



PERFORMANCE OWNERSHIP

MANAGING FROM MEDIOCRITY TO HIGH PERFORMANCE



Business owners and managers are often faced with the challenge of wanting high performance from those who are happy with mediocrity. This becomes particularly apparent when position descriptions, complete with roles, responsibilities and the ever defining performance measures are handed in their entirety to the employee. More often than not, the employee will manage a compliant nod of agreement, return to their tasks and hope to God that the performance measures outlined were really an afterthought and that they won't be measured accordingly. Here is an example:

Role: Account management in the XYZ region

Responsibilities:

- Monthly onsite visits to all current A grade customers, bi monthly visits to B category customers and all others to receive a quarterly call
- Increase new accounts
- Increase number of products per customer

Performance Measures:

- Customer complaints to be less than 1%
- New accounts must increase by 10% p.a
- Budget must be met with GP maintained
- Number of products per customer to increase to 2.4

Management should have high expectations - no doubt. It is quite another for the account manager in this case to 'own' what is expected of him. When performance measures are handed down from the top without a mutually consultative process with the employee, there often exists a gap between management's expectations and the employees internal motivation to meet these.

A few things you can do if this *gap* currently exists:

- Work through the position description and your expectations with the employee emphasising the fact that they are an important part of the organisation and that their input is crucial to the ongoing success of that particular department (unless of course this isn't the case.)
- Ascertain what their key challenges are in meeting the standards
- Understand what drives them and tailor conversation accordingly
- Be prepared to lower the bar (in certain cases) and raise it in others
- Work on having the employee fully embrace the expectations. If it takes one meeting or six do it
- Performance manage them in the next 90 days with weekly meetings and relevant reports
- If they can't make the shift from mediocrity then maybe there is a better company or department for them to work in

The goal is 100% ownership from either side. Management sets the bar high; the employee fully embraces the expectations.

Ray Hodge speaks and consults to businesses and organisations, a notable event being the Department of the Australian Prime Minister and Cabinet. His emphasis is on improving critical efficiencies to dramatically increase key results. He has coached and provided consulting services to leaders and teams for over 25 years.