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What is EE Relations?

EE Relations is part of an overall HRM strategy to support other HR functions. It just makes sense for an organization to want to retain and encourage an employee on whom considerable money and time have been spent during the recruiting, selecting, training and development phases of the HRM process. You will learn that the cost of managing employee turnover is a massive burden to Canadian employers.

Employee relations mean managing employer-employee relationships. Traditionally, employee relations is a term used to describe a company's efforts to prevent and resolve problems arising from situations at work, including discipline and dismissal actions. Employee relations can also describe the day-to-day communication and interactions among managers and employees.

There has been a gradual recognition that EE relations should also focus on securing employee engagement. The goal of an engagement-centered employee relations program is to increase employee satisfaction and maintain good morale among workers and ultimately to retain those motivated and engaged employees. One challenge for every employer is how to manage the "de-motivated" or "dis-engaged"employee.

In literature on the subject, EE Relations typically refers to a non-union environment and Labour Relations is used to describe unionised environments. While the two terms are interchangeable, Labour relations usually deals with the administration of existing collective agreements as well as negotiating new Contracts. An interesting question to consider is the degree of difference in EE relations between unionised and non-unionised organizations.

Employee relations are not a one-size-fits-all solution. Strategies for good employee relations can take many forms and vary by a number of factors, including industry, location, company size, even individual leadership philosophies. Issues that concern construction workers on the job can be very different from the problems facing nurses or accountants.

The Employee as Stakeholder

There is a growing trend in EE Relations to approach the relationship with employees from a "stakeholder" perspective, which is different than even a generation ago. Successful organizations recognise the need to have their workforce be part of the solution. Stakeholders have vested interest in the organization and want to be "at the table" when decisions are being made.

One of the more successful Canadian organizations to use this approach is WestJet.

As you view this 4 minute What WestJetters Say video,

see if you can get an idea of the drivers behind EE relations at WestJet.

Post your ideas on the Discussion Board Lesson One forum

Share with your colleagues as to how the stakeholder philosophy is applied to WestJet.

For now, start to think of the big picture of EE Relations.

In subsequent lessons you will study the principles and procedures related to EE Relations in detail.

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What are the Essential Elements of EE Relations?

As you watch the following four-minute Employee Engagement Video ask yourself what an EE Relations strategy might look and feel like if it supported the engagement philosophy? You watched a WestJet video in Lesson one that demonstrated how one company has managed to engage its employees.

 A recent ~~Conference Board Paper on Employee Engagement~~ provides a comprehensive definition of the term Employee engagement i.e.

Employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work.

The purpose of the Paper was to review and summarize research studies relating to Employee engagement and to point out drivers of personal engagement for employees. Based on the findings of the Conference Board review (page 6), the following are the **"Big Eight"** Drivers of EE Engagement as reported in multiple research studies:

1. Trust and Integrity
2. Nature of the Job
3. Line-of-sight between individual performance and company performance
4. Career Growth Opportunities
5. Pride about the Company
6. Co-workers/team members
7. Employee development
8. Personal relationship with one's Manager

Interestingly enough, there are significant differences in personal drivers for being attracted to an organization as a potential employee, staying with an organization after being hired and being engaged on one's job. As an example, while compensation is reported to be a driver for being attracted to the organization and staying with the organization, it does not appear in the list of personal engagement drivers.

Approached from another perspective, if we are looking for reasons that employees tend to leave organizations it can be argued that the lack of these personal drivers might be part of the reasons.

Journal Assignment: The Conference Board Paper identified 8 "personal drivers" for employee engagement. Identify and discuss two of the drivers that have special importance for you and why. As a HR Professional, what are your recommendations to an employer as to how to foster these drivers? Post your response in the Journal Tab on the left menu on the course home page. You will see a Lesson Two Journal forum. The journal function is strictly between you and your facilitator and no one else can access your comments.

Read this article

A recent article by "hrcouncil.ca" provides a great summary of the value to an organization of Employee Engagement.

As you review this article, ask yourself what additional benefits there might be to having an engaged work force.

Fairness in EE Relations

How many times a week do you hear someone say "it's not fair" when examining a decision or action taken in the workplace? As employees we spend a lot of time and energy evaluating the fairness of actions taken by our employer. If you have taken an "Organizational Behaviour" course as part of your HRM Certificate, you will recall the "Equity Model."

View this 8-minute video on The Equity Model

It provides a super overview of the Equity model and how perception forms our impressions of fairness in the workplace.

To put this discussion into the context of EE Relations, an employee is constantly using his "equity radar" to determine the fairness associated with a decision made by the supervisor, manager or organization as a whole. If the employee feels that the decision or policy is not fair, according to the Equity Model the employee may decrease the level of engagement as a reaction to the perception of inequity.

Your organization has recently announced a mass lay-off. Employee "equity radar" will be working overtime as employees monitor the fairness of the decision plus the equity in how the lay-off determination is carried out and notified to affected staff.

As you watch the following 3-minute video Challenges in today's EE Relations,

think about how the challenges pointed out by the speaker impacts relate to equity and fairness.

Share

In the Discussion Board Lesson Two Forum, please respond to the question related to Equity and EE Relations.

Trends in the Workplace and their Impact on EE Relations

View

This 4-minute video on Trends in the Workplace is an interesting snapshot as to how the workplace is evolving and changing. With these changes EE Relations will also need to evolve. While the video describes the American workplace, the points certainly apply to our Canadian reality as well.

Can you think of any other trends in the workplace not flagged by the video? To what extent are EE Relations affected by these trends?

Diversity in the Workplace and their impact on EE Relations

Lesson Three will explore diversity in detail, but for the time being it is important to stress that managing diversity in the workplace is one of the biggest EE relations challenges for organizations.

Other Challenges for HR and EE Relations

What are additional challenges for HR and for EE Relations in the Canadian work place? Here are a few that come to mind and please feel free to add to this list:

- An organization's need to protect employee privacy while at the same time being concerned about employees' use of electronic equipment for uses other than those sanctioned by the employer. Specifically the use of social media such as emails, Facebook and Twitter by employees has created the need to develop and apply policies and procedures;
- The use of video surveillance equipment to monitor the workplace and employees is an emerging issue for EE Relations and policies and procedures continue to evolve.
- The trend to have staff working away from the workplace either through teleworking or some other configuration has changed the traditional supervisor/worker relationship.
- The shift to a self-directed team-based work structure in a unionised work environment has definitely altered the role of supervisor and in some cases the administration of the collective agreement.
- Can you think of any other challenges for EE Relations?

Discuss

In the Lesson Two discussion forum related to Challenges for HR and EE Relations suggest some of the other challenges that you see in the workplace and how these challenges are being managed. Can you predict what some of the evolving challenges might be?

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Diversity in Canada

Diversity is defined as the differences between people. To be even more specific, the differences can be visual or perceived. These differences can include race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, values, age, background, socio-economic status, and much more.

As the Canadian population changes then logically so does the make-up of the workplace. I once worked in a city where a pulp and paper mill was located in the middle of the city, which was symbolic as well because it was the center of the city's economy. It was the stated hiring policy of the employer to recognize favourably someone being considered for a job if they had relatives working in the mill. Over the years, this employer systematically re-created the demographic and ethnic make up of the work force. On another note, part of the hiring process required candidates to "pass" an aptitude test, which had been validated on a sample population of white urban males in the States. Candidates from different cultures were screened out as they were not passing the aptitude test requirement. I am not sure those practices would happen today.

View this 3-minute Statistics Canada video on Immigration Trends

This provides insight into one aspect of diversity in Canada. In a recent HR Council release, an excellent summary of the various diversity elements is outlined. While the focus of the Diversity in the Workforce study is the non-profit sector, the basic premise of the article can apply to all sectors.

Workplace Diversity

Let's see if we can apply the notion of diversity to the workplace.

This 6 minute video does a very good job of identifying some of the key elements of a diverse workplace which is already present in Canada.

The point that I found to be particularly interesting is that the diverse workplace will require a set of management skills that may be different than traditionally have been used in a homogeneous work place. In terms of EE Relations, what are organizations doing to equip managers and supervisors to develop those skills required to manage diversity in the workplace?

Discuss the posted diversity-related equity statement

You will find it in the Lesson Three Discussion Forum in Blackboar

When you are responding to the statement from your perspective and interacting with your colleagues on the topic, try to respond using your own ideas rather than to quote a text or other source material.

Managing Workplace Diversity

Integration of the diversity components of your workplace does not happen "naturally." Many organizations have developed diversity management plans that are tied to the written diversity policy of the organization. There is a big assumption in that last sentence i.e. that an organization has indeed generated a diversity policy.

In fact, in many larger organizations, manager or director-level positions have been created to specifically manage diversity plans and programs. Organizations with specific diversity plans tend to be able to facilitate changes more quickly than companies without diversity plans. Diversity should be treated as an asset and is the reality of the workforce and workplace.

There are typically three main steps to creating diversity plans:

1. **Assessment of diversity**. Employee satisfaction surveys, discussions, and open forums that can provide insight into the challenges and obstacles to diversity. Inclusion of all workers for input is necessary to create a useful plan.
2. **Development of the diversity plan**. Based on step 1, a series of attainable and measurable goals should be developed regarding workplace diversity.
3. **Implementation of the plan**. The commitment of executives and management is necessary at all 3 stages. Formulating action plans based on the goals developed in step 2 and assignment of implementation and measurement of those plans must follow. The action plan should be the responsibility of the entire organization, not just the director of diversity or human resources.

Typically a diversity plan is either reactive or proactive in nature. An example of a reactive diversity plan is one designed to comply with federal and/or provincial legislation. A proactive plan would be one designed to achieve standards over and above any legislated requirements and driven by the realities of the specific workplace and workforce.

To reinforce what you have read and viewed on the videos, managing diversity is a key organizational task in order to support and encourage performance within the work force.

The following list is not meant to be all-inclusive but points out the various aspects of HRM where a diversity plan could influence direction and priorities. As you read the list, feel free to add additional areas.

