

Employee Performance Correction

Part One

By Cheri Baker, SPHR
Principal, Emergence Consulting

This three-part series will focus on how to talk to your employees about deficiencies in their work performance. This article starts by covering what performance deficiencies are and how to assess them.

A performance deficiency is when employee performance is not equal to the performance expectations you have set.

Performance deficiencies can include any and all of the following:

- 1) Work tasks are done incompletely, late, or not at all.
- 2) Work tasks are complete, but the manner in which they are completed present a problem. This includes behavioral problems.
- 3) Work tasks are complete but sloppy, there are errors.
- 4) Work tasks are complete but the employee does not report results back to the appropriate parties, so the right people do not know they are complete.
- 5) The quality of the work tasks are uneven, sometimes adequate and sometimes not.
- 6) The employee completes work tasks correctly, but only when reminded constantly, the employee cannot manage his/her own work.
- 7) Any combination of these.

The first step in a performance discussion is to get clear on the situation before you ever speak to the employee. The following questions are for you; ask them of yourself before you approaching the employee.

Pre-Discussion Questions (Manager Self-Check):

1. What is the problem? (be specific, include examples, measurements, and data)
2. What job expectation is this person not meeting?
3. How/When/Who/What/Where
 - 0 How does this employee know what the job expectation is?
 - 0 When was that job expectation last stated or reinforced?
 - 0 Who is responsible for setting that expectation with this employee?
 - 0 What is the business result of this expectation being missed?
 - 0 Where is the expectation being missed, and in what circumstances?
4. Have I spoken to this employee about this problem before? If so, list when the discussion took place, any witnesses, and any documentation from the discussion.
5. What are the organizational policies or procedures that relate to this expectation? What is our performance improvement or disciplinary action policy?

6. How have I handled other similar situations with other employees?
7. List any history of performance problems or disciplinary action for this employee that differ from the current problem, but that may constitute a pattern of poor performance. (if relevant)
8. Are other employees also making this mistake/error, or is it just this employee?

In our next section we'll discuss how to plan for the performance discussion with the employee.