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Quotable Quotes

"You don't have to fear your own company being perceived as human. You want it. People don't trust companies; they trust people." ~ Stan Slap

"Organization doesn't really accomplish anything. Plans don't accomplish anything, either. Theories of management don't much matter. Endeavors succeed or fail because of the people involved. Only by attracting the best people will you accomplish great deeds." ~ Colin Powell

"Difficult times disrupt your conventional ways of thinking and push you to forge better habits of thought, performance and being." ~ Robin S. Sharma

Dear Jean,

Happy New Year! The holidays just passed by much too quickly, didn't they? And by now most of us are back at work and looking at a new year. The word, 'new,' does in fact carry a bit more weight at this time of year. You may be one of us looking at new opportunities, new challenges, new work, and even anticipating some additional changes to your life's routines as you currently know it.

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, this year the *Choice Connection's* focus will be exploring the many facets of *Performance Management*. After a year focused on the topic of Leadership, the exploration of *Performance Management* seems to be a next logical step. It is the leaders in an organization who establish the performance management culture - all the nuances, processes, events, and initiatives that strengthen the lifecycle for each and every employee.

So, let's pick up where we left off talking about Leaders in Action and begin the conversation as to what Performance Management really means. While our conversation just gets started this month, I invite you to email me at any time with your shares of what Performance Management really means to you. I look forward to sharing topics such as the culture of an organization, getting the right people, developing your staff, and the transition and growth of an organization. Stay tuned - there is more to come.

Wishing you a joyous start to 2016!
Jean

Performance Management

To begin this year's series on Performance Management, I invited a few colleagues into a conversation to share what performance management means to them, their experiences with effective performance management activities and their 'go to' tools and resources.



To start the conversation...

A formal definition for performance management is the process of establishing goals and measuring performance against these goals. Implementing a formal performance management process can help you: retain your best employees, give employees reason to maintain or improve their good performance.

Jean: Let's start the conversation with an understanding of what we each think Performance Management is. In my experience, performance management begins on day one of an individual's employment, is a work life development plan and requires ongoing conversations between the individual and his/her management to align their role with their organization's work initiatives. And it is so much more ...

"A": To me, Performance Management is providing employees with relevant and timely direction and support, so that they have clear expectations, get the instructions and information they need, and also have the resources they need to do the job. I strongly endorse Situational Leadership as a framework for supervisors and other leaders to more easily assess what an employee needs. Situational Leadership starts with the supervisor assessing the individual's competence and commitment (motivation and interest) to do a

particular task, and then follows with the supervisor providing the corresponding leadership style (combination of direction and support) for the particular individual on the particular task. To me, performance management is a highly inclusive process, where employees engage with the supervisor in discussion. Rather than being a twice or three times a year activity (beginning of the year to set and agree on goals, mid-year to check in, and end of year to close out), performance management can happen at any time.

"B": And, I believe that ... a succinct, generic definition of performance management is a process by which an organization measures the alignment of its processes, resources, and employees with the strategic goals of the organization. However, with regard to culture, I have a preference for the notion of performance management as fostering an environment where employees are able to perform to the best of their ability - clarity in the communication of goals and expectations, accessibility to resources required to fulfill said goals and expectations, training and development, empowerment in employees, mentorship, and prompt feedback. Of course performance evaluations and other measures are a part of this, but it is also a genuine investment in and caring for the people of the organization.

As you work with the leadership and employees in an organization what performance management activities have you found to be effective?

"A": I'll go back to Situational Leadership for this. My employees and I agree on the frequency of check-in discussions, and, during those discussions (as well as in spontaneous discussions, as relevant), I always ask what the employee needs from me to be able to handle the task. I think that the question, "What support do you need from me?" is a key question in the supervisory toolkit.