- Recruitment and selection policies
- Opportunity for staff training and development for staff and management
- Compensation policies
- Accommodation of workplace and tasks
- HR policies related to use of time off and vacations
- Discipline and separation
- Communication within the workplace
- Corporate culture
- Other?

Challenges In Managing Diversity in the Workplace

Managing diversity brings with it certain challenges to creating an inclusive workplace. The following examples of challenges require that EE relations practices are implemented to manage the challenges.

1. **Equity and Fairness in decisions and treatment of staff.** You know as humans we use fairness and equity models to evaluate the quality of decisions made in the workplace and in life generally. Any decision that is made related to a diversity-related issue will be scrutinized by staff. Fairness will be weighed against the needs of an individual and the needs of the larger group.
2. **Managers and Supervisors do not support the diversity plan.** Organizational culture is hard to change—there may be active resistance or the covert resistance to change—especially if there is a threat to traditional power bases.
3. **Segments of the staff may be afraid of the change and may "push back."** The

introduction of a diversity plan is often criticized by some staff as being "reverse discrimination". You hear talk of "quotas" and hiring people on grounds other than merit.

4. **The organizational reward systems might not align with the diversity plan.** A prime example of this mismatch is an organizational reward system based on seniority. This tenured reward system makes it difficult to introduce initiatives to support a diverse workforce especially if the reward system favors promotions based on seniority.
5. What other challenges do you see in managing diversity?

Respond...

to the Lesson 3 discussion forum question on challenges to managing diversity.

Examples of Initiatives that Support Diversity Management

Review the following job poster for Coordinator, Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives at **Royal Bank of Canada**, as the job poster flags many of the activities associated with managing diversity.

Typically the following examples of organizational initiatives reflect and support diversity management in the workplace:

1. Diversity training for staff as a tool to identify and change perceptions
2. Recruitment and selection procedures
3. Accommodation of workplace
4. Support for family-associated needs e.g. day-care and elder care requirements
5. Flexible and alternative work arrangements e.g. teleworking and compressed hours.
6. Mentoring options
7. Developmental opportunities such as job rotation and apprenticeships
8. Codes of conduct for communication and respect in the work place
9. Management accountability for diversity success.

What other initiatives can you suggest that could be part of a "diversity management" program within an organization?

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What is Performance Management

Review

As an introduction to this topic, review the Canada School of Public Service Performance Management website.

See if you can intuitively generate an overview of performance management from the names of the courses being offered for Managers, HR professionals and Senior Managers.

View this 3 minute video which provides an excellent summary of the process of Performance Management

Turn the video off at 3:15 minutes as there is a sales pitch to sell a Performance Mgmt computerized system for the last minute—but apart from the sales pitch—the summary of what typically happens in a Performance Management strategy is valuable.

So what is performance management (PM)? Note the similarities in the following definitions pulled from several different sources:

- "process by which the company manages its performance in line with its corporate and functional strategies and objectives"
- "Performance management is a tool for improving the work performance and productivity of individuals, teams and organizations."
- Performance management is the process of creating a work environment or setting in which people are enabled to perform to the best of their abilities. Performance management is a whole work system that begins when a job is defined as needed. It ends when an employee leaves your organization.

While each definition is slightly different e.g. one definition describes PM as a process whereas another definition calls it a tool. It seems that there is consensus that PM is the sum total of all activities and initiatives designed to support performance to reach organizational (and individual) goals and objectives. As you digest this information, consider the influence that a diverse work force has to play in achieving performance objectives.

What are the Typical Stages in a PM Strategy?

The 3 minute video that you watched did a very good job in identifying the stages and/or steps in a PM process. Specifically, a PM process typically consists of the following steps:

- clearly defined set of organizational goals and objectives, which in turn are converted to performance objectives for each employee with specific performance expectations attached to each objective;
- Regular and ongoing interaction between the manager and employee , which can serve as "check-ins" to provide feedback and coaching specific to the performance expectations;
- A formal appraisal system used to provide formal feedback to an employee as to the match between expectations and performance. Both the manager and employee should be aware of the appraisal tool to be used and the results to be measured by the instrument.
- A review of developmental needs such as training, job rotation, job enrichment etc., in order to meet current performance standards as well as for career goals;
- An analysis of the rewards earned by the employee due to performance standards as well as consequences for not meeting objectives.

Let's explore each of the stages briefly and in the rest of the course each component will be looked at in detail, starting with next Lesson's review of the Appraisal process.

Stage 1 in the PM Process: Employment Expectations

Goal setting and corporate expectations have to come from the top down. Senior Managers are responsible for setting priorities and key deliverables for an organization. Managers and employees have to work within the context of the larger objectives and goals to establish what each department, unit and individual are expected to do in order to support meeting those corporate expectations. Task performance expectations are typically easier to set as they can usually be measured e.g. lower waste by 14 %, increase sales by 10%, have a 24 hour call-back at least 97% of the time etc.

In addition to those task performance expectations, there is also a range of other less measurable expectations relating to performance. An employee is expected to conduct him/herself according to established Code of Ethics. Employees may be expected to exhibit "corporate citizenship" behaviours, by participating in events supporting the organization's chosen charities. Employees are expected to be a "team player." These kinds of less-clear expectations are harder to evaluate and must somehow be agreed to by all parties so that everyone knows up front what the expectations are.

Managers and employees often use the SMART decision making model to set goals and expectations.

View this 3-minute video on Setting Smart Goals as a good summary of how the SMART Model works.

You will be setting a SMART goal as one of your tasks in this Lesson.

Stage 2- Interaction between Manager and Employee

In the context of Performance Management, it is expected that there will be regular and planned "check ins" to review the progress of performance goal achievement and to adjust the expectations if necessary. As a result, a manager or supervisor might find that the traditional role of those positions might be changing. Feedback now becomes a critical role of the supervisor and coach and mentor skills are core competencies.

These "check-in" interactions are likely more effective if done at a pre-determined time frame e.g. once a month, so that feedback can be timely and if there are issues then they can be dealt with while still relatively new.

Stage 3 in the PM Process: The Performance Appraisal

Lesson 5 will concentrate on the Performance Appraisal. Facts and information to be considered in the formal appraisal interview should be gathered throughout the year –and should have already been discussed at one or several of the "check-ins." There should be nothing new presented to an employee at the appraisal interview as feedback will have been given and discussed throughout the year.

Stage 4 in the PM Process: Career Development

In this stage, the manager works with a staff member to determine and action activities related to career development. Some of the learning and development activities might be to correct current deficiencies and other interventions are to develop the employee for future positions. We will devote a Lesson to career development.

Stage 5 in the PM Process: Discipline and Separation

This stage has several different options to consider and several lessons will tackle this important part of the PM process.

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What is Employee Assessment and Appraisal?

Let's start off our discussion of Employee Appraisal with a scenario for you to consider:

As you wake up this morning, you think about the performance evaluation you will give one of your employees, Sean, later this morning. Sean has been with your company for two years, and over the last six months his performance has begun to slide. As the manager, it is your responsibility to talk with him about performance, which you have done on several occasions. However, the performance evaluation will make his non-performance more formalized. You know that Sean has had some personal troubles that can account for some of the performance issues, but despite this, you really need to get his performance up to par. Your goal in the performance evaluation interview today is to create an improvement plan for Sean, while documenting his non-performance.

When you arrive at work, you look over the essay rating part of Sean's evaluation. It details two client project deadlines that were missed, as well as the over-budget amounts of the two client projects. It was Sean's responsibility to oversee both aspects of this project. When Sean arrives at your office, you greet him, ask him to take a seat, and begin to discuss the evaluation with him.

"Sean, while you have always been a high performer, these last few months have been lacklustre. On two of your projects, you were over budget and late. The client commented on both of these aspects when he filled out the client evaluation. As a result, you can see this is documented in your performance evaluation."

Using defensive non-verbal language, Sean says, "Missing the project deadlines and budget wasn't my fault. Emily said everything was under control, and I trusted her. She is the one who should have a bad performance review." Sean has his arms folded and is leaning back in his chair and is making eye contact in the form of a stare.

You say, "Ultimately, as the account director, you are responsible, as outlined in your job description. As you know, it is important to manage the accountability within your team, and in this case, you didn't perform. In fact, in your 360 reviews, several of your colleagues suggested you were not putting in enough time on the projects and seemed distracted."

"I really dislike those 360 reviews. It really is just a popularity contest, anyway," Sean says. "So, am I fired for these two mistakes?" You have worked with people who exhibited this type of defensive behavior before, and you know it is natural for people to feel like they need to defend themselves when having this type of conversation. You decide to move the conversation ahead and focus on future behavior rather than past behavior.

You say, "Sean, you normally add a lot of value to the organization. Although these issues will be documented in your performance evaluation, I believe you can produce high-quality work. As a result, let's work together to develop an improvement plan so you can continue to add value to the organization.

The improvement plan addresses project deadlines and budgets, and I think you will find it helpful for your career development." Sean agrees begrudgingly and you begin to show him the improvement plan document the company uses, so you can fill it out together.

When you head home after work, you think about the day's events and about Sean. As you had suspected, he was defensive at first but seemed enthusiastic to work on the improvement plan after you showed him the document. You feel positive that this performance evaluation was a step in the right direction to ensure Sean continues to be a high producer in the company, despite these mistakes.

Post in the Lesson 5 Discussion Forum your reactions to this scenario.

Consider this: Did the supervisor take the right path in this interview? What could have been done differently?

A Performance Evaluation System

A performance evaluation system is a systematic way to examine how well an employee is performing in his or her job. If you notice, the word systematic implies the performance evaluation process should be a planned system that allows feedback to be given in a formal—as opposed to informal—sense. Performance evaluations can also be called performance appraisals, performance assessments, or employee appraisals.

There are four reasons why a systematic performance evaluation system should be implemented.

