

Make It Stick

*Activity Pack*

Manage People and Performance

 **Helping lessons learned through training become part of *how we work*.**

**To the Learner Leader…**

This suite of activities has been designed to reinforce the key learning from the **Manage People and Performance** course. They have been designed to be led by team leaders or designated trainers and do not require training experience, though for best results we recommend that whoever is leading the activities understands the principles of adult learning and has some experience in leading learning activities.

The suite of activities will provide you with up to six months of learning reinforcement. We recommend that an activity is run each month following the Manage People and Performance course.

When running each activity:

* Ask the group to reflect back on the original course they attended:
  + What takeaways did they have?
  + What have they tried to implement?
  + When revisiting some of these activities for a second time, ask them what additional ideas or thoughts they have in applying the concepts and tools in the activities to their job.

Each activity will take 10-15 minutes to run depending on the size of the group.

There is one activity to a page. Each activity has a brief introduction followed by instructions for the trainer.

We suggest the following to optimise your learning experience:

* Have the group meet away from their normal workspace.
* Make sure mobile devices are switched off so that everyone fully engages.
* Make the environment ‘safe’ and encourage everyone to contribute.
* Run these activities with everyone standing – try running them outdoors in the fresh air.
* Have other team members take the lead and run an activity – this will build confidence and leadership skills.
* Don’t be afraid to improvise – the learning needs to be about you and your group so make it meaningful.
* When debriefing an activity, get the group to reflect on what the activity means for them and what they will do differently or continue to do that underscores the learning points from the activity.

**Activities in this pack**

1. Aligning effort to organisational goals
2. Communicating workplace performance
3. Developing strengths
4. Running coaching sessions
5. Monitoring performance
6. Dealing with performance issues

**Activity 1: Aligning effort to organisational goals**

**Introduction**

Each and every activity that employees undertake must be aligned to the achievement of their organisation’s regular business activities or new initiatives. Employee activities that are non-aligned, even if performed exceptionally well, are invalid because they are not helping their organisation achieve its goals.

**Instructions**

Ask the group to think of one or more individual or team goals they are striving to achieve.

For each goal, ask the group to reflect on how the goal is aligned to the business and strategic goals of the organisation.

Then, for each goal, ask the group to list down all the tasks associated with that goal they perform, either individually or as a team.

Then, for each task, determine if the task supports the goal or opposes its achievement.

Use a flip chart or whiteboard to capture the tasks for the goal and mark each one with a tick or a cross in terms of its alignment to the goal.

After you have analysed the goal and each of the tasks required to achieve that goal, ask the group which tasks need to be deleted or modified to ensure there is better alignment with goal achievement.

For any changes to tasks draw up an action plan noting:

* The change(s) to be made
* Who will be responsible for the change
* When the change is to be made by

Questions to reflect on at the end of the activity:

* How can reviewing roles and tasks impact productivity at work?
* If people are reluctant to change how they complete tasks, what can you do?

**Activity 2: Communicating workplace performance**

**Introduction**

Communication is a vital ingredient of workplace performance:

* Managers communicate expectations and performance goals
* Managers delegate tasks
* Managers communicate feedback
* Managers and employees engage in performance related conversations
* Employees communicate understanding
* Employees seek clarification
* Employees give feedback to their manager

**Instructions**

With the group, examine each of the statements above by generating a set of questions to critically evaluate each statement. Some suggestions are below. In answering the questions, the team should come up with one or more suggestions for improving communication.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **Critical questions to ask** | **What improvements to communication can be made?** |
| Managers communicate expectations and performance goals | Are expectations clear?  Are goals SMART? |  |
| Managers delegate tasks | Is the delegated task clear?  If the person being delegated the task cannot execute it, what do they do? |  |
| Managers communicate feedback | How often is feedback communicated?  Is feedback specific? |  |
| Managers and employees engage in performance related conversations | Are performance targets clear?  How do these conversations happen? |  |
| Employees communicate understanding | Is understanding communicated verbally or in writing?  What is being communicated? |  |
| Employees seek clarification | How do they seek clarification?  What do they seek clarification on? |  |
| Employees give feedback to their manager | How do they give feedback?  How receptive is the manager to feedback? |  |

**Activity 3: Developing strengths**

**Introduction**

A strength is a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking or feeling, that is authentic and energising to the user, and enables optimal functioning, development and performance. Strengths can be developed in the following ways:

* Push the limits
  + Provide challenges
  + Set the bar higher
  + Allow them to grow
* Education and training
  + Formal and informal learning
  + Skill and knowledge acquisition
* Mentoring
  + Engage mentors
  + Have the employee mentor others
* Job shadowing
  + Employee develops from observing more experienced operators
  + Employee is observed so others can learn

**Instructions**

Ask each team member to identify and qualify their key strengths. Why do they believe they are key strengths? What tells them this?

