2017

DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

Contents

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1. INTRODUCTION - DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE – A CORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGERS

Welcome to this workshop on *Developing Individual Performance,* one of the workshops in the Cluster *Developing Team Performance*. Along with the pre- and post-work, this workshop focuses on one of the most important responsibilities of managers in the Institutions. With the increasing focus on the need for the Institutions to deliver 'value for money' for EU citizens (cf. the concept of 'Public Value'[1]), individual and team performance matter more than ever.

Why is this workshop in the *Developing Team Performance* Cluster? The *Team Dynamics* workshop looks at the team as a whole, while this workshop looks at the individuals in the team and their behaviours, strengths and challenges, and explores how to address their different needs and demands. A manager needs to ensure that each member of their team or 'unit' is provided with the environment and the resources to perform at their best.

Managers need to ensure that the right staff member is in the right place in the organisation, with the right performance profile. Managers must apply organisational systems and instruments to support performance management and development (i.e. appraisal) while keeping a high level of staff motivation and engagement. So they need to be comfortable and effective in managing the **chain of performance processes**:

> 1. setting and agreeing relevant performance standards,
>
> 2. gathering appropriate and reliable performance data,
>
> 3. making appropriate decisions for managing individual performance, and
>
> 4. supporting and facilitating development.

They should keep in mind that they manage individuals **in a collective setting**, hence need to take decisions and initiatives which are beneficial for both the group and the individual.

Managers need to:

- provide clear and tangible definitions of each team member's expected contributions and how they should be achieved. They need to monitor achievements consistently, and to make any necessary adjustments;
- respond constructively to resource constraints and optimise the performance of their people;
- develop the reputation of their team or unit, attracting highly qualified and committed staff to join, stay and engage.
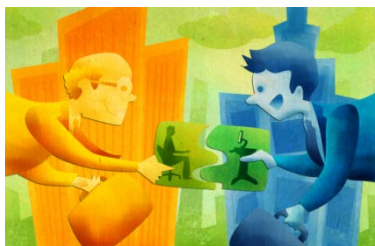
> In Section 2 below we look at performance: what is it and how can we influence it.

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[1] To read more on Public Value follow the links below.

- *Mark Moore interview: What is Public Value* @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igYD8xo4LKE
- *A Value Creating Public Service,* Government of South Australia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9e1gUgsa2p4)

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2.   PERFORMANCE AND HOW CAN YOU INFLUENCE IT?

What is performance?

An athlete, an actor, a musician, a police officer – all these perform their work in the public eye. But we also say of anyone with a job that they "perform" that job. In fact, every member of the European Institutions is a performer, and is expected to perform their best. What does that mean, and how can performance in a job be assessed?

Many definitions of 'performance' include being **effective** at what one does – this is the **'what'**. However, to be able to assess, change and improve performance, we need to go beyond **what** is achieved (outputs and outcomes) at look also at the **'how'**. This means the conditions for and cost of achieving expected outputs, i.e. the **efficiency**.

Applying this to you and your team members, performance can be defined as **the combination of the outputs of staff's activities PLUS the conditions for generating the outputs**. Conditions include:

- <u>Relevance</u> – operations may generate expected outputs in optimal conditions, but if the value created is minimal or could have been achieved by better courses of action then performance is low;
- <u>Coherence</u> – operations may generate expected outputs in optimal conditions, but if outputs clash with other efforts leading to a contradictory or opposing result then performance is low.

In human resource performance appraisal practice, **performance** is often identified as a combination of

- <u>Achievements</u> (related to context and circumstances),
- <u>Abilities</u> (knowledge and skills acquired through education and experience) and
- <u>Conduct</u> (behaviours displayed during interactions).
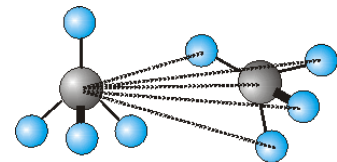
Where does performance come from?

Managers must understand what affects different levels of **performance,** i.e. **what leads staff members to deliver 'excellent', 'good' or 'poor' performance**. Developing performance requires **a manager to invest time and energy** and to be **cost-effective** in their actions. Which source of performance may have the greatest impact on team members? Which ones should a manager prioritise?

Managers can tap into **internal AND external sources -** those coming from staff themselves and those originating in their environment (management is one of the components of that environment). Understanding the importance of these sources should help ensure that staff **are willing to, know how to** and **can** give their best performance.

