

HIGH PERFORMANCE IN THE NEW NORMAL – A PERSPECTIVE PAPER

PROLOGUE

According to a quarterly survey conducted by Randstad Workmonitor, 47 per cent of respondents globally still have regular annual performance reviews despite as many as 88 per cent of them feeling that such performance reviews are a one-sided affair that is mainly used by the line manager to provide feedback.

The COVID-19 situation has only complicated matters.

Given that performance is measured and benchmarked only at the end of each year, most managers gravitate to other means to keep their team in check on a regular basis. This means visually checking in your employee's punctuality every morning and a headcount check on who is putting in extra hours at the end of the day.



Remote work at present may not allow managers to do this sort of monitoring. Although there are mention of companies where bosses mandate their employees to be logged onto Zoom the entire workday so that their movements can be monitored. Clearly a better and more adaptive performance review process is needed to keep employees accountable, drive their performance and maintain the sanity of traditional managers.



REAR VIEW MIRROR

The main grouse about performance review is its frequency, or rather the lack of it.

Lumping everything good and bad over an entire financial year in one or a limited number of Performance Dialogs or reviews makes it not only daunting but perhaps not reflective of the employee's entire gamut of contributions and value-add to the organisation for the entire year. This makes Performance Management a lag, post mortem like system rather than a live,

real time engagement process to produce results forward.

The lag effect compounds its impact – whatever that was formalised at the beginning of the year fails to adapt to what evolves over the next 12 months. New scope of work may have been added or even a re-designation would have happened. The often overly generic catch-all performance review form can barely accommodate these phenomena.

No wonder then, most employees who are subject to the Performance Management System feels that they are driving a car by looking at a rear-view mirror alone.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – A QUICK RECAP

Performance Management is a set of processes and systems aimed at developing an employee, so they perform their job to the best of their ability.

“Performance Management is the continuous process of improving performance by setting individual and team goals which are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation, planning performance to achieve the goals, reviewing and assessing progress, and developing the knowledge, skills and abilities of people.”

Performance Management isn't an easy field to navigate. It's constantly evolving. New Performance Management trends emerge every year and all too often, organisations get it wrong. Employees are left feeling deflated, unmotivated and unengaged and managers are frustrated at the poor levels of team and individual employee performance.



Thankfully, more and more companies are waking up to the importance (and resulting benefits) of effective Performance Management systems.

A key point here is that Performance Management is a continuous process — not a once-a-year activity. Quality Performance Management should, therefore, bring together a number of different, integrated activities to form an ongoing "Performance Management cycle", as shown below.

Performance Management is not aimed at improving all skills. In fact, good Performance Management focuses on improving the skills

that help an employee do their job better. This means that it is about the strategic alignment of one's work to the group and organizational goals.

Because Performance Management is a process that aims to align individual goals with group and organizational goals, it is a strategic and formal process. This means that key individual career decisions, like bonuses, promotions, and dismissals are all linked to this process

There are many ways to conduct Performance Management. When it comes to performance evaluation, there are two main approaches conceptually

Behavioural approach: Employees are evaluated based on their behaviours and efforts made. Behaviours are identified and evaluated. This approach is suitable for giving detailed feedback on behaviors and by mapping desirable future behaviors. This approach is suitable when individual results are hard to measure.

Result-oriented approach: In this approach, employees are evaluated based on objective criteria. The focus is not on input but output, both in terms of quality and quantity. This approach is suitable when there are multiple ways to do the job. The end-result is key, not how it has been done.

