The success of any organization is directly related to the performance, productivity and commitment of its employees.

If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.

Thomas A. Edison
Outline

- What are Job Performance Standards and why are they important?
- Setting Job Performance Standards
- Understanding the Employee’s Role
- Constraints Affecting Job Performance
- Communication
- Measuring Job Performance

What are Job Performance Standards?

- Way for supervisors to measure job performance and productivity of employees
- Way for employees to measure their own job performance and productivity
Why are Job Performance Standards Important?

- Help employees understand the expected scope, key responsibilities, required knowledge and skills, and duties of the job
- Support equitable evaluation of all employees doing the same job tasks
- Facilitate communication between the supervisor and employees regarding job related activities
- Help supervisor ensure that employees have the resources necessary to do their jobs

Without Job Performance Standards...

- Supervisors and employees may have different understanding and expectations about job requirements and performance
- Supervisors may have difficulty identifying performance issues
- Supervisors and employees may have difficulty separating what should be done from how it should be done.
Without Job Performance Standards...

- Supervisors may lower their expectations to avoid confronting employees with performance issues.
- Employees may protect themselves from possible failure by performing at a lower (more comfortable) level.
- Supervisors may evaluate employees (who are doing the same job) differently.

Setting Job Performance Standards

Craig Steinfeldt
Key Activities

- Supervisor and employee collaborate
- Evaluate different levels of job hierarchy using different standards
- Identify the top 3-5 job responsibilities of the employee
- Identify specific skills and knowledge required to do the job well

Key Activities

- Define specific performance standards and measurement criteria
- Establish method to monitor performance
- Implement standards at beginning of the assessment period
- Set short-term (90 day) and long-term goals
- Develop plan for supervisor and employee to communicate about job related issues
Key Activities

Write it all down!

Common Mistakes

- Job performance standards used to micro-manage staff
- Writing/implementing standards right before the annual performance assessment
- Job performance standards are never reviewed or updated
- Setting unrealistic job performance standards
- Creativity about how things get done is limited (based on standards for what must be done)
Understanding the Employee’s Role

Sarah Lincoln

Characteristics of a High-Performing Organization

- All employees understand the mission of the agency, and how their jobs help achieve that mission
- High levels of trust, commitment, enthusiasm, and fun!
- Effective, empowering labor-management partnerships
Characteristics of a High-Performing Organization

- Healthy in all aspects – morale, individuals’ physical and mental health, and agency’s physical environment
- Opportunities for employees to use diverse talents
- Self-sustaining and self-generating

Importance of Engagement

- Organizations that fail to engage their people fail to achieve their full potential.
- Engaged employees reduce costs, work harder, and create more satisfied customers.
Retention is Key

- Costs of employee turnover…
  - Lost productivity during a vacancy
  - Diminished productivity of team/managers covering for a vacancy and training new hire
  - Increased labor costs due to overtime or contractors hired to cover for a vacancy
  - Recruiting and hiring costs

Constraints Affecting Job Performance

Steve Schmidt
Job Performance Constraints

- Wide variety of factors may interfere with optimum performance
- Consider and assess constraints before performance discussions
- Consider the “Golden Rule” of Psychology:
  \[ B = f(P, E) \]
  
  *Behavior (B) is a function (f) of both Personal (P) and Environmental (E) factors*

Personal Constraints

- Relationship/Marital Problems
- Children/Dependents
- Health – self, family, others
- Stressful events (e.g., home move)
- Loss/Death
- Other
Environmental and Situational Constraints

- Relationships with co-workers-supervisor
- Equipment/supply deficiencies
- Working conditions (e.g., office space, ergonomics)
- Clerical support
- Excessive workload

Environmental and Situational Constraints

- Key personnel absent
- Poor co-worker performance
- Unclear performance standards
- Poor communication
- Lack of authority to get things done
- Policy problems
- Other
I’ve Identified Constraints... Now What?

