone else) if you don't like an employee --**
Managers and supervisors are people. It's not unusual to just not like someone who works for you. That someone could, for example, look like an uncle you don't like. In this case, admit to yourself that you don't like the employee. Then talk to someone else who is appropriate to hear about your distaste for the employee, for example, a peer, your boss, your spouse, etc. Indicate to the appropriate person that you want to explore what it is that you don't like about the employee and would like to come to a clearer perception of how you can accomplish a positive working relationship with the employee. It often helps a great deal just to talk out loud about how you feel and get someone else's opinion about the situation. As noted above, if you continue to focus on what you *see* about employee performance, you'll go a long way toward ensuring that your treatment of employees remains fair and equitable.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Benefits and Compensation at http://managementhelp.org/payandbenefits/index.htm
- Coaching at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/coaching.htm
- Counseling (addressing performance problems) at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/counseling.htm
- Delegating at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/delegating.htm
- Employee Performance Management at http://managementhelp.org/employeeperformance/index.htm
- Employee Wellness Programs at http://managementhelp.org/employeewellness/index.htm
- Establishing Employee Performance Goals at http://managementhelp.org/employeeperformance/index.htm#anchor1972621
- Goals and Objectives Should Be SMARTER at http://managementhelp.org/planning/index.htm#anchor1384873
- Mentoring at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/mentoring.htm
- Morale (Boosting) at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/improving-morale.htm
- Motivating (additional articles about supporting employee motivation) at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/motivating-others.htm
- Performance Management (basics concepts) at http://managementhelp.org/performancemanagement/index.htm
- Policies (Personnel) at http://managementhelp.org/policies/policies/policies.
- Power and Influence at http://managementhelp.org/leadingpeople/influencing-others.htm
- Rewarding Performance at http://managementhelp.org/employeeperformance/rewarding.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Observing and Giving Feedback

McGill and Beatty (in "Action learning: A practitioner's guide", London: Kogan Page, 1994, p. 159-163) provide useful suggestions about sharing effective feedback:

1. Clarity -- Be clear about what you want to say.

2. Emphasize the positive -- This isn't being collusive in the person's dilemma.

3. Be specific -- Avoid general comments and clarify pronouns such as “it,” “that,” etc.

4. Focus on behavior rather than the person.

5. Refer to behavior that can be changed.

6. Be descriptive rather than evaluative.

7. Own the feedback -- Use ‘I’ statements.

8. Generalizations -- Notice “all,” “never,” “always,” etc., and ask to get more specificity -- often these words are arbitrary limits on behavior.

9. Be very careful with advice -- People rarely struggle with an issue because of the lack of some specific piece of information; often, the best help is helping the person to come to a better understanding of their issue, how it developed, and how they can identify actions to address the issue more effectively.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Giving and Receiving Feedback at http://managementhelp.org/communicationsskills/feedback.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Addressing Performance Issues

(Note that if your organization's policies about performance management indicate a specific procedure for handling performance issues, that procedure should be followed very carefully. Otherwise, a court may interpret your official policies to be modified by how you actually handled a performance issue and you may lose protection from your related policies in court.)

1. **Note that performance issues should always be based on behaviors that you see, not on characteristics of the employee's personality**

2. **Convey performance issues to employees when you see first see the issues!**
Don't wait until the performance review! Worse yet, don't ignore the behaviors in case they "go away."

3. **When you first convey a performance issue to an employee, say what you noticed and would like to see instead**
Be specific about what you saw that you consider to be a performance problem. Ask the employee for feedback. Ask the employee if there's any special training or more resources they need to do their job. Explore if the job is configured so that most people would probably fail, and so the job needs to be redesigned. Tell them that you want the behavior to improve. If they react strongly and claim they will quit, give them a day to think it over. In any case, remind them that you support them in their role.

4. **Consider special circumstances:**
You can usually fire someone if they committed certain gross acts, such as theft, blatant insubordination, a major impropriety, e.g., telling information to competitors or spreading confidential information about customers, etc. However, if there is poor performance or chronic absenteeism because of potential verified alcoholism or depression, it's best to consult an expert to deal with this situation.)

