

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Performance – Understanding the Link between Individual and Organisational Performance

Title: High Performance Working and Performance Management

Student Name: Rachel Thomas

Student Number: 1201576

CIPD Membership Number: 55478540

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Signed: RMThomas

Date: 14 September 2020

High Performance Working and Performance Management

Learning Outcomes

Understand the concept of high-performance working and how it can benefit individuals and the organisation

Understand the contribution of the performance management process to high levels of performance

Understand the role of line managers in the performance management process

What is Performance?

“How successful and investment, company, etc. is and how much profit it makes”

Cambridge English Dictionary (2020)

“An analysis of a company’s performance as compared to goals or objectives”

Business Dictionary (2020a)

“The work related activities expected of an employee and how well those activities are executed”

Business Dictionary (2020b)



Organisations spend a lot of time acquiring people with the necessary skills and experience that it requires through its effective recruitment. Once employed, the organisations attentions then shift in order to find ways of getting the best out of its people and manage their performance to ensure organisational outputs are met.

Cambridge English Dictionary (2020) simply defines performance as the measure of success of an organisation from its profits. Business Dictionary (2020a) suggests that performance can be compared to organisational goals and objectives. Additionally, Business Dictionary (2020b) implies that performance is related to the work activities carried out by employees and assessing how well these activities have been carried out.

What is High Performance Working?



“A general approach to management organisations that aims to stimulate more effective employee involvement and commitment in order to achieve high levels of performance”

UK Commission for Employment and Skills, cited by Buzzacott (2020)

Components of High Performance Working

- Increasing customer value by providing and differentiating products or services to meet customer needs
- Leadership from the top and throughout the organisation
- Devolved decision making
- Aligning support systems and culture to organisational objectives
- Trust and commitment-based relationships both within and outside the organisation

(Tamkin, 2004)

As explained by Taylor and Woodhams (2016), successful organisations not only try to encourage their employees, but seek to create and develop a ‘high performance working’ environment. Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) refer to this as ‘high commitment HRM’.

The former UK Commission for Employment and Skills defined high performance working as a series of processes, practices and policies which, in conjunction, can result in improved performance of employees (Gov.uk, 2013).

The CIPD has defined the component parts of high performance working as:

- Increasing customer value by providing and differentiating products or services to meet customer needs
- Leadership from the top and throughout the organisation
- Devolved decision making
- Aligning support systems and culture to organisational objectives
- Trust and commitment-based relationships both within and outside the organisation (Tamkin, 2004)

High Performance Working Systems

- Recruitment and Selection
- Investment in Training and Development
- Performance-based Pay
- Internal Promotion
- Team-based approaches
- Grievance systems
- Employee participation
- Information sharing
- Performance appraisal
- Flexible Working
- Job Security
- Work-life Balance
- Harmonisation of Terms and Conditions

Boselie et al (2005), Datta et al (2005), Marchington and Wilkinson (2012)

Bohlander and Snell (2010) explain that high performance work systems are becoming a pivotal source of competitive advantage, built on key business processes that are flexible and easily adapted to changing environments. Sahoo and Mishra (2012) recommend that such systems should not only provide evaluation and development opportunities but should also be used as a strategic tool delivering performance analysis on an organisational, process and individual basis.

Taylor and Woodhams (2016) note that there is no precise make-up of policies and processes, instead there is a broad consensus that it should promote employee commitment and involvement.

Analysis of HPWS includes around thirteen 'best practices' seen to attract, engage and retain employees. There are two reasons why these practices are believed to be associated to high levels of organisational performance: 1) it makes the organisation more appealing as people want to work for an employer seen to be managing its people effectively, and 2) once those employees are employed, the staff are more likely to be engaged in their work. Holbeche (2005) argues that HPWS make it more likely that employees are more open to adapt to change and promotes innovation and creativity.

HPW and Organisational Performance

Pfeffer (1994) – a mixture of 'best practices' was used in most of these organisations he studied

Combs et al (2006) meta-analysis:

- 4.6% increase in on return on assets
- 4.4% reduction in staff turnover

Huselid (1995): Proof that HR adds value

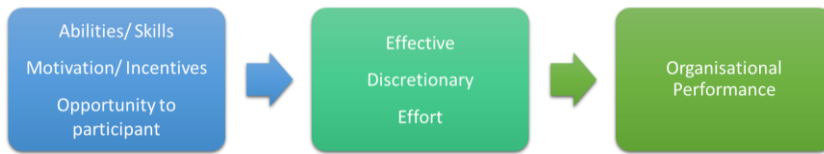
A 1 standard deviation increase in HR practice yields:

- A 7.05% decrease in staff turnover
- \$27,044 in increase sales per employee
- \$18,641 more in market value per employee
- \$3,814 more in profit per employee

Buzzacott (2020) suggests a potential 20-40% increase in productivity by organisations that adopt HPW practices. Even though research results would agree with Buzzacott whereby an increase is seen, not all are convinced by them.