Then ask each team member how they would like to develop their strengths. Use the suggestions and examples in the introduction above to spark ideas.

Lastly, have each team member draw up an action plan to capture how their strengths will be developed including support from their manager and their team.

**Activity 4: Running coaching sessions**

**Introduction**

Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be successful, a coach requires a knowledge and understanding of process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place.

**Instructions**

Identify a coaching opportunity among your team. Use the GROW model to run several coaching sessions.

Make sure the coaching goal is SMART.

|  |
| --- |
| **Specific**  What does the coachee wish to accomplish? Why is the goal important to the coachee? |
| **Measurable**  How much?  How many?  How will I know when it is accomplished? |
| **Achievable**  Can the coachee accomplish this goal (which can be a stretch goal)?  What constraints might impact the goal being achieved? |
| **Relevant**  Does this goal matter to the coachee? Is the timing right? Does it suit the current environment? |
| **Time-bound**  When will this goal be reached? Give specifics. |

**Activity 5: Monitoring performance**

**Introduction**

There are a number of ways that managers can monitor performance. Behaviours are monitored through observation. Results are monitored through dashboard indicators and reports. The important point for managers to note is that **monitoring should be consistent and regular and focused on performance indicators**.

**Instructions**

Work with your team to identify ways that performance can be effectively monitored.

**Step 1**

Team members identify what behaviours and results should be monitored.

**Step 2**

The team identifies what methods can be used to monitor and report on performance. Here is a starting list for consideration:

* Observations
* Regular check-ins
* Stand-up meetings
* Reports
* 360 degree assessments
* Performance display boards
* Feedback

**Step 3**

For each method, the team works out the detail of how the method is to be applied and how the results of the monitoring are to be reported. Questions at this stage can include:

* When will monitoring take place?
* Where will monitoring take place?
* What will be monitored?
* How will it be monitored?
* Who will monitor?

The team leader/manager and the team then agree on the monitoring methods discussed and the start date for monitoring to commence.

**Activity 6: Dealing with performance issues**

**Introduction**

When dealing with issues of underperformance, managers need to understand the cause (or causes) so that it can be addressed. It is important that managers do not make assumptions or form conclusions without firstly understanding the issue(s) from the employee’s perspective.

**Instructions**

In the table below are common performance issues along with possible causes and actions to address them.

Using a whiteboard or flipchart write up one of the performance issues. Get the group to brainstorm what the possible causes may be. Write these next to the issue. Then ask the group to suggest what actions should be taken to address the performance issue.

Use the additional information in the table below to prompt the group if they get stuck for ideas.

If time permits, work through other performance issues in the same way.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Issue | Possible causes | Actions |
| Employee does not undertake work as required, showing signs of apathy and laziness. | Job content and design.  Inappropriate job fit.  Personal or external issues. | * Begin with informal performance discussion. * Be clear about the performance requirements and expected contribution of the role to the work of the business. * Focus on interest in work tasks, and how they might be improved. * Explore options for opportunities in other areas of the business, if possible. * Refer to counselling services if personal circumstances are impacting performance. |
| Employee will not follow directions or perform tasks as required. | Failure to understand what is required.  Inability to perform tasks.  Personal issues. | * Begin performance improvement process starting with informal discussions around what is required in the position. * Look at possible options for training and development if a skill deficit is identified. |
| Employee fails to acknowledge they are underperforming. | Performance issues have not been adequately explained.  Process has not been adequately applied.  Employee does not accept management assessment. | * Re-establish expected outcomes, use evidence of how performance has failed to meet expected standards and explain the impact of this on the success of the business. * If necessary, commence formal performance management process. |
| Employee does not complete work tasks to the required standard. | Lacks the required skills and capabilities. | * Identify training and development opportunities as part of performance improvement plan. * If employee fails to develop required skills, progress through performance management process to possible options such as reassignment of duties, or transfer to another area to achieve a better job fit (if possible). * Review recruitment practices to ensure appropriate selection decisions are being made. |