5. **Make notes about the first meeting and its results, and keep it in a file for yourself**
This note may come in handy later on if the performance problem persists. (In the case of a corporation, you might mention the situation to your board. The board will likely be a precious and objective asset to dealing with this situation, especially if things with the employee get worse.)

6. **If the problem occurs again over the next month or two, immediately issue them a written warning**
In the memo, clearly specify what you saw, mention the previous meeting and its date, say the behaviors have not improved, warn them that if this occurs again over some period (e.g., the next month), they will be promptly terminated. Meet with them to provide them the memo. If you are convinced that the employee is trying hard, but can't improve, consider placing him or her elsewhere in the organization. Attempt to have this meeting on other than on a Friday. Otherwise, employees are left to ruminate about the situation without ready access to you for at least three days. (In the case of corporations, update the board.)

7. **On the third occurrence, consider firing the employee. (See below.)**

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Addressing Performance Problems at http://managementhelp.org/employeeperformance/problems.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Conducting Performance Appraisals/Reviews

Yearly performance reviews are critical. Organization's are hard pressed to find good reasons why they can't dedicate an hour-long meeting at least once a year to ensure the mutual needs of the employee and organization are being met. Performance reviews help supervisors feel more honest in their relationships with their subordinates and feel better about themselves in their supervisoral roles. Subordinates are assured clear understanding of what's expected from them, their own personal strengths and areas for development and a solid sense of their relationship with their supervisor. Avoiding performance issues ultimately decreases morale, decreases credibility of management, decreases the organization's overall effectiveness and wastes more of management's time. Conduct the following activities.

1. **Design a legally valid performance review process; consider these legal requirements of the performance review process:**
Patricia King, in her book, *Performance Planning and Appraisal,* states that the law requires that performance appraisals be: job-related and valid; based on a thorough analysis of the job; standardized for all employees; not biased against any race, color, sex, religion, or nationality; and performed by people who have adequate knowledge of the person or job. Be sure to build in the process, a route for recourse if an employee feels he or she has been dealt with unfairly in an appraisal process, e.g., that the employee can go to his or her supervisor's supervisor. The process should be clearly described in a personnel policy.

2. **Design a standard form for performance appraisals**
and include the name of the employee, date the performance form was completed, dates specifying the time interval over which the employee is being evaluated, performance dimensions (include responsibilities from the job description, any assigned goals from the strategic plan, along with needed skills, such as communications, administration, etc.), a rating system (e.g., poor, average, good, excellent), space for commentary for each dimension, a final section for overall commentary, a final section for action plans to address improvements, and lines for signatures of the supervisor and employee. Signatures may either specify that the employee accepts the appraisal or has seen it, depending on wording on the form.

3. **Schedule the first performance review for six months after the employee starts employment**
Schedule another six months later, and then every year on the employee's anniversary date.

4. **Initiate the performance review**
Tell the employee that you're initiating a scheduled performance review. Remind them of what's involved in the process. Schedule a meeting about two weeks out.

5. **Have the employee suggest any updates to the job description and provide written input to the appraisal**
(Note that by now, employees should have received the job descriptions and goals well in advance of the review, i.e., a year before. The employee should also be familiar with the performance appraisal procedure and form.) Have them record their input to the appraisal concurrent to the your recording yours. Have them record their input on their own sheets (their feedback will be combined on the official form later on in the process). You and the employee can exchange each of your written feedback in the upcoming review meeting.

6. **Record your input to the appraisal -- always reference the job description and associated formal goals for basis of review**
Be sure you are familiar with the job requirements and have sufficient contact with the employee to be making valid judgments. Don't comment on the employee's race, sex, religion, nationality, or a handicap or veteran status. Record major accomplishments, exhibited strengths and weaknesses according to the dimensions on the appraisal form, and suggest actions and training or development to improve performance. Use examples of behaviors wherever you can in the appraisal to help avoid counting on hearsay. Always address behaviors, not characteristics of personalities. The best way to follow this guideline is to consider what you saw with your eyes. Be sure to address only the behaviors of that employee, rather than behaviors of other employees.

