

Employee's formal informal relations

Dr. Monica Shrivastava

Definition

- Employee relations is that aspect of Human Resources that directs attention to assist employees and management to establish a work environment that is stimulating and creative and that supports an environment in which the individual can perform to the best of his or her ability.

Importance

- Employee attitudes and commitment are strongly associated with business performance, and managers see employee voice as contributing to performance via better employee contributions and productivity gains.
- The informal climate of involvement and consultation appears to be more strongly associated with employee satisfaction and commitment than the collective machinery for negotiation and consultation.
- Mechanisms in use for employee voice include two-way communications, project teams and joint consultation, but there is growing interest in electronic media, attitude surveys and partnership schemes.

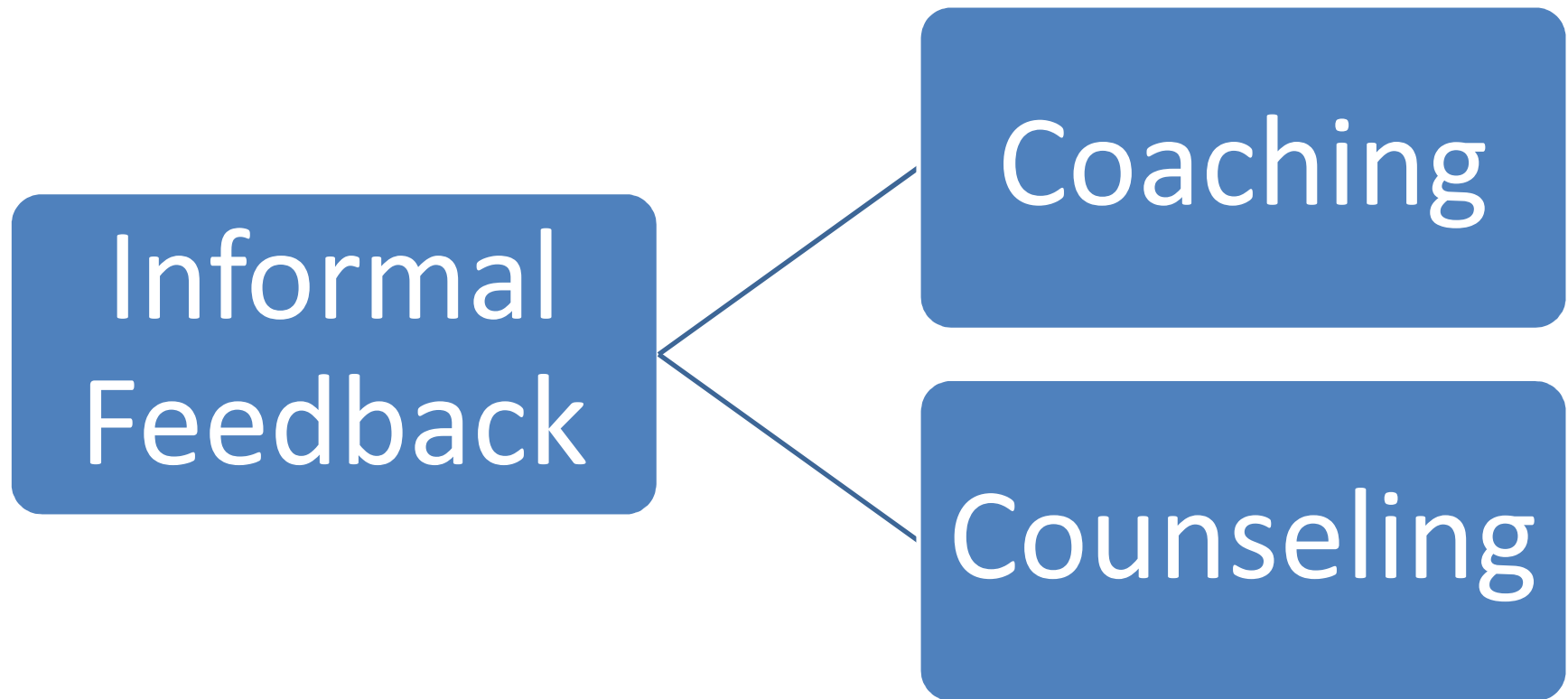
- The major constraints on employee voice are lack of skills and enthusiasm by managers and employees.
- The psychological contract model, validated by successive employee attitude surveys, suggests that HR practices strongly affect the way people feel about their work. Employees' trust in the organisation, their sense of being fairly treated and the extent to which they believe their employer has delivered on the implicit deal between them, affects their attitudes towards job satisfaction, commitment, work–life balance and the state of employee relations.