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The figures below provide some examples:

Performance results from the combination of:
- Leadership
- Organisational Culture
- Working Environment
- Motivation
- Training

Adapted from US Office of Personnel Management

High Performance is a function of =
- how motivated people are
- How experienced people are
- How easy the access to resources is
- how large the organisation is
- How generous the remuneration is
- How conducive the work environment is
- How strong the employee interest is

Adapted from Muzalifah & Izah, 2011, International Journal of Business & Behavioural Science, vol 1, nbr 1)

Factors affecting performance. It's the interplay that counts…
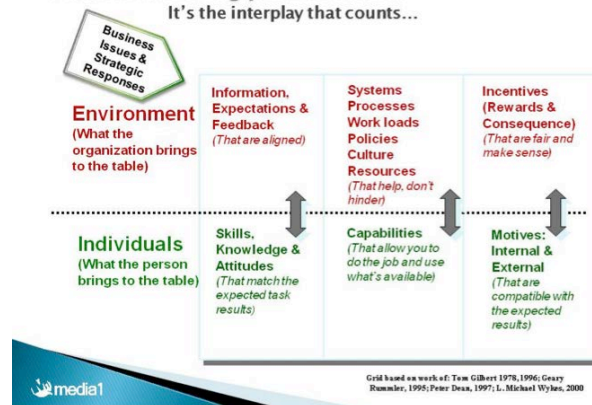
Each manager should define the particular combination of factors they think most likely to contribute to each staff member's high performance. Most commonly, the factors conducive to high performance will include:

External sources	Internal sources
✓ A strong sense of what needs to be achieved and why	✓ Personal interests & motives closely and willingly associated with the tasks at-hand
✓ A clear vision of what expected performance should look like, both in terms of goals and of achievements	✓ Confidence that own competency set is fully appropriate to achieve expected outputs
✓ An optimal resource management so as to ensure efforts are commensurate enough with the expected achievements in the long-run, are not in vain and are not hindered by energy/time-consuming set-ups and systems	✓ Physical, physiological and mental capacity
	✓ Determination to engage in optimal interactions and collaborations within the workplace
✓ Diverse tangible/intangible modes of recognition perceived as fair	

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Clearly performance and motivation are strongly linked. Managers need to pay attention to the following:

a. High diversity in the workplace increases that chance that a team member be (de)motivated by factors very different from those of their manager, such as generational aspirations, values and attitudes;

b. Managers should pay at least as much attention to **not demotivating** staff as to motivating them. Even unintentional lack of consideration can reduce motivation. A good manager will motivate despite imposed constraints, i.e. a flawed appraisal system should not stop a manager passing on positive feedback to their team. Even if processes are imperfect, a good manager makes sure that staff are clear on their roles in the process, and how to behave cooperatively to deliver value.

In close and regular contact with their people and concerned for their well-being, a good manager **tries to influence** how they:

- share directions, goals, objectives and challenges in a clear and inspiring way, possibly compensating for the organisation's shortcomings;
- are given and take ownership for their goals and objectives and resulting performance standards, and that they take responsibility for their expected achievements;
- make appropriate resources available in a way that is feasible **and** invites staff to consider their further development needs;
- organise structures, systems, processes, instruments and tools in a way that avoids extra burdens or obstacles;
- help create a favourable working environment encouraging high **sustained commitment**.

To complement your background on Motivation you can check:

Motivating people: getting beyond money, Martin Dewhurst, Matthew Guthridge, and Elizabeth Mohr, McKinsey Quarterly, 2009 @ http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/motivating-people- getting-beyond-money

Effectiveness Defined, S R Covey, 2015 @ https://ucieserve.wordpress.com/the-seven-habits/effectiveness-defined/

3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

Managers are increasingly expected to take responsibility for managing and developing performance, supported by HR in an internal client/provider relation.

Managers need to become more skilled at **spotting and taking full advantage of opportunities** for developing individual performance, at individual and team/unit level. They need to execute a people development strategy with its corresponding stages, processes and variety of instruments. Opportunities for development may occur during annual work programmes, i.e at yearly or half-yearly objectives setting, or more frequently during monthly or weekly team meetings, or less often such as at a career review.