7. **Hold the performance appraisal meeting**
State the meeting's goals of exchanging feedback and coming to action plans, where necessary. In the meeting, let the employee speak first and give their input. Respond with your own input. Then discuss areas where you disagree. Attempt to avoid defensiveness; admitting how you feel at the present time, helps a great deal. Discuss behaviors, not personalities. Avoid final terms such as "always," "never," etc. Encourage participation and be supportive. Come to terms on actions, where possible. Try to end the meeting on a positive note.

8. **Update and finalize the performance appraisal form**
Add agreed-to commentary on to the form. Note that if the employee wants to add attach written input to the final form, he or she should be able to do so. The supervisor signs the form and asks the employee to sign it. The form and its action plans are reviewed every few months, usually during one-on-one meetings with the employee.

9. **Note that if the supervisor has been doing a good job supervising, then nothing should be surprising to the employee during the appraisal**
Any performance issues should have been conveyed when they occurred, so nothing should be a surprise in the review meeting.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Employee Performance Appraisals/Reviews at http://managementhelp.org/employeeperformance/index.htm#anchor1974259

Return to Top if Desired

Firing Employees

1. **You should consider firing the employee only if you have:**
a) given the employee clear indication of what you originally expected from him or her (via a written job description previously provided to the him or her);
b) have clearly written personnel policies which specify conditions and directions about firing employees and the employee initialized a copy of the policy handbook to verify that he or she had read the policies;
c) warned the employee in successive and dated memos which clearly described degrading performance over a specified time despite your specific and recorded offers of assistance and any training (the number of memos depends on the nature of the problem, but should be no more than three or four); and
d) you clearly observe the employee still having the performance problem.
(Note that if the employee is being fired within a probationary period specified in your personnel policies, you may not have to meet all of the above conditions.)

2. **Take a day or so to consider what you are about to do.**
Consult with members of your board (in the case of corporations).

3. **If you still decide to fire the employee, do so promptly**
both for your credibility with other employees and so as not begin procrastinating about this rather painful, upcoming event.

4. **Write a letter of termination to the employee.**
As with the previous letters of warning, be clear about the observed behaviors, when you saw them, earlier warnings and their consequences, what you did in response, and the consequence that must now be enacted according to your policies.

5. **Tell the computer system administrator to change the employee's password**
and assert that this action should be done promptly and in complete confidence.

6. **Meet with the employee. Provide them the letter. Explain how the termination will occur,** including when, what they must do, what you request from them and when. Ask for any keys. Give them a half hour or so to remove personal items (you may choose to monitor them during this removal, depending on the nature of the grounds for dismissal). Consider changing the door locks to the facilities. Change the passwords on phone systems, if applicable.

7. **As with other meetings, make notes of what was said and exchanged.**
Keep them in your records.

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Firing Employees at http://managementhelp.org/employeeperformance/firing-employees.htm

Return to Top if Desired

=== PERSONNEL POLICIES ===

Developing Personnel Policies

Need for Personnel Policies

From review of the above personnel management information, it's clear that there are numerous considerations and potential areas for litigation when dealing with personnel issues. There are numerous rules and regulations which regulate the nature of the relationship between an employee and his or her organization, e.g., about affirmative action, managing personnel files, employee retirement, rights of privacy, discrimination and harassment, wrongful termination, etc. Consequently, it's better to have thought out these potentially controversial situations before they occur and establish guidelines by which they might or will be addressed. These general guidelines are called policies. Specific activities resulting from the guidelines are often called procedures.

Developing Personnel Policies

Each organization should carefully consider what policies it requires and how they should worded. Many organizations begin developing their personnel policies by reviewing policies from other organizations. This is fine as long the organization carefully reviews each policy, modifies them according to the nature and needs of the organization and has all policies approved by the board (in the case of corporations).

When developing policies, always consult a lawyer who's well versed in federal, state and local laws regarding employment practices, e.g., the Employee Law -- Civil Rights Act of 1964, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, and Occupational Safety and Health Acts. Personnel policies may need to be governed to by union rules or other contractual agreements.