Jean: Well ... at the heart of effective performance management is, I believe, the time given to communication between management and their employees. It also seems to be the greatest challenge for management and staff to schedule. As more formal communication events are scheduled and informal communication instances occur, the stronger trust and understanding is throughout the organization. I have discovered that programs owned and managed by the employees with management are the most effective. I advocate mentoring, coaching and recognition programs as effective initiatives activities to engage employees and strengthen the communication and connection for the employees to the organizations they work for.

"B": I'm not sure if this is referencing a training activity or how it is addressed with each group. With leadership or individuals, coaching and development or accountability plans are very useful. Addressing performance management as part of strategic planning with leadership for the benefit of the organization as a whole is helpful. Again processes to implement and incorporate accountability are key.

What resources do you turn to or use as a guide when you're challenged with a Performance Management issue?

"A": When I use good coaching skills and the Situational Leadership approach, I find that it's easier to address challenges. When a situation looks like it will become a problem that's beyond my ability to address alone, my manager is a great sounding board. He has more supervisory experience than I do and has good knowledge of both HR approaches and the history of how our organization has successfully and unsuccessfully addressed challenges. Our Employee Relations office has also been helpful.

"B": I turn to colleagues. I find conversations with those I trust and respect are extremely beneficial, whether I am seeking a coach or an advisor. Discussing real life examples of similar challenges with those who have experienced and failed or overcome those challenges is also very valuable.

Jean: I agree with using good coaching skills. As an external consultant, my resources typically are the management or leaders within the organization who have a passion for supporting the people. I have also found that when there is a performance challenge in the organization, the collaboration of leaders and staff seem to have the greatest positive impact for turning the challenge into an opportunity.

Thanks for listening in as we begin the performance management conversation! In future months we will dig into more specific challenges, resources and tools - all in support of creating, maintaining and sustaining effective performance management systems.

Tools and Resources FROM THE BOOKSHELF

[Performance Architecture - The Art and Science of Improving Organizations](#) (2009) by Roger Addison, Carol Haig and Lenn Kearney

[Performance Consulting - A Strategic Process to Improve, Measure and Sustain Organizational Results](#) (2015) by Dana Gaines Robinson, James C. Robinson, Jack J. Phillips, Patricia Pulliam Phillips and Dick Handshaw

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[Preparing a Performance Management Plan](#)

[Sample Performance Management Plan](#)

[The Performance Dialogue](#)

[SHRM - Performance Management Guidelines](#)

Reflection

Performance Management (PM) is sometimes visually depicted as the lifecycle of an employee. There are facets or elements, if you will, that may be managed by different entities within an organization - HR, corporate policies, divisions, departments, managers, etc. As you think about the lifecycle of an employee (leaders are included in this community), what are the most important elements for you that comprise a strong performance management system? Consider the following questions to draw your PM lifecycle:

1. What is involved in hiring the right employees?
2. What is most important to your new hires?
3. How do you support the mid-career employees within your organization?

4. What do all your employees need for development that benefits both them and the organization?
5. How would you describe your organization's culture and what role does the culture play in your performance management system?

Now, give it a shot and draw what you envision the employee lifecycle in your organization to be. This year, what is the one element that you want to strengthen in your system?

Choose To

Define performance management based on your work experiences ... identify the PM element that is strong and working well in your organization today ... now, consider the one PM element that may need an infusion of collaboration ... identify who is missing from the team ... determine today the element of success you will evaluate in December 2016.



January Joyful Observances

[National Braille Literacy Month](#)

[National Polka Music Month](#)

Self-Love Month

Worldwide Rising Star Month

National Hot Tea Month

Home Office Safety and Security Week (January 3-9)

Universal Letter Writing Week (January 8-14)

Hunt for Happiness Week (January 17-23)

Clean Out Your Inbox Week (January 24-30)

Ellis Island Day (January 1)

Dress Up Your Pet Day (January 14)

Celebration of Life Day (January 22)

Inspire Your Heart with Art Day (January 31)

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- * New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, life their voices, and...
- * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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