This figure highlights occasions where a manager can develop an individual's performance, **making sure that every initiative can tie in with others**, **reinforce the impact of previous ones** or **pave the way for future ones**.

While the horizontal axis in the figure broadly corresponds to 1 year or so (except for the exceptional Recruitment and On-boarding phases), the vertical axis considers longer-term initiatives, with Feedback being the regular and beneficial day-to-day tool.
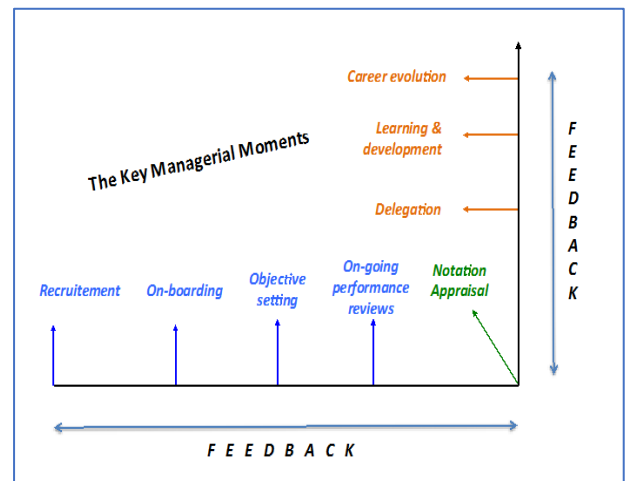
The opportunities shown comprise:

- Recruitment, because the process, especially the interview, aims to match a candidate's proven or alleged performance history and the requested performance profile;
- On-boarding, as the first occasion where management and staff can explore in more detail missions, tasks and expected performance;
- Objective setting, either individually or as a group, where Effectiveness and Efficiency measurements can be agreed in relation to specific achievements;
- Performance reviews, where performance in the job is central;
- Regular appraisal exercises, these both look back on previous performance and set the expected performance for future periods;
- Delegations, where temporary or permanent assignments have an important impact on key sources of performance while providing opportunities to develop skills and gain more awareness of the work environment, etc. (cf. below, Focus on Delegation);
- Learning and Development, the best channels for focused performance improvement;
- Career Development, where performance history can help in setting development goals for the longer term career;
- Feedback, that when managed properly can be the most immediate way of assessing performance and development needs or benefits.

Exploiting such opportunities is one of the formal responsibilities of a manager, and needs to feature naturally in the manager's priorities and schedule.

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4. DEFINING & AGREEING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Purpose and benefits

Managers need to be able to assess how close actual performance is to expected performance. They need benchmarks against which to measure performance and identify any gaps, i.e. performance standards. Performance standards are **the tangible description of the contribution everyone is expected to bring to the organisation** both in terms of **what should be achieved** and of **how achievement should come about**. They can animate a **job description** by making clear how performance is perceived and should be improved. Here is an example of actual performance standards:

- Normal
    - "Normal" performance at a high level is expected of staff in the Institutions
- Above-norm
    - Goes substantially beyond the expectations of the staff member in his or her role
    - An above-norm assessment should be justified clearly with reference to specific accomplishments
- Below-norm
    - Areas for improvement and development are specified
    - These should be clearly and constructively stated and specific examples given
    - These should be reflected in the objective-setting form and training plans for the next reference period.

Performance standards provide additional benefits, such as a sense of direction and purpose which can motivate and inspire, and suggesting where to focus on improving skills or behaviour.

The basis for defining performance standards

Expecting staff to perform at any given level needs to be supported by a clear and strong rationale. Indeed, staff may question why they should do certain things, or in a certain way:

Why is such quality required when processing a given file? Why should that report be circulated within X weeks? Why does every team member need to display full solidarity with their colleagues? Why should a staff member need to significantly improve their presentation skills?

Three elements can help make performance standards relevant and motivating for the jobholder:

- The unit's objectives, relating to broader Directorate/Directorate General's objectives. Each staff member's performance needs to be seen to contribute to the higher-level objectives and goals, i.e. as part of an annual or multi-annual programme, shorter-term projects or on-going activities. *A unit is to make policy support activities a more important part of its remit (rather than just processing administrative files), so staff performance needs to reach a higher level.*
- Changes in external work context or conditions may impact the performance standards required of a person or team. *An important new project is coming up soon, or clients' requirements become more stringent, or the political agenda changes, etc.*
- Changes in team composition may call for a different performance profile from current team members. *Two members of a team, experts in a specific area, will retire shortly, or one post is cut but not the outputs required, or two teams are merging into a new unit: in these examples staff will need to adapt their own work and how they collaborate with new colleagues. What does that involve in terms of deliverables, the skills required or behaviours to display*?