WORK PERFORMANCE

- Supervisors and managers need to set clear expectations for acceptable work performance.
- Use of informal feedback can be used as an initial way to correct unsatisfactory work performance.
- if informal feedback does not correct a problem, more formal measures should be taken to improve the staff member's work performance.

Informal Feedback

- Supervisors have a responsibility to reinforce and clarify work expectations for staff members.
- Employees should be given timely, balanced, and constructive feedback identifying areas in which performance meets or exceeds expectations, as well as those issues that require improvement.
- Supervisors are encouraged to use coaching and counseling because it often corrects unacceptable work performance and avoids the need for more formal measures.



Coaching

- Supervisors should coach staff members by providing informal but specific guidance, instruction and/or training to reinforce and clarify work expectations.
- Supervisors should remember to document when and why he/she has coached a staff member about his/her work performance and should maintain documentation of coaching in their personal files.
- Staff member does not receive written documentation of coaching.

Counseling

- If coaching does not solve the problem, supervisors should counsel staff members.
- Counseling consists of a more explicit explanation of the work performance concern.
- It should also reinforce and clarify work performance expectations.
- Supervisors should provide written confirmation of the details of the counseling session, including the specifics of the expected level of performance (e.g., an email summarizing the discussion) to the staff member. Supervisors should maintain a copy of the written confirmation in their personal files.

FORMAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT MEASURES

1. Written Notice of Performance Expectations
2. Performance Improvement Plan
3. Termination

Written Notice of Performance Expectations

- Written Notice of Performance Expectations is generally the first formal written document/measure in the performance management process. I
- It is a document designed to explicitly communicate performance issues and job expectations as well as the consequences of failing to meet expectations.

Written Notice of Performance Expectations should:

- Describe the desired performance standards;
- Describe the staff member's work performance gaps using specific illustrative examples;
- Describe the steps the staff member must take to meet his/her work performance expectations;
- Explicitly communicate the need for immediate and sustained improvement;
- Establish regularly scheduled meetings with the staff member and the supervisor to ensure an ongoing dialogue about performance expectations; and
- Notify the staff member that his/her job "may be in jeopardy" if his/her work performance does not improve.

- Written Notice of Performance Expectations may also be used outside of the scope of the Performance Management Policy to clarify job responsibilities when:
- A staff member's duties have changed as a result of a departmental reorganization;
- A new work process has been introduced; or
- A staff member is assigned to a project that includes new job duties and responsibilities or is assigned to a new supervisor.
- Written Notice of Performance Expectations must be issued only after consulting with the Director of Labor and Employee Relations and/or a Human Resources Generalist.

Performance Improvement Plan

- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is used to clearly and explicitly communicate to staff members when their work performance has not sufficiently improved following their receipt of Written Notice of Performance Expectations.
- A PIP should provide clear notice to the staff member that his/her employment is in jeopardy and failure to demonstrate immediate and sustained improvement will result in termination from the University. It also establishes a time line (usually 30 to 90 days) during which the staff member's performance must improve and be sustained at an acceptable level

- This period should include regular meetings (weekly or bi-weekly) between the staff member and the supervisor to review problems, concerns and/or answer questions that may arise about work performance. At or near the end of the PIP period, the staff member must be offered a progress report as well as a decision as to whether his/her performance has sufficiently improved to be retained in the current position

- A PIP should:
 - Identify specific details of the issue or concern;
 - Explain how the performance (or action) is falling short of expectations;
 - Detail expectations for improvement and the corresponding time-frame;
 - Identify measurements, resources, and support for the employee to improve performance;
 - Include a statement that if the unacceptable performance continues, or other problems occur, the staff member will be terminated.

