

# THE SUPERVISOR/HR NEWSLETTER



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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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*How to Motivate Employees from Different Generations*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/6833217767937705729>

*How to Effectively Delegate Tasks & Responsibilities*

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# Creating an Environment that Encourages Employee Growth and Development

There are many benefits to organizations who provide an environment that encourages the growth and development of their employees. Working in an environment like that helps to improve employee motivation and leads to increases in both employee engagement and retention. In addition, providing resources that encourage employees to grow professionally results in a more skilled and productive workforce.

## Importance of Supervisors Taking an Active Role in Each Employee's Professional Development

Of course, it's in our best interest as leaders to take an active role in the growth and development of each of our staff members. Unfortunately, many supervisors do not prioritize working with their employees on their long-term growth because of the pressure and stress of day-to-day tasks and problems.

It's important for supervisors to recognize that, by focusing on both short-term issues and long-term employee growth concurrently, they will maximize the team's success over time. Employee knowledge and skill development should be a core part of every supervisor's performance management approach.

## Start by Staying Current with Each Employee's Goals & Interests

Your support of the professional development of your employees will be most effective when it's customized to the needs and interests of the individual. Kevin Kruse, the author of "Employee Engagement 2.0", recommends that supervisors meet with their employees twice per year to talk about their career goals, what types of projects they are most interested in, what skills they would be interested in further developing, etc.

It's important to remember that many employees will not focus on their long-term professional development without the encouragement of their supervisor. When a supervisor recommends that an employee take advantage of available resources such as tuition assistance to pursue an advanced degree, participation in a training class in an area of interest, or attendance at an industry conference to stay current in their field, it's more likely that the employee will participate. And when they do, both the employee and the organization will benefit from their continuing knowledge and skill development.

## Follow up to Encourage Their Progress

Follow up with your employees and ask about their progress. Provide recognition for their efforts, and continually offer your support. It demonstrates that you care about them as individuals, and as professionals. Research shows that motivation and engagement increases when an employee knows that their supervisor cares about them.

*Source: Greg Brannan, Director of Business Development & Training, Deer Oaks EAP Services, LLC*

# Performance Management

## Performance Management Competencies: Setting Goals

Supervisors need to communicate organizational goals and how they link to individual and work group performance in order to energize their employees to accomplish desired results. While developing performance plans, supervisors and employees can talk about how employee accomplishments support organizational goals. By aligning employee performance with organizational goals, supervisors direct their employees' efforts toward maximizing accomplishments and supporting the agency's strategic plans. Once the supervisor and employees make these connections, they can agree upon more specific, individual goals and can analyze individual responsibilities. Without the employee's agreement to perform at a certain level, it is very difficult to meet or exceed established goals.

### Steps for Setting Goals

In their book, *Goal Setting: A Motivational Technique That Works*, Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham propose seven steps for effectively setting individual goals:<sup>1</sup>

- *Specify tasks and results.* Clearly describe tasks to be accomplished that produce fully successful results.
- *Set targets or standards.* Setting goals that are difficult but possible to achieve produces higher levels of performance than no goals or vague goals.
- *Determine the measures.* Using clear measures (quality, quantity, cost, timeliness, and frequency of completion) at all levels is necessary for successful performance management.
- *Outline time frames.* To maximize the benefits of goal setting, specify expected time frames for achieving goals.
- *Prioritize goals.* It is helpful to rank or prioritize goals so employees are aware of their relative importance.
- *Rate goal performance.* Employees need to know about the process of appraising elements and assigning a summary performance rating.
- *Coordinate efforts for goal achievement.* If goal attainment requires a group effort, make certain to plan and measure each individual's contribution.
- *Goals have a directive effect on an individual's thoughts and actions.* A goal focuses a person's attention on goal-related factors. It also regulates a person's energy expenditure. Setting hard goals increases an individual's persistence and thus transfers effort into commitment and motivation. This ultimately leads to increased performance, especially if the goals are set at a high level and are accepted by employees.