First, the evaluation process should encourage positive performance and behavior. Second, it is a way to satisfy employee curiosity as to how well they are performing in their job. Third, it can also be used as a tool to develop employees. Lastly, it can provide a basis for pay raises, promotions, and legal disciplinary actions.

Designing a Performance Appraisal System

There are a number of things to consider before designing or revising an existing performance appraisal system. For the purpose of this lesson, let's assume you can create a performance appraisal system that will provide value to the organization and the employee. When designing this process, you should recognize that any process has its limitations, but if you plan it correctly, you can minimize some of these.

The first step in the process is to determine how often performance appraisals should be given. As was indicated in Lesson Three, managers should constantly be giving feedback to employees, and this process is a more formal way of doing so. Some organizations choose to give performance evaluations once per year, while others give them twice per year, or more. The advantage to giving an evaluation twice per year, of course, is more feedback and opportunity for employee development. The downside is the time it takes for the preparation and delivery of the appraisal. If a manager has 40 staff reporting directly to him, the amount of time and energy to direct to two appraisals per year is large.

Once the frequency has been determined, it is time to begin to formalize the process.

First, we will need to develop the actual forms that will be used to evaluate each job within the Organization. Every performance evaluation should be directly tied with that employee's job description.

Determining who should evaluate the performance of the employee is the next decision. It could be their direct manager (most common method), subordinates, customers or clients, self, and/or peers. Ultimately, using a variety of sources might garner the best results.

There has been considerable discussion related to the 360-degree approach. A 360-degree performance appraisal method is a way to appraise performance by using several sources to measure the employee's effectiveness. Although the following is an American example, it still points out that organizations must be careful when using peer-reviewed information. For example, in the Mathewson v. Aloha Airlines case, peer evaluations were found to be retaliatory against a pilot who had crossed picket lines during the pilot's union strike against a different airline.

Given that the 360-degree process is electronic, it minimizes the possibility of tampering by disgruntled peers.

Performance Appraisal Errors

Before you begin to develop your performance review process, it is important to note some of the errors that can occur during this process. First, **halo effects** can occur when the source or the rater feels one aspect of the performance is high and therefore rates all areas high. A mistake in rating can also occur when we compare one employee to another, as opposed to the job description's standards.

Sometimes halo effects will occur because the rater is uncomfortable rating someone low on a performance assessment item. Of course, when this occurs, it makes the performance evaluation less valuable for employee development.

Validity issues are the extent to which the tool measures the relevant aspects of performance. The aspects of performance should be based on the key skills and responsibilities of the job, and these should be reviewed often to make sure they are still applicable to the job analysis and description.

Reliability refers to how consistent the same measuring tool works throughout the organization (or job title). When we look at reliability in performance appraisals, we ask ourselves if two raters were to rate an employee, how close would the ratings be? If the ratings would be far apart from one another, the method may have reliability issues. To prevent this kind of issue, we can make sure that performance standards are written in a way that will make them measurable. For example, instead of "increase sales" as a performance standard, we may want to say, "increase sales by 10 percent from last year." This performance standard is easily measured and allows us to ensure the accuracy of our performance methods.

Aspects of Effective Performance Management Systems

Longitudinal studies of best practices related to the set-up and management of Performance Management systems have come up with some interesting observations as to what constitutes effective PM systems:

Make sure evaluation has direct relation to the job	Involve managers	Consider employee self-evaluations
Use more than one evaluation method	Feedback should be on-going	Employee goals should tie into organization's strategic plan
Train Managers and raters on the system	Develop standards for each job to avoid bias	Review the evaluations often, as jobs and expectations change

The Appraisal Interview

Given the best practices recommended in the development of a Performance Management system, it ultimately requires that a supervisor and employee sit together for a formal appraisal interview to provide feedback to the employee and to reinforce good behaviour and to correct/adjust behaviour that is affecting performance.

An appraisal interview can typically go in one of several directions:

1. The employee's performance over the appraisal period is satisfactory and the employee is considered to be "promotable." Planning with this employee will likely involve career development and specific educational and experience opportunities to help prepare the employee to move forward.
2. The employee's performance is satisfactory but due to the reality of the organization, there person cannot be promoted at this time. The organization might be in a lay-off situation and there are no opportunities within the organization. This situation is frustrating as here is an employee who could be promoted should a job be available. It is difficult to tell an employee to maintain performance while at the same time not being able to move the employee along in his/her career.
3. The employee's performance is not totally acceptable but can be corrected by developing an action plan.
4. The employee's performance is not acceptable and cannot be corrected. This situation may lead to dismissal.

There should not be any "new" information presented at the formal appraisal interview, as long as during the year there have been on-going interaction and feedback between the supervisor and the employee. The appraisal interview should be a summary of discussions held throughout the evaluation period.

In preparing to have the conversation be sure that you are clear on the purpose or objective for the discussion. Think about the following:

- What is the intent or reason for conversation?
- What do you want to cover?
- What is the impact if issue(s) is not addressed or the feedback is not provided?
- What emotions do you anticipate?
- What matters most to them?
- Imagine the perfect resolution (if there is a problem) and what is it?
- What are the next steps or options if there is not improvement/ resolution?

When setting up the conversation it is important that you select the appropriate PLACE (it should be private) and the appropriate **time** (as close to an event occurring or you observing behaviour as possible and not when the person is distracted with a task in front of them). Ensure you have the listener's **attention** by having scheduled time and asking them to turn off cell phones or blackberries.

At the end of the conversation it is important to establish a time for follow up.

Provision of Feedback during an Appraisal Interview

Below is a feedback model known as the DERE model to help you construct a conversation

1. **Describe** the Behaviour: Describe what you have observed or know to be fact and be sure to be specific.*When you said/did <<insert behaviour, comments>>*
2. **Explain** the Impact (on their work, the department, other colleagues or the organization)For example: *"When you are late for your shift our customers are not getting the service we promise them and as a result our department service scores go down, that impacts everyone's bonus"*
3. **Relate** In this step you want to give the person the opportunity to share their feelings, reactions to the feedback and for you to be relating to them through listening or where it is appropriate validation of some constraints or obstacle they may be facing.
4. **Explore** In this step you want to explore a better/more effective outcome with the individual. Articulate what you hope for, need or want. You may then say something like: *"what changes are you willing to make as a result of this conversation?"*

Stage 3 of the DERE Model is particularly important in that there will likely be defensiveness if information is being presented to the employee that is felt not to be positive, or is interpreted as being negative or challenging. Defensiveness is a normal reaction and to a large part you can manage the exchange by reacting calmly and not owning the defensiveness. There is an old saying that you can "see the drama but not be the drama." Letting the employee talk and share the feelings is a much better strategy than you becoming defensive too.

View

As you watch the following **Performance Appraisal Interview** , which was made by colleagues in a previous course, I want you to watch for the following aspects of the process:

1. What structure are you seeing in the Appraisal interview process? Did the structure flow naturally or was there something missing?
2. What are the strengths of the interview? Why?
3. What are weaknesses in the interview process?
4. What model did the interviewer use to provide feedback?
5. Did you observe any defensiveness by the employee? If so, what did the interviewer do to manage the defensiveness?

Your observations

Post your observations in the Lesson Five discussion forum for your colleagues to read and interact. Ensure that you follow the directions for this discussion.

Lesson Content

Readings

- Chapter 2-3 in Text (you will likely notice an overlap of topics in each Chapter)
- Lesson notes including embedded video and text

Lesson Notes

What are Some Common Evaluation Methods?

It is important to note that different industries and jobs need different kinds of appraisal methods. For our purposes, we will discuss some of the main ways to assess performance in a performance evaluation form. Of course, these will change based upon the job specifications for each position within the company. In addition to industry-specific and job-specific methods, many organizations will use these methods in combination, as opposed to just one method.

There are **four** main methods of determining performance:

- The first is the **trait** method, in which managers look at an employee's specific traits in relation to the job, such as friendliness to the customer.
- The **behavioural** method looks at individual actions within a specific job.
- **Comparative** methods compare one employee with other employees.
- **Results** methods are focused on employee accomplishments, such as whether or not employees met a quota.

Within the categories of performance appraisals, there are **two** main aspects to appraisal methods.

First, the criteria are the aspects the employee is actually being evaluated on, which should be tied directly to the employee's job description.

Second, the rating is the type of scale that will be used to rate each criterion in a performance evaluation: for example, scales of 1–5, essay ratings, or yes/no ratings. Tied to the rating and criteria is the weighting each item will be given. For example, if "communication" and "interaction with client" are two criteria, the interaction with the client may be weighted more than communication, depending on the job type. We will discuss the types of criteria and rating methods next.

Rating Methods

Graphic Rating Scale

The graphic rating scale, a behavioural method, is perhaps the most popular choice for performance evaluations. This type of evaluation lists traits required for the job and asks the source to rate the individual on each attribute. A discrete scale is one that shows a number of different points. The ratings can include a scale of 1–10; excellent, average, or poor; or meets, exceeds, or doesn't meet expectations, for example.

You experience the graphic rating scale when you complete satisfaction surveys, including this course's evaluation.

A continuous scale shows a scale and the manager puts a mark on the continuum scale that best represents the employee's performance. For example:

The disadvantage of this type of scale is the subjectivity that can occur. There is a evaluation error called "centrality" in which the rater tends to mark every response in the middle of the scale. As an example in a 1-5 rating scale each response would be rated as a

This type of scale focuses on behavioural traits and is not specific enough to some jobs. Many organizations use a graphic rating scale in conjunction with other appraisal methods to further solidify the tool's validity.

For example, some organizations use a mixed standard scale, which is similar to a graphic rating scale. This scale includes a series of mixed statements representing excellent, average, and poor performance, and the manager is asked to rate a "+" (performance is better than stated), "0" (performance is at stated level), or "−" (performance is below stated level).

Mixed standard statements might include the following:

- The employee gets along with most co-workers and has had only a few interpersonal issues.
- This employee takes initiative.
- The employee consistently turns in below-average work.
- The employee always meets established deadlines.

