

... people management skills are valued; and make sure your values are more than a long list.

**DEVELOPING**

**People understand how to use the performance framework:**

- the leadership team is keen to get good performance information on the impact of its decisions to help it plan service delivery; it prioritises what it needs to know and encourages others to do the same;
- the performance management system has been developed from the strategy of the organisation and most objectives and targets flow from that – and staff can see this;
- the leadership team is developing its scrutiny function and is beginning to challenge the data;
- managers use performance information only as a part of the picture – along with feedback from customers and staff; some managers are beginning to analyse the data;
- staff do not really understand how the system operates – some people see it as duplicating efforts while others see it as complementing other management approaches; to some, it still feels 'foreign' and irrelevant; and
- the organisation is beginning to link financial planning and resource allocation into performance discussions, although it may still feel like two separate systems.

**CONSOLIDATING**

**The performance management system is just the way the management team runs the organisation:**

- the leadership team sees performance management as running the business – it uses the system and information to shape the corporate strategy and the improvements;
- the organisation has built its own framework or adapted another one so that it fits; staff understand the performance management framework and talk about it easily – they have worked out how they fit in;
- service managers recognise that they cannot use the same measure for everything – they may have to develop different measures for improvement; they use the national targets and also develop local ones;
- the organisation has streamlined the frequency and timeliness of performance indicators to the point where managers and staff can make in-year interventions and take remedial action if needed; managers understand how their departments are performing and can identify whether their decisions have had any effect;
- managers have a balanced view of performance across all dimensions of service and the organisation (eg, good information on financial performance, staff morale, user satisfaction etc); and
- financial planning and resource allocation are an integral part of discussions about performance – it is clear that there is one system.

**Helping people perform**

*'Some people don't perform.'*

**STARTING**

**The framework is creating work, not helping performance, for example:**

- the performance management framework has service level and corporate elements, which are recognised and applied in both business planning and monitoring performance;
- the visible face of the framework is the raft of performance data – but this does not command people's confidence; there are several hundred performance indicators, each with the same weighting;
- the performance management framework does not reflect the significant changes in the organisation; it may have been imported from outside with no attempt to tailor it to the organisation; it does not serve the executive and scrutiny functions effectively;
- the leadership does not understand or trust much of the information they get, it tends to rely on chats with service managers/outside, to check if everything is OK;
- service managers do use the performance management system to collect data and measure performance but there is little analysis of the information; managers do not seriously challenge the data;
- staff know about, but have little interest in the system – it feels more like a 'stick' than a 'carrot'; there is little attempt to develop good information from users and staff; and
- finance and resource allocation discussions are separate from discussions about performance.

**BREAKTHROUGH POINTS**

**Find your own framework:**

- understand what you want the framework to do;
- keep it simple;
- focus on its purpose rather than on the mechanics;
- ensure that it is visible, understood and purposeful;
- keep on with the hard thinking;
- go for flexibility;
- invest in the necessary training and communication – and keep doing so;
- measure what matters and keep checking that your measures link to your strategy;
- develop different measures for accountability and improvement if you need them;
- make sure finance and resource allocation are not a separate discussion from discussions about performance; and
- make sure your framework gives you a balanced view of what is happening across your organisation.

**CONSOLIDATING**

**People across the organisation are clear about what management expect of them, they feel that managers deal fairly and transparently with under-performance and clearly reward behaviour that helps the organisation:**

- managers and training programmes focus on how to get the most of the appraisal discussion rather than on the mechanics of the system;
- managers clearly outline what good performance looks like for each individual;
- there is evidence that managers are dealing with under-performance every level in the organisation – this is done by first checking the individual is in the right job and whether the organisation/manager is supporting them to perform;
- the organisation values good people management skills as more than technical skills – and puts money into ongoing training. People are promoted clearly behave in a way that will help the organisation achieve its goals;
- accountability and responsibility are clearly separated and delegated as far as possible down the organisation – managers feel they own and do things; and
- each individual has internalised the corporate values for himself – and can express them easily.

**Performance frameworks**

*'The system doesn't help.'*

**CONSOLIDATING**

**Everyone sees change – and managing it – as the norm:**

- the leadership team believes that changing the way people think and behave is the most important factor in improving performance – and this is clear from what they write, say and how they act;
- the leadership team spends time thinking hard about how it needs to change how it thinks and acts itself, as individuals and as a team, in order to make change happen; it sees this as more important than implementing a new structure or system; it seeks feedback from staff and outside support if necessary; it communicates discussions to staff to set an example;
- the leadership team develops good 'soft' performance indicators so that it can measure the success of the changes; it gives equal attention to 'soft' and 'hard' indicators;
- staff at different levels in the organisation are involved throughout the discussions about change and their views are fed back to those making the decisions;
- staff see that their managers are beginning to behave differently, which encourages them to do the same; the organisation sets up structures so that ongoing change comes from the organisation (eg, quality circles);
- the leadership team communicates with staff in various formal and informal ways, in plain language; and
- it is clear that middle managers and staff are the ones delivering the change – under the guidance of senior managers.

