



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & CORRECTIVE ACTION GUIDELINES

As a supervisor, one of your primary roles is to help employees succeed in their position and coaching them to high levels of performance. Whenever an employee's performance, conduct or attitude is below company standards or your expectations, you should take positive steps to help the employee correct the problem.

Most problems can be resolved through communicating clear expectations and providing ongoing feedback. Let the employee be responsible and accountable for correcting their problem with coaching assistance from the Supervisor.

Defining & Monitoring Performance

It is important for supervisors and employees to be very clear on job expectations and performance requirements. Make sure employees understand the company's rules and standards. Also, ensure that employees understand their job performance requirements and how they will be measured. Performance can best be measured by either establishing goals and then comparing the actual work accomplishment to the goal or by establishing defined competencies and comparing performance against the competency standards.

Conducting a good employee orientation with new hires, providing a job description and having them read the employee handbook helps accomplish this goal. It is also a good idea to review with employees upfront how their performance will be appraised and even sharing a copy of the performance appraisal.

Holding regular one-on-one discussions with employees provides an opportunity to discuss performance issues. This is not a once a year activity that occurs during performance appraisals.

Supervisors should regularly monitor performance keeping notes and statistics on all employees under their direction. Look for positive and constructive feedback areas to assist employees on a regular basis. When you are pleasantly surprised with good performance, give praise, recognition and when appropriate rewards.

Corrective Action

When performance drops, negative attitudes or behaviors appear or you see concerning work patterns, approach the employee with specific feedback about your concerns. Avoid generalities like "you always do this or that". Be specific in stating your perception and detailing the facts or behaviors observed in comparison to performance standards. Also, keep a positive voice tone and body language throughout the discussion. Your objective is to help employees understand how to improve their job success, not to threaten or make them feel punished. Avoid words that sound judgmental or that attack the person or personality.

Throughout the discussion, if the employee becomes defensive, try listening to help calm them down and gather the facts. Obtain the employees side of the story before forming any final conclusions.

Ask probing questions to obtain the details. Paraphrase your understanding where appropriate.

It is important to come to agreement on what the problem is and how it will be resolved. Jointly define the problem, discuss alternatives to resolving the challenge, select an optimal solution and discuss what actions will be taken. Define who, will do what and by when. Make sure to follow-up per your agreement.

If agreement can not be reached or the discussion escalates, involve your manager or the Human Resources Manager to help facilitate the discussion or resolve the conflict.

When possible, try to discuss any performance issues with employees allowing them to come up with possible solutions. You may need to communicate how their low performance affects others and yourself to help obtain their commitment. Generally, some form of punishment is not the best means of changing behavior. However, there are times when immediate action is needed depending on the nature and severity of the problem.

It is important that you administer corrective action consistently, predictably and without discrimination or favoritism.

When disciplinary or corrective action is warranted, supervisors should use the following procedures.

PROCEDURES

- 1) Be consistent and fair with how you treat all employees.
- 2) Take action in a timely manner, in private, and keep the information as confidential as possible.
- 3) When possible, consult the Human Resources Manager or your manager prior to taking action. Always prior to discharge.
- 4) When applicable, use a positive approach to bring about corrective actions (see details below). Review exceptions with senior management or the Human Resources Manager.
- 5) Have a management witness present for discharges and whenever there are unusual risks involved.
- 6) Provide proper documentation for all corrective action discussions or actions. What happened? When did it occur? What was said to whom? What are the planned follow-up actions?

Positive Corrective Action

Positive discipline is a coaching method of helping an employee meet performance expectations without the use of punishment or threatening warnings. Using this approach, the supervisor confronts an employee directly with specific facts regarding his or her performance. It is helpful to compare the employee's current observed performance to the standard or expected performance to help them see where they need to improve.

Next, the supervisor listens to the employee's side of the story to understand why the performance problem exists. If the employee becomes upset, a good technique for the supervisor to use is active listening to help employees vent their feelings. Using active listening skills the leader shows that s/he is listening with good eye contact, probing questions and paraphrasing understanding. Once the facts are out, the supervisor and the employee work together to define the real problem and come up with a plan that for the employee to correct the problem. Employees are more committed when they participate in coming up with the ideas. Throughout this process the role of the supervisor is one of consultant, facilitator and coach, not dictator or disciplinary.

For this approach to be most effective, it is important to be respectful in how you approach and assist the employee. The key is to come across as if you are trying to help, not punish them. Although a punitive approach may work in the short-run, it is not as effective in motivating the employee to take

responsibility for long-term results.

When approaching an employee, be direct in explaining the expected behavior in comparison to the behavior you see. In this manner, you avoid appearing judgmental or attacking them personally. Focus on the behavior (what you see), not their personality. Use an effective voice tone and words that convey your message without causing the employee to be defensive or feel punished.

The discussion sessions between the supervisor and the employee focuses on getting the employee to learn from past mistakes and initiate a plan to make a positive change in behavior. Rather than depending on threats and punishment, the supervisor uses counseling skills to help the employee accept responsibility and be personally motivated to make needed changes. True motivation comes from within the employee learning to enjoy the job and being recognized for good performance.

The leader listens and involves the employee in coming up with a verbal solution that is acceptable to both parties. The following shows a typical scenario where this approach may be used effectively over several occurrences. The leader's approach changes some based on the severity of the performance issue and based on repeat offences. This serves as progressive discipline, but keeps the interaction more positive.

