

Establishing Performance Expectations and Taking Corrective Action



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Agenda

- Developing a coaching mindset
- Benefits of setting expectations
- Seven key actions
- Practice examples
- The performance management continuum
- Planning questions and key actions
- “Say this, not that”
- Responding to excuses
- Terminations

First Things First...

Set employees up for success to minimize the need for corrective action:

- ✓ Develop and update a **job description** that clearly lists the responsibilities, qualifications, and performance standards of the position.
- ✓ Ask **behavioral questions** in the interview process to select the best-suited candidate.
- ✓ Design an **onboarding program** that includes appropriate training and mentoring.



Developing a Coaching Mindset

- Onboarding and training is an important investment of your time, and theirs.
- You know what success looks like... don't make them guess.
- It's a Win-Win situation. When your employees perform well, you look good. When they don't meet expectations, you are accountable.



Developing a Coaching Mindset

Don't stop at new-hire training!

Establishing expectations is necessary when...

- Orienting an employee to a new position
- Delegating an assignment
- Adding new responsibilities to a job
- Giving an employee new priorities

Developing a Coaching Mindset

- Setting clear expectations up front avoids conflict, confusion, lost time & lost credibility
- When describing performance areas for development, include ***why*** it's important.
- Don't rely strictly on your preferred communication or learning method. Adjust approach & layer methods for the *receiver*.

Adult Learning



#1

Adults need to know why they are learning something.



#2

Adults learn through doing (even if they make mistakes).



#3

Adults are problem-solvers.



#4

Adults learn best when the subject is of immediate use.

Basic Assumption

- Most people want to do the right work and do it well.



- How do we (supervisors) sometimes make it more difficult, or demotivate employees when assigning work or delegating?

Seven Key Actions

1. Describe the job in terms of **major outcomes** and how it fits into the company's larger picture.
2. Tie to the company's **mission, vision, and values**.

“As our Receptionist, you're the patient's first introduction to our office, whether in person or on the phone. We want every person to be treated in a friendly, courteous, professional manner.”



Seven Key Actions

3. Agree on **measurable** performance criteria.
4. Mutually identify necessary **resources and guidelines**.

“The phone should be answered within three rings, and all filing is to be completed by the end of the work day.”

“If you have questions, you can refer to our Policies & Procedures binder, or ask Cindy for help.”



Seven Key Actions

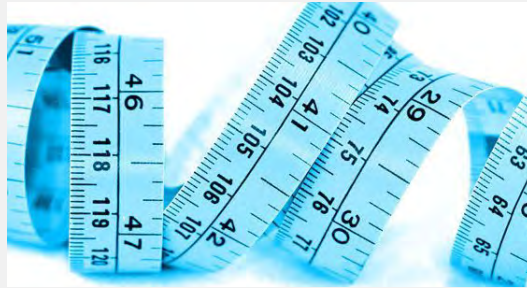
5. Determine **priorities**.
6. Review and check for **understanding** and **commitment**.
7. Set a date for an early **progress review**.

“The patient standing in front of you is always top priority. Don’t make someone wait to be greeted while you finish paperwork.”

“What questions do you have? Do you feel confident in our expectations? Let’s plan a meeting for next week to talk about issues that come up.”



Measurable Performance Criteria



- Identify measurable performance criteria/specific expectations.
- Describe methods you would use to communicate these expectations (consider different adult learning styles).

Measurable Performance Criteria

- ❖ Answering a Multi-line Phone System
- ❖ Providing Excellent Customer Service in a Face-to-Face Transaction
- ❖ Providing internal customer service to a co-worker or another department who depends on your work product and follow-through.
- ❖ Consistent use of personal protective equipment.
- ❖ Others?