**DEVELOPING**

**Everyone understands that they need to do things differently to get improvement:**

- the leadership team is developing its thinking on how to address the 'soft' issues [people issues] to make sure change happens and this is clear in its plans – but it is less clear on how to do this;
- the technical changes still seem to be a priority for the leadership team – how people will do things differently is usually put at the end of the agenda, there is little open discussion and it is not worked through in detail; it is often delegated to the HR department;
- the leadership team spends some time thinking about how it needs to change (individually and as a team) to help the organisation improve – but discussions are not completely honest; there is little attempt to seek feedback from peers or staff;
- the leadership team consults staff about changing the organisation at the beginning of the process, but consultation tends to stop when there are difficult decisions to make, that involve winners and losers;
- there is a communication to staff – but it is often in 'management speak' and not tailored to different staff audiences; the benefits of changes and the consequences of not changing are unclear;
- the organisation encourages managers (and staff) to work out how they will change in their part of the organisation; and
- middle managers have specific delegated responsibilities for parts of the change plan – and they receive the support they need to deliver.

**STARTING**

**The organisation has a new direction but no one is talking about changing what they do:**

- the leadership team still has to think through all the change implications of their new strategy; there are no discussions about the behaviour and values that have to change to improve results;
- the leadership team focuses on achieving improvement through system/structure/process – it does not recognise that things change largely through people changing what and how they do things;
- the leadership team still has to consider how they need to change what it does and how it behaves (individually and as a team), in order to set an example;
- the leadership team focuses on improving the 'hard' performance indicators – and there are very few 'soft' performance indicators;
- staff are not involved in designing the change in any way and imposed from the top;
- most staff do not know what they are supposed to do differently; they are not sure how what they do now fits into the organisation's new direction; there is little communication about why the change is necessary or what the benefits are and what it means for the staff; and
- middle managers are not involved in deciding what change management do not receive the support they need, in order to do things differently.

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<p><b>Leadership</b> <i>'Leaders aren't interested.'</i></p>	<p><b>STARTING</b></p> <p><b>Leaders* do not show clearly through their words and actions that self improvement really matters:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the leadership team's statements about where it wants the organisation to go and how they want it to change, are confusing (eg, different strategies in different documents; inconsistent messages from individual members of the management team);</li> <li>the leadership team rarely talks about improving performance publicly; leadership meetings focus on discussing the current situation and may sometimes simply apportion blame;</li> <li>there is very little delegation of accountability for achieving results, from the leadership team to senior managers or the operational boards;</li> <li>people see that the leadership team makes all the important decisions, paying lip service to delegation;</li> <li>there is no structured leadership development programme for leaders and senior managers; and</li> <li>the leadership team does not take time to look at its performance.</li> </ul> <p><small>* Note: 'Leaders' includes politicians and top managers.</small></p>	<p><b>DEVELOPING</b></p> <p><b>Leaders start to give clear messages about performance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the leadership team sets out one clear direction and shares their objectives with all the staff; messages from individual members are generally consistent;</li> <li>the leadership team sees the written documents as only one part of communication with staff – they constantly reinforce the organisational direction when they talk to the staff;</li> <li>senior managers tend to take all the key decisions themselves rather than supporting/coaching those better placed to make the decisions;</li> <li>most managers have participated in some form of leadership development programme; there is a focus on meeting the needs of professional staff;</li> <li>the leadership team does reflect on its own performance, but at stage, discussions tend to be unstructured, sporadic and not completely honest.</li> </ul>
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**BREAKTHROUGH POINTS**  
**Show your staff that you think performance matters:**

- be clear about what you want for the organisation;
- state and re-state the focus and priorities – and not just on paper; what you do is much more important than what you say – make this the guiding principle for the management team;
- build leaders and champions at all levels – encourage them to delegate and coach, rather than control;
- make sure people see that your management team wants to improve its own performance; and
- delegate decision making to the right level.

