



# 7 WAYS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

A guide to optimizing talent for success



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# INTRODUCTION

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## *How to maximize employee performance*

### **ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES UNDERPERFORMING OR NOT GIVING YOU THE RESULTS YOU EXPECT?**

Management practices make all the difference.

Why do some managers have employees that consistently take intuitive and are high performing, while others have employees who struggle to meet objective and optimize performance?

Maximizing employee performance is vital to a company's success. It's important to incorporate talent management practices at all stages of the employee lifecycle, from talent selection to exit interviews. The importance of having an intentional plan to maximize talent cannot be understated.

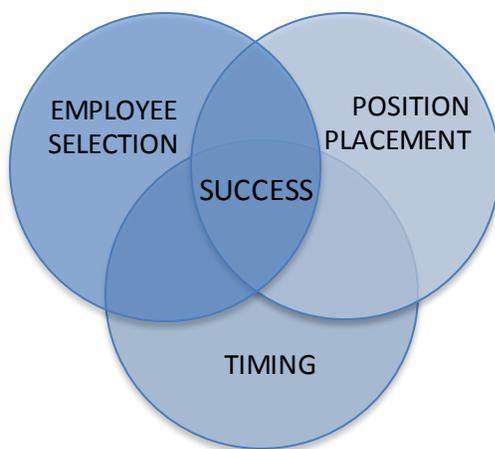
Based on discussions with hundreds of managers combined with powerful data analytics, SkillNet has created an actionable list of proven tactics and actions that drive and increase employee performance. This guide shares the first seven proven actions to optimize your team.



# CHAPTER 1: TALENT SELECTION

## *How to get the right employee into the right job*

The greatest mistake a manager can make is a bad hire or putting someone in the wrong job. Matching up detailed and very specific job requirements to candidate capabilities is an imperative step.



Success is achieved when you are able to align the optimal employee into the right job at the right time.

Effective managers have a detailed competency model for every critical or high turnover position. When selecting new hires, they use this to interview candidates and assess a future fit based on past performance thus validating that the candidate is a strong fit against the job specific criteria and responsibilities. For existing staff, they use success models to evaluate potential job changes, training needs, and job expansion options. Usually developed based on the abilities of high performers, success models include the skills, knowledge, competencies and behavioral elements that must be matched and considered.

Carefully defining success models and measuring the candidate or staff member at a detailed level is well worth the effort. Without this process, selection, job change or development decisions are subjective or assumptive.



When you consider your staff, is everyone in the right job?



## CHAPTER 2: TALENT PROFILE

### *Employees need more than just a job description*

A recent Gallup poll found that only half of employees worldwide strongly agree that they know what's expected of them at work because managers aren't communicating their expectations frequently or well enough to their staff members.

Managers need to set clear expectations and hold employees accountable for meeting them, but most of all they need to support and develop their employees.

A clear expectation, one easily understood by employees has five primary elements...

- 1 Clearly define tasks. (Complete and turn in the weekly sales report in the sales template.)
- 2 Set a firm, realistic due date. (by 12:30 PM Tuesday)
- 3 Create an exception protocol. (If workload is too much, send an email explaining why you can't meet the deadline, and send the report by 10 AM Monday.)
- 4 Define a clear standard of performance, some sort of quality indicator. (Ensure all numbers are accurate and totals are correct.)
- 5 Gather feedback to aid in frequent performance coaching.



Think about how you currently communicate expectations. Do you meet all five minimum criteria?



## CHAPTER 3:

# FREQUENT ONE-ON-ONE COACHING

### *A shift from the annual performance review*

The most common form of performance review is the annual review. While annual reviews are common, they are often more damaging than useful. Reviews need to be conducted more frequently, even quarterly is not frequent enough. By shifting to a monthly progress review high performing managers meet employees' performance needs, maximizing success.

Systems theory states that there are three criteria to manage anything

- 1 An expectation for performance
- 2 A method to monitor performance
- 3 A way to correct unwanted performance

Setting realistic expectations and then monitoring results is a critical part of the second phase. Reviewing progress and coaching staff with transparency is key for not only changing behaviors but inspiring the best in people. Additionally, giving timely feedback and constructive advice builds trust and shares best practices.

Exceptional managers have frequent informal one on one conversations with staff. These discussions or coaching sessions are aimed to help the employee get better at what they do and cover topics ranging from task specific guidance to overcoming obstacles. These conversations help employees become aware and thus more accountable to expectations and results. Additionally, managers are able to privately answer questions and provide ongoing support, feedback and communication so employees always know whether they're meeting expectations.