- Collaborate with employee regarding ideas to mitigate or eliminate constraints
- Different approaches for personal vs. environmental/situational constraints
- Determine how to document effects of constraints
- Address environmental and situational factors

Communicating Job Performance Standards

Mary Gage
Communication is Critical for Successful Job Performance

- Ever hear… *That’s not in my job description?*
- Written and verbal communication are vital!
- Goals are easier to achieve when managers let employees know…

(1) performance & development expectations

(2) how they will be measured

Clearly Communicated Expectations Help Employees…

- Understand what is important, and what they should be doing
- Understand why they are doing their work
- Know how they are doing, and when to ask for support
- Recognize where performance improvement can occur
**Write Job Expectations to Get What You Want**

- Crisp, concise statements
- Stated directly
- Prioritized
- Limited in number – don’t overwhelm!
- Focus on specific results – i.e. cost, timeliness, quality, quantity, etc.

**Writing Job Performance Standards**

- **Write in Objective Terms**
  - Action verbs
  - Results statements
  - Time targeted
  - Standard of performance

- **Standard of performance expectation** = action verb + deliverable + qualifier + date specification
Face-to-Face Communication

- Discuss expectations with employee in-person
- Make the discussion positive and “two-way”
- Communicate written expectations
- End with mutual understanding and direction – everyone on same page
  NO SURPRISES!
- Eye-to-eye contact is important, but recognize cultural and personal preferences

Measuring Job Performance

Nitza Pfaff
Two Ways to Measure Job Performance

- **Quantitative measures**
  - referred to as “hard data”
  - “how many”
  - obtained through spreadsheets, databases or mainframes applications

- **Qualitative measures**
  - Best described as “soft data”
  - relate to customer perceptions or experiences
  - obtained through customer satisfaction surveys or number and type of complaints.

Types of Performance Measures

- **Input** – resources used to produce services (output)
  - Example: cost, labor hours, operating expenses

- **Output** – quantity of units produced by an agency (volume)
  - Example: clients served, how many units of service

- **Efficiency** – identify cost, unit cost or productivity associated with an outcome/output
  - Example: cost per client, cost per transaction
Types of Performance Measures

- **Service Quality** – customer satisfaction, timeliness and/or accuracy of a service
  - Example: average wait time, % of respondents satisfied with service
- **Outcome** – impact or benefit of the service on the customer
  - Example: reduction in fire deaths/injuries, increase in job trainees who hold a job for more than six months
- **Explanatory** – factors affecting performance
  - Example: weather conditions for road maintenance

**What gets measured gets done.**

*Anonymous*

Unfortunately, what people measure often is not precisely what they want done.

*Behn, 2003*
Why Should Public Managers Measure Performance?

- **Evaluate** – How well is my public agency performing?
- **Control** – How can I ensure that my subordinates are doing the right thing?
- **Budget** – On what programs, people, or projects should my agency spend the public’s money?

---

Why Should Public Managers Measure Performance?

- **Motivate** – How can I motivate employees and citizens to do the right things to improve performance?
- **Promote** – How can I convince political superiors, legislators, stakeholders and citizens that my agency is doing a good job?
Why Should Public Managers Measure Performance?

- **Celebrate** – Agency and individual accomplishments
- **Learn** – What is working or not working?
- **Improve** – What exactly should who do differently to improve performance?

Performance measurement can serve as an early warning system to management, and as a vehicle for improving accountability to the public.

Behn, 2003
Job Performance Standards

Conclusions

- Job performance standards are critical to help ensure the success of the...
  - Employee
  - Supervisor
  - Work unit
  - Agency

- Job performance standards must be clearly communicated (written and verbal) to the employee, and similarly understood by both supervisor and employee.
Conclusions

- Job performance standards may be measured using quantitative and/or qualitative methods.
- Personal and environmental/situational factors can affect job performance.
- Job performance standards should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

References

- [http://careercompass.berkeley.edu/jobstandards/resources/glossary.html](http://careercompass.berkeley.edu/jobstandards/resources/glossary.html)
- [www.hawaii.edu/ohr/download/aptdocs/ExPESmts.pdf](http://www.hawaii.edu/ohr/download/aptdocs/ExPESmts.pdf)
- [www.hr.uncc.edu/CB/AdminSupport/Writing_Performance_Expectations.pdf](http://www.hr.uncc.edu/CB/AdminSupport/Writing_Performance_Expectations.pdf)
- Fairfax County’s Performance Measurement System, June 2006
- Why Measure Performance? Difference Purposes Require Different Measures, Robert Behn, Harvard University, October 2003
- Performance Measurement and Evaluation, GAO April 1998