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LifeWorks *Managers* is a publication of LifeWorks Employee Resource, a *free*, 24/7 confidential service provided for managers, their employees and their families.

LifeWorks provides solutions for today's workplace by offering **EXPERTISE** in:

- Employee Assistance Programs
- Organization Training and Development
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- Career concerns
- Financial and legal issues

**We can assist MANAGERS with:**

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**INTRINSIC MOTIVATION:** motivation that comes from *inside* an individual rather than from an external or outside source. As a manager, your job is to create an environment where your employee's intrinsic motivations are encouraged to surface and blend into their daily work. You can encourage your employees' intrinsic motivation by:

- *Communicating* vision. Encourage and let employees use their own creativity to create the desired vision and results.
- *Recognizing* individual contribution while promoting the importance of team efforts.
- *Focusing* energy on reinforcing good behavior rather than correcting bad.
- *Sharing* outcomes and how employee efforts have benefited the world around them.

# Managers



SUCCESSFUL *MANAGING*



## Do Performance Improvement Plans Really Work?

**Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) can be very successful if they provide a channel for communication between employee and manager.**

More specifically, they must create a situation in which the employee and manager have a two-way, ongoing conversation about the employee's performance and it should create a mutual understanding about what specifically the employee's behavior will look like when they are successful. Too often PIP documents are created simply for the purpose of jump-

ing through an obligatory step before an employee can be terminated. If management and Human Resources are not invested in the success of an employee, they shouldn't create a PIP. Nor should a PIP be created when the employee is also not invested in their own success. Both of these scenarios create the sense that a PIP is a perfunctory waste of time. The lack of confidence created in the PIP process, then, can sabotage its potential success from the beginning.

*PIP* continued ►



## TIME MANAGEMENT for Managers

**Managers of people may often find themselves at the end of the day wondering where their time went and what measurable outcome they have to show for their 8 (or more) hour work day.**

New managers quickly learn that any given day may present them with spontaneous meetings, distractions, required time for direction and even employee crises. Time management experts suggest the following preemptive strategies to plan for these types of predictable distractions.

### Time Study

Determine where your time is currently being spent. You might take notes on everything you do or piece together your activity at the end of each day — estimating time spent on scheduled projects and meetings versus unforeseen activity.

*TIME* continued ►

MAKING LIFE WORK FOR YOU & YOUR EMPLOYEES

# Q & A

**Q:** *I have an employee who has been here 35 years. He is less than a year from retirement but already has one foot out the door. When he is late with things or forgets what I've asked him to do, he makes a joke about how he is "sliding toward retirement and getting used to doing nothing ..." I understand he will be retiring but I can't do his work for him for the next nine months. Any suggestions on how to handle?*

**A:** By picking up the slack and trying to do your employee's job, you might jeopardize your own job performance and leave you feeling resentful. LifeWorks suggests the following:

- 1. Document your employee's performance problems.** By having everything written down you can show that there is a pattern of performance issues.
- 2. Address the problem with your supervisor and your human resource department.** If they are made aware of the situation, backed up with your documentation, they will have legal grounds to address the issue.
- 3. Have a direct meeting with your employee.** Let him know about his diminished job performance—that you know he will be retiring soon, but that the company still expects him to do his work. Document the meeting and what was discussed.

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PIP continued ...

## Achieving a Successful PIP

**1) Begin with a genuine conversation** with your employee letting them know that you're concerned about their long-term success and asking for their own perception of their performance. Find out if they're committed to success; this conversation will help you determine whether you're committed to their success as well. Your ability to be honest and genuine in this first conversation will set the stage for whether the employee immediately reacts with defensiveness or is open to suggestion and guidance.

**2) Provide specific examples** of how your employee's performance has been sub-par and what your expectations are. The more concrete examples you can provide, the more likely your employee will be able to piece together the big picture of what you're looking for and be able to understand what their behavior should look like in future scenarios.

**3) Make the outcomes measurable.** Your employees need to know that when they excel, they can point to specific numbers achieved and goals met.

**4) Provide a time frame** so that your employee knows when you will come together again to evaluate how things are going. It's important for them to know that there will be follow-up on the stated objectives.

**5) Structure ongoing communication about the PIP.** Let the employee know that going forward you will meet once a week for a half hour (for example) to discuss how things are going and that they can ask you for specific feedback. It is their job to make maximum use of the time you're offering them and your job to give them specific feedback about how you believe things are going and how they can continue to improve. If you haven't been paying attention to their performance since creation of the PIP and can't give them salient feedback, you're the one sabotaging the potential success of this process.

Some workplace consultants say that you should also let the employee know specifically what the consequences will be if they do not improve. Most employees know that if they are given a PIP, termination is a real possibility. Focus on creating a vision for success.

TIME continued ...

## Scheduling Time Accurately

Managers may have an inaccurate perception of what they can accomplish in a given time period. Today's increased pace and the number of interruptions that management brings render the old process for estimating time outdated. Set realistic goals and allow time for emergencies.

## Delegate

The job of a manager isn't to "do," but to assure that the work gets done. A well-managed team can accomplish more than a single individual. There are times when it's easier to do things yourself than to delegate, but time invested in developing your employees will pay off in the long run.

## Block Time

Block periods of time that you are unavailable so that you can work on your projects. Also block time for responding to email and phone calls. Don't assume that you have to respond to your phone and email immediately.

With a little effort you can learn to manage your own time as well as you do your employees!