An example of a simple graphic rating scale is as follows:

Attribute	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Dependable			
Shows Problem Solving Ability			
Works well in a team			
Takes Initiative			
Produces High quality work			
Shows leadership within department			
Communication ability			

The manager and employee would both sign and date the document as part of the appraisal process.

View this two-minute video

from Survey Monkey which gives some suggestions for how to write strong **rating scale questions.**

Essay Appraisal

In an essay appraisal, the rater answers a series of questions about the employee's performance in essay form. This can be a trait method and/or a behavioural method, depending on how the manager writes the essay. These statements may include strengths and weaknesses about the employee or statements about past performance. They can also include specific examples of past performance.

The disadvantage of this type of method (when not combined with other rating systems) is that the manager's writing ability can contribute to the effectiveness of the evaluation. Also, managers may write less or more, which means less consistency between performance appraisals by various managers. This method is difficult to use if the rater is not in direct contact with the employee and might not be able to witness the employee working every day.

Attribute	**Comments**
What does this employee do well?	
What aspects of his/her job performance should be improved upon?	
Describe Performance challenges.	
Aspects of the job performance to continue	

doing	

This document would be signed and dated by both the manager and employee.

Checklist Scale

A checklist method for performance evaluations lessens the subjectivity, although subjectivity will still be present in this type of rating system. With a checklist scale, a series of questions is asked and the manager simply responds yes or no to the questions, which can fall into either the behavioural or the trait method, or both.

Another variation to this scale is a check mark in the criteria the employee meets, and a blank in the areas the employee does not meet. The challenge with this format is that it doesn't allow more detailed answers and analysis of the performance criteria, unless combined with another method, such as essay ratings.

	YES	NO	Comments
This employee works well with the people on his/her team			
He/she is respected and well-liked by people on the team.			
The employee has in-depth knowledge of his/her job.			
The employee needs minimum supervision in performing his/her job.			
Are there aspects of the job the employee could improve?			

Here are a few of the more common advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods just discussed. As you look at this list see if you can add your own ideas and thoughts.

Type of Performance Appraisal Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Graphic Rating Scale	• Inexpensive to develop • Easily understood by EEs and managers	• Subjectivity • Can be difficult to use in making compensation and promotion decisions
Essay	• Can easily provide feedback on the positive abilities of the employee	• Subjectivity • Writing ability of reviewer impacts validity • Time consuming
Check list Scale	• Measurable traits can point out specific behavioural expectations	• Does not allow for answers or explanations (unless combined with another method)

Discuss

In the Lesson Six Discussion Board, discuss with your colleagues those situations when you might choose to use the first cluster of rating methods i.e. graphic rating, essay or Check list methods

Group Two of Methods

Critical Incident Appraisals

When it is time for the employee to be reviewed, the manager will pull out this file and formally record the incidents that occurred over the time period. The disadvantage of this method is the tendency to record only negative incidents instead of positive ones. However, this method can work well if the manager has the proper training to record incidents (perhaps by keeping a weekly diary) in a fair manner. This approach can also work well when specific jobs vary greatly from week to week, unlike, for example, a factory worker who routinely performs the same weekly tasks.

This method of appraisal, while more time-consuming for the manager, can be effective at providing specific examples of behavior. With a critical incident appraisal, the manager records examples of the employee's effective and ineffective behavior during the time period between evaluations, which is in the behavioural category.

Work Standards Approach

For certain jobs in which productivity is most important, a work standards approach could be the more effective way of evaluating employees. With this results-focused approach, a minimum level is set and the employee's performance evaluation is based on this level. For example, if a sales person does not meet a quota of $1 million, this would be recorded as non-performing. The downside is that this method does not allow for reasonable deviations. For example, if the quota is not made, perhaps the employee just had a bad month but normally performs well.

This approach works best in long-term situations, in which a reason manufacturing situations where production is extremely important. For example, in an automotive assembly line, the focus is on how many cars are built in a specified period, and therefore, employee performance is measured this way, too. Since this approach is centered on production, it doesn't allow for rating of other factors, such as ability to work on a team or communication skills, which can be an important part of the job too.

Ranking Methods

In a ranking method system (also called stack ranking), employees in a particular department are ranked based on their value to the manager or supervisor. This system is a comparative method for performance evaluations. The manager will have a list of all employees and will first choose the most valuable employee and put that name at the top. Then he or she will choose the least valuable employee and put that name at the bottom of the list. With the remaining employees, this process would be repeated.

Obviously, there is room for bias with this method, and it may not work well in a larger organization, where managers may not interact with each employee on a day-to-day basis.

Your Comments for the Lesson Six Discussion

Task: You are a HR Professional and your organization is asking to consider the use of a ranking method as an evaluation tool. What recommendations would you make in order to make the raking method objective and free from bias? Discuss this in the Lesson six Discussion Forum.

Management by Objectives (MBO)

Management by objectives (MBOs) is a concept developed by Peter Drucker in his 1954 book The Practice of Management. This method is results oriented and similar to the work standards approach, with a few differences. First, the manager and employee sit down together and develop objectives for the time period. Then when it is time for the performance evaluation, the manager and employee sit down to review the goals that were set and determine whether they were met. The advantage of this is the open communication between the manager and the employee. The employee also has "buy-in" since he or she helped set the goals, and the evaluation can be used as a method for further skill development. This method is best applied for positions that are not routine and require a higher level of thinking to perform the job.

In case you have ever wondered where the SMART Goal template came from, it was first introduced in the MBO model.

To be efficient at MBO, the managers and employee should be able to write strong objectives. To write objectives, they should be SMART:

1. **Specific**. There should be one key result for each MBO. What is the result that should be achieved?

2. **Measurable**. At the end of the time period, it should be clear if the goal was met or not. Usually a number can be attached to an objective to make it measurable, for example "sell $1,000,000 of new business in the third quarter."

3. **Attainable**. The objective should not be impossible to attain. It should be challenging, but not

impossible.

4. **Result oriented**. The objective should be tied to the company's mission and values. Once the objective is made, it should make a difference in the organization as a whole.

5. **Time limited**. The objective should have a reasonable time to be accomplished, but not too much time.

Personal Question:

Do you see MBO working for all positions in an organization? If not, are there specific jobs that may lend themselves better to the MBO approach?

View this short video on Management by Objectives

which provides a good overview of the main objective of MBO.

Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)

A BARS method first determines the main performance dimensions of the job, for example, interpersonal relationships. Then the tool utilizes narrative information, such as from a critical incidents file, and assigns quantified ranks to each expected behavior. In this system, there is a specific narrative outlining what exemplifies a "good" and "poor" behavior for each category. The advantage of this type of system is that it focuses on the desired behaviors that are important to complete a task or perform a specific job. This method combines a graphic rating scale with a critical incidents system.

Here is an example of a BARS rating for a nurse.

The following chart summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of the second cluster of evaluation methods:

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Critical Incidents	• Provides specific examples	• Time consuming for Manager • Tendency to report negative events
Work Standards Approach	• Ability to supply specific components of job • Does not allow for deviations	• Does not allow for deviations
Ranking	• Can create high performing work culture • Validity depends on amount of interaction between manager and employees • Can negatively affect team work • Possible bias	• Can negatively affect team work • Possible Bias
MBO	• Open communication • Employee may have more "buy in" • May not work for all jobs	• May not work for all jobs.
BARS	• Focus is on desired behaviours • Scale is for each specific job • Desired behaviours are clearly outlined • Time consuming to set up	• Time consuming to set up

Summary of Evaluation Methods

Key Points

You have taken in a lot of information related to evaluation methods, so let's see if you can summarize what has been presented so far related to the performance management process.

Personal Question: What would you say are three key points that you will take away from this Lesson?

Key Takeaways:

When developing performance appraisal criteria, it is important to remember the criteria should be job specific and industry specific.

- The performance appraisal criteria should be based on the job specifications of each specific job. General performance criteria are not an effective way to evaluate an employee
- The rating is the scale that will be used to evaluate each criteria item. There are a number of different rating methods, including scales of 1–5, yes or no questions, and essay.
- In a graphic rating performance evaluation, employees are rated on certain desirable attributes. A variety of rating scales can be used with this method. The disadvantage is possible subjectivity.
- An essay performance evaluation will ask the manager to provide commentary on specific aspects of the employee's job performance.
- A checklist utilizes a yes or no rating selection, and the criteria are focused on components of the employee's job.
- Some managers keep a critical incidents file. These incidents serve as specific examples to be written about in a performance appraisal. The downside is the tendency to record only negative incidents and the time it can take to record this.
- The work standards performance appraisal approach looks at minimum standards of productivity and rates the employee performance based on minimum expectations. This method is often used for sales forces or manufacturing settings where productivity is an important aspect.
- In a ranking performance evaluation system, the manager ranks each employee from most valuable to least valuable. This can create morale issues within the workplace.
- An MBO or management by objectives system is where the manager and employee sit down together, determine objectives, then after a period of time, the manager assesses whether those objectives have been met. This can create great development opportunities for the employee and a good working relationship between the employee and manager.
- An MBO's objectives should be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time limited.
- A BARS approach uses a rating scale but provides specific narratives on what constitutes good or poor performance.

Personal Task: Review each of the appraisal methods and consider which one(s) you might use for the following types of jobs.

- a. Administrative Assistant
- b. Chief Executive Officer
- c. Human Resource Manager
- d. Retail Store Assistant Manager

Completing and Conducting the Appraisal

So far, you have discussed the necessity of providing formal feedback to employees through a systematic performance evaluation system. We have stressed the importance of making sure the HR professional knows how often performance evaluations should be given and if they are tied to pay increases.

The next step is to make sure you know the goals of the performance evaluation; for example, is the goal to improve performance and also identify people for succession planning? You will then determine the source for the performance evaluation data, and then create criteria and rating scales that relate directly to the employee's job description.

Once this is done, the successful functioning of the performance evaluation system largely depends on the HR professional to implement and communicate the system to managers and employees. This will be the primary focus of our next section.