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Setting the standards

To set the appropriate standards for a team, the manager needs to explore with them

a) where the team/Unit should be and by when, and what will it achieve once it is there, and

b) what will the external and internal environments look like.

He or she will then be better able to define the needs of the team to get there, and the performance standards required for each role.

The steps to follow are:

1. Undertake a visioning exercise with the staff.
2. Identify critical areas of performance, i.e. considering tangible achievements and deliverables, or from the point of view of how staff are delivering.
3. Explore with staff what good and high or excellent performance looks like for their work. Recognise low or poor performance but focus on excellence rather than shortcomings.
4. Agree examples of good or high performance and phrase them in a simple and practical way using measurable indicators.
5. Repeat the exercise whenever necessary to maintain alignment between evolving contexts and objectives and corresponding performance standards.

Below are examples of 'good' performance indicators or standards.

Processing beneficiaries' complaints

- Systematically records incoming complaints applying appropriate questions and paraphrasing to ensure full understanding
- Gives immediate answer if possible within own zone of control
- Redirects complaint as appropriate with a commitment to a deadline for initial feedback
- Circulates value-added info about the complaint

Dealing with unexpected change

- Makes a point of exploring the case for the change ahead in the broadest possible perspective
- Is willing and able to explore and share the challenges incurred (for self, the team or the unit) as well as the opportunities created
- Proactively reflects upon possible needs for adjustment to current courses of action

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5. OBSERVING AND ASSESSING PERFORMANCE

Mechanisms and resulting risks

Due to the way our brain assimilates information, our perception can provide only **a partial and biased set of information**. Research on the topic of conscious and unconscious bias confirms that there is no such thing as full objectivity, particularly when observing people's performance. Some of our decisions may be determined by an "auto-pilot" default setting in our brains, i.e. we interpret information based on prior experience and deep-seated personal thought patterns, prejudices and assumptions. .

This has a major impact on how we perceive others and assess performance. *Matthew, a Head of Unit, is proud of having graduated from a renowned university and has successfully managed files and cases as a desk officer then as a manager. In certain situations, he may consider more highly colleagues with the same background and their way of working, and look less favourably on alternative approaches.*

The risk of not being totally accurate or fair in our decisions and judgements, even unconsciously, is high. This may also prevent us appreciating the rich contribution of diversity in the workplace.

Ensuring accuracy and reliability

To avoid such biases, a manager must **take full ownership of the mechanisms at play** and of **the possible consequences**. He/she needs proactively to identify any biases that may affect decisions, especially about people. The following link (http://mentalfloss.com/article/68705/20-cognitive-biases-affect-your-decisions) summarises 20 major biases and their effects.

What can a manager do to develop self-awareness in this area and the risk of faulty decisions?

- Refrain from reflecting on specific situations or making related decisions alone. Actively **seek feedback** about one's own possibly limited awareness or unconscious biases. Allow time to involve others if preparing recruitment interview panels, ensure a broad and diverse range of inputs when assessing staff performance: *what is the perception of the Project Manager who has been managing a colleague for four months*? Explain to a colleague how you are considering dealing with a specific case, positively challenging your cognitive biases and enriching the range of viewpoints to be taken into account. Sharing with others a decision or reflections on a case can lessen the risk of bias.
- Learn to discriminate between assumptions and 'given facts'. There's nothing wrong in making assumptions, but make sure you have checked them before feeding them into the decision-making process
- Explore the possible consequences of an attitude or decision. By focusing on the impact, a manager can briefly step away from the decision itself, disarming the biasing mechanisms
- Regularly review decisions about your people. Examine consequences beyond yourself and the individual concerned, and take into consideration others affected by the decision such as the rest of the team, internal or external clients or suppliers.
- Slow down and reflect on your thinking processes related linked to assessing and deciding. Delaying an immediate fight-back response to an infuriating and unfair email may be the better strategy. Managers need to be able deliberately to postpone a response, thus enabling System 2 thinking (cf. D Kahnemann) to complement System 1. Consciously climbing up or down the Ladder of Inference can give a manager time for self-reflection and challenge

