3 Ways HR Can Use Technology To Facilitate Employee Growth

Today's technology has changed the ways and speed with which organizations can gather information about their employee's performance and productivity and make changes.

Here are 3 ways you can use technology to facilitate change in your organization.

Data Analytics:

Data gathering is a hot topic and as we get more and more data the topic will continue to be important. Good analytics help us move from information to analysis to action.

There are 4 different types of analytics

- *Diagnostics* help us determine why something happened
- *Descriptive* helps us understand what is happening
- *Predictive* helps us understand what is likely to happen
- *Prescriptive* helps us determine what we should do about something

There are two ways you can gather data, through subjective and objective measures.

- *Subjective data* is based on reports from people including self-reporting from an employee or reporting from a third party such as a co-worker, supervisor, or customer.
- *Objective data* is data gathered based on measures such as speed, completeness, accuracy, quality and so on.

Today's HR can use analytical tools that help gather and analyze data from a several sources. This can help you identify what measures really are useful. You

can gather data on employee absenteeism, information on what education credentials correlate with on the job success and you can gather data on employee performance and productivity.

For example, if your organization has identified that speed of processing is important then the objective measure of speed from the beginning to the end of the process should be sufficient data. But we know often this is not true. For example, speed in processing a fast food order would not be a sufficient measure of success if the quality or accuracy of the order failed or if the experience a customer had was poor. While the objective measures of speed, accuracy, and quality are valuable so to are the subjective measures of speed, accuracy, quality and experience. If you want your fast food serving staff to improve their productivity and performance gathering a variety of data from different sources will be imperative.

Once you identify the information you need technology can allow coordinated gathering of data from a variety of sources.

Simplify and Speed up Feedback:

Annual, quarterly and even monthly performance reviews are generally ineffective because they rarely provide enough context to make the feedback tangible and applicable. You can gather a ton of data and use that data to identify patterns, trends and outliers generally but individually your employees do not need to see a ton of charts and graphs, they need simple, useful, and immediate feedback to go along with the bigger picture feedback.

You can use the data you gather collectively to develop new training initiatives for your employees but for each individual employee often the aggregate data is not sufficient. For any given employee you need to include personal feedback. Instead of holding annual or even monthly meetings use technology to provide your employees with quick feedback using key words or even symbols to communicate information. Sending an employee a 'thumbs up' for speed and 'thumbs down' for accuracy sends a pretty clear message about what needs to be adjusted. If these messages are received in a text or using a smiling emoticon in an app the employee can receive the information quickly and adjust. This should be done in conjunction with looking for patterns and trends for each employee so that a weekly feedback summary can be provided for further training opportunities.

Deliver Fast and Frequent Training and Skills Development:

Technology provides HR the potential to provide training on an ongoing and as needed basis. By having a cache of training resources available including technical, procedural, behavioural, skills, knowledge based and more technology can enable you to 'send' the training to an employee as needed and you can 'receive' feedback whether or not the employee has 'completed' the training. The creation of annotated your own PowerPoint's, videos, online learning courses combined with a list of 3rd party, such as a college or other formal or informal training option can allow you to catch a deficit early.

Using a tool such as SKYPE or GoToMeeting you to connect an employee with a trainer to quickly offer guidance, the trainer might even observe the employee at work over a smart phone or tablet and provide real-time feedback on the development of a skill. If your fast food employee keeps getting the orders done fast and accurately but customers report they did not find the customer service

good the ability of a trainer to ask questions or observe could provide an opportunity to offer some tips to improve performance in only a few minutes.

Training that cannot be delivered electronically can be assigned and scheduled just as quickly using technology. Coordinating the schedule of a mentor, trainer or supervisor with an employee or group of employees who have the same training or skills deficient can be as quick asking everyone send their availability and having a tool coordinate all schedules.

Keep Technology In Balance

By using technology to gather and assess data, provide feedback and deliver training you can use technology to make an everyday impact on the performance and productivity of your employees on an ongoing basis.