Are you currently spending the necessary time to provide ongoing, useful feedback to increase performance?



## CHAPTER 4:

# INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

### *A prescription for success*

Individual Development Plans or IDPs are dynamic documents that at minimum, contain three to five actions the employee will take to improve some aspect of performance. Usually focused on future performance or making good performance great, it conveys that the employee is important to the organization and the organization is willing to invest time and effort into the employee's development.

By offering employees an Individual Development Plan (IDP), employees are given an overview of their skills profile with steps to turn their weaknesses into strengths. The IDP contains links to internal and external training to help improve on the job knowledge. The improvement can be important incremental milestones for a newer employees in a role or minor tweaks that make your best performer even better. Remember that IDP's are unique for each employee and role.

An effective way to develop the IDP is this 4 stage process...

- 1 Measure gaps against the position's competency model
- 2 Agree on short term performance objectives
- 3 Determine how the selected objectives can be measured
- 4 Define the activities and resource to accomplish the plan



Are all your staff maintaining and using IDPs in an effective and efficient way?



## CHAPTER 5:

# PROVIDE RESOURCES & EXPERIENCES

### *Give employees the tools to succeed!*

Howard Gardner's groundbreaking research proved that people learn very differently. Some learn best by doing, some by talking, some by thinking. But, all employees need access to the right resources when they need them.

Learning resources are texts, videos, software, courses, and access to experts who can teach skills or share knowledge. This information can be in-person or hosted through a cloud based training system to employees everywhere.



It's critical to provide learning opportunities for staff to work on developmental tasks as well. Even the best courses and learning management systems can't get close to the effectiveness of experiential learning. GE was famous for pioneering job rotations to provide experiential learning which provided each employee with shared knowledge and perspective they otherwise would not have access to.

By combining a variety of learning methods, employees are given resources to succeed in a manner that best fits their learning style, increasing learning success.



Do your employee have access to the right resources to help grow and develop on the job?



## CHAPTER 6:

# PEOPLE ANALYTICS

### *Leverage data to gain valuable insights*

One of the most time consuming parts of the talent management process is data aggregation. If done manually, it can make the process almost impossible. It imperative to use technology to simplify the stage, turning raw data into tangible tools to use with employees.



Results monitoring involves both feedback and other types of results. We can monitor progress on skills, knowledge and behaviors by defining how each will be measured and trending results over time.

Self-assessments are a key baseline that are not meant to stand alone. They become more meaningful when complemented with 180 manager assessments. The 360 assessment provides even more insights by considering peer or subordinate reviews. Once all the data gathered is compiled it can provide managers with substantive perspective that can be invaluable in making tactical decisions on how to best deploy and manage their teams.

The key is to conduct frequent measurements and conversations that provide key information and guidance that allows employees to make adjustments and learn what works for them.



Are you able to monitor all the important results and process indicators to ensure staff are on the right path?



## CHAPTER 7: ENGAGEMENT

### *Recognize high performers frequently and visibly*

Twenty years of engagement research has shown the undeniable value of praise and recognition. Be extremely generous with praise and recognition. The “big idea” here is the frequency, quality and visibility of the praise. Many leading organizations use forms of gamification to recognize users for contributions and accomplishments.



Gamification is a platform to publically share praise while increasing employee motivation, creating healthy competition for enhanced performance. For example, using leader boards to highlight sales success or public “badges” for IT staff to display their credentials and certifications compared to their peers, is a wonderful way to drive engagement and create positive competition.

For example, Accenture has successfully developed and deployed a recognition system that rewards users with points that earns badges when they provide quality content into the firm’s knowledge repository. The badges are displayed on the user’s internal profile.



Do you celebrate successes frequently enough or in a way that makes positive competition fun?

# ABOUT SKILLNET

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SkillNet is a talent optimization software platform that aligns all phases of the Talent Lifecycle to drive performance, profits, and passion. SkillNet offers software and services to help firms collect and use data to improve how they hire, manage and develop their staff.

Having an end-to-end, cloud based people performance platform allows companies to optimize accountability and engagement and drive learning and behavior changes through all phases of the Talent Lifecycle.

SkillNet is reinventing best practices for talent optimization.

Please visit [www.skillnet.net](http://www.skillnet.net) for additional information.



Learn more at [www.skillnet.net](http://www.skillnet.net)

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# SkillNet

SkillNet provides powerful talent management tools to top companies. Learn how SkillNet can help maximize your talent today.

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