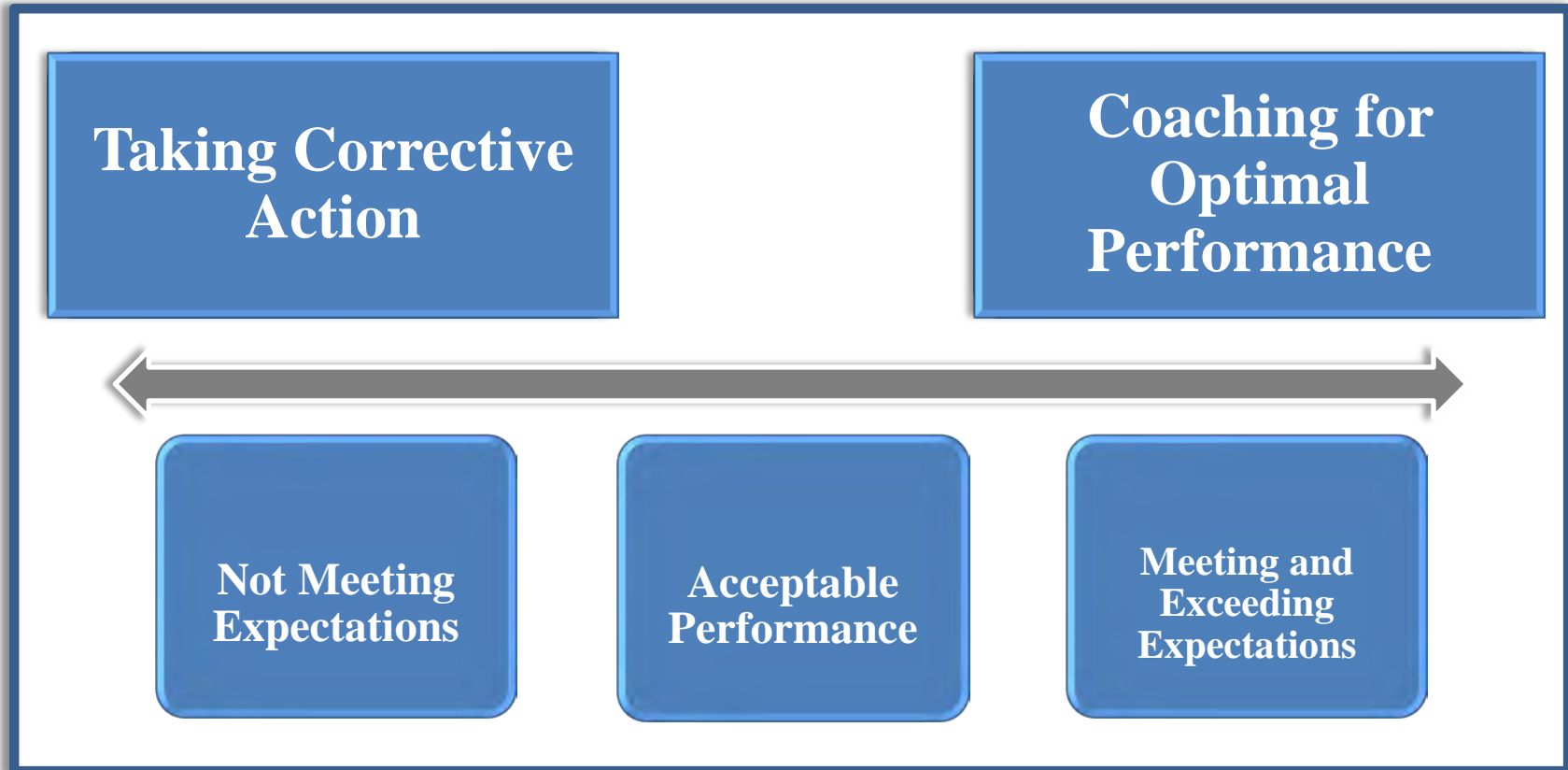
Original plan



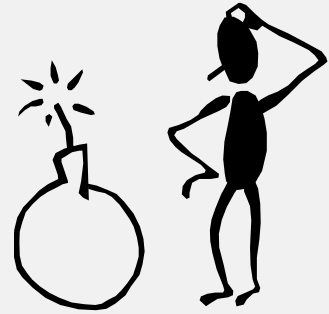
Actual plan



Performance Management Continuum



Why do we avoid discipline?



What are the consequences?



Performance or Behavior That Requires Corrective Action

“Once is too much”

“Just keeps getting worse”



“Once is Too Much”

Examples of unacceptable performance calling for immediate and strong corrective action include:

- Deliberate insubordination
- Possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs on company property, or appearing for work under the influence
- Theft of company property
- Altering, falsifying or destroying records
- “No call – no show” (how many days?)
- Refusing to work with another employee (due to disability, prejudice, etc.)
- Workplace violence, threats

“Keeps Getting Worse”

Examples of performance issues that have a negative impact on the department or company:

- Tardiness and absenteeism
- Rude behavior (to co-workers or customers)
- Missing deadlines
- Minor inaccuracies
- Mis-match with company culture

What are the consequences of these issues as they build up over time?

Taking Corrective Action

Begin early with coaching and constructive feedback.

DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!



Taking Corrective Action

Identify the GAP between agreed upon performance expectations and present unacceptable performance.



Taking Corrective Action

- Do your homework – get all the facts. Make sure the problem warrants action. Avoid the “triangle”.
-
- Select the proper time and place for privacy and confidentiality.
-
- **DOCUMENT!** Make a written record of the meeting and provide space for employee’s signature.

Taking Corrective Action

Take appropriate disciplinary steps. Depending on the circumstances of the violation, corrective action **may include** any of the following:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension or termination
 - CAUTION: *don't negate **at-will** by creating the expectation of "progressive discipline"*

Consult your manager or the HR Department for fair and consistent action.

“Maturity is the balance between

and

”



~Stephen Covey
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

“Maturity is the balance between
COURAGE
and
CONSIDERATION.”