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For further information on biases, you can view the following material:

- *Unconscious Bias and Ingrained Beliefs* @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eAwWMFZYbo
- *Addressing unconscious bias* @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFW2cfzevio

For additional information on System 1 & 2 thinking:

- Watch the video *Brain Tricks - This Is How Your Brain Works* @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiTz2i4VHFw

For an illustration of the mechanism and further information you can read and view:

- *Groupthink and the Ladder of Inference: Increasing Effective Decision Making.* Dr . Teri C. Tompkins, The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning, V 84 ol. 8, Num. 2, December 2012 @ www.hraljournal.com/Page/11%20Tompkins%20Rhodes-2.pdf
- *Rethinking thinking, Trevor Maber, @ https://www.google.fr/?gws_rd=ssl#q=trevor+mabeer+ladder+of+influence+video+*

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6. MANAGING PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Many managers associate performance management with improving 'low' or 'poor' performance. However, managing 'good' and 'excellent' performance helps keep up good performance and also ensures people's continuing commitment. In fact, no matter what the performance level, a manager needs to be proactive in **consistently and regularly communicating and sharing their key messages and initiatives as indicated below.**

Managing 'high' or 'excellent' performance

What are the related challenges?

- Show clear and immediate signs of recognition for outstanding performance, while
- capitalising on the assets it provides for both the individual concerned and the team, and
- creating the conditions for the person concerned to want to maintain the same level.

Where should the focus be?

Managers should ...	Managers should NOT ...
Take every opportunity to highlight the excellent achievement: ✓ Bilaterally with the relevant staff member, with an emphasis on the benefits that have been generated ✓ To their hierarchy, to increase visibility of that member of staff ✓ To the rest of the team as appropriate to promote learning from the achievement Check: ✓ Whether the colleague is expecting 'return' for the high performance, and ✓ What the organisation may provide as reward or incentive Decide if any reward is appropriate; explore opportunities to build on achievements through new/greater responsibilities, a shift in priority missions, transferring know-how and expertise, mentoring or coaching colleagues	o Allow for the achievement to go unnoticed o Exaggerate the magnitude of the achievement and impact, making the praise sound phoney or insincere o Compare one member's high performance with others' lower performance o Take advantage of 'high' performance to increase the staff member's workload, or compensate for other colleagues' shortcomings or lower performance

Managing 'good' performance

What are the related challenges?

- Show clear and immediate signs of recognition,
- Review the positive aspects of performance to encourage taking things a step further,
- Create the conditions for the staff concerned to want to improve their performance.

Where should the focus be?

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Managers should ...	Managers should NOT ...
▪ Take any opportunity to highlight the satisfactory achievement bilaterally with the staff concerned, with an emphasis on the benefits generated ▪ Highlight possible challenges of sustaining that performance level – and offer help to overcome them ▪ Invite the staff member to suggest ways of taking performance one step further (areas, expected benefits, timeframe and possible action plans)	o Allow for good performance to go unnoticed o Compare one member's good performance with that of others o Put sole responsibility to improve performance on a staff member's shoulders without providing appropriate support if applicable

Managing 'low' performance

Managing low performance to create positive change requires a high level of staff self-awareness of what is happening and the consequences (cf. the next section about Feedback). It also means creating the conditions for the staff member to understand clearly the changes needed in terms of the achievements themselves and of the way of securing them.
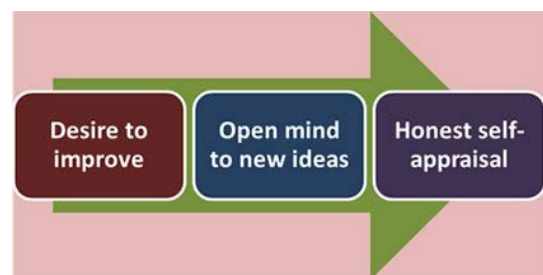
There can be many reasons for under performance. 'Low' performance is often due to a failure to ensure that staff understand and own the performance standards reference-point. Or perhaps performance standards themselves were not adapted to shifting priorities, objectives or elements of the environment. Staff may show 'low' performance if not involved in defining the performance standards. Good practice # 1 should be for managers to **ensure sufficient active ownership and understanding of up-to-date performance standards**.