Pfeffer (1994) analysed the ways HR practices are used in the most successful and fastest growing organisations, compared to those of their less successful competitors. He concluded that a mixture of 'best practices' was used in most of these organisations. Huselid (1995) went onto investigate the impact of HR to an organisation. Issuing detailed questionnaires relating to HR policy and practice to 968 firms that employed over 100 people, he was able to evaluate the results with measures of company performance outlined in the organisation's annual reports. Huselid's results showed that the more HR practices there was in an organisation, the lower its labour turnover, the higher its market value and the higher its profits. Combs et al's (2006) meta-analysis of 92 separate studies, concluded that 'high performance working practices' are associated with an increase in return on assets and a reduction in staff turnover.

The People-Performance Link



HR Policies and Procedures to Improve Performance



For years, efforts have been made to establish a correlation between management principles and organisational performance. Purcell *et. al* (2003) expands on the definition of performance given by Business Dictionary in his 'black box' studies, suggesting that performance is a function of people's ability, motivation and opportunity, known as the AMO model. Purcell outlined eleven HR policies and practices that impacted on improving performance. The findings of such studies imply that when an organisation has in place 'bundles' or 'high performing' HR policies and practices, there is a positive response from employees. This is also reflected when there is a sense of shared purpose, and increased communication with line management.

Outcomes of Research

The Black Box studies



Gallup Organisation

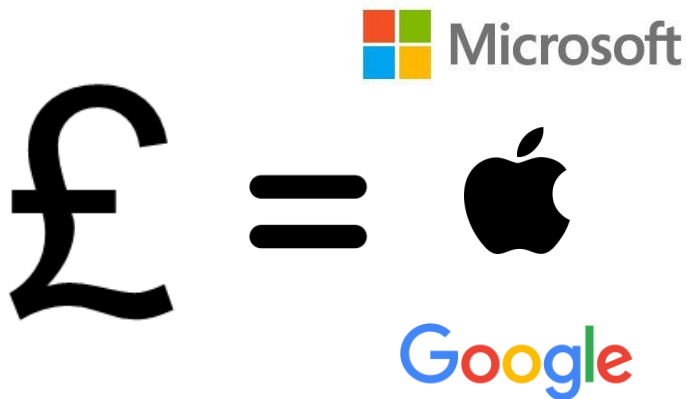
The work by the Gallup Organisation aimed to address levels of employee engagement through a 12-question instrument. Harter et al (2002) states how by 2002, 198,514 people in 7,939 businesses had responded to the 12-question statements indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or neither agree nor disagree to each statement.

The key findings suggest:

- Greater variation in the level of employee engagement between different business departments, compared to different organisations - due to the quality of the line management.
- Correlation between engagement scores and business performance
- Strong relationship between engagement and employee turnover

Both studies address the impact of HR policies and practices in helping to generate business performance by positively impacting on employees. The 'black box' studies use the term 'discretionary effort' to describe this, whereas the Gallup studies use 'employee engagement'. Both agree with Huselid's approach of 'best practice' bundles.

Criticisms of Research



Some remain unconvinced by outcomes of such research. Many have argued that it is difficult to quantify the impact in financial terms of the 'HR bundle' and therefore, how can this prove effective.

They suggest the likes of Google, Apple and Microsoft, use their superior performance leads to buy into and invest in a first-class approach to HRM and performance management, creating employee value propositions, becoming highly rewarding places to work.

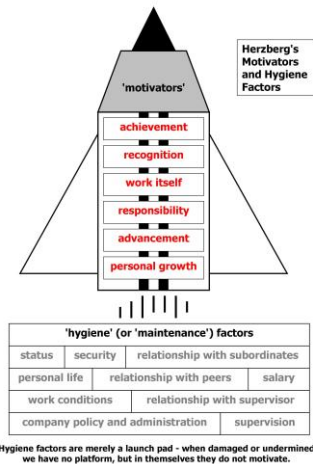
Another explanation for the correlation is, if an organisation is professionally and efficiently managed and can generate more income for investment, this in turn could impact on performance and its approach to employment practices. Personnel Today (2003) states the increased importance of staff commitment, not staff satisfaction in helping to maximise performance of organisations.