**BREAKTHROUGH POINTS**  
**Help people to perform:**

- tell people mistakes are OK as long as they are put right;
- make sure people really know what good performance looks like; recognise how difficult it is to deal with poor performance – and support your managers;
- be clear about the differences between responsibility and accountability – and make people accountable;
- analyse why poor performance happens;
- be prepared to act;
- show that good people management skills are valued;
- make sure your values are more than words.

**STARTING**

**No one is very clear what performance means – and about whether and how the organisation really deals with under-performance:**

- the organisation does not have a fully developed objective setting and appraisal system for every employee;
- the leadership team appears to ignore poor performance at senior level – although it may hold other managers accountable for performance;
- service managers set some performance standards, operate the appraisal system and identify training needs;
- the organisation tends to identify 'problem' individuals and move them sideways, rather than looking at the wider environment or checking whether they are in the wrong job;
- managers feel that they will not be supported 'up the line' if they try to resolve under-performance issues;
- many managers have limited people management skills, especially in dealing with under-performance; they do not have an open attitude to people making and learning from mistakes and they rarely reward positive behaviour;
- there is little recognition of how difficult dealing with under-performance is for managers – and it is not given priority in discussions about training or support; and
- staff are not clear where accountability or responsibility lies – and it tends to stay at the top of the organisation.

**CONSOLIDATING**

**Everyone sees how necessary learning is for developing and improving:**

- the leadership team regularly takes time out to review what is working well; the team actively seeks external challenge/comparison; it gets feedback from staff and other stakeholders and shares the results across the organisation;
- the leadership team sees learning as part of understanding 'cause and effect'; it tracks the impact of management decisions; it is swift to stop any activities that do not deliver the required result;
- problems showing up in performance data are rarely a surprise, the issue is usually well on the way to resolution;
- managers see the organisation as a system and review services from a user perspective; they involve key stakeholders;
- the leadership team now expects teams/individuals to review projects at regular milestones, in well-facilitated sessions; appraisal/reward systems reflect the outcomes from this process;
- people are happy to share mistakes openly and make sure that the wider organisation learns from their experience; and
- teams regularly use facilitation and process mapping; they know that experimentation is critical to continuous improvement. Managers give innovative projects time to produce results.

**DEVELOPING**

**People are becoming clearer about what is expected of them – and more confident about addressing performance issues:**

- the organisation has properly developed appraisal systems and training provision for all staff;
- the leadership team has established corporate values and behaviours and is clear what this means for different levels in the organisation; departmental managers translate corporate values and behaviours into what it means for them;
- departments have goals and targets, many staff are clear what is expected of them – but not everyone;
- the leadership team is beginning to deal with under-performance at the senior level;
- service managers know how to assess performance and give constructive feedback to staff; they deal with under-performance; there are clear examples of support from above, when managers address underperformance issues;
- managers reward positive behaviours that help improve users' experience of the service, they recognise outstanding merit and good results; and
- for most people, the difference between responsibility and accountability is still unclear – and too many decisions are still made at the top level.

**BREAKTHROUGH POINTS**

**Take action on what matters most:**

- focus on what matters, prioritise and do something;
- get the right people involved in deciding what matters;
- be ready to change priorities if necessary;
- move resources to support what matters most;
- make the national agenda work for your organisation's own self-improvement;
- support your managers to make sure the priorities do get done; and
- make the difficult decisions about what to drop.

**Priorities**

*'There are too many priorities.'*

**BREAKTHROUGH POINTS**

**Sign up your staff:**

- remember improving performance is about managing change;
- change is about doing things differently, not about a new system or structure;
- it is not just about your staff changing – it is about you and your management team too and you have to show this;
- understand what motivates people to change the way they think and behave;
- encourage everyone to be on the same side;
- allow people to take responsibility for their own piece of the jigsaw – and make them accountable;
- communicate well and in plain language; and
- give middle managers incentives.

**STARTING**

**Priorities are not clear and no one says what can be dropped, in order to take on new work:**

- the leadership team identifies clear corporate objectives; it is beginning to state priorities but these do not relate directly to the corporate objectives; the leadership team has not yet made a realistic assessment of capacity to deliver them all;
- there is little involvement of politicians/non-executive board members or users, in deciding priorities; there may be insufficient hard evidence to guide priorities; political involvement may happen inappropriately at an operational level;
- the leadership team does not make explicit decisions on competing demands, as part of the discussions about objectives and priorities;
- performance indicators are 'undifferentiated' at this stage, due to a lack of coherence between the corporate objectives and the priorities;
- people blame the national agenda for the confusion that results; and
- people feel as if everything is a priority.

