

**People Management –
BMSW5010
Rebecca Francis-Davies**

***Report: Enhancing Management
Skills for Performance Success at
TechInnovate***

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Executive Summary

This report evaluates the roles and skills required for managers, discusses relevant theories, and models, and explores activities underpinning effective people management. It also links good people management to company performance and provides SMART recommendations for TechInnovate.

Introduction

TechInnovate’s rapid growth has transformed it from a small startup into a medium-sized organisation. While this expansion is a testament to the company’s innovation and success, it has brought significant human resource challenges. Addressing these issues requires equipping managers with the skills to effectively manage performance.

The report has been compiled by Claire Thomas, utilising a range of resources, including books, websites, academic journals, and blogs, to provide comprehensive insights into the topic.

Equipping Managers to Manage Performance

Managers at TechInnovate must balance their technical expertise with people management responsibilities.

Key managerial roles include

Leadership: Managers inspire and guide their teams to achieve organisational goals, creating a sense of purpose and direction. Leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, can foster innovation and employee commitment by aligning individual and organisational goals (Corrie, 2019). On the other hand, transactional leadership focuses on clear task assignments and rewards, which can be effective for routine work but less so for innovation (Burns, 1978).

Coaching: Managers develop employees' skills through constructive feedback and support, fostering continuous learning and growth. According to Sutha (2019) coaching involves not just technical skill-building but also personal development, ensuring employees are well-rounded and prepared for future challenges.

Performance Management: As described by Gorbatov et al. (2020) managers are responsible for setting clear expectations, monitoring progress, and ensuring accountability to meet organisational objectives. Regular performance evaluations, supported by metrics and benchmarks, provide transparency and direction.

Conflict Resolution: Managers mediate and resolve workplace disputes to maintain productivity and harmony. This requires skills in negotiation, active listening, and emotional intelligence to address underlying issues and promote positive outcomes (Kraczla & Wziątek-Staśko, 2024).

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Advocacy: Managers play a pivotal role in fostering an inclusive workplace culture, ensuring equitable opportunities for all employees. This includes actively addressing unconscious bias and championing diversity initiatives (CIPD, no date).

Skills Required for Effective Management

Communication: Clear, empathetic, and transparent communication is essential for aligning team efforts with organisational goals. Managers must also be skilled in adapting their communication styles to suit different team members.

Emotional Intelligence (EI): Self-awareness, empathy, and social skills enable managers to build strong interpersonal relationships and address team dynamics effectively. For instance, managers with high EI can detect and address employee dissatisfaction before it escalates into turnover.

Feedback Delivery: Constructive feedback supports employee development and addresses performance gaps, ensuring continuous improvement. Feedback should be specific, actionable, and balanced to maintain employee morale.

Conflict Management: Skills in negotiation and problem-solving are critical for resolving disputes and maintaining a collaborative work environment. Successful conflict management often involves finding common ground and ensuring all parties feel heard.

Strategic Thinking: Managers must align team objectives with the broader company vision and anticipate potential challenges. Strategic thinking also includes identifying opportunities for innovation and improvement within the team.

Cultural Competence: Understanding diverse perspectives promotes inclusivity and innovation within teams. Managers should actively seek to understand cultural nuances and integrate them into team practices (Cook, 2009).

Theories and Models for Managerial Effectiveness

Transformational Leadership: Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees through vision and shared goals. This leadership style fosters innovation, engagement, and commitment qualities essential for TechInnovate's dynamic environment (Bruce & Mckee, 2020).

Emotional Intelligence Model: Goleman (2020) identifies five EI components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components are critical for managers to effectively lead and connect with diverse teams, enhancing workplace harmony and productivity. For example, empathy helps managers address individual employee concerns, while self-regulation ensures they respond to challenges calmly.

