

INCLUSIVE AND INTERACTIVE ON-GOING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The following explanations aim to provide guidance for effective performance management. Apart from reference to RCA, the suggested techniques and/or approaches are universal.

1. A manager's most important, and most difficult, job is to manage people. Managing staff can also be a rewarding experience. To achieve this, a manager must lead, motivate, inspire, and encourage the staff reporting to them. Evaluation of performance, recognition, reward, disciplinary action and/or recommendations are an important, and integral part of this role.
2. During the annual RCA cycle, managers are expected to fully engage in performance management, employing a suitable array of informal and formal approaches to assure a staff member's performance and learning plans are on track. This array includes: regular feedback using behavioural examples, coaching, counselling, mentoring, and other development tools. However, when a staff member's performance needs to improve in certain areas, a more structured plan is required, which would include more frequent feedback, development, and coaching, as well as specific deliverables with a timetable.
3. **Coaching.** Coaching is aimed at improving a staff member's performance or promoting her or his career development. Conducted in a climate of openness and trust, the supervisor guides the staff member in examining strengths, areas for development, any relevant interests or concerns, and how the supervisor can be most helpful. Coaching is a process that can be undertaken in a one-time setting or over time to develop an under-utilised capability or potential in a staff member, as well as to improve performance. It usually involves more than simply directing, prescribing, or demonstrating what the staff member should do to achieve a certain result, although some guidance and direction will likely be provided. The emphasis is more on "asking" open-ended questions rather than making "telling" statements. Often, it involves the coach's use of self as a catalyst, a facilitator, a partner -- unbiased, authentic, supportive, challenging -- to empower the staff member to take some risks, explore hidden self-dimensions (e.g., fears, values), change a perspective or attitude, and learn and exhibit new behaviours to an expected standard or higher. Thus the relationship is a critical factor to a successful outcome, having at its core, empathy, mutual trust and respect. Confidentiality is

absolutely essential. Coaching is comprised of two forms:

- Performance coaching -- when a staff member's performance in a given area(s) is below expectations for someone in the post. This form may follow a number of corrective feedback discussions that have not produced a change in behaviour, even when formal or on-the-job training has been engaged. Often, expertise- or knowledge-building is not at the heart of the performance problem, although it may be related. Instead, the staff member's attitude, poor self-image or lack of self-awareness, assumptions, perspective, values, beliefs, or past negative experiences blocks her or his ability to make effective use of more routine feedback and developmental activities. In some instances, performance coaching is part of a structured plan of action to prevent poor appraisal ratings and further job action or loss. In performance coaching, one is "tough" on substance (need for performance improvement) and "soft" on the person.
 - Developmental coaching – when a staff member's performance is meeting or exceeding expectations in their post, and they are ready to assume more responsibility in their current post or in preparation for a future job at a higher level. This form of coaching usually follows sustained successful performance, a number of confirmatory feedback sessions, and the perception of the staff member's career potential. An in-depth career discussion ensues where the individual's short- and long-term career goals and interests are explored. Sometimes, mental or emotional barriers (see above) will emerge, but the degree is not as detrimental to performance enhancement as seen in the Performance Coaching form. The coach encourages the staff member to take risks to enhance her or his personal and professional growth, refers him or her to other developmental activities, and provides continuing support.
4. In either form, the coach: explores the staff member's interests, motivators, developmental needs; engages her or him to set goals, priorities, and indicators of success; analyzes various options; gives effective corrective and confirmatory feedback to promote learning; identifies the staff member's strengths in other areas and utilises them to support behavioural change or growth in the targeted area; clarifies mutual expectations and role behaviours; discusses career implications.
 5. **Mentoring.** In addition to coaching for purposes of competency development, staff members may also need the support of a mentor – a senior manager or experienced peer – to provide advice on a variety of

professional matters and concerns of the staff member. A mentor has been described at various times as a teacher, sponsor, counsellor, host, guide, role model, tutor, coach, and all of the above. Mentoring is one of the most effective strategies in leadership development, and is usually directed toward those individuals who demonstrate performance and competencies at a level that is noted as outstanding or exceeds expectations. The focus is on promoting the learning of the individual and her or his professional and career growth. Therefore, mentoring may involve some developmental coaching, but the coach who is focused on performance enhancement is not necessarily a mentor.