Training the Raters

Let's assume that you are a HR professional and you have been asked to develop a training session for anyone within your organization that will be conducting evaluation sessions with staff. The following are examples of the type of information that could be covered in an evaluators' training session.

What you want to avoid is making it seem as if the performance appraisal process is "just one more thing" for managers to do. Show the value of the system in your training or, better yet, involve managers in developing the process to begin with.

- Set standards should be developed for managers filling out the performance ratings and criteria. The advantage of this is accuracy of data and limiting possible bias.
- Consider these "ground rules" to ensure that information is similar no matter which manager is writing the evaluation:
- Use only factual information and avoid opinion or perception
- For each section, comments should be at least two sentences in length, and examples of employee behavior should be provided.
- Reviews must be complete and shared with the employee before the deadline.
- Make messages clear and direct.
- Focus on observable behaviors.

Once your managers are trained, understand how to fill out the forms, and are comfortable with the ground rules associated with the process, you can coach them on how to prepare for performance evaluations.

For example, here are the steps you may want to discuss with your managers who provide performance evaluations:

- Review the employee's last performance, Note goals from the previous evaluation period.
- Review the employee's file and speak with other managers who interface with this person. In other words, gather data about the performance.
- Fill out the necessary forms for this employee's appraisal. Note which areas you want to address in the appraisal interview with the employee.
- If your organization bases pay increases on the performance evaluation, know the pay increase you are able to offer the employee.
- Write any improvement plans as necessary.
- Schedule a time and date with the employee.

The next step is to work with the employee to develop improvement plans (if necessary) and offer any rewards as a result of excellent performance.

The Evaluation Interview

Once a good understanding of the process is developed, it is time to think about the actual meeting with the employee. A performance review process could be intricately detailed and organized, but if the meeting with the employee doesn't go well, the overall strategic objective of performance reviews may not be met. While you have covered this topic in Lesson 5, this is a reminder of the key points of the interview.

There are at least three types of appraisal interview styles. The first is the **tell and sell** interview. In this type of interview, the manager does most of the talking and passes his or her view to the employee. In the **tell and listen** type of interview, the manager communicates feedback and then addresses the employee's thoughts about the interview. In the **problem-solving** interview, the employee and the manager discuss the things that are going well and those that are not going well, which can make for a more productive discussion.

To provide the best feedback to the employee, consider the following:

1. Be direct and specific. Use examples to show where the employee has room for improvement and where the employee exceeds expectations, such as, "The expectation is zero accidents, and you have not had any accidents this year."
2. Do not be personal; always compare the performance to the standard .For example, instead of saying, "You are too slow on the production line," say, the "expectations are ten units per hour, and currently you are at eight units."
3. Remember, it is a development opportunity. As a result, encourage the employee to talk. Understand what the employee feels he does well and what he thinks he needs to improve.
4. Thank the employee and avoid criticism. Instead of the interview being a list of things the employee doesn't do well (which may give the feeling of criticizing), thank the employee for what the employee does well, and work on action plans together to fix anything the employee is not doing well. Think of it as a team effort to get the performance to the standard it needs to be.

Results of a Performance Evaluation Interview

The result of a completed performance evaluation usually means there are a variety of ramifications that can occur after evaluating employee performance:

1. The employee now has written documented feedback on his or her performance.
2. The organization has documented information on low performance, in case the employee needs to be dismissed.

3. The employee has performed well and is eligible for a raise.
4. The employee has performed well and could be promoted and career development can be considered.
5. Performance is not up to expectations, so an improvement plan should be put into place.
6. The employee hasn't done well, improvement plans have not worked (the employee has been warned before), and the employee should be dismissed.

In each of these cases, planning in advance of the performance appraisal interview is important, so all information is available to communicate to the employee.

Key Points from Lesson Six

You have a lot to think about after working through this Lesson.

The following points are critical to your understanding of the lesson:

- There are many best practices to consider when developing, implementing, and managing a performance appraisal system. First, the appraisal system must always tie into organizational goals and the individual employee's job description.
- Involvement of managers in the process can initiate buy-in.
- Consider using self-evaluation tools as a method to create a two-way conversation between the manager and the employee.
- Use a variety of rating methods to ensure a more unbiased result. For example, using peer evaluations in conjunction with self- and manager evaluations can create a clearer picture of employee performance.
- Be aware of bias that can occur with performance appraisal systems.
- Feedback should be given throughout the year, not just at performance appraisal time The goals of a performance evaluation system should tie into the organization's strategic plan, and the goals for employees should tie into the organization's strategic plan as well.
- The process for managing performance evaluations should include goal setting, monitoring and coaching, and doing the formal evaluation process. The evaluation process should include rewards or improvement plans where necessary. At the end of the evaluation period, new goals should be developed and the process started over again.
- It is the HR professional's job to make sure managers and employees are trained on the performance evaluation process.
- Standards should be developed for filling out employee evaluations, to ensure consistency and avoid bias.
- The HR professional can assist managers by providing best practices information on how to discuss the evaluation with the employee.
- Sometimes when performance is not up to standard, an improvement plan may be necessary. The improvement plan identifies the problem, the expected behavior, and the strategies needed to meet the expected behavior. The improvement plan should also address goals, time lines to meet the goals, and check-in dates for status on the goals
- It is the job of the HR professional to organize the process for the organization. HR should provide the manager with training, necessary documents (such as criteria and job descriptions), instructions, pay increase information, and coaching, should the manager have to develop improvement plans.

Search

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Readings

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- Lesson notes including embedded video and text

Lesson Notes

Examples of Eleven (11) Counter-Productive Work Behaviours

The following examples of performance issues serve to highlight the wide range of behaviours that might be found in the work place and the challenges that managers and HR have in performance management. As you look at this list, ask yourself what recommendations you would make to a manager discussing these situations with you.

Constantly late or leaves early. While we know that flexible schedules and teleworking can provide a work-life balance, managing this flexible schedule is key. Some employees may take advantage and, instead of working at home, perform nonwork-related tasks instead.

Too much time spent doing **personal things at work**. Most companies have a policy about using a computer or phone for personal use. For most companies, some personal use is fine, but it can become a problem if someone doesn't know where to draw the line. Use of social media and internet is a considerable issue.

Inability to handle **proprietary information.** Many companies handle important client and patient information. The ability to keep this information private for the protection of others is important to the success of the company.

Family issues. Child-care issues, divorce, or other family challenges can not only cause absenteeism, but also poor work quality. Absenteeism is defined as a habitual pattern of not being at work.

Drug and alcohol abuse. The US Department of Labor says that 40 percent of industrial fatalities and 47 percent of industrial injury can be tied to alcohol consumption. The US Department of Labor estimates that employees who use substances are 25–30 percent less productive and miss work three times more often than non-abusing employees. These figures apply to substance abuse of both legal and illegal substances. Canadian statistics mirror those of the American figures presented here.

Nonperforming. Sometimes employees are just not performing at their peak. Some causes may include family or personal issues, but often times it can mean motivational issues or lack of tools and/or ability to do their current job. As one of the realities of diversity in the workplace, perhaps the older worker may be experiencing diminished ability to perform the job due to physical limitations.

Conflicts with management or other employees. While it is normal to have the occasional conflict at work, some employees seem to have more than the average owing to personality issues. Of course, this affects an organization's productivity.

Theft. The numbers surrounding **employee theft** are staggering.

This Globe and Mail story on Employee Theft describes a multi-billion $$ cost to employers and consumers each year in Canada—and the figures presented in the article are conservative. Obviously, this is a serious employee problem that must be addressed.

Ethical breaches. The most commonly reported ethical breaches by employees include lying, withholding information, abusive behaviour, and misreporting time or hours worked.

This Forbes Article on Ethical Breaches made by CEOs lists several of the more infamous ethical breaches. Sharing certain proprietary information when it is against company policy and violating non-competition agreements are also considered ethical violations. Many companies also have a non-fraternization policy that restricts managers from socializing with non-management employees.

Harassment. Engagement of sexual harassment, bullying, or other types of harassment would be considered an issue to be dealt with immediately and, depending on the severity, may result in immediate termination.

Employee conduct outside the workplace. Speaking poorly of the organization on blogs or Facebook is an example of conduct occurring outside the workplace that could violate company policy. Violating specific company policies outside work could also result in discipline and/or termination.

For example, the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada issued a statement on Conduct outside the Workplace to interpret the policies on discipline for behaviour outside the workplace.

Summary

While certainly not exhaustive, this list provides examples of the types of problems that may be experienced in the workplace. As you can see, some of these problems are more serious than others. Some issues may only require a warning, while some may require immediate dismissal. As an HR professional, it is your job to develop policies and procedures for dealing with such problems and to support managers in the application of the policies and procedures. In some cases, the problems and situations found in the workplace are evolving. As HR departments were developing policies and procedures for use of email, the use of social media inside and outside the workplace became a topic requiring attention.

On the Lesson 7 Discussion Board forum, discuss this list with your colleagues and identify other behaviours that could be added to the list.

Are there behaviours that fall into that "grey" area and/or not covered by policies and procedures.

As an example, the use of social media by employees at work is not always clearly defined and can cause issues in trying to apply a less than clear policy.

What influences performance?

When an employee is not performing as expected, it can be very frustrating. When you consider the amount of time it takes to recruit, hire, and train someone, it can be disappointing to find that a person has performance issues.

Sometimes performance issues can be related to something personal, such as drug or alcohol abuse, but often it is a combination of factors. Some of these factors can be internal while others may be external. Often a behaviour is a symptom of some other issue. Absenteeism, for example, may be a sign of something else going on. Sometimes an employee who is missing time is really expressing dissatisfaction at a recent decision. That perception of lack of fairness might be acted out with the employee not coming in to work.

Internal factors may include the following:

- Career goals are not being met with the job.

- There is conflict with other employees or the manager.
- The goals or expectations are not in line with the employee's abilities.
- The employee views unfairness in the workplace.
- The employee manages time poorly.
- The employee is dissatisfied with the job.