Other favourable initiatives by managers include:

- **Exposing the state of facts in a clear and constructive** (cf. assertive) **way**, not avoiding possibly unpleasant confrontation. Managers should not ignore the potentially de-motivating effect on other colleagues, who may resent low performance and its consequences on them and the team.
- **Tackling 'low' performance in a very focused and tangible way** – which specific aspects of the staff's performance are below expectations? When and how does that manifest itself? What are the real consequences and whom do they affect?
- Finding the **appropriate balance between exploring motives** in a respectful yet resolute way **and** appearing lenient and happy to accept **excuses.**
- **Actively involving staff in suggesting appropriate remedial actions**, with associated timeline and commitments – the colleague concerned rather than the manager should record the agreed action plan, which the manager should validate and possibly amend. Managers should help staff develop one small step at a time, focusing on easily observable changes and duly recognising any progress.
- **Showing explicit determination to use any instrument and system provided by the organisation** to tackle such circumstances as appropriate (cf. commensurate response).

- **Combining the genuine willingness to help and support** with clear messages that **providing more resources cannot be the only solution.**
- **Review the history of managing that staff member's performance**: could any trend have been discerned and tackled earlier? How were early warnings followed-up? Were other options or initiatives sufficiently explored which may have provided better opportunities to improve performance?

The set of practices set out in *Managing underperformance,* a guide from the Fair Work Australian Government Ombudsman, 2010 @ https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/best-practice-guides/managing-underperformance can provide additional inspiration in that area.

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7. THE USE OF FEEDBACK FOR PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

Feedback – why and what for?

Feedback is one of the core mechanisms that help build people's self-awareness. It is also a key way to highlight gaps or discrepancies in performance at work.

Managers need to use feedback carefully - any signal their staff are receiving or giving has an emotional impact on them and on others. The absence of feedback as well as properly or improperly delivered feedback can harm people in building their sense of identity, of security and of likeability[2]. Recognition means getting signals from others, whatever their nature: getting signals testifies to my existence and importance in the eyes of others.

Feedback – what and how?

There are five prerequisites for a manager to use feedback effectively:

1. **Have a strategy for giving feedback**. What does that involve in practice?

- Relating feedback to a specific practical purpose. Whenever a manager decides to share feedback with a staff member, he or she should have a clear goal in mind. What should be the outcome, whom does it impact, what is the added-value? A manager should avoid initiating a feedback conversation with such vague and unspecific words as: *'I'd like to **chat with you** about my concerns with your participation in last week's meeting'* or *'We need to **talk about** the late handover of file X.'*
- Delivering feedback at the right time. Too soon may exaggerate a particular event and lead to tackling a situation which may never occur again, while too late may diminish the subject's association between action and consequences, and require more effort to correct.
- Balancing giving and seeking feedback, and a strong ability to receive feedback themselves, is needed for a manager to secure acceptance when giving feedback. A manager who is quick in giving feedback (particularly if it bears on 'low' performance) but very slow on seeking feedback for themselves, is likely to aggravate staff and increase their resistance.

2. **Create favourable conditions**. This obviously involves the setting in which the conversation will take place – secure, with no external interference or disturbance and in the most comfortable environment, with seating that is conducive to as much 'partnering' as possible and in a way which respects the cultural preferences of each party[3].

3. **Be authentic and constructive**. To prevent defensiveness and denial, avoid conveying a negative or threatening attitude. Be genuinely constructive, and support your positive language with 'congruent' non-verbal clues.

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[2] See Eric Berne (among others, cf. The Strokes)

[3] See The Social Distance as described by E.T. Hall for instance, or Trompenaars' Specific vs Diffuse' paradigm and Hofstede's Index of Hierarchical Distance)

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4. **Be concrete and specific**. Base feedback on the combination of:

- tangible circumstances jointly experienced by the two parties at the same time, and
- a clear consideration of the consequences on any possible stakeholder.

5. **Tie feedback to future actions with a clear and explicit commitment**. This should help close the circle from the initial intention of sharing feedback to the achievement of improved performance. It can lead to adopting a 'Feed forward' approach, emphasising building a different future rather than reflecting only on events from the past.

