What Do You Do About Underperforming Employees?



It would be great if all employees performed up to expectations all of the time. Fortunately, most of the time the majority of your employees perform well and when minor deficiencies arise they can be corrected with simple interventions. However, there are times when some of your employees require more formal and ongoing interventions to improve their performance. When this happens a systematic, well-organized and sustained approach is required to enable change.

3 Key Components for Creating Change

1. Identify and understand the underlying problem: understanding what is contributing to the problem. Contributing factors include lack of knowledge, training, skills, support, personal challenges, work environment and more can help you address the underlying contributing factor.
2. Clarify required performance outcomes: give clear, concrete examples of great performance.
3. Create opportunities for change: provide training, support, feedback, coaching and mentoring.

Improvement Intervention Process

Changing performance takes time. To enable an employee to improve performance you need to create a plan and roll it out over time. Generally 30-90 days is required, ideally your plan should cover at least 60-90 days. If an employee's performance does improve over during the intervention time period it is also useful to reinforce change and performance improvements on an ongoing basis over 6 months.

Timelines, Rewards and Incremental Improvements

Performance improvements need to be specific, measurable, incremental and supported with feedback and ongoing reinforcement. Keep in mind that different people, with different personalities and skills will respond differently to your attempts to improve their performance. The more flexibility and variation for learning, training and feedback that you offer, the more likely you are to succeed.

To support the process for change we have created a sample Employee Performance

Intervention Plan you can download and use with your employee