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Note di management n° 45

Escalate a Performance Problem with a Formal Plan

Fonte: TenStep, Inc. 2363 St. David's Square, Kennesaw, GA. 30152

One of the hardest jobs of a manager is to provide performance feedback to staff that are not meeting expectations. It is hard enough for most managers to provide performance feedback to begin with – even when the employee performance is good. When the employee performance is not where it needs to be, it is even harder.

The **first thing** you need to do when you see a performance problem is sit down with the employee, discuss the performance observations, try to determine a cause and put a short-term action plan in place so that the employee has a chance to turn the situation around.

Unfortunately, sometimes the initial performance feedback and short-term plan do not have the desired effect.

If this occurs, the manager needs to take additional actions.

In some companies, the **next step** might be a demotion or termination.

In larger companies, however, managers normally don't have the authority to demote or fire employees on their own. It is time to bring a **formal Human Resources process** into play.

Managers sometimes hesitate to take personnel-related actions because of their concern for how the rest of the team will react. However, a team knows its weak links. In many situations, the rest of the team ends up working harder to compensate for the person with the weak performance. In the worst case, teammates start to turn against the poor performer, causing resentment, animosity and friction among team members.

Sometimes a perceived performance problem hits the team member totally by surprise. However, in most cases, they already understand the situation. If they cannot meet expectations, it will become increasingly obvious to them. This situation will cause them more anxiety, which can drive performance down even lower. The situation should be resolved as soon as possible for the sake of the employee as well as the organization.

The next step is usually a **formal Performance Plan**. The Performance Plan is really a way to save the person from possible termination. A good Performance Plan puts everything into



black and white, and it should precisely set expectations. The performance plan should include the length of the plan, the expectations and how the progress will be communicated.

Once the performance plan is signed, it is activated. The employee should strive to meet the expectations of the performance plan. The manager must provide ongoing feedback on the employee's performance and whether the employee is meeting expectations. This entire process is set up to manage expectations. This ensures there are no surprises.

The Performance Plan ultimately ends up with a successful employee or a termination. Both the employee and the company should follow the Plan to see where it leads.

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