Performance   Appraisal

IMPLEMENTATION

Appraisal Training   -   raising of awareness
information
consultation

Formulation of Appraisal Document

Appraisal Training

Appraisal Training II - prior to implementation

- Statements to be written and agreed - Start of appraisal process

Implementation

- Formal review

Performance Appraisal

WHAT IT HAS TO OFFER

Properly designed appraisal has many benefits for the organisation also. These include:

- a logical link between the corporate plan and the day-to-day activities of people employed
- improved knowledge and skill at all levels
- clearer corporate goals and easier planning
- effective cascade of plans and information
- fewer "territorial" disputes
- quicker feedback and more usable data
- greater flexibility, responsiveness and commitment
- real information generated about training needs
- strengths which can be capitalised on are identified
- problem areas are identified
- planned development for key staff

WHAT IT HAS TO OFFER

To be effective an appraisal system has to be geared toward the organisation, its work, its culture, and the skills of the people employed.

Properly designed and operated appraisal has positive advantages for:

- the individual concerned
- the manager
- the organisation

For the individual the benefits of appraisal can include:

- clear definitions of standard
- feedback on performance and achievement
- reassurance that they are valued
- 'structured[1] communication with manager
- overview of how they 'fit[1] within their organisation at present and in the future
- clarification of expectations (own/managers)
- training can be matched to identified strengths of shortfall areas
- development can be planned

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TRAINING FOR APPRAISAL

MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Without real, publicised, management commitment, no appraisal system has a chance. Training to bring about management commitment to appraisal would involve:

- providing an overview of the system

  identifying benefits

- defining roles and their requirements

  developing the relationship of appraisal to overall strategy and plans

  indicating penalties or problems likely to result from lack of commitment

  defining the relationship of appraisal to development and career counselling

  showing how a series of individuals objectives could contribute to overall objectives

  developing positive attitudes

  defining any overlap with performance-related pay

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TRAINING FOR APPRAISAL

OBJECTIVE SETTING

This is a crucial area for training.   Issues to be covered in the training include:

- making objectives realistic and achievable, but stretching

- setting and agreeing standards

- quality of objectives to be set

- monitoring achievement of objectives

- recognising issues could cause changes in direction or in the overall work plan

- using objectives to develop the individual

- quality versus quantity

- defining the factors by which success can be gauged

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TRAINING FOR APPRAISAL

SKILLS

A wide range of skills is needed if appraisal is to operate efficiently. These include:

appraising or reviewing performance

'negotiating[1] in the broadest sense

problem solving and counselling

monitoring performances and progress towards objectives

recording views and summaries effectively

setting and agreeing objectives general

communication interviewing and meeting

skills

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TRAINING FOR APPRAISAL

THE SYSTEM ITSELF

Training needs under this heading include:

- the philosophy
- the process
- using the form(s) effectively
- benefits and their requirements
- roles and their requirements
- attitudes (changing and creating)

Both managers and job holders have training needs in this area. Both need to be encouraged to see appraisal as a joint process requiring positive contributions from both parties. In some cases senior managers will need training before anyone else in the organisation

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TRAINING FOR APPRAISAL

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Four main areas are core to any appraisal training strategy:

- the system itself

- skills

- objective setting

- management commitment

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE APPRAISAL

Insofar as is it is possible to generalise, effective appraisal systems tend to share certain characteristics. They:

- satisfy the intellectual and practical demands of those involved

- present key or core concepts and principles which can be adapted in operation to suit differing parts of the organisation and management skills

- are competence and results based, and holistic in style and approach

- encourage openness, frequent review and joint participation

- attempt to understand goal congruence

- emphasise "resources" rather than "costs"

- as far as possible, help managers to be better managers

- involve some element of self appraisal, particularly for senior and "specialist" jobs or for autonomous "knowledge workers

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CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE APPRAISAL
cont ....

ensure that objectives set extend beyond the purely quantitative and budgetary

contribute to and derive from overall organisation planning

help achieve a total quality approach by the organisation

keep performance review separate from reviews of promotability/potential

keep appraisal separate from performance-related pay and merit awards

emphasise the forward planning aspect as strongly as the retrospective review of performance/achievements

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KEY PRINCIPLES

Performance appraisal should highlight results

Objectives and plans set for each individual should:

- derive from and contribute to the overall plans
  of the department, section or unit

- be designed in cascade fashion, e.g. top down

- offer development opportunities to the individual

  extend beyond the purely financial/budgetary Rating
  scales should be based on the approach of
  competent/non-competent, e.g. 3-point scale

  1. Highly competent
  2. Competent
  3. Less than competent

All staff to be offered an annual discussion and interim
review discussions

Where appropriate, self or peer appraisal to be used to
add to the total information available on an individual's
performance

Every individual to be routinely (but separately) reviewed
for potential and promotability

Every individual to be made fully aware of how their
performance and promotability is viewed (openness)

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Performance appraisal involves:

an extended consideration of past work, set against the job description and the goals for the period under review

a review and detailed revision of the job description

a detailed consideration of forthcoming activities and goals for the future

identifying training needs arising from any part of the process: past performance, present tasks or future goals

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It is obvious that, to be effective, performance appraisal takes time. The workload of those involved will be one of the factors dictating the frequency of the performance appraisal and the time which can be allocated to it. Whatever the workload, performance appraisal should be given sufficient priority to ensure that it takes place, and that it is positive and supportive.

Two questions remain unanswered. What is the yardstick? and, What is the role of the trainer?

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OBJECTIVES

The setting of objectives is potentially one of the most contentious aspects of appraisal.

WHAT ARE OBJECTIVES

Objectives can be statements about what is to be achieved in the job or about the personal development of the job holder.

The core objectives therefore should be concerned with the main aims of the job regardless of who is actually doing the job,

Whenever possible, objectives should be:

specific clear realistic

controllable important

achievable

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WHAT IT HAS TO OFFER

Benefits for the manager include all those accruing for the individual employee but in addiition can include:

- assistance in planning and in implementing change

- maximising talents and skills of the whole team

- greater motivation of workforce

- real knowledge of subordinates' capabilities and performance

- ensuring objectives of team add together to assist in reaching overall goal

- a framework within which to agree tactics and plans with professional or largely autonomous staff

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WHAT TO AVOID

It is considered that designers of appraisal should avoid all systems which:

- rely exclusively on a form and once yearly interview
- leave too much room for subjective views of performance
- are too formulaic (eg rigid scales, etc.)
- are overly mechanistic
- appear too demanding in terms of 'extra' time and input
- appear only to support pay scales and 'merit' awards
- link appraisal or review of performance too closely to considerations of 'promotability' or future potential
- present differing (and diverse) approaches for different staff

Systems which gain acceptance are generally those where the requirements placed on individuals and managers can be seen to be relevant, achievable and result in positive 'pay offs[1] or benefits

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DESIGNING AN APPRAISAL SYSTEM

In designing an appraisal system much thought needs to be given to such factors as:

- expectations of and requirements from the new system
- communication and working relationships
- roles and responsibilities within the system
- objectives and competences (effective performance)
- standards of performance
- staff and management information
- generating useful information
- ensuring effective service delivery
- ensuring quality in all aspects
- tying in with existing systems of management, development and training
- designing one system which will operate effectively for all types and grades of staff
- the resources available/to be made available to introduce and implement the new system

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