Goal-Setting Theory: Clear, specific, and challenging goals enhance performance (Locke et al., 2002). Managers should use SMART criteria ("Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound") to set and evaluate objectives. Setting stretch goals can also motivate employees to exceed expectations while ensuring the goals remain realistic.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: This theory differentiates between hygiene factors (e.g., pay, policies) and motivators (e.g., recognition, achievement) (Herzberg et al., 2011). Managers should focus on motivators to enhance job satisfaction and drive employee engagement. For instance, regular recognition of employee contributions can significantly boost morale (Parra, 2020).

Tuckman's Model of Team Development: Teams progress through forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning stages. Managers must adapt their leadership approach to each stage to maximise team effectiveness and cohesion. During the storming phase, conflict resolution skills are particularly important to address misunderstandings (Bonebright, 2010).

Situational Leadership Model (Hersey and Blanchard): This model emphasizes adapting leadership style based on the maturity and competence of team members, ensuring tailored support and direction. For example, a directive style may suit new employees, while a delegative style works better for experienced team members (CFI, no date).

Effective People Management

Performance Management (Arora et al.,2021):

Goal Setting: Managers should collaboratively set individual and team objectives aligned with organisational goals to ensure clarity and focus.

Regular Feedback: Structured performance reviews and real-time feedback keep employees engaged, accountable, and informed about their progress.

Performance Metrics: Establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provides measurable benchmarks for evaluating individual and team contributions. Managers should ensure these metrics are transparent and aligned with broader company objectives.

Employee Reward (Shields, 2007):

Competitive Compensation: Offering market-aligned salaries and benefits attracts and retains top talent in a competitive industry. Introducing stock options or profit-sharing plans can further enhance employee loyalty.

Recognition Programs: Highlighting achievements through awards or public acknowledgment fosters motivation and loyalty. Personalised recognition—tailored to individual preferences—can make these efforts more meaningful.

Career Development Opportunities: Providing clear pathways for growth and skill enhancement increases employee satisfaction and retention. Managers can facilitate this by identifying and supporting employees' long-term career goals.

Employee Engagement (Bridger, 2018):

Communication Channels: Open forums, and anonymous surveys ensure employees feel heard and valued, building trust and transparency. Feedback loops are essential to demonstrate that employee input leads to actionable changes.

Work-Life Balance: Flexible work options, such as remote work or adjustable hours, support employee well-being and productivity. Offering wellness programs, such as mental health support, further enhances engagement.

Team-Building Activities: Organising social events and collaborative projects strengthens bonds, creating a positive workplace environment. Virtual team-building options can be included for remote employees.

Onboarding and Training (Tsipursky, 2023):

Structured Onboarding: A comprehensive onboarding process introduces new hires to company culture, processes, and expectations, reducing turnover. Pairing new employees with experienced mentors can accelerate their integration.

Skill Development: Offering continuous learning opportunities, including workshops and certifications, enhances employee competencies and career progression. Managers should encourage employees to take ownership of their professional development.

Mentorship Programs: Pairing new employees with experienced mentors ensures guidance and integration into the company. This also builds a culture of knowledge sharing and support.

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms (Bhattacharyya, 2020):

Clear Policies: Establishing transparent conflict resolution procedures ensures issues are addressed promptly and fairly. Managers should be trained to recognise and address potential conflicts early.

Mediation Support: Training managers in mediation techniques promotes equitable resolutions and strengthens team dynamics. Providing third-party mediators for escalated cases can ensure impartiality.

People Management and Company Performance

Poor people management can result in low morale, high turnover, and inefficiencies, which undermine business performance (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). According to CIPD (no date) people management practices are directly linked to improved company performance in the following ways:

Increased Productivity: Skilled managers optimise team performance by effectively delegating tasks, addressing challenges, and providing clear direction. This minimises inefficiencies and enhances output. For example, teams with clear goals and regular feedback outperform those without structured management practices.

Higher Employee Retention: Effective onboarding, engagement, and rewards create a supportive work environment, reducing turnover and preserving institutional knowledge. Studies show that companies with strong employee engagement practices experience higher profitability.