~Stephen Covey
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Planning Questions

Before meeting with an employee to address a performance problem, prepare a focused discussion by completing the following:

1. Write a preliminary description of the present unacceptable performance
 - Explore possible causes of the problem:
 - Does the employee have the knowledge, skills abilities and resources to do the job?
 - Have clear expectations been communicated?
 - What is the person likely to say is the root of the problem?
 - Does the employee have control over the problem? If it's not fully within the employee's control, who else should be involved in finding a solution?

Planning Questions

2. Consider how the employee will be likely to respond

- Is (s)he going to be:

- Surprised
- Defensive
- Sulking or silent
- Angry or crying



- How will you handle these reactions?

3. Determine which organizational policies you will need to refer to in your discussion

- See Human Resources if you have questions about policies and any past precedent that may apply in this case

Key Actions for the Meeting

During the meeting with an employee to address a performance problem these Key Actions should be used:

Key Action #1:

Point out the difference between present performance and agreed upon performance

Be sure to:

- ✓ Use clear, objective descriptions
- ✓ Include specific facts

Key Actions for the Meeting

Key Action #2:

Describe the negative impact of the employee's performance

- ✓ Did you include the ripple effect – the impact on co-workers, customers, other stakeholders, and the mission?

*“ We’ve discussed the importance of our patients being greeted in a friendly, professional manner. Twice this week I have seen patients waiting at the front desk because you were distracted by checking your phone. This reflects poorly on you **and** our office.”*

Key Actions for the Meeting

Key Action #3:

Explore possible causes of the problem.

- ✓ Based on what you learned in preparing for the meeting
(lack of training, circumstances not within their control, etc.)
 - REMEMBER: *Avoid blaming. Focus on SOLVING the problem*

Key Action #4:

Ask for ideas on how the employee can correct the situation, and offer your own.

- ✓ In the discussion, ask the person for his or her ideas first.

Key Actions for the Meeting

Key Action #5:

If appropriate, explain any further actions you may need to take and why.

- ✓ What must you do to be consistent with your company's policies (*documentation, disciplinary action if problem not resolved, etc.*)

Key Action #6:

Agree on an action plan and a date for follow-up

- ✓ What questions will you ask to help the employee commit to specific points of an action plan?
- ✓ How will you include coaching and feedback in the plan?
- ✓ What date(s) will you set up for follow-up?

Key Actions for the Meeting

Key Action #7:

Offer your support and express confidence that the employee can correct the situation.

- ✓ What will you say to express your confidence in the employee?
- ✓ When and how will you make yourself available if the person needs further guidance?



Say This, Not That...



Say This, Not That...

How could you change the following statements to be more effective in your meeting?

“You’re just not a team player...”

“It seems like you’re always late...”

“This report is a disaster...”

“Carol told me that you were rude to Susan yesterday...”

Responding to Excuses

What would you say in response to the following statements?

“I’m overworked and stressed.”

“You never trained me to do that.”

“That’s not in my job description.”

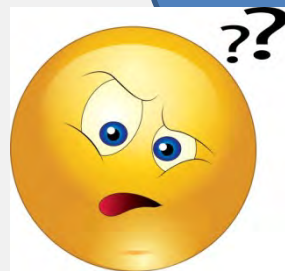
“I don’t think it’s that big of a deal.”

“This feels like harassment / a hostile work environment.”



In the Event of Termination

After other disciplinary steps have been taken, or if the action was egregious enough to warrant immediate termination, the following critical issues must be weighed in consultation with the Human Resources Department....



But wait!
What about “at will
employment” and
“probationary periods”?!?!

Critical Issues

In the Event of Termination

- ❖ Was the employee clearly forewarned of the action (if possible).
- ❖ Review recent performance evaluations. A series of “meeting standards” could discredit the termination decision (*unless this issue can stand alone, i.e. fighting.*)

Critical Issues

In the Event of Termination

- ❖ Have the facts been objectively gathered and investigated? Have you reviewed your documentation with HR?
- ❖ Has the employee been given the opportunity to explain or defend his/her position?
- ❖ How have similar performance issues been handled in the past? Aim for consistency as much as possible, or document business-related reasons why this is different.

Critical Issues

In the Event of Termination

- ❖ Be sure all termination paperwork is ready:

Final paycheck must be provided on the last day of employment (including accrued & unused vacation/PTO, earned commissions and non-discretionary bonuses)

DE 2320M Unemployment Insurance notice

HIPP Insurance Portability notice

- ❖ Avoid on-the-spot terminations for egregious actions.
Suspend the employee and then take proper steps.

Review

- Set employees up for success with effective interviewing & hiring practices.
- Develop a coaching mindset and invest the time in valuable onboarding.
- Tie performance standards to company mission and goals, and provide measurable criteria.
- Remember to establish clear expectations even after new hire training.



Review

- Don't avoid corrective action. Address issues with constructive feedback.
- DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!
- Plan the corrective action meeting so you stay in control.
- DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!
- Use clear, objective facts and be ready for excuses.
- DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!
- Use appropriate caution when considering termination, and ensure all company policies are followed.
- DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!



Thank You!

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