## Additional Advice

According to Lynn Summers and Elizabeth Hampson in their article published by Performaworks, “Setting and Attaining Goals: How to ACT BEST,” supervisors need to be skillful at setting goals successfully. In addition to the steps listed above, these authors say that supervisors should be able to do the following:<sup>2</sup>

- Break apart organizational goals into manageable pieces, and delegate them
- Use multiple criteria to evaluate successful goal achievement using client satisfaction, quality, and value added, as well as cost and quantity
- Visibly track and update goals to maintain or increase employees’ energy and drive
- Gain top management’s support to overcome barriers, clarify goals, and free up resources

Goal setting can have far-reaching consequences for the organization and its employees. Research reports that productivity increased an average of 39% in organizations that practice systematic goal setting. Of those organizations, productivity actually increased by 57% when goal setting was supported by top management. In contrast, productivity increased only 6% in organizations with little top management support.<sup>3</sup>

## References

1. Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1984). *Goal setting: A motivational technique that works!* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
2. Summers, L., & Hampson, E. (n.d.). *Setting and attaining goals: How to ACT BEST*. Raleigh, NC: Performaworks.
3. Grote, D. (2002). *Performance planning* (p. 37). In *The performance appraisal question and answer book: A survival guide for managers*. New York: Amacom, American Management Association.

*Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). (n.d.). Performance management: Performance management cycle. Retrieved June 26, 2018, from <https://www.opm.gov/>*

# Ask Your EAP!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to the EAP for a management consultation.

*Q. I recently stopped paying attention to my phone in meetings with employees, after one of them called me out for checking it while in meetings. It's a bad habit, I know! I actually sense the anxiety of not checking it. I'm amazed. Can the EAP help?*

A. Behavior you are describing is referred to as “boss phone snubbing” in one research study, and it is also known as “phubbing” (phone + snubbing). Anyone can be guilty of this off-putting behavior and earn the ire of meeting participants, but when bosses do it, their status and authority, and the power of being a role model others want to admire, can have an especially negative impact on subordinates. Research on this topic discovered that supervisors who cannot resist looking repeatedly at their smartphones while meeting with employees risk losing their employees’ trust. The productivity cost is loss of engagement. Smartphone addiction is not a recognized disorder, at least not yet, but the problem can create distress. Consider whether your use of a smartphone causes problems but, despite your best efforts, you can’t stop. If that is true, contact the EAP. See the study: [www.baylor.edu](http://www.baylor.edu) (search “boss phone snub”).

*Q. I should be more decisive, but I like to seek the opinions of my team. Secretly, I fear being wrong, so gathering opinions is a way to procrastinate with some of these tougher calls. How can I develop better, faster, and more confident decisions-making skills?*

A. There are many reasons people hesitate to make decisions. Fear of being wrong is one, but what drives this fear? This question is one the EAP can help you understand more clearly. You must make decisions, of course, so your anxiety translates into stalling techniques with the information-seeking, which is a legitimate and responsible step that covers for your hesitancy. You are using it as a crutch. The rest of the problem about making decisions—the mechanics of the process—can be found in hundreds of resources. In your journey of discovery, examine whether any of these decision-killers affect you: 1) perfectionism (it slows progress), 2) fear of disapproval, and 3) over-analyzing. Great decision makers have a history of overcoming mistakes. It is these mistakes that turn them into leaders who can trust their gut—an art that gets better over time. This is your goal: to be a great gut-level decision maker who is often right, but not perfect.

*Q. We are pushing this year to hire more veterans. It's the right thing to do, and we believe it will be a win-win. What are some of the key issues we should keep in mind after we begin hiring?*

A. Be proactive and communicate effectively with veterans. Surveys of vets who are employed in the civilian workforce find that most think their unique skills—ones that would directly help the employer—aren’t fully or effectively used. So, when supervising vets, dialogue with them about their ideas, skills, and potential. Put them to the test. Vets are trained in taking or giving directions and then performing to their maximum ability. They are not necessarily conditioned to play the devil’s advocate, question authority, hold brainstorming sessions, or delve into discussions about how employees feel. These participatory workplace behaviors of the modern era may require more prompting to pull vets into them. If you are hiring vets, consider the special report released last year that will aid you in maximizing your effectiveness in working with vets. It’s called “Mission Critical: Unlocking the Value of Veterans in the Workforce.” Find it at online bookstores. Don’t forget to make the EAP available and have its message communicated to family members and spouses. These persons can help reach vets if personal problems arise. **Copyright © DFA Publishing, LLC**

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