Enhanced Innovation: A motivated workforce contributes creative solutions and embraces challenges, driving the company's competitive edge in artificial intelligence and machine learning solutions. Employees are more likely to innovate when they feel valued and supported.

Improved Client Satisfaction: High-performing teams deliver quality solutions, meeting or exceeding client expectations and strengthening relationships. Employee satisfaction often translates to better client service.

Sustainable Growth: Strong HR practices support scalability, enabling TechInnovate to grow without compromising its culture or operational efficiency. Clear processes and trained managers ensure consistency across the organisation.

Resilience to Market Challenges: Engaged and well-managed teams adapt more effectively to changing market demands, ensuring long-term success. This is particularly important in fast-evolving industries like AI and machine learning.

Recommendations for TechInnovate

To address the outlined challenges, TechInnovate should implement the following SMART recommendations:

Develop a Comprehensive Management Training Program:

Specific: Design a program covering communication, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and performance management.

Measurable: Train 100% of managers within the next 12 months.

Achievable: Leverage internal expertise and external trainers to deliver the program effectively.

Relevant: Addresses current skill gaps and aligns with company growth objectives.

Time-bound: Launch within 3 months and complete within a year.

Establish a Formal Performance Review Process:

Specific: Implement biannual reviews incorporating self-assessments and manager evaluations to provide structured feedback.

Measurable: Achieve a 90% completion rate for all employee reviews by the end of the first review cycle.

Achievable: Use performance management software to streamline the process and ensure consistency.

Relevant: Encourages accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Time-bound: Roll out the process within 6 months.

Enhance Onboarding and Training Programs:

Specific: Develop a structured onboarding curriculum that includes company culture, role-specific training, and mentorship opportunities.

Measurable: Reduce new hire turnover by 20% within a year of implementation.

Achievable: Collaborate with HR, senior technical staff, and current employees to design effective programs.

Relevant: Ensures new hires integrate seamlessly and perform effectively.

Time-bound: Launch the enhanced onboarding program within 3 months.

Implement Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:

Specific: Introduce mentorship programs, unconscious bias training, and targeted recruitment strategies to promote diversity.

Measurable: Increase representation of underrepresented groups in technical and leadership roles by 15% within 2 years.

Achievable: Partner with diversity-focused organisations and leverage internal champions.

Relevant: Enhances innovation, collaboration, and workplace equity.

Time-bound: Begin initiatives within 3 months and monitor progress biannually.

Foster a Collaborative Company Culture:

Specific: Organise quarterly team-building activities, establish cross-functional projects, and promote open communication channels.

Measurable: Achieve a 15% increase in employee satisfaction scores within a year, as measured by annual surveys.

Achievable: Allocate budget and resources for cultural initiatives and ensure leadership buy-in.

Relevant: Strengthens workplace bonds, employee satisfaction, and retention.

Time-bound: Initiate programs within 1 month and evaluate impact after 6 months.

Adopt Advanced HR Technology:

Specific: Implement an integrated HR platform to manage performance reviews, employee feedback, and training records.

Measurable: Achieve 95% adoption among managers and employees within the first 6 months.

Achievable: Select user-friendly tools and provide training for seamless implementation.

Relevant: Streamlines HR processes and supports data-driven decision-making.

Time-bound: Complete implementation within 9 months.

Conclusion

Equipping TechInnovate's managers with the necessary skills to manage performance is crucial for sustaining the company's growth and addressing its current HR challenges. By focusing on leadership development, emotional intelligence, and effective performance management practices, the company can enhance employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention. Integrating evidence-based management theories and structured processes will enable TechInnovate to build a resilient and inclusive culture that supports innovation and client satisfaction. Implementing the proposed SMART recommendations ensures measurable and actionable steps toward addressing the outlined issues, securing TechInnovate's position as a leader in artificial intelligence and machine learning. Through this comprehensive approach, TechInnovate will not only overcome its current challenges but also position itself for long-term success and sustainability.

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