Session 4 - How To Tackle Poor Performance

A poor-performing employee can bring down the whole morale of your department.

Consistent errors, a bad attitude, disruptive behavior, laziness or just them not pulling their weight can dramatically impact the dynamics of your team and it will not only impact their performance but your own productivity will inevitably suffer as well.

First, consider the reasons for their poor performance.

Is the person lacking skills? Is it a motivation problem, or their attitude perhaps?

Either way, you need to get to the root cause of the problem, and quickly at that, and then put an action plan in place to facilitate the improvements with your member of staff.

So here are some factors relating to poor performance and some ways that you can deal with them:

Demotivation
Here, you need to tackle the problem quickly by assessing the reasons. Base the improvement plan on a schedule of achievement. You may not be able to change the person, but you can provide the conditions for the person to motivate themselves.

Do They Lack The Skills To Do Their Job Properly?
Determine exactly what skills they're lacking. Maybe some coaching, mentoring or training might help them? Maybe you need to observe them in the role and provide some feedback

Do They Procrastinate?
If so, break the job into more manageable tasks. The task might seem too big for them and hence they do nothing. Don't let them overestimate how long a task is going to take and provide hands-on help to get the tasks up and running.

Absenteeism
Emphasise the negative effects of being away from work – not only for their own workload but on their team members and any impacts it has on the levels of customer service you provide – both internal and external customers. You'll need to determine the real reasons behind the absenteeism and work on the roots of the problem.

Habitual Lateness
Determine the real reasons and don't accept excuses. Work on solutions rather than the problems. Try coaching before disciplining.

Do They Suffer With A Lot Of Personal Problems That Are Having An Impact On Their Performance?
If they do remember you need to focus on the performance elements and not on the problems if you can't help to solve them. Be empathetic and assess whether it is short or long-term. Consider giving sick-leave or re-assigning responsibilities. Get HR to seek professional help for the person if it gets out of hand or causes concern with clients and colleagues.

You know, performance problems can come from many sources, and if you allow them to fester they normally don't just go away on their own accord.

Dealing with the problem early on helps the person to see you're concerned about them personally, and will assist in developing a better attitude towards their contribution towards a successful resolution.