Some of the external factors may include the following:

- The employee doesn't have correct equipment or tools to perform the job.
- The job design is incorrect.
- External motivation factors are absent.
- There is a lack of management support.
- The employee's skills and job are mismatched.

All the internal reasons speak to the importance once again of hiring the right person to begin with and to continue communicating with the employee.The external reasons may be something that can be easily addressed and fixed. Whether the reason is internal or external, performance issues must be handled in a timely manner.

I like the model that has you ask yourself whether the performance issue is either a "can't do" or a "won't do" issue.

This determination will help considerably in planning a strategy to move forward in solving the situation. If an employee is having a performance issue due to the fact that he "cannot do" the job, then perhaps training or review of equipment or accommodations may be in order. If the employee is having performance issues because she "won't do" the job then that is different.

Your Task

As you review the lists, what other reasons could you add to either the internal or external list to explain a performance issue? Place your responses in the Lesson Seven Discussion Board forum pertaining to internal/external factors.

Defining Discipline

Discipline is defined as the process that corrects undesirable behaviour. The goal of a discipline process should not necessarily be to punish, but to help the employee meet performance expectations. This definition ties in well with the concept of performance management. The "can't do/won't do" model that was presented in an earlier subtopic helps us to understand that if performance expectations are not being met because an employee cannot do the task, then punishment might not be necessary.

To have an effective discipline process, rules and policies need to be in place and communicated so all employees know the expectations. Otherwise, you are likely to hear choruses of "that is not fair" when a discipline process is instituted.

Here are some guidelines on creation of rules and organizational policies:

- All rules or procedures should be in a written document such as the Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct.
- Rules should be related to safety and productivity of the organization.
- Rules should be written clearly, so no ambiguity occurs between different managers.
- Supervisors, managers, and human resources should communicate rules clearly in orientation, training, and via other methods.
- Rules should be revised periodically, as the organization's needs change.

The management of the discipline process is no different than the management of any other facet of performance management. Consistency among the various players is crucial.

Suppose, for example, you have a manager in operations and a manager in marketing. They both lead with a different style; the operations manager has a more rigid management style, while the marketing manager uses more of a laissez-faire approach. Suppose one employee in each of the areas is constantly late to work. The marketing manager may not do anything about it, while the operations manager may decide each tardy day merits a "write-up," and after three write-ups, the employee is let go.

See how lack of consistency might be a problem? If this employee is let go, he or she might be able to successfully file a lawsuit for wrongful termination, since another employee with the same performance issue was not let go.

Wrongful termination means an employer has fired or laid off an employee for illegal reasons, such as violation of anti-discrimination laws or violation of oral and/or written employee agreements.

Besides the written rules in Codes of Conduct and Ethics, each individual job analysis should have rules and policies that apply to that specific job. The performance appraisal is a systematic process to evaluate employees on (at least) an annual basis.

The organization's performance appraisal and general rules and policies should be the tools that measure the employee's overall performance. If an employee breaks the rules or does not meet expectations of the performance appraisal, the performance issue model, which you will review next, can be used to correct the behavior.

The Performance Issue Mode

Using the Performance Issue Model, you can look at a performance issue from five different perspectives. This classification process will help to determine how best to deal with the issue.

First, the **mandated issue** is serious and must be addressed immediately. Usually, the mandated issue is one that goes beyond the company and could be a law. Examples of mandated issues might include an employee sharing information that violates privacy laws, not following safety procedures, or engaging in sexual harassment. For example, let's say a hospital employee posts something on his Facebook page that violates patient privacy. This would be considered a mandated issue (to not violate privacy laws) and could put the hospital in serious trouble. These types of issues need to be handled swiftly.

A written policy detailing how this type of issue would be handled is crucial. In our example above, the policy may state that the employee is immediately fired for this type of violation. Or, it may mean this employee is required to go through privacy training again and is given a written warning. Whatever the result, developing a policy on how mandated issues will be handled is important for consistency.

The second performance issue can be called a **single incident**. Perhaps the employee misspeaks and insults some colleagues or perhaps he or she was over budget or late on a project. These types of incidents are usually best solved with a casual conversation to let the employee know what he or she did wasn't appropriate. Consider this type of misstep a development opportunity for your employee. Coaching and working with the employee on this issue can be the best way to nip this problem before it gets worse.

Often when single incidents are not immediately corrected, they can evolve into a **behavior pattern,** which is our third type of performance issue. This can occur when the employee doesn't think the incident is a big deal because he has not been correct before or may not even realize his is doing something wrong. In this case, it's important to talk with the employee and let him know what is expected.

If the employee has been corrected for a behavior pattern but continues to exhibit the same behavior, we call this a **persistent pattern.** Often you see employees correct the problem after an initial discussion but then fall back into old habits. If they do not self-correct, it could be they do not have the training or the skills to perform the job. In this phase of handling performance issues, it is important to let the employee know that the problem is serious and further action will be taken if it continues. If you believe the employee just doesn't have the skills or knowledge to perform the job, asking him or her about this could be helpful to getting to the root of the problem as well.

Personal Task:

In your Lesson Notes above, a list of eleven performance issues was provided. You have already discussed the issues in the Lesson Seven discussion forum. Consider the list of performance issues from a different perspective i.e. under which of the categories in the Performance Issue Model would you classify each of the issues? Can an issue be classified under more than one of the categories?

The Investigative Interview

When an employee is having a performance issue, it may be your responsibility as a HR professional to investigate the situation. Training managers on how to document performance failings is the first step in this process. Proper documentation is necessary should the employee need to be terminated later for the performance issue.

The documentation should include the following information:

1. Date of incident
2. Time of incident

3. Location (if applicable) of incident
4. A description of the performance issue
5. Notes on the discussion with the employee on the performance issue
6. An improvement plan, if necessary
7. Next steps, should the employee commit the same infraction
8. Signatures from both the manager and employee

With this proper documentation, the employee and the manager will clearly know the next steps that will be taken should the employee commit the infraction in the future. Once the issue has been documented, the manager and employee should meet about the infraction. This type of meeting is called an **investigative interview** and is used to make sure the employee is fully aware of the discipline issue. This also allows the employee the opportunity to explain his or her side of the story. These types of meetings should always be conducted in private, never in the presence of other employees.

Types of Discipline Interventions

Progressive Discipline

This online article on Progressive Discipline gives a good overview of the process and outlines the steps typically taking place in the intervention.

For those of you who want a visual respresentation,

View this 4-minute video on Progressive Discipline does a similar good job on describing the process of progressive discipline.

The progressive discipline process is useful if the offence is not serious and does not demand immediate dismissal, such as employee theft. The progressive discipline process should be documented and applied to all employees committing the same offences.

The following chart demonstrates the typical path that progressive discipline takes.

Counselling and Reinstatement of Expectations	**Counselling and Reinstatement of Expectations** Counselling by immediate supervisor is the initial step to mentor or coach performance • Meet with staff member and affirm expectations regarding performance • Discuss performance deficit or behavioural concern • Provide a timeline and resources for improvement • Report consequences for no improvement • Document for an anecdotal file
Written Reprimand	At this time, the immediate supervisor may want to consult a HR representative. After the counselling process, with the exception of providing documentation to the EE in a letter of reprimand. The letter should outline previous informal efforts and the current problem. Send copies of the signed letter to the department personnel file, and Union if applicable.
Short Suspension **Long Suspension**	Fully investigate the concern, followed by discussion with the EE. Summarize previous progressive discipline and current problem, and specify the timeframe for suspension in writing. Identify further discipline and possible termination as a potential consequence for not meeting and maintaining standards for improvement. Provide copies as for the written reprimand.
Termination	Termination may be necessary when discipline is not successful in improving performance. Review, the work history and record of progressive discipline with proper authority. Schedule a final meeting with the employee and conduct a meeting at which a letter of termination is provided. If necessary, the termination notice may be sent via registered mail. Provide copies as for disciplinary measures.

Positive Discipline a.k.a Discipline Without Punishment

The positive discipline model comes out of the parenting and academic environments and differs from progressive discipline in that the processed is designed to have employees take ownership and to monitor behaviour and assume responsibility for the consequences of their actions. The positive model starts off and may end up the same as the progressive model, but the middle parts of the models differ.

Managers and raters are expected to coach and be involved in collaboration with employees to solve the issues together. Suspensions are replaced by "time outs", where the employee continues to be paid but does not come to work and instead does introspective review of why previous attempts to right the behaviour have not worked. It is hoped that after the "time-out" the employee will return to work with the answers as to how he/she can improve the performance in question.

The Seven Tests of Just Cause

The seven test[s] of just cause represent a practical and effective way to determine whether a proposed disciplinary action is firmly and fairly grounded. It is fair to assume that these tests will be applied by arbitrators in the event that disciplinary actions are challenged, and it is therefore good practice to apply them prospectively when considering the imposition of progressive discipline.

The following tests could actually be part of a discipline check list—and specific actions in support of each test could be listed as a confirmation that the termination process is being completed according to consistent procedures.

The seven factors are the following:

1. The employee knew of the company's policy
2. The company's policy was reasonable
3. The company investigated to determine that the employee violated the policy
4. The investigation was fair and objective
5. Substantial evidence existed of the employee's violation of the policy
6. The company's policy was consistently applied
7. The discipline was reasonable and proportional (the punishment fit the crime)

This four minute video outlines well, the Seven tests for just cause

Let's see if you can operationalize these seven tests

In the Lesson 7 Discussion forum take one of these tests and generate a list of observable behaviours or checks that can be done to determine if your chosen test has been completed.

For example under the "notification" test, one of the check boxes could be for producing a document signed by the employee during an orientation that he had read the policy on workplace harassment.

Rights of Workers and Employers in Canada

Service Canada's website contains a great summary work-related laws and acts in the

My rights as a worker section.

Employee rights tend to focus on fairness in the workplace. Employees expect to be treated fairly by employers. **Statutory rights** move to ensure fairness through legislation.

