

Turn Your People Around:

PRESENTED BY

Managing
People^{at}Work

▶ ***Getting Improvement from
Problem Employees***

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Session Objectives

- ▶ Know when and how to intervene to correct performance problems
- ▶ Set practical, achievable goals and expectations for improving performance
- ▶ Use coaching and counseling techniques to help employees succeed
- ▶ Using discipline when necessary to motivate performance improvement
- ▶ Help employees take responsibility for their own performance

Points to Keep in Mind ...

- ▶ **Performance** is ultimately the *employee's* responsibility/
Results are your responsibility as a *manager*
- ▶ There is no magic solution that works for every problem employee
- ▶ Sometimes, termination is the best option for both you and the employee

On the other hand ...

- ▶ Not every underperforming employee is a “problem employee”
- ▶ Employees who turn their performance around often end up better than average
- ▶ Effectively fixing performance problems boosts results from **all** your employees
- ▶ And, of course, turning an employee around is cheaper than starting over with a new hire

When to intervene?

▶ **As early as possible**

- Overlooking performance problems = reducing your expectations for everyone
- Other workers notice and respond

▶ **But not “out of the blue”**

- Part of a performance management system
- Not guided by emotion or crisis
- When “ordinary management” hasn’t succeeded
- A long-term commitment for both you and the employee

Defining the Problem

▶ **Aim for specifics**

- A concrete gap between expectations and demonstrated performance
- Not just dissatisfaction or a “gut feeling”
- Metrics and examples are useful
- Be able to explain why your specific expectations are necessary and important

continued...

Defining the Problem

▶ **Look for external factors**

- Personal issues
- Conflicts or disputes with co-workers
- Confusion over new/changed expectations
- Lack of training
- Job stress

▶ **Such cases call for counseling, rather than coaching or discipline**

▶ **If external factors aren't the issue, move on with planning for improvement**

Employee Commitment

- ▶ **Get employees to agree on:**
 - What constitutes proper performance
 - What they need to do to get there
 - That they're not there yet, but can succeed
- ▶ **Employees need to want to succeed**
 - Knowing how to meet expectations
 - Knowing benefits of doing so
 - Knowing consequences of not doing so

Planning for Improvement

► **Two options:**

· **Option A: Is performance unsatisfactory?**

-A coaching-based strategy

-Setting specific, incremental goals

· **Option B: Is performance unacceptable?**

-A discipline-based strategy

-A timeline for progressive action (up to termination)

Counseling? Coaching? Discipline?

- ▶ **Counseling:** Helping employees overcome obstacles to success
 - Giving advice
 - Assuming workers are capable and motivated
- ▶ **Coaching:** Helping employees improve their own capability for success
 - Building skills and capacity
 - Helping workers be more capable and motivated
- ▶ **Discipline:** Enforcing the minimum standards for performance and conduct

A Coaching Strategy

- ▶ Check yourself
- ▶ Clearly define the issue—in writing
- ▶ Think about solutions
- ▶ Practice—role play—the session
- ▶ Determine the best place to meet

A Coaching Strategy

- ▶ Gain agreement that there is a problem
- ▶ Create a plan
- ▶ Get employee's commitment to improvement
- ▶ Consequences
- ▶ Follow up with written summary to employee

A Discipline Strategy When Coaching has Failed

- ▶ General principles
- ▶ Categories for discipline
- ▶ Progressive discipline

A Discipline Strategy

▶ **Progressive Discipline**

- Verbal warnings
- Written warnings
- Suspension
- Discharge

Documenting Results

▶ Discipline

▪ Verbal

- Make note of when you spoke with the employee. You will need this information if further action is necessary

▪ Written

- Is it clearly stated what the problem is, what consequences of inaction will be and what the time limit is?
- Has the employee signed the warning?

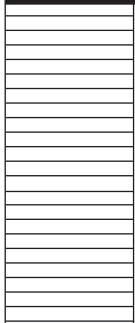
Declaring Victory—Or Not

- ▶ Has there been improvement?
- ▶ What is the temperature of the rest of the team?
- ▶ You set the standards
- ▶ Don't prolong the agony

Final Thoughts

- ▶ You are the manager
- ▶ Performance issues happen
- ▶ You and the employee each have a specific part to play in the process
- ▶ The ultimate responsibility for improvement is the employee's
- ▶ Don't forget your other employees

Notes



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