Note that the online information referenced from these Web pages and the associated examples should be considered as guidance, rather than as policies to be adopted as is for any organization.

Training on Policies

Note that if management's behaviors do not conform to the personnel policies, courts will consider the related policies to be superseded by the behaviors. Therefore, it's critical that management have basic understanding of the major points made in each personnel policy.

Consider setting aside a half day per year for employees to review the policies and procedures to ensure they are up-to-date. Any recommended changes should be discussed with and approved by the board (in the case of corporations).

In addition, each employee should have a manual that includes all personnel policies. (See below.)

Return to Top if Desired

Developing an Employee Manual

Document all intended policies and procedures and collect them in a policies and procedures manual. Having all policies and procedures in a manual facilitates training about them to all employees. All employees should have read the manual to understand and accept its contents. They should sign a form indicating so, and provide the signed form to the organization's administrator.

All supervisors should be trained about the policies and procedures. A large number of suits brought against organizations is because, although the organizations had clear policies, supervisors did not enact the policies because they did not understand them. Note that courts may consider policies and procedures as superseded by the actual behaviors displayed by supervisors.

The board (in the case of corporations) should authorize all policies in the manual and every employee should receive a copy of the manual.

Each policy should include wording to the effect that the policies are for general guidance in the relationships between employees and the organization, the board (in the case of corporations) has authorized the policy, that policies can be changed at any time and that the policies do not constitute a contract between the organization and the employee. Consider the following wording on the cover of your policies manual:

"Nothing contained in or implied by this manual creates or shall be deemed to create or constitute a contractual obligation to employees on the part (of the organization). The policies, procedures and guidelines contained in this manual are subject to change at any time, do not confer any obligation (on the part of the organization) and do not create any right to employment on the part (of the organization)."

For additional and advanced information, see:

Employee Manuals / Handbooks at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/handbook.htm

Return to Top if Desired

Sample List of Personnel Policies

The following list is an example of policies included in a personnel policies manual (or an "Employee Handbook"). The contents of your manual will depend on the nature and needs of your organization.

Work Schedule

Work day hours
Lunch periods
Holidays
Vacation
Sick Time
Personal Leave
Leave of Absence
Severe Weather
Jury Duty

Hiring Procedures

Americans With Disabilities Act
Interviewing job candidates
Checking references
Offering employment

New Employee and Internal Orientation

New employee orientation -- general information
Agency-wide new employee orientation
Intern orientation
New employee and internal orientation checklist

Compensation

Paydays
Overtime and compensation time
Classifying employees as exempt or non-exempt
Salary ranges
Positioning pay within a salary range
Maintaining competitive salary information
Reclassifying positions
Salary review policy
Promotional increases
Withholding salary increase due to performance
Withholding salary increase due to leave of absence

Payroll Information & Timekeeping Procedures

Payroll information -- General
Payroll information -- Direct deposit procedures
Payroll information -- Required and voluntary payroll deductions
Timekeeping -- General discussion of non-exempt and exempt employee classifications
Supervisor's signature

Benefits

Eligibility and general information
Types of available benefits
Medical insurance
Dental insurance
Disability insurance
Supervisory communication
Life insurance
Confidentiality note
Retirement plan
Social security
Employee advisory resource

Workers' Compensation Information and Procedures

When there is an injury or accident on the job
What is covered under Workers' Compensation
Type of injury covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance
Medical expenses resulting from a work-related injury
Resources available

Performance Assessment Procedures

Performance assessment cycle
Performance assessment process
Dealing with performance issues
Discipline: when the positive approach does not work
Separation from employment checklist
Communications by the supervisor regarding personnel issues
COBRA
Leave-taking procedures

Financial Management

Budget management
Capital expenditures
Supervisor's responsibilities in maintaining the budget
Operating management
Financial reporting

Data Practices

Policy
Procedures
Definitions
Security of Records
External releases
Internal releases
Use of data
Legal procedures
Destruction of records
Employee access

For additional and advanced information, see:

- Personnel, Policies and Records Management at http://managementhelp.org/personnelpolicies/index.htm

Return to Top if Desired

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