



The Threat of Performance Monitoring

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The very thought of performance monitoring conjures up images of draconian management by most employees. What if there was a job measurement system that actually benefited the employee? By extension, if the employee benefits, the job probably wins and in all likelihood your company would gain too. And, in fact, all three of these positives can be realized by any willing manager!

1. Two Baddies

Two performance-monitoring methods that don't work, in our opinion, are:

- Seat-of-the-Pants Approach
- Convoluted Approach

a. Seat-of-the-Pants Approach

There is not much good to say about being on the wrong end of an intuitive decision about a person's performance. This subjective assessment: "You ain't doin' your job. Get outta here!" probably represents the monitoring means for about 80% of businesses. Not very exciting for the employee.

b. Convoluted Approach

Large companies, in an attempt to be progressive, reach out to well-established performance consultants who carry in-depth analyses of the firm. The consultants' complex methodologies for performance measurement, developed by respected performance gurus, often result in a mass of details that are difficult to relate to by the average worker. Huge amounts of information leave both the manager and the employee confused: "The data is there but I don't know what to do with it," says the manager. "This makes no sense to me or my job", gripes the employee. Unfortunately, this top-down management approach has a predictably undesirable outcome. Every employee knows that – but 'management' remains in an ambivalent fog: "I'm unclear how to use it, but it must be good – I paid a lot for these experts." There is a maxim: A true expert can explain complex things in a very simple way.

2. We're Getting Warmer

More modern, and now quite successful, are performance measurement tests and charts such as those offered by Profiles International (who has 40,000 clients in 100 countries) and Predictive Index. These groups clearly understand the value of the bottom-up approach, what motivates employees, that objectivity is superior to subjectivity and the importance of matching the employee to the job. They understand that only 17% of employees are excited about their working situations; thus they seek to help their cor-

porate clients find the right people to grow that 17% to a higher level. However, often the focus of such testing is on serving management, rather than serving the employee.

3. The Smarter Approach

An enlightened approach to job measurement is based on the belief that employees within a company can be motivated to move into the excited-about-the-job category by applying the right measurements for each person. By asking questions of each employee of what they do, why they do it, what are the priorities, who they are trying to please and what in their minds constitutes success or failure at that task, a partnership can be developed between employee and manager. The employee, Harry in the training department, sets the bar and Harry keeps raising his bar because this newer form of working has Harry competing against the most formidable opponent possible – himself. He then assumes the role of owner of the job vs. tenant in the job. Often for the first time, Sarah, the accounts receivable coordinator knows the results that she is supposed to get – and she become liberated by it. And if her reward system ties directly into this, everyone wins. How?

For starters, Harry and Sarah become motivated, they want to do a good job, to exceed those goals they set for themselves, and more importantly want to stick around. Being able to retain your employees not only saves you the high cost of replacement testing and training, it also generates increased company performance results as these employees move into a higher productive bracket. A second feature of this approach is that it makes it startlingly evident to people who cannot perform in the company's, or that particular job's, environment, that they should move on. They leave on their own – no awkwardness, no severances, no hard feeling, no prolonged re-approvals. Again money is saved.

Isn't everyone a winner?

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