Another set of rights can best be described as **contractual** in nature. Collective agreements negotiated on behalf of employees are examples of rights set out in contracts. Often the relationship between an employer and employee is based on an "implied" contract—to use a rather sexist term a "gentlemen's agreement."

Finally, there are also rights established by society itself and often time they are more expected than written in a code. I may believe and expect that I have the right to privacy in the work place but it is not a "right".

The article published online, by the Privacy Commissioner for Canada on **Privacy in the Workplace** raises some very interesting points regarding an employee's "right" to privacy versus an employer's "right" to know.

What other "emerging" topics are you seeing related to the rights of employees and employers in the Canadian workplace?

Discuss the following cases on the Lesson 7 Discussion Forum

Determine if the employee should receive immediate termination or a progressive discipline process, and provide justification for your responses.

- The employee stole one pack of office paper, stating he would be using it at home to perform his job.
- An employee posted how boring her job is on a Facebook status update. You know she is Facebook friends with several clients.
- The employee groped a colleague in the break room.
- You saw an employee's résumé posted on LinkedIn, stating she was looking for a new job. The manager has told you the employee is difficult to work with and not liked by his colleagues.

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Readings

- Chapter 7-8 in Text (you will likely notice an overlap of topics in each Chapter)
- Lesson notes including embedded video and text

Lesson Notes

Employee Turnover and Separation

Read Online

Employee turnover and separation can occur for a number of reasons. First, the employee resigns and decides to leave the organization. Second, the employee is terminated for one or more of the performance issues listed previously. The Conference Board in Canada Q&A document indicates that the rate of Voluntary and involuntary separations continues to increase on a yearly basis.

Employee separation costs can be very expensive. The Canadian Nurses' Association published a discussion paper related to the costs associated with the turnover of Nurses in Canada. The profession experiences a 20% yearly turnover rate and each turnover costs an estimated $25K.

In reviewing articles for this section, I was struck with the global nature of the problem. HR publications from every country were flagging the massive costs associated with staff turnover and separation. No wonder most HRM strategies have a strong staff retention component. To keep employees engaged and motivated to stay and perform is a more effective and efficient strategy than to deal with the costs of hiring and training new staff.

Resignation means the employee chooses to leave the organization. First, if an employee resigns, normally he or she will provide the manager with a formal resignation e-mail. Then the HR professional usually schedules an exit interview, which can consist of an informal confidential discussion as to why the employee is leaving the organization. If HR thinks the issue or reasons for leaving can be fixed, he or she may discuss with the manager if the resignation will be accepted. Assuming the resignation is accepted, the employee will work with the manager to determine a plan for his or her workload. Some managers may prefer the employee leave right away and will redistribute the workload. For some jobs, it may make sense for the employee to finish the current project and then depart.

If it is determined an employee should be **terminated**, different steps would be taken than in a resignation. First, documentation is necessary, which should have occurred in the progressive discipline process. Performance appraisals, performance improvement plans, and any other performance warnings the employee received should be readily available before meeting with the employee. It should be noted that the reliability and validity of performance appraisals should be checked before dismissing an employee based upon them. Questionable performance appraisals come from the real-world conditions common to rating situations, particularly because of limitations in the abilities of the raters.

Right Sizing and Lay-offs

Right sizing refers to the process of reducing the total size of employees, to ultimately save on costs.

Downsizing ultimately means the same thing as right sizing, but the usage of the word has changed in that right sizing seems to define the organization's goals better, which would be to reduce staff to save money**, or** right size. When a company decides to right size and, ultimately, engage in lay-offs, some aspects should be considered**.**

From an **human resources management** perspective, there are a number of elements to consider when an organization is deciding to either right size or downsize:

First, is the downturn temporary? There is nothing worse than laying people off, only to find that as business increases, you need to hire again. Or there are lay-offs in one department and another department is short-staffed and needs more employees.

Second, has the organization looked at other ways to cut expenses? Perhaps cutting expenses in other areas would be advisable before choosing to lay people off.

Finally, consideration should be given to offering temporary sabbaticals, voluntary retirement, or changing from a full- to part-time position. Some employees may even be willing to take a temporary pay cut to reduce costs. Organizations find they can still keep good people by looking at some alternatives that may work for the employee and the organization, even on a temporary basis.

If the company has decided the only way to reduce costs is to cut full-time employees, this is often where HR should be directly involved to ensure legal and ethical guidelines are met. Articulating the reasons for lay-offs and establishing a formalized approach to lay-offs is the first consideration.

Before it is decided who should get cut, criteria should be developed on how these decisions will be made. Similar to how selection criteria might be developed, the development of criteria that determines which jobs will be cut makes the process of cutting more fair, albeit still difficult.

Establishing the criteria ahead of time can also help avoid managers' trying to "save" certain people from their own departments. After development of criteria, the next phase would be to sit down with management and decide who does or doesn't meet the criteria and who will be laid off. At this point, before the lay-offs happen, it makes sense to discuss severance packages.

Usually, when an employee signs for a severance package, the employee should also sign a form (the legal department can help with this) that releases the organization from all future claims made by the employee.

After criteria have been developed, people selected, and severance packages determined, it's key to have a solid communication plan as to how the lay-offs will be announced. Usually, this involves an initial e-mail to all employees, letting them know of impending lay-offs. Speak with each employee separately, and then announce which positions were eliminated. The important thing to remember during lay-offs is keeping your employees' dignity; they did not do anything wrong to lose their job—it was just a result of circumstances.

Discuss

On the Lesson 8 Discussion forum, what you feel should be key components to initiating a lay-off process in an organization. Perhaps you have experienced a lay-off and have witnessed less than a stellar management of the process.

The Termination Interview

View this 7-minute video on the Termination Interview

provides a great template as to the steps of the process plus the activities that typically occur in each of the steps. When I reviewed the video I picked up that the termination interview process really has "before-during-after" stages to it.

The presenter made an excellent point at the very beginning of the presentation when he said that "the way people are treated" will make a difference as to their short-term and long-term reactions.

In Lesson one of this course, you learned about fairness and justice and how we all use the concept of fairness to evaluate events and how we were treated with dignity and respect. One level of fairness that is very important is called “interactional” fairness.

If you have ever heard someone come out of a meeting or interview and say something like “He has no right to speak to me that way that he just did—and embarrass me in front of everyone”—you have just experienced “interactional fairness. We all have a standard for how we expect to be treated in interactions with colleagues and especially with supervisors and managers. If a person does not live up to our expectations, we will likely react in less than a positive manner.

In the context of the termination interview, the employee being terminated is evaluating whether he is being treated with dignity and respect during the process. If he feels he is not, then the probability is higher than the employee may take action after the interview.

Read more about Interactional justice

The following guidelines for preparing for and conducting termination interviews can be thought of as “best practices” to both ensure legal compliance as well as treating the employee with dignity.

Preparing for the Termination Interview

- Choose an appropriate time and place for the interview to take place that takes into consideration the employee’s dignity.
- The decision to terminate an employee should be kept confidential and apart from those staff needing to know, the employee to be terminated should be the first to know.
- If at all possible, there should be at least two employees representing the organization in the termination interview. The immediate supervisor is expected to be in the interview and will likely lead some of the process. A HR representative should also be there to explain procedures and answer questions.
- Make sure that the termination checklist is completed and that all steps have been prepared.
- Rehearse the script that will be used in the interview.

During the Termination Interview

- Get directly to the point of the interview. This is not the time for small talk.
- The message should be clear with no grounds for interpretation. How the message will be presented can be rehearsed and even scripted prior to the interview.
- Confirm that the reason in the termination letter is the same reason that is being presented in the interview. If an employee is being terminated due to behaviours under his control, then the employee has to be told that fact. The easy way to terminate an employee might be to deflect the real reason and indicate that the termination was due to downsizing but that is not accurate.
- A termination is not open to negotiation. The decision is final and the purpose of the interview is not to problem-solve or to find a way to have the employee stay with the organization.
- Your role is to deliver the message and to move through the interview to its conclusion. You will not be able to do your role if you get pulled into the terminated employee’s energy. While you can certainly acknowledge any emotions that the employee might be feeling, be careful not to use statements such as “I know how you are feeling” or “you must be feeling confused “as those kinds of statements may not be taken well.

After the Termination Interview

- Make sure you follow up with any outstanding tasks or actions that were discussed during the interview e.g. final pay cheque issue and delivery to employee.
- Complete all termination checklist items and ensure that all forms and documents are filed in the appropriate place.

Add to the above list in the Lesson 8 Discussion Forum.

What do you feel would be additional best practices to follow before, during or after a termination interview?

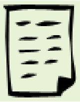
The Termination Check List

One of the key components of the termination process is the “Termination Check list. “ The termination checklist design should take into consideration all of the actions and tasks to be accomplished in the various stages of the termination process i.e. before, during and after the interview.

The termination checklist should reflect an organization’s HRM policies and practices as well as to take into consideration any legal requirements. The design of the checklist should likely be done by HR professionals within an organization and is the template for any staff member involved in terminating an employee. Ideally, training should be provided on the use of the checklist to ensure consistency of the termination process.

A termination checklist should have a “sign-off” section for all mandatory actions to confirm that the action was taken and by whom.

A properly designed and completed checklist becomes a permanent record that the termination process was conducted according to legal requirements and may be used as evidence in wrongful dismissal cases.



Your Online Journal Task

Review the following examples of termination check lists and identify the strengths of each and what else should be added to make the checklist more robust.

Government of Alberta Termination Checklist

My HR Department Termination Checklist

University of New Brunswick Termination Checklist

Worm Law Termination Checklist Guide

The Exit Interview

An exit interview is a strategic and valuable tool used by organizations to gain insight into why employees are voluntarily leaving the organization. The purpose of an exit interview is to receive honest feedback, which will then be used by the organization as consideration for changes in the way the employer supports its staff.

