

What is

Performance Management?

INFORMATION SHEET FOR MANAGERS

Performance management and development is a set of every-day practices that are used to foster the best possible performance from individuals, work-groups and an organisation as a whole. It also supports ongoing development to help individuals realise their potential and make the most of their unique strengths.

In the South Australian Public Sector, these practices are supported by formal systems, procedures and processes designed to align and synchronise the performance management and development across your agency. This is fundamental to ensuring that the public sector and its agencies meet community expectations and deliver services effectively and efficiently. At its most effective, performance management and development provides the foundation for a culture of productivity, growth and excellence.

At the heart of good performance management and development are high quality conversations between individual employees and line managers. These conversations take place all the time, and depending on the situation, have a different emphasis:

Collegiate conversations -

where employees and managers get to know one another as individuals, and understand more about one another's life outside of work, personal goals, career interests, and strengths or talents they have. These establish the basis for good working relationships and adapting your approach to different individuals.

Planning conversations -

where an employee and their manager discuss and agree goals and expectations that are connected to the employee's individual job. These can also include discussion about the employee's development at work and their broader career goals.

Feedback conversations -

where an employee and their manager discuss progress towards achieving those goals. This can include recognition and appreciation for positive contributions, and constructive feedback that helps enhance performance further.

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Coaching conversations -

where a manager provides support and direction to help focus an employee's efforts on the activities which will add the most value in progressing towards goals that have been agreed.

Review conversations -

where an employee and manager formally review performance and judge achievement in relation to the goals and standards agreed. This is the basis for providing clear and balanced feedback so that all employees know how their performance is tracking and how to keep improving.

Key Benefits for Managers



When Managers get into the habit of having these conversations, we know that it:

- Helps you perform better in your role as a Manager because you will be able to bring out the best performance from the people you manage and achieve more as a team.
- Makes your life easier by having better quality conversations about performance which prevent things going off track much earlier in the piece.
- Enables you to step back and look at how you can utilise the different strengths of individuals in your team so you make the most of these assets
- Means you tend to spend less time managing conflict and issues, allowing you to think more about constructive improvements.
- Fosters a more positive and less stressful work environment by building good working relationships. This helps people feel more comfortable discussing issues openly and work through them in partnership.
- Releases time for your other tasks and responsibilities as a Manager, by becoming more confident to delegate work to others.

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Key Benefits for Employees

When Managers get the right momentum behind these conversations, we also know that it results in Employees:

- Being clear about what success looks like and expectations at work - both “what” they are accountable for and need to deliver, and “how” they need to conduct themselves to model the right behaviour.
- Understanding what the priorities are what they need to do in order to contribute to the “bigger picture” – that is, they feel more aligned to where the organisation is heading.
- Seeing that they have a valuable role to play, which helps them feel more energised and willing to go above and beyond.
- Recognising where they can continue to develop and identifying the appropriate support and development that will enable this.

All of this culminates into more effective delivery of performance goals for the organisation, valuable public service, and a culture of productivity, growth and excellence.

There may still be times when for various reasons, performance goes off track. For specific issues around under-performance, there are other conversations and processes which become important.

Please follow the link to these here.

Key ingredients for Performance Management and Development

For Managers, the practice of performance management and development is a core responsibility of your role. As an employee, you have a responsibility to participate in your agency performance management and development processes and relevant training requirements.

As a Manager, you have a key role to promote, align and support the ongoing performance of employees within your team in alignment with the system within your agency.

This translates into some specific requirements for Managers to:

- Establish a performance agreement (plan) for your direct reports and for all new employees within the first 90 days of joining the agency, and
- Facilitate and document performance management and development reviews for all employees at least biannually
- Ensure that the outcomes of the agency performance management and development process you undertake with your employees is reported through to the area of your agency responsible for human resource management.

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In order to meet these requirements, Managers need to be holding the regular, meaningful performance conversations throughout the year to lay the groundwork for good practice.

There are some specific inputs that you will need reference in order to anchor these conversations to the context of an employee's specific job, your agency and the broader South Australian Public Sector:

1. The key responsibilities that cover the scope of the employee's role
2. The broader strategic and corporate objectives, operational plans and specific priorities that flow into your team
3. The SA Public Sector Values and Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector.

There are a range of information sheets and supporting materials which have been designed to assist you in building your knowledge, skills and understanding of performance management and development. You can view these here.

Underpinning Principles

To demonstrate the South Australian Public Sector's commitment to developing and supporting our people and promoting a culture of productivity, growth and excellence, our approach to performance management and development is based on the following principles:

> Role Clarity & Alignment

Our role is to serve the community and Government of South Australia. To be effective, employees need to be clear about expectations and have a clear line-of-sight between their work and the operational and/or strategic priorities of their agency and government. A clear understanding of roles and expectations supports greater productivity, motivating employees to maintain and improve their performance.

> Partnerships

Respectful and genuine partnerships between line managers and employees are central to the success or failure of performance management and development. Regular two-way conversations provide the opportunity to build rapport, agree on accountabilities, focus work outputs, provide timely feedback, to work together to create solutions, and address barriers to achieving performance goals. By building the relationship, we can succeed together and deliver.

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> Coaching for Success

Coaching is important to empower, develop, assist and motivate employees to achieve. Adopting a coaching approach in performance conversations provides the opportunity to bring out the best in employees by sharing expertise and perspectives, developing self-awareness, developing necessary capabilities, building on strengths, prioritising wellbeing, and recognising achievements.

> Growth Focus

To attain and maintain high performance, agencies should understand, manage and optimise employee potential through the development of knowledge, mindset, skills and competencies that align with agency priorities and future needs. Our commitment to the learning and development of our people creates a mutual benefit: supporting career resilience and the realisation of employee potential, while ensuring sustainable public sector performance through an engaged and skilled workforce.

> Agility

We operate in an environment that is complex, rapidly changing, and collaborative. To anticipate and be responsive to changing environments, performance management and development should involve frequent conversations and feedback, be flexible to shifting priorities, emphasise timely development, and be designed for a collaborative environment. Performance management and development processes should be flexible and open to review.

(Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment – Performance Management and Development, November 2016).

Practical actions that you can work on to build good practice in performance management and development:

Top 10 key practices for Managers

1. Make time for performance conversations and activities
2. Actively involve and support each team member to achieve their goals
3. Help each team member set clear, measurable goals
4. Show appreciation frequently and build rapport continuously
5. Provide regular and timely coaching in the moment
6. Monitor performance regularly throughout the year
7. Plan ahead for each performance management and development conversation
8. Adapt your approach to suit your purpose and each team member's style and motivations
9. Adapt your communication style to each individual's needs
10. Follow up by planning and implementing a range of next steps as appropriate.