In order to silence the critics, Paauwe et al (2013) recommends measuring business performance before the introduction of HPWS, and then afterwards, to form a solid conclusion.

Employee Engagement

“The emotional attachment employees feel towards their place of work, job role, position within the company, colleagues and culture and the affect this attachment has on wellbeing and productivity”

HR Zone (2020)



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Studies carried out by Frederick Herzberg and Abraham Maslow looked at the causes of employee engagement, whereby organisations can address such needs within their management. Employee engagement is defined as the relationship an employee has with their work. The Good Work Index Survey carried out by CIPD in 2018, shows that around two-thirds of workers are satisfied in their job roles (CIPD, 2019).

Herzberg's studies identified two sets of factors affecting motivation and work: hygiene factors relating to the job environment, and motivators relating to the job content itself. He suggests that both need to be addressed not only to achieve good performance, but job satisfaction (Mullins, 2010).

Maslow suggested that there are five hierarchies, or levels of needs, that explain how people are motivated. The five needs are: psychological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualisation. According to Maslow, an individual's unsatisfied needs become a motivating factor (Management Study Guide, 2020b). He implies that each level of the hierarchy, needs to be addressed in order before an individual is fully satisfied and motivated.

Alternatively, Frederick Taylor believed that employees were motivated by money,

and not the needs addressed Maslow.

Performance Management

“A proactive partnership between employees and management that helps employees perform at their best”

Cardwell (2002)

“The continuous process of improving performance by setting individual and team goals which are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation”

Armstrong (2018)

Benefits of Performance Management

- Motivate staff
- Check that all staff are making valuable contributions towards organisational goals
- Develop staff
- Recognise and acknowledge the good work of employees
- Deliver tasks and projects quickly and to required standards
- Spot and improve poor performance

Organisational performance is the result of individual performance combined. Cardwell (2002) suggests that performance management is a result of a proactive partnership between employee and management that encourages employee participation. Armstrong (2018) addresses the process of improving performance by aligning personal goals to the strategic goals of the organisation. ACAS (2020) highlights the benefits of performance management to include: increased motivation, recognition of the work being carried out, and spot and improve poor performance.

Similarly, to the ‘esteem’ need highlighted by Maslow, Reddy (2019) examines the importance of recognition and reward in the performance management process on individual performance. Too often in an organisation, line managers do not praise good performance, instead criticise when performance falls below expectations. Positive feedback on good performance is proven to be a strong motivator, resulting in continued/increased levels of performance and acceptance of constructive criticism.

Performance Management Cycle



Plan	Agreeing objectives and identifying organisational requirements.
Act	Carrying out the work required to achieve objectives
Monitor	Checking on progress in achieving objectives
Review	Assessment of progress and achievements



Performance management takes the form of a continuous self-renewing cycle (Armstrong, 2009). As a natural process of management, the performance management cycle closely resembles the cycle for continuous improvement defined by William Deming's Plan-Do-Check-Act model. The performance management cycle outlines four stages: Plan, Act, Monitor and Review. Similarly, Kermally (2002) suggests a six-stage cycle of performance management.

The elements of performance management may be similar across different organisations, however there is not a 'one size fits all' approach (CIPD, 2019a). Strategic organisational goals should be the starting point for departmental goals, followed by an agreement on the requirements of the employee in terms of performance and development. Feedback between parties should be regular, supported by formal performance management systems. This can be referred to as 'appraisal', 'evaluation' or 'development'. Bloom et al (2012) reported organisations were on average 23% more productive when they had targets, incentives and monitoring in place.

Performance Management Tools

Appraisals

“Systematic evaluation of the performance of employees and to understand the abilities of a person for further growth and development”
Management Study Guide (2020a)



Drucker's SMART Objectives



Balanced Scorecard

360° Feedback



Performance appraisals is a formalised review of an individual's performance, highlighting areas for potential training and development. Appraisals should be carried out annually, allowing opportunities for two-way communication regarding performance, expectations and objectives for the coming year (Mullins, 2010). Appraisals often form a means of financial reward, and planned career progression in many organisations.

Peter Drucker's SMART approach explained by Mindtools (2019) enables realistic targets to be set and achieved. Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard approach was developed "to align activities to the vision and strategy of the business, improve internal and external communications, and monitor business performance against strategic goals" (Lind (2015), p.115).

