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Performance Improvement Through Better Management

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How often do you think about performance and the way in which it is managed in the workplace? If you're an employee, you most likely think about it every day. You ask yourself: How am I performing? How is my manager communicating that with me? Do I know what to expect when I receive my review? And the list goes on.

And then there are managers and business owners for whom performance management is top of mind only once a year right around annual review time. For businesses small and large, performance management is one of the most important organizational processes, yet according to Janet Brennan, it's far too often poorly managed. Such a statement might come off as negative. However, if you have the chance to meet Brennan, you will realize it's quite the opposite. Her entire professional career has been committed to improving the lives of employees by positively affecting companies' performance management processes. She has been in HR for nearly 30 years and has spent the past 10 years running her own HR consulting agency. Brennan decided to venture out on her own in order to do what she loves: help small businesses improve their HR processes.

Why is performance poorly managed so often? One reason is that many organizations have the same process they had 30 years ago. Organization leaders don't tackle their outdated performance management process because it's overwhelming. Most perceive a performance evaluation overhaul as a daunting, behemoth task that one can't possibly change or improve for an entire organization. However, it's not so daunting. As Brennan puts it, "performance management is an opportunity, not a task." She explained that as you improve the way in which you manage and communicate performance, the better off your organization will be. You will see improvements in many areas, including retention, loyalty, happiness and, maybe most important, business results.

It takes time to build an organization that manages its people in a way that facilitates success and growth. However, there are things you can consider and take action on tomorrow, and we want to share those with you:

1. It's more than a once-a-year event.

Brennan couldn't say it enough times: "Good performance management is a process that helps managers communicate

with their direct reports throughout their careers, and it's an ongoing area to address rather than a once-a-year event." Far too often, managers make the mistake of communicating project feedback at the end of a project and overall performance feedback once a year during a formal review. Brennan argues that you must communicate along the way. Employees care about how they are performing, and nothing is more detrimental than a disconnect between employee and manager regarding performance.

2. It's formal and informal.

It's a combination of informal conversations and formal events. The formal piece of the equation is usually provided through a process managed by company leaders. It's the informal conversations that are usually missing. As a manager, you have to be consciously and continuously communicating with your direct reports on how they are doing and what you expect of them.

3. Invest in a process ... then invest in training.

As you put time and resources into changing the process, you must also commit to training your managers. You won't have effective performance management reform without both. You may have a stellar process, but if you have a manager that communicates everything incorrectly, the employee will have an overall negative experience.

These are just a few ideas to keep in mind as you evaluate the way in which your company manages performance. Join us at the next Sharp and On Point Speaker Series on Tuesday, July 18, 2017, from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Lodge Des Peres, where Janet Brennan, president at Brennan HR Group Inc., will share her insights into performance management and how to positively impact employees and managers. To reserve your seat or for more information, visit www.lopataflegel.com.



Laurie Griffith is a principal at Lopata, Flegel & Co. Accountants and Management Consultants. The Sharp & On Point Business Advisory Speaker Series is a free event at the Lodge Des Peres sponsored by Lopata. Learn business strategies you can immediately put in place to point your business in the right direction. For more

information, visit www.SharpAndOnPoint.com.