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Yes, you can do better

Re-evaluating the approach to performance management

By Salma El-Shurafa and Veronique Ademar

In any company, ensuring that goals are captured, measured and periodically evaluated is a critical exercise to manage performance and outcomes. Most companies have some sort of performance management system, be it online or in paper format. However, most managers describe it as painful and time consuming, while employees feel like the process is contrived and often have the impression that it's 'just a tick-in-the-box' exercise for their senior management.

So, is PM becoming redundant? According to a 2014 *Global Human Capital Trends* report, led by Deloitte Consulting LLP and Bersin by Deloitte, which surveyed over 2,500 business and HR leaders across 90 countries, two conclusions stand out:

- Only 8% of companies report that their performance management process drives high

levels of value, while 58% said it is not an effective use of time. • Today's widespread ranking- and ratings-based performance management is damaging employee engagement, alienating high performers, and costing managers valuable time.

Well, maybe you don't want to throw away your process just yet. The same survey showed that 70% of the survey re-

spondents are either "currently evaluating" or have recently "reviewed and updated" their performance management systems. Also, it reveals that some of these organizations are scrapping the annual evaluation cycle and replacing it with ongoing feedback and coaching designed to promote continuous employee development. This means that the more



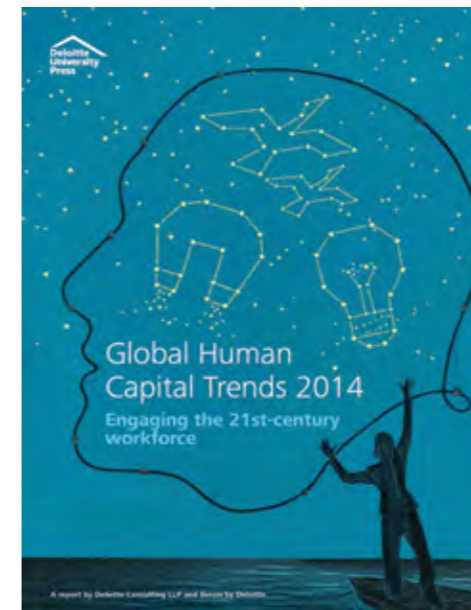
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traditional management style focusing on planning and evaluating once a year can no longer be applied, and that managers will have to adopt more of a coaching management style if they aspire to build high-performing teams and retain their best people.

So, what are skills that are an absolute must for all managers in order to drive motivation, results and eventually increase performance and retention?

1. LISTENING TO UNDERSTAND People want to be listened to, that's a fact. But more than that, they want to be understood. In order to become an effective listener, ensure you don't only listen to what the person says, but also pay attention what the person doesn't! Observe non-verbal messages, and feelings, which are usually ignored. Give your full attention to your employee without necessarily having the intent to answer...but just listen, understand and be present.

2. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION This seems like a given, however, having great communication skills doesn't mean just talking for the sake of passing on a message to someone. Judgment, attacks and emotional outbursts have no place here. When you are conveying a message, keep in mind that what others perceive is also important. Your body language, facial expressions and tone of voice will convey your attitude-be it positive or negative.



3. IMPARTING MOTIVATION The words 'thank you' go a long way, and managers tend to forget the importance of small gestures. Appreciating someone's hard work and lending a hand or a compassionate ear will make your employees feel valued! Giving them new challenges and ensuring they have clear goals and responsibilities are simple, yet powerful, ways to gain engagement and motivation! And remember, when looking at development, focus on employee strengths and ensure that their areas of improvement are critical to the responsibilities of the job, and not just peripheral to it. You can't be motivating someone by reminding them how 'bad' they are at something, especially if it doesn't weigh too much on their jobs.

WHEN AN OWNERSHIP DRIVEN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS IS PAIRED WITH MANAGERS APPLYING COACHING SKILLS, NOT ONLY WILL YOU ACCELERATE CHANGE AND GROWTH, BUT YOU'LL ALSO BOOST EMPLOYEE MORALE AND ENGAGEMENT WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY RESULT IN HIGHER PERFORMANCE.

4. ESTABLISHING TRUST Create a blame-free environment where employees are challenged, supported and not afraid to make mistakes. Walk

the walk and dare to ask feedback from your staff. You want to create an environment of openness with your team so that they feel supported and consider themselves free to come to you in times of need.

5. GIVING FEEDBACK Do this on a regular basis and

not just once a year! It always has to be done in a timely manner and not a week after the fact. Remember that feedback should be conveyed in a constructive manner, (no blaming!), and instead of asking: 'Why did you do this?' ask instead: 'What's gone wrong?' and 'How can we do it better next time?' And

don't forget to give positive feedback also when the job has been well done! It doesn't stop here. Feedback is essential, and it also has to be partnered up with regular check-ins on accountabilities and progress especially if development areas were established.

The performance management process as we know it is becoming obsolete, and whether you need to review it or scrap it altogether will depend on a number of factors. However, what is becoming obvious is that companies have to embed a new way of managing people. The truth of the matter is that employees don't merely want to be given a rating at the end of the year, but instead crave for regular feedback, understanding, guidance and recognition. When an ownership-driven performance management process is paired with managers applying coaching skills, not only will you accelerate change and growth, but you'll also boost employee morale and engagement which will ultimately result in higher

performance. The way performance is managed has to be redefined and managers have to be stretched beyond their current skills so that they don't just remain evaluators, but they become success-enablers. ■



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Regions where top five trends are most important

| | Asia Pacific | Western Europe | Central and Eastern Europe | Africa | Middle East | North America | South America |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Leadership | 439 (37%) | 447 (38%) | 278 (24%) | 246 (21%) | 155 (13%) | 466 (40%) | 292 (25%) |
| Retention and engagement | 355 (36%) | 297 (31%) | 192 (20%) | 200 (21%) | 101 (10%) | 346 (36%) | 237 (24%) |
| Workforce capability | 374 (40%) | 287 (31%) | 178 (19%) | 218 (23%) | 111 (12%) | 316 (34%) | 201 (22%) |
| Global HR and talent management | 337 (53%) | 305 (48%) | 188 (29%) | 168 (26%) | 120 (19%) | 286 (45%) | 198 (31%) |
| Learning and development | 319 (38%) | 279 (33%) | 183 (22%) | 157 (19%) | 92 (11%) | 287 (34%) | 209 (25%) |
| Talent acquisition and access | 263 (37%) | 222 (32%) | 160 (23%) | 150 (21%) | 89 (13%) | 286 (41%) | 170 (24%) |
| HR technology | 226 (38%) | 255 (43%) | 155 (26%) | 141 (24%) | 89 (15%) | 256 (43%) | 160 (27%) |
| Talent and HR analytics | 207 (40%) | 215 (41%) | 120 (23%) | 111 (21%) | 76 (15%) | 244 (47%) | 126 (24%) |
| Reskilling the HR function | 208 (34%) | 228 (37%) | 117 (19%) | 135 (22%) | 59 (10%) | 202 (33%) | 126 (20%) |
| Performance management | 199 (34%) | 210 (36%) | 115 (20%) | 123 (21%) | 65 (11%) | 230 (39%) | 114 (19%) |
| The overwhelmed employee | 137 (27%) | 168 (34%) | 95 (19%) | 86 (17%) | 39 (8%) | 188 (38%) | 94 (19%) |
| Diversity and inclusion | 91 (35%) | 74 (28%) | 51 (20%) | 80 (31%) | 34 (13%) | 86 (33%) | 62 (24%) |