You have learned about employee engagement as a key organizational priority. If staff is leaving the organization due to deficiencies in the organization **human resource management** policies and procedures then it is valuable information for an organization to have and act upon.

An exit interview will also provide useful feedback as to what the organization is doing well and should be reinforced.

Typically, a HR staff member conducts exit interviews with departing employees. Direct supervisors and managers can also conduct termination interviews depending on the level of trust between the supervisor and departing employee.

A few precautions will make the exit interview process a more credible and useful source of information.

- First of all the exit interview option should be targeted to only those employees leaving voluntarily.
- Secondly, any information gathered in an exit interview with a specific individual should be rolled up into an aggregate report without any identifying information attached. This is particularly important in those cases where an employee might be leaving due to a personality conflict with the supervisor or manages.
- Thirdly, an exit interview should be part of an overall "employee satisfaction" strategy which might include surveys and questionnaires for employees within the organization and not just for departing employees.

The following example of an exit interview questionnaire is for your information. While these are typical questions, each organization should design its own set of questions to gather information for its specific purposes.

- What caused you to start looking for a new job in the first place?
- Why have you decided to leave the company?
- Have you shared your concerns with anyone in the company prior to deciding to leave? What was the response?
- Was a single event responsible for your decision to leave?
- What does your new company offer that encouraged you to accept their offer and leave this company?
- What do you value about the company?
- What did you dislike about the company?
- The quality of supervision is important to most people at work. How was your relationship with your manager?
- What could your supervisor do to improve his or her management style and skill?
- What are your views about management and leadership, in general, in the company?
- What did you like most about your job?
- What did you dislike about your job? What would you change about your job?
- Do you feel you had the resources and support necessary to accomplish your job? If not, what was missing?
- We try to be an employee-oriented company in which employees experience positive morale and motivation. What is your experience of employee morale and motivation in the company?
- Were your job responsibilities characterized correctly during the interview process and orientation?

- Did you have clear goals and know what was expected of you in your job?
- Did you receive adequate feedback about your performance day-to-day and in the performance development planning process?
- Did you clearly understand and feel a part of the accomplishment of the company mission and goals?
- Describe your experience of the company's commitment to quality and customer service.
- Did the management of the company care about and help you accomplish your personal and professional development and career goals?
- What would you recommend to help us create a better workplace?
- Do the policies and procedures of the company help to create a well-managed, consistent, and fair workplace in which expectations are clearly defined?
- Describe the qualities and characteristics of the person who is most likely to succeed in this company.
- What are the key qualities and skills we should seek in your replacement?
- Do you have any recommendations regarding our compensation, benefits and other reward and recognition efforts?
- What would make you consider working for this company again in the future? Would you recommend the company as a good place to work to your friends and family?
- Can you offer any other comments that will enable us to understand why you are leaving, how we can improve, and what we can do to become a better company?

These are examples of typical questions. You might want to see a rating scale added to these questions as in "on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate your relationship with your immediate supervisor?" This type of question can then be followed up with a narrative section for comments.

In the Lesson Eight Discussion Board forum respond to the following:

"What other questions would you like to see in an exit interview? Why?"

Exit interviews are sometimes done electronically in the form of an electronic survey. The advantage is that the departing staff might feel more comfortable giving an honest evaluation electronically than in an interview. The downside is that there is no opportunity for the interviewer to probe and to ask clarification-type questions.

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Readings

- Lesson 4 & 5 in the text (you may notice overlaps in the two chapters)
- Lesson Notes and embedded text and videos.

Lesson Notes

Staff Training

Traditionally organizations "train" their employees. The content of these training sessions are predictable and may include:

- Orientation Training;
- Technical training on the use of computers and/or software specific to the organization;
- Quality training, especially of the organization is working on accreditation such as ISO or other certificates;
- Skill training for the current job;
- Safety training, especially if mandated by provincial or federal legislation;
- Soft skills training related to communication and staff interaction;
- Team training
- Working in a Global organization
- Diversity training

 As you review the above list, think of how each of these training initiatives impact on EE relations. In other words how might an effective staff training program impact positively on the relationship between an employee and the organization?

Orientation Training

Let's focus on the importance of **orientation training** in supporting effective EE relations. There is an interesting correlation reported in research i.e. that an effective orientation program is associated with a higher retention rate of employees.

Discuss

in the Lesson Nine Discussion Board forum, the possible reasons as to why an effective orientation program might be associated with a higher retention rate of employees

Review this 4-minute video on Tips for orienting your new employee.

Recall orientation training that you may have had when you started a new job. Some sessions may have been formal while others may have been very informal and consisted of a brief walk through of the job site and the invitation to "ask if you have any questions."

Assuming that an organization offers orientation training, the following topics are likely to be part of the course agenda:

- A "walk around" of the job site to introduce the new employees to the location as well as to point out the features of the site such as lunch room, HR office, employee lounge, parking etc. This walk around" might also include introductions to relevant staff.
- A classroom portion where essential policies are explained, which might include Code of Conduct, harassment policies, safety policies, Code of ethics. During this portion of the training, the new employee may be asked to sign-off as to the fact that training was given and understood.
- The new employee will likely be presented with an overview of the essential tasks and responsibilities of the job for which he/she was hired.
- Assuming that there is a formal training program in place, the new employee may also receive a schedule of training and development that will take place in the near and immediate future.
- Depending on the size of the organization, an orientation session may also include an overview of the performance management process e.g. how and when appraisals will take place, how they are carried out and any probationary periods involved.
- Review of an Employee Handbook, which typically could include an overview of the organizational values and ethics, plus employee benefits and mandatory policies such as electronic security, safety, fire procedures.

Depending on the size of the organization and topics discussed, orientation training may be delivered by several different employees including executives, Managers, supervisors, HR staff and veteran employees.

Value-added Orientation Sessions

An organization may have to deal with unique situations from time to time, and how these situations are handled will impact on EE relations.

- Large global organizations have multiple work locations and, as such, orientation sessions may be different within each country, especially when dealing with local laws and regulations and different cultural expectations.
- In previous lessons you learned about the impact of diversity in the Canadian workplace and challenged for EE Relations. This challenge starts with orientation session, especially with new employees who may not be familiar with the Canadian workplace.
- Providing an orientation session to a group of new employees who are there due to a company take-over or merger can be challenging, especially if there is resistance and/or anger at the decision.

Training initiatives are usually classroom but can also be online and delivered either in a boardroom or taken at your desk. There may be on-the-job elements to the training and for the most part the training is designed either to socialize you into the organization, teach you the skills to do your current job and/or to meet some legislated requirement.

Career Development

A career development program is a process developed to help people manage their career, learn new skills, and take steps to improve personally and professionally. Think of it as a training program of sorts, but for individuals. Sometimes career development programs are called professional development plans. As such, career development can be an important element of an organization's **human resources management** strategy.

You can certainly see how career development planning with an employee can be a direct result of performance appraisal interviews. You learned previously that one of the outcomes of a performance appraisal might be that the work performance is satisfactory and that the employee is "promotable." If there is nowhere to promote that person, the employee may decide not to stay and to move on to another organization.

Career development programs are necessary in today's organizations for a variety of reasons. First with a maturing baby-boom population newer employees must be trained to take those jobs once baby boomers retire. Second, if an employee knows a particular path to career development is in place, this can increase motivation. A career development plan usually includes a list of short- and long-term goals that employees have pertaining to their current and future jobs and a planned sequence of formal and informal training and experiences needed to help them reach the goals. The organization can and should be instrumental in defining what types of training, both in-house and external, can be used to help develop employees.

The responsibility for career development typically is that of the employee, the manager and the organization. However, the emphasis has shifted somewhat to the individual employee.

As an employee, the expectation is that you own and are responsible for your own career development. An organization can certainly support and provide opportunities but ultimately you manage your own development.

Discuss

In the Lesson Nine Discussion Board forum, what you see as the roles for each of the partners in career development of employees i.e. the organization, the manager and the employee.

Typically under the "Career Development" umbrella you are apt to see a variety of HRM functions and initiatives, including:

- Succession planning
- Managerial development programs
- Executive development
- Coaching and mentoring
- Reimbursement of tuition
- Job rotation and enrichment
- Access to career-planning seminars and workshops
- Management of Promotions and Transfers

The Learning Organization

Wikipedia describes a Learning Organization as "a company that facilitates the learning of its members and constantly transforms itself." Learning and knowledge management is used by such an organization as a driver to push the organization along. The organizational culture of a learning organization is one of learning from each other and from experience and mistakes. Mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning and growth.

Learning organizations use a systems approach to problem solving and every employee within the organization is seen as a source of knowledge as problems and issues are explored. The training and development function therefore takes an essential role in a Learning Organization.

This 4-minute video on The Learning Organization

provides great insights into the workings of a learning organization

Status of Staff Training and Development in Canada

Read Online

What is the status of staff training and development in Canadian organizations?

The Conference Board of Canada recently released its 12th annual Learning and Development Outlook , which has some surprising and disturbing statistics. Over the past 20 years the amount of $$ spent in staff training and development per employee on average by Canadian organizations surveyed has declined by 40% from a high of $1207 per employee in 1993 to the current average per employee of $705 in 2012.

The following quote taken from the Conference Board's Outlook document raises some interesting challenges for Canadian organizations:

"*This is a significant issue because we know that organizations with strong learning cultures tend to realize better business results. Those who invest more in learning and development are the* *organizations that are being rewarded with higher levels of employee performance, customer satisfaction, and quality products and services compared to their competition,"*

What an interesting challenge for Canadian organizations—as support for training and development continues to stay at low levels. What are the implications for organizations' ability to retain employee and to compete globally? In fact, Canada ranks quite low among industrialized countries in terms of the amount of money spent on training and development.

Respond to the following question in the Discussion Board Forum for Lesson Nine.

How do we interpret the Conference Board statistics related to the average amount spent on training and development per employee in Canada? Is it something that Canadian organizations need to be worried about? Are there other ways to explain the drop perhaps?