**Managing change**

*'People don't understand that what we do has to change.'*

**CONSOLIDATING**

**People have confidence that priorities will be followed through and everyone copes with changing demands:**

- the leadership team constantly states and re-states the priorities and reviews them regularly in the light of the changing environment, performance information and feedback;
- politicians/non-executive board members and users regularly take full part in the discussions about priorities; the quality and impact of their contributions is improving as they gain experience;
- managers tell their teams what they can drop and support them even when things get difficult;
- resource allocation clearly follows the priorities, even if this means that previously well-resourced initiatives have to be dropped; and
- staff can say what the main priorities are and everyone understands the link between priorities and the performance targets for service delivery.

**DEVELOPING**

**People start to concentrate on the things that matter:**

- there are clear priorities in objectives and performance indicators and a limited number of each;
- politicians/non-executive board members and users take part in the discussions about priorities, however the quality and impact of their contributions varies according to their experience;
- the leadership team takes time to think through how the organisation can manage all the competing demands; it takes decisions about priorities against the agreed direction of the organisation – and staff can see this;
- leadership team meetings focus only on exception reports for most non-critical areas;
- although the organisation has established priorities, resource allocation does not completely reflect this as yet; resources are beginning to follow priorities at the periphery;
- managers tell their teams what they can drop – but under pressure, managers may revert to asking their teams to do too much; and
- people see the national agenda as just part of the territory – self-improvement is the primary focus of attention.

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<p><b>Performance:</b></p> <p>shares the al members are</p> <p>only one part of the organisation's</p> <p>themselves, rather like the decisions;</p> <p>adership professionals; and</p> <p>ance, but at this ; and not always</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSOLIDATING</b></p> <p><b>The management team are clear that their job is about leading and supporting the organisation to improve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the leadership team sees written documents as far less important than what they do as a team and how they set an example; they clearly speak with 'one voice' about the organisation's direction;</li> <li>leadership team meetings focus on future strategy and only on what they can change or improve in the organisation – they delegate 'maintenance' discussions to operational teams/boards;</li> <li>the leadership team members act as coaches, not only as decision makers;</li> <li>the leadership programme is ongoing and well resourced; it ensures that new managers come up to speed quickly; follow-up arrangements are in place (eg, learning sets, coaching and mentoring); and</li> <li>the leadership team reviews its own performance regularly in a structured and open way; it bases rewards on team as well as individual performance.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>'There's no time to learn.'</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STARTING</b></p> <p><b>Learning doesn't seem to feature in the organisation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the leadership team rarely talk about it;</li> <li>the leadership team rarely seeks customer or staff feedback and it is not a major factor in its decision making;</li> <li>the leadership team does not track key management decisions to see if these have led to improvement;</li> <li>the approach to performance information is reactive – data showing problems tends to come as a surprise;</li> <li>projects are reviewed briefly, only at the end and in a token way; the project team retains the results and fails to share the learning;</li> <li>experimentation is not encouraged as a necessary part of improving services;</li> <li>people do not feel free to admit that there might have been a better way of doing something, as they do not want to look foolish; and</li> <li>learning is not encouraged at either individual or team level – it does not feature in any appraisal/incentive/reward scheme.</li> </ul>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BREAKTHROUGH POINTS</b></p> <p><b>Join up your thinking and learn:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>set aside time and resources for learning and set an example;</li> <li>try new things, don't give up, but be prepared to fail – know whether things are working or not;</li> <li>make sure your reviews focus more on what you are going to do, than on what you have done in the past;</li> <li>make sure you follow up on agreed actions;</li> <li>seek external challenge and comparison;</li> <li>see things from other people's perspectives – including that of your service users – work with partners to improve the users' experience; and</li> <li>think of your organisation as a system – with inter-dependent parts.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DEVELOPING</b></p> <p><b>Learning is starting to happen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the leadership team says learning is important and does initiate it but it is still sporadic and unstructured; the team accepts external challenge/comparison rather than actively seeking it out;</li> <li>the leadership team sees customer and staff feedback as an important part of improvement;</li> <li>the organisation is beginning to develop performance information that shows the impact of management decisions; the leadership team reviews this information regularly and challenge assumptions, asking 'what does this information really mean?';</li> <li>problems that are revealed by the data are not surprises and often they are already being addressed;</li> <li>management teams are encouraged to review how they are doing – but sessions may be curtailed because of operational priorities;</li> <li>people are comfortable with admitting when things don't go well and there are incentives for individuals to learn; and</li> <li>people are starting to map processes and think of the organisation as a system. Teams use facilitation to help open up discussion.</li> </ul>
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