To better understand how Strokes can support effective feedback and how managers can build them appropriately into their management practice, you can watch

- The *Transactional Analysis - Strokes* Slideshare presentation @ http://fr.slideshare.net/manumjoy/strokes-24081607

To go further into how to manage feedback, you can check:

- *Find the coaching in criticism,* Harvard Business Review, Jan-Feb 2014 @
- *Delivering effective performance feedback: The strengths-based approach*, ResearchGate, 2011 @ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251550792_Delivering_effective_performance_feedback_The_strengths-based_approach

To go deeper into the powerful Feed Forward approach (in French), you can read *Feedback ou Feed Forward? Là est la vraie question!,* MétaSystème @ *http://www.metasysteme-coaching.fr/francais/feedback-ou-feed-forward-la-est-la-question/*

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8. A TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE ENTITY/UNIT/TEAM

Developing individual performance also needs a group perspective

A manager should consider an individual's development not in isolation, but rather as part of the team's management and development. Considering A rather than B for a new and exciting work opportunity may boost A's performance, but at the expense of B's; how might that alter the dynamics between the two colleagues, and the performance of the team as a whole?

Managers need to include the team's development prospects and challenges when considering developing the performance of any single member, asking questions such as:

- Who is good at what in the team?
- Who has got a strong/a lesser interest for ... in the team?
- Who may wish to move for various reasons?
- Whose workload is likely to change?
- Who seems willing to engage in supporting others when necessary?

'Scenario thinking' can be a useful tool. *Suppose X moves to another Unit in a few weeks, who could compensate for the absence, and how quickly could a replacement become fully proficient? What if more multi-tasking is required in the Directorate, or if clients' quality standards are raised - who might be willing and able to mentor 2 more junior colleagues?*

Spotting and nurturing 'potential'

Managing the talents of your team is essential for yours and their success in the long-term. Having a talent management strategy demonstrates your confidence in and commitment to them – you should optimise your current human capital before considering acquiring more, and invest time in finding potential among your team members. There are risks of course, of making a wrong judgement of an individual's abilities or motivation to advance, or even that you be overtaken by one of your protégés.

To increase their confidence in correctly assessing someone's potential future abilities, managers can ask themselves the following questions, where a positive answer indicates reasonable probability of future potential:

- Does B... keep referring to any (extra-)professional activities, missions or responsibilities when discussing a particular issue or when reflecting upon their current job?
- What has C... been mentioning lately in terms of what they might be able to do and how in a different/next job?
- When facing challenges, or looking for solutions, who has been coming up with relatively unconventional and fruitful suggestions?
- Who is asking questions which clearly sound 'out-of-the-box'?
- Which skills or experience areas feature in G...'s CV that they don't have a chance of using?

Chance observations, gut feeling or assumptions may trigger a manager to consider that a staff member has potential. Potential high-flyers are likely to show several of the following:

- The combination of a strong future orientation and drive for high achievement
- An acute interest for and awareness of their operating environment
- A strong sense of purpose (their own and at team/organisation levels)
- Ability to capture and process diverse and apparently unconnected data and inputs

- A constant desire and great abilities to learn and develop
- High willingness to change, or even seeking change
- Determination and commitment to lead and show the way.

To get a very varied complementary range of reflections on Talent management, you may want to check *Talent management in the public sector*, the Feb 2013 Issue 1 of APS Human Capital Matters, from the Australian Public Service Commission,

@ https://www.google.fr/?gws_rd=ssl#q=APS+Human+capital+matters+talent+management+in+the+public+sector

To take your reflection further on some of this section's issues, you can read the following papers. Although they predominantly target private sector companies and should not be considered as 'the ultimate truth' on the subjects at hand, some of the thinking and options they provide can be very fruitful for large public administration managers:

- *HR for Neophytes*, P Cappelli, HBR Oct 2013 issue @ https://hbr.org/2013/10/hr-for-neophytes
- *High Potentials vs. High Performers: A Manager's Guide to Identify, Assess and Develop*, K Lagunas, 2012 @ http://new-talent-times.softwareadvice.com/high-potentials-vs-high-performers-a-managers-guide-to-identify-assess-and-develop-1081012/

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9.   STRATEGIES & TOOLS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The challenges

Managers who have decided to develop staff performance need the right strategies and tools. The list below highlights some suggestions.