Taylor and Woodhams (2016) suggest a series of objectives brought about by appraisals, to include: raised morale, clarifying expectations and duties, and reinforcing management control.

Organisations are often seen as 'managing their talent' as a result of these reviews, offering opportunities for development including lateral moves and horizontal

progression, whilst also focusing on retaining talent.

Alternatively, line managers may determine an individual's performance by their shown behaviours and emotions or based on results or outcomes.

The concept of 360° feedback involves feedback from different groups within the organisation including peers and subordinates. The variety of feedback allows for a wide-ranging perspective and can help to make the performance management process more objective and fair (CIPD, 2019b). On the other hand, this process can provide the opportunity for others to exercise personal vindictiveness.

Performance Management Tools



Baker's Five Conversations Framework

Embracing Technological Changes



It is argued that traditional performance management systems are now outdated. Arguments include whether they have an impact on individual performance, and secondly, that appraisals are a largely bureaucratic exercise and a tick in the box, where the information is not revisited once completed.

Baker (2013) addresses this, proposing a more flexible, informal, innovative and unpredictable approach. Baker's 'Five Conversations Framework' advocates five separate conversations each six months focusing on different aspects of performance at work, instead of the usual annual meeting. Baker believes discussion topics should be job satisfaction and commitment, training and development, improving efficiency and effectiveness, improving individual performance and longer-term career aspirations.

Buckingham and Goodall (2015) agree with Baker, proposing meetings to be held quarterly, and more frequent if and when necessary. They have developed a list of four criteria where, similarly to the Gallup studies, employees note whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or neither agree nor disagree to each statement:

1. Given what I know of this person's performance, and if it were my money, I would

award this person the highest possible compensation increases and bonus

2. Given what I know of this person's performance, I would always want him or her on my team
3. This person is at risk of low performance
4. This person is ready for promotion today

With the increase in use of new technologies, Schrage et al (2019) highlights the importance of embracing such technologies to adapt and introduce new types of performance management styles and tools into the workplace. Technology allows ease of access to documentation; therefore, it is less time consuming.

Abudi (2014) recommends the use of informal performance management methods. In many instances, suggesting that this allows for more honest comments and feedback.

Working with Line Managers



Line managers play a vital role in delegating and allocating work whilst ensuring that each employee is working to their full potential. As a line manager, daily communication with the employee helps to build a trusting relationship whereby concerns can be raised and addressed. In view of this, it is important that line managers work with the HR department to manage any arising people issues effectively and consistently. Research suggests that the line manager has the greatest impact on the motivation and performance of employees.

To achieve this, HR managers need to ensure that all required information such as key HR policies and procedures, are accessible and communicated to line managers, where in organisations like Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, activities are devolved to line managers. If basic HR information can be passed onto line managers, more HR time can be spent on other strategic activities.

Marchington et al (2016) also highlights the importance of employee induction in creating the right cultural expectations for all new recruits. Holbeche (2005) places emphasis on organisations building positive psychological contracts with employees in order to sustain a high-performance working culture, to include: treating people with respect, listening to their views, and providing plenty of opportunity for

development.

Employee Wellbeing



Employers are increasingly turning their focus towards wellbeing in the workplace as a key driver in improving company culture. Wellbeing includes the way people feel about their lives, including their job and relationships. Factors influencing wellbeing include: their character, their home and social lives (Griffiths, 2019).

Bryson, Forth and Stokes (2014) propose that the two factors identified by Herzberg, can be a measure of employee wellbeing. They suggest higher levels of well-being can bring about higher job performance by:

- Affecting employees' cognitive abilities and processes
- Affecting employees' attitudes to work
- Improving employees' physiology and general health

Boxall and Mackay (2014) agree, whereby their analysis suggests that higher levels of work intensity can increase fatigue and stress. Griffiths (2019) suggests that the wellbeing on one employee, can easily have a knock-on effect, affecting the performance of colleagues around them.

The CIPD (2020) implies that many organisations have Occupational Health services to assist in employee well-being, and in managing long-term absences, or have

processes in place signposting employees to services that may be of use.

To conclude, organisations wanting to optimise performance and achieve their objectives need to have a performance management system in place relevant to them, whilst having a recognised bundle of high performance work practices and employee centred styles of line management that seeks to encourage and bring out the best in their employees.

The relationships between employee and line-manager are pivotal in embedding a high-performance culture, and to building trust.

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