Job Performance Standards

October 2008

Prepared by: Lisa Morrison, Craig Steinfeldt, Sarah Lincoln, Steve Schmidt, Mary Gage, Nitza Pfaff

Enterprise Management Development Academy

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 <u>their own</u> 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 <u>what</u> should be done from <u>how</u> 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 <u>how</u> things get done is limited (based on standards for <u>what</u> 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 SPECIFIC IN A SPECIFIC
 - Time targeted
- TIMEFRAME...
- 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

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://www.sideroad.com/Management/performance-standard.html
 - http://careercompass.berkeley.edu/jobstandards/resources/glossary.html
- www.hawaii.edu/ohr/download/aptdocs/ExPEStmts.pdf
 - www.hr.uncc.edu/CB/AdminSupport/Writing_Performance_Expectations.pdf
- Fairfax County's Performance Measurement System, June 2006
- The State of Texas Guide to Performance Measure Management, 2006 edition
- A Brief Guide for Performance Measurement in Local Government, Citizen-Driven Government Performance
- Why Measure Performance? Difference Purposes Require Different Measures, Robert Behn, Harvard University, October 2003
- Performance Measurement and Evaluation, GAO April 1998
- The Chronicle, 4/22/2004: Performance Evaluations Can Help Workers Improve--and Help Charities Reach Their Goals: http://www.stthomas.edu/hr/compensation/files/developPerfStandards.p