1st Occurrence

Whenever the supervisor is surprised by an employee's performance or it is below expectations, approach the employee on an informal basis. Discuss what you observed and your expectations with the employee. Keep the discussion light and respectful simply bringing the concern to the employee's attention and help him or her generate options to correct the area of concern. This is a verbal discussion only. However, the Supervisor should make notes concerning the discussion in a confidential employee file (paper or electronics is fine). The supervisor would never indicate to the employee that this is a warning.

2nd Meeting (If Problem Continues)

After a reasonable period of time, if the solution doesn't work, the problem repeats itself or the employee does not resolve the problem, the Supervisor and employee meet to discuss why it failed. Make sure to investigate possible things blocking the employee from achieving their goal (e.g. others in the way, needed training, lacking skills, etc.). It is important to keep an open mind and to ask questions in a non-accusing manner. Focus on the facts and correcting behavior, not punishing the employee. The leader is trying to help employees succeed, not punish them or make them feel bad.

This time the discussion is written down as a plan of action and signed by both parties using the Performance Planning Guide. Obtain details during the meeting, then complete the written document. Obtain the employees input on the facts, then both sign indicating your commitment. Establish a timetable to review progress with specific tasks to be performed and follow up as agreed. Consult with the Human Resources Manager concerning the on-going issue, and provide a copy of the signed Performance Planning Guide to be placed in employee's file.

Care should be taken so that the employee views the written plan as a tool to help, not that he or she has been "written-up". Again, the emphasis is taken off punishment, and replaced with effective coaching and problem solving techniques. Do not inform the employee that the document is put in their file.

3rd Meeting (Final Warning, if needed)

After the agreed time period, if there is still no improvement in performance, a final discussion and opportunity for improvement takes place. The employee may be asked to examine why earlier

attempts to improve did not work. The leader and the employee put in writing a final written plan to correct the problem.

At some point during this meeting, the leader points out that the employee is putting himself or herself at risk of being discharged if the defined changes do not take place. This puts the employee on final notice that further non-compliance or repeating of unacceptable behavior will result in termination of employment. This is not using the threat of discharge to motivate change, only to put the employee on notice that he or she is at risk and needs to take serious corrective action. The duration of the time span permitted for improvement will vary depending on past performance, severity of the problem and longevity of service.

When employees are given a final warning they are not eligible for a transfer, promotion or salary increases for 60 days after the warning or until the problem is resolved. Supervisors should not use these restrictions as threats and generally do not bring them up unless one of these practices is in transition.

At any point after this final discussion, but no later than 60-days, the supervisor determines if sufficient progress has been made to retain or discharge the employee. At any point during the 60-day period, an employee may be dismissed for failure to correct behavior or to perform the necessary corrective actions. Employees whose performance falls back into a category where they had previously received a final warning may be discharged at any point in the future for reoccurrence. Final discharge must have prior approval from human resources and a member of senior management.

See Performance Management Guidelines for additional details on effective management techniques to align employee work outcomes and behaviors with organizational strategies and department objectives.

Note: The implementation of corrective action and certain steps may vary depending on the circumstances, severity of issues at hand and organizational needs. The organization is not restricted by these guidelines and will use them as they see necessary to best meet the needs of employees and the organization. Although most circumstances will follow the above steps, it is up to the organization to determine which techniques to use, how and when to apply them.

Immediate Suspensions/Termination's

Situations warranting immediate termination or suspension may include, but are not limited to the following: illegal conduct, working under the influence of drugs or alcohol, fighting, insubordination, severe disruption by the employee, unauthorized possession or removal of property belonging to the company, the customer or an employee, and severe substandard performance which, if allowed to continue, could do substantial harm to the company. The organization will also move employees or discharge as needed to ensure a strong fit with the position, team and organization.

If the situation warrants immediate action, supervisors can suspend an employee for the day until the entire matter can be reviewed jointly with the Human Resources Manager or Senior Management. It is always easier to reverse a suspension than a termination. The Human Resources Manager and your manager must be consulted prior to firing someone.

An employee should never be disciplined because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or in retaliation. Supervisors should uniformly apply disciplinary action to job-related employee activities.

Documentation

Documentation is critical both to help you resolve performance issues and for legal reasons. As a general rule, keep notes on discussions and observations dealing with employee performance. These will provide you with feedback examples, and will justify your employment actions. Document verbal warnings, counseling conversations, and evidence of infraction information like witnesses or performance statistics.

Gather and write down information facts to assist you in giving specific information when counseling. Avoid generalities and assumptions and write down only the facts. It is recommended that you keep a separate, confidential (password protected) computer file for each of your employees where you record important constructive and praise worthy behaviors and other relevant employee information.

“At Will” Employment

The above procedures in no way limits or prevent the company from taking appropriate action as it sees necessary including immediate dismissal for any reason. The purpose of discipline is to preserve good conditions for other employees and encourage employees to be responsible in performing their job. Employment is voluntary for both employees and the company. Nothing should be misconstrued as a guarantee of employment. Employees have the right to terminate their employment at any time for any reason and the Company reserves the same right

Performance Improvement Plan

Employee Name: _____

Defined Problem or Opportunity for Improvement:

Employee Action Plans:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Supervisor Action Plans:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Date:

Review Date (s):

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor/Mgr. Signature: _____

Date: _____