HIGH PERFORMANCE AND THE NEW NORMAL

In the New Normal, Organisations have newer difficulties in managing the same classic challenges while ensuring performance while a few new ones have emerged on the horizon

The classic challenges

- Alignment across the organisation
- Individual accountability and ownership
- Aligning competencies to emergent tasks & complexities
- Communication and Dialogues
- Measurement



These classic challenges have been compounded with New Normal challenges

- Remote working
- Increasing frequency of disruptive changes in the market place
- Slowdown in the economy
- Digital dependence
- Newer ways of working impacting performance
- New factors of performance stress and performance digressions

Legacy Performance Management systems are therefore likely to face challenges in helping organisations cope with the current reality and produce high performance

Organisations that use classic/legacy systems to manage their performance are highly likely to encounter the following challenges

Challenge 1: *Defining annual goals under the assumption that they will remain static*

Challenge 2: *Goal approval going beyond L1/Direct manager*

Challenge 3: *Not enabling people to collaboratively define measurable KPIs*

Challenge 4: *Global assignment of Goals and assignment without considering individual and role related complexities*

Challenge 5: *Defining goals just before the performance reviews*

Challenge 6: *Not empowering managers to give feedback on goals anytime, anywhere*

Challenge 7: *No established ritual to review goals every week/fortnightly/month*

Challenge 8: *Actual goal & KPI achievement data not reflecting in performance reviews*

Challenge 9: *Not defining skills, competencies, behavioural traits, and values for evaluation with respect to your organization's culture and need*



Our Industry 4.0 ready **Isochronous High Performance Management System – AlmanaQ** has been designed to be a creative conflation of wisdom drawn from Complex Adaptive Systems, Strategy, Behavioural Neuroscience and powered by Artificial Intelligence based Real Time Analytics to help organisations realise High Performance delivery with Agility

The NEXTGEN design principles, ESPL has deployed for the ALMANAQ IH-PMS are

➤ **THE EFFORTS PRINCIPLE**

Efforts precede results. Performance outcomes are an aggregation of planned and effective efforts that are made over a period of time – typically a financial year. The efforts that each employee invests everyday of the working week

➤ **EVERYDAY, EVERYONE, EVERY TIME PRINCIPLE**

Performance is not an episodic incident. It is to be reinforced, rewarded, reviewed and in focus consciously and unconsciously for everyone, every day, every time in the organisation. It is an always on process.

➤ **THE ACCOUNTABILITY, FOCUS, ALIGNMENT PRINCIPLE**

Results are likely only if each individual in the system is accountable for their own behaviours and competencies, focussed on the specific role based tasks and aligned to everyone else on the team. In short AFAR. Accountable, Focused and Aligned for Results

➤ **THE SOCIAL BRAIN NEUROSCIENCE PRINCIPLE**

Ours is a social brain. Timely appreciation and recognition within our groups and the social system of the organisation is paramount to our motivation. Also we perform best when are in the know of what is going on in our immediate teams and the organisation at large. Both formally and informally. Social exchanges and meaningful information interchange is critical for High performance



➤ **THE EARLY RESULTS INDICATOR PRINCIPLE**

Leaders, Managers and Individuals in teams need to have access to early indicators of results so that they can create and deploy interventions sufficiently ahead of time so that precious efforts are not wasted and efforts can be invested to reap maximum results in the finite time available



➤ **AGILITY PRINCIPLE**

Agility is required to ensure high performance. Leaders need to quickly observe trends based on data, respond to it and share feedback to individuals so that they can make necessary changes to their workways, skills and behaviours. Real time data and Agility go hand in hand to ensure that organisations succeed in achieving their goals everytime

➤ **EVIDENCE BASED PERFORMANCE DIALOGS PRINCIPLE**

Performance dialogs are very tricky conversations. While these dialogs have the power to transform, credibility is lost rapidly if the individual who initiates these conversations does not have ready evidence for the points they are making. It is imperative that ready, validated and relevant data is available and accessible at all times

AlmanaQ is a class defining High Performance Management system that combines the best of Behaviour based and Result based approaches, deploys Real Time data to support leader-manager-team member interactions and engages the social milieu in which performance occurs. The system is powered by AI technology and is designed using the latest developments in behavioural neuroscience. AlmanaQ is a true **Early Results Indicator System**.