- If the staff member either does not take steps to improve performance within the time period stated in the PIP and/or does not demonstrate immediate and sustained improvement, the department is required to consult with a Human Resources Generalist or the Director of Labor and Employee Relations prior to the termination of his/her employment.

- New and/or serious performance concerns that arise during the PIP period may result in escalation of the performance management process including, but not limited to, discipline or immediate termination after consultation with a Human Resources Generalist or the Director of Labor and Employee Relations.
- PIPs must be issued in consultation with the Director of Labor and Employee Relations.

Termination

- If a staff member's work performance does not improve following adequate notice of the area(s) of concern as well as a sufficient opportunity to improve upon the same, his/her employment with the Organization will be terminated. The Head must pre-approve involuntary terminations.

CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- The Corrective Disciplinary steps apply to all regular full-time and part-time employees who have completed their probationary periods and should be used to correct misconduct and/or failure to comply with departmental or Organizational policy. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, tardiness, absenteeism, and/or failure to meet work-related reporting requirements. Corrective action for unacceptable behavior is normally imposed on a progressive basis; however, it is not a rigid process. In this regard, steps may be omitted or repeated depending on the frequency, severity, and/or nature of the behavior.

Informal Feedback

- Supervisors are encouraged to use counseling throughout the year as an informal means to correct unacceptable behavior. Our goal is to correct unacceptable behavior with counseling before more formal measures are necessary. Please note that egregious acts of misconduct or violations of policy should not be addressed using informal corrective disciplinary measures; instead, such matters should be immediately addressed with formal measures after consulting with the Director.

Coaching

- Supervisors should coach staff members who engage in behavior that is unacceptable, but does not necessarily warrant counseling.
- For example, supervisors should coach staff members to address the first time they report late for work. With that said supervisors should remember to document when and why he/she has coached a staff member. Supervisors should maintain documentation of coaching in their personal critical incident files. Please note that the staff member does not receive written documentation of coaching.

Counseling

- If coaching does not solve the problem, supervisors should counsel staff members. For example, supervisors should counsel staff members to address the second time they report late for work. Counseling consists of an explicit explanation of the unacceptable behavior, why it is unacceptable and the consequences of the staff member's failure to correct the unacceptable behavior. Supervisors should provide written confirmation to the staff member reiterating the details of the counseling session (e.g., email confirmation of the counseling session). Supervisors should maintain documentation of counseling in their personal files.
- If informal counseling fails to solve the problem, supervisors, in consultation with the Director of Labor and Employee Relations or a Human Resources Generalist should initiate formal corrective disciplinary measures to correct the unacceptable behavior.

FORMAL CORRECTIVE MEASURES

- Written Warning - A written warning is appropriate when a staff member has failed to correct unacceptable behavior after being counseled. A written warning may also be appropriate to address a first offense if a staff member knowingly violates a University policy or engages in more serious behavior.
- In general, the written warning should:
 - Describe the standard for acceptable behavior;
 - Describe and/or provide examples of the unacceptable behavior;
 - Reference prior counseling that addressed similar behavior;
 - Outline the University's expectations moving forward; and
 - Notify the staff member failure to correct the problem will result in further discipline, up to and including termination.

Final Written Warning

- A final written warning is a staff member's last chance to correct unacceptable behavior. A final written warning is appropriate to address recurring offenses that continue despite prior counseling and warnings (e.g., chronic absenteeism or tardiness), egregious behavior and/or serious violations of policy.

Termination

- If after receiving a final written warning, the staff member's unacceptable behavior persists, his/her employment should be terminated. Please also note that a staff member's employment may be terminated without prior counseling or warnings in certain circumstances.

Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Grossly unethical, inappropriate, and/or criminal behavior (e.g., misuse of University funds, release of confidential information, acts of workplace violence, etc...);
- Actions or behavior that have a severe negative impact on the department or the Organizations credibility (e.g., violation of the rules, Conflict of Interest Policy);
- Inability or unwillingness to adhere to conditions of employment (e.g., I-9 verification);
- Misrepresentation of facts (e.g., educational qualifications, criminal record, etc...); and
- Severe disregard for policy (e.g., sexual harassment, failure to comply with safety and environmental regulations).