- **Performance development is more than learning.** As well as gaining new skills, experience and knowledge, development is about people themselves.
- There is **no one right way** to learn and develop, but the best way for an individual. This diversity results from individual preferences, education, culture, cognitive dispositions and abilities, etc.
- **Development is a process**, needing time and commitment. Performance development should be **managed as a high priority** against the pressing demands of the job.
- **Learning with and through others** contributes to the beneficial combination of challenge and support.
- People will commit to self-development if they, **their manager and their organisation attribute positive value** to it. "Learn as if you will live forever"
- **Effective development takes time and is cumulative**. Learning needs to be anchored, reinforced and put into daily practice.

What managers can tap into

A White Paper from the Centre for Creative Leadership about challenges in Leadership Development sums up the challenges for a manager: *'Too much time is spent delivering information and content and not enough on the hard work of developing the leaders themselves. Most leaders already know what they should be doing; what they lack is the personal development to do it.'*

More than increasing knowledge, understanding and practical skills, full development needs people to **act on and for the learning**. A common frame of reference in this field is **the 70:20:10 rule**.

This rule highlights that optimal learning and development results from an appropriate combination of various learning methods that:

- target knowledge and understanding, e.g. through attending thematic courses or training programmes. This 10 % of **formal learning** can be achieved in groups or independently.
- bring the benefit of interacting with others such as peer groups, communities of practice, feedback, mentoring or coaching (individual or team). This is the 20 % of **social learning**.
- confront people with the reality of action, provide durable channels to anchor inputs and give opportunities to learn by trial and error and from experiencing directly the impact of actions. This makes up 70 %, and is by far most important source of effective learning.

All three approaches contribute to learning and development, and should be used in combination.

As an example, agreeing that a staff member will attend a 2-day course on a particular topic or issue (formal learning) will be all the more beneficial as this individual can later discuss some of the learning with colleagues who may have differing practice or ways of applying (social learning), review the way they are applying the learning or devising the implementation strategy (experiential learning).

To go deeper into the possible lessons from Leadership Development, read

- *Vertical Leadership Development–Part 1 Developing Leaders for a Complex World*, N Petrie, a CCL White Paper, 2014 @ http://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/VerticalLeadersPart1.pdf

- To add to the inputs about the 70:20:10 model, you can refer to

How to Apply the 70:20:10 Model for Learning and Development from eLearning Industry @ https://elearningindustry.com/apply-70-20-10-model-learning-development

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10. DELEGATION, THE ULTIMATE TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Amongst all the performance development initiatives available to a manager, delegation to their staff can be the most profitable investment. And managers who give away responsibility can be the first to benefit. Delegating is **a unique opportunity for managers to focus on their own performance and development**: which responsibilities could/should a manager delegate? How should they spend the time they may gain? How can proper delegation help managers prioritise?

However, delegation does not mean dumping less interesting, less visible or less directly career-useful assignments on staff members' shoulders. A manager needs to delegate the right things, in the right way, and might want to challenge own beliefs or fears such as:

- *'I'm afraid that properly entrusting staff with one of my tasks will delay achievement, and the results will be less good, so maybe I should take care of it myself*!'
- *'What if my subordinate ends up doing a better job of that task*?'
- *'If I'm not doing it myself, it'll require so much monitoring and follow-up*!'
- *'I/we can't really afford to risk this assignment not being carried out properly'*.
- *'Does this staff really have the resources and capabilities for such a challenging assignment*?'

Against these risks, delegation offers a unique instrument for performance development, and can lead to the following benefits: -

- It provides **a focused opportunity to agree what later success will look like**, hence it is an opportunity for agreeing, validating, complementing, fine-tuning (existing) performance standards. 'Terms of reference' are of the essence here
- It may **contribute to increasing staff's zone and nature of responsibility**, hence possibly increasing theirs and your team's visibility beyond the team/unit/DG's boundaries
- It is **an opportunity for a practical and action-oriented managerial dialogue** over suggestions on the 'How' by staff and bridging possible gaps in approaches
- It can push staff to favour **optimising current skills, experience, expertise or relational qualities** and may be more profitable than searching for yet more external resources
- It **provides the material for the 70% part of the learning** (cf. previous section)
- It provides **hands-on practice of the process** of setting standards, observing and assessing performance
- It provides **an opportunity for managers to show consideration** for staff and **confidence in their ability** to raise their performance to a new level.

And finally, it puts developing individual performance back within the team through inviting managers to reflect upon who the best person should be for a delegation and upon how the resulting achievements or shortcomings can become a learning and development opportunity for all of the team members.

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