6. An effective mentoring relationship is a learning partnership, as in the sharing of knowledge, networks, job-related feedback, and career advising. In the past, mentors were most often older, senior level managers. Today, mentors can be found across levels and age groups, as high-level knowledge is just as likely to be found among individual contributors as senior supervisory levels. Thus, well-experienced peers or, in some instances, highly knowledgeable or skilled staff at a lower level of the Organisation than the recipient, can all serve successfully as mentors. More important than having hierarchical status is having the needed qualities, competence, information, or networks to facilitate another individual's: transition into a new role or assuming new responsibilities; strategizing on how to advance her or his professional growth or career advancement; building of strategic alliances with others across the UNDP to broaden her or his perspective; identifying special assignments or developmental opportunities; skill or knowledge refinement.
7. There are many potential pitfalls to be avoided in mentoring relationships: abusive use of power, jealousy, overprotection, over-dependency, controlling behaviours, feelings of being used or rejected. Successful relationships display integrity, emotional maturity, power-sharing, trust and trustworthiness, mutual respect, approachability, and humility. Both parties understand the concept of mutual learning and reciprocating benefits of nurturing the other's growth, independence, and autonomy.
8. To assure successful outcomes, the mentor should facilitate: an honest assessment of the other's strengths and developmental needs; mutual goal-setting regarding learning outcomes and process; clarification of expectations regarding the nature of interactions and their frequency; an agreement regarding the giving and use of advice; giving and receiving feedback; use of learning strategies and tools to support the process.
9. Importantly, the mentor should listen actively to and probe thoroughly the staff member's interests, ambitions, needs, and values, and do what one

can to support him or her accordingly, while permitting her or him to maintain ultimate responsibility for their decisions and actions. Furthermore, the mentor should also help the staff member to understand and navigate the political and organisational realities to achieve performance and career success.

10. An important part of a manager's job is motivating and encouraging staff to become productive contributors to achieve organizational goals. Performance assessment is a powerful tool toward this end, by approaching the assessment process as an on-going, positive event. In the process the managers should, inter alia; increase communication, establish clear expectations, reinforce good performance, improve unsatisfactory performance and foster a spirit of cooperation and teamwork.

12. Some techniques managers can apply to increase the effectiveness of the performance assessment process include:

- Hold periodic, on-going progress reviews with staff. Don't limit interactions to formal appraisals once or twice a year;
- Acknowledge good performance immediately;
- Address problems as soon as they arise. It's easier to solve them early, before they develop into larger Issues;
- Observe and record specific examples of performance whenever they occur. It's important to provide specific feedback, not vague generalities;
- Keep communications open - remember to ask staff about their feelings and perceptions. Actively listen and respond to their input.

13. Eventually the time will come when the manager will sit down with the staff for that all important person-to-person meeting for annual performance assessment. The manager should give the meeting the preparation and priority it deserves - the same as s/he would expect for his/her own personal assessment with his/her manager.

14. Writing staff member's assessment is a task that some managers find tedious and sometimes daunting. Operating under the stress of tight deadlines and the need to always stay objective can be a problem. However, from the staff member's perspective, the assessment and the assessment meetings can be the most important factors in his/her career development, therefore they deserve manager's quality time and attention.

15. Here are some guidance on how to make the assessment inclusive,

interactive and engaging:

- The manager, when making his/her decision, should utilize a wide range of resources and consultations, including, inter alia; review of the individual's achievements in relation to results scorecard, learning, competency development, feedback received from peers- and validated-, critical incidents in connection with the results scorecard, the individual's self-assessment, impact of the achievements on priorities, progress achieved since mid-term review discussions, development of competencies and work plan achievements, consultation with the other supervisor(s).
- If possible, the manager should schedule a brief meeting with the staff to discuss the upcoming performance review. The main purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the manager and the staff have some common understanding of the topics they'll be covering.
- This preliminary meeting should not become formal in any way. They should stay focused on the topics, not on their preconceived evaluations, if any.
- The formal assessment meeting should ideally be scheduled several days in advance. The manager should allow the staff the opportunity to prepare whatever he or she wants to say.
- It's always useful and engaging to begin the meeting by providing positive feedback, pointing out specific accomplishments, noting how they have contributed to the group's efforts.
- Equally engaging is to concentrate on future actions that can be taken in any areas that need improvement.
- If possible, discussing motivation and personal issues should be avoided. The focus should be on the staff's behavior and the consequences of that behavior to the individual and the organization. This is a good opportunity to stress the requirements of the job.
- It is extremely important to allow the staff the opportunity to discuss his or her feelings and reactions to the manager's input and feedback.
- If there are areas that need improvement, the staff should be encouraged to come up with potential solutions.

- If the staff disagrees with the manager, s/he should be allowed to state his/her feelings and the manager should listen without arguing or defending his/her point of view. In the process, the manager should be prepared to adjust his/her viewpoints, if necessary.