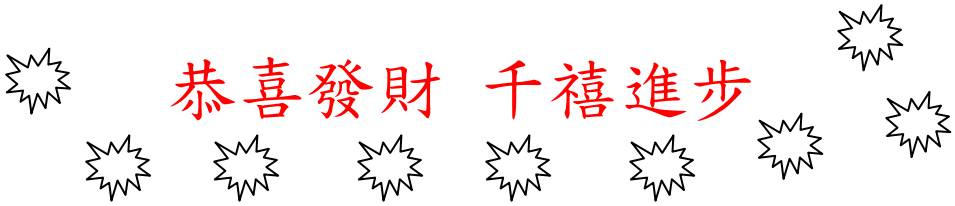
IFTDO

"Member of the International Federation of Training and Development Organizations"

January 2000, Issue 7

ITP LINK

The Newsletter for Members of the Institute of Training Professionals



Competencies for Managers Managing in China

The Management Development Centre of Hong Kong commenced a project on "Management Development Programme for China Managers (Pearl River Delta)" in July 1998. The aim of the project is to develop practical tools to raise the managerial effectiveness of managers working in the PRC environment.

The first stage of the project was to identify those management competencies that would be critical for managers managing in business organizations in PRC environment. Fieldwork was conducted in September 1998. This involved interviewing individual managers of participating companies in the Pearl River Delta region to gather information for developing the competency profile. Subsequently, a questionnaire survey was conducted to confirm the competencies.

Competencies identified

From the data collected from the field interviews, the following competencies were identified as important in contributing to the effectiveness of a manager managing in business organization in PRC:

1. Functional Expertise
2. Business Acumen
3. Customer Driven
4. Business Objective & Direction
5. Planning
6. Leadership
7. Teamwork
8. Relationship Building
9. Developing Others
10. Diversity Awareness
11. Communication
12. Integrity
13. Intellect Utilization
14. Developing Self
15. Professional Behaviour

From the questionnaire survey, all the 15 competencies are considered important in contributing to the effective managerial performance of a manager. Managers' performance of these competencies has been considered moderate by the managers themselves and their superiors.

Relative importance of the competencies in affecting a manager's performance

In terms of ranking, 'Functional Expertise' and 'Leadership' are ranked as of comparatively higher importance than the others.

For the importance of the competencies to a manager's performance, little difference is found between managers' and their superiors' ranking. This implies that their perception of the relative importance of the respective competencies is similar.

Rating on managers' performance on the competencies

Rating on managers' performance on respective competency is obtained by calculating the average rating of the behaviour statements under each competency. The result shows that managers' performance on respective competencies is moderately displayed, meaning that all the 15 competencies represent potential focus for training and development.

Of the 15 competencies identified, 'Integrity' receives the highest rating while 'Business Acumen' is rated the lowest. This means that managers' performance on the former is better than the other 14 competencies while the latter is the least well performed one.

'Integrity' in this project refers to an individual's work ethics as demonstrated through his daily interaction with others. The focus is not about business ethics of doing business in the PRC.

For managers' performance on respective competencies, all managers rated themselves significantly higher than their superiors did for most of the competencies. The difference in rating shows that in a relative sense, managers think they have been performing quite competently in respective competencies while their superiors do not think so as reflected by their lower rating on managers' performance. This implies a discrepancy on performance expectation between the two groups.

Training Focus

Management training programmes will focus on those competencies which are ranked as highly important to the managers' performance yet managers' performance of them is moderately. Based on the result of the fieldwork, 'Planning', 'Communication', 'Teamwork' and 'Business Objective & Direction' are the top training priorities.

Cultural Consideration

The identified 15 broad competencies do not deviate from other models, for example, the Management Standards of the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) of the UK, and The Management Capability Profile (MCP) of The Management Development Centre of Hong Kong.

In terms of specific expected behaviour to be demonstrated for the competencies, the list identified in this study does not present a completely new situation. The majority of the behaviour matches quite close to those presented in the MCI and MCP models. However, certain behaviour can still be explained by taking into consideration the characteristics of the Chinese culture and certain behaviour statements under some competencies are based on the cultural uniqueness in China.

Sam Ying - *Abstract from A Field Study on Competencies for Managers in China (Pearl River Delta), MDC – March 1999*

Welcome New Members

Name: **Ms Yu Chi Ping (余志萍)**
Class member: Member
Job title: Training Officer
Employer: Swire Beverages – Coco-cola Botling Co.

Name: **Ms Wang Yu, Christine (王玉)**
Class member: Member
Job title: General Manager Principal Consultant
Employer: CYW consulting - Guangzhou

Name: **Ms Lau Seung Wah, Eva (劉湘華)**
Class member: Member
Job title: Director – HK/TWN
Employer: Motorola Asia Pacific Ltd – Telecommunication

Name: **Mr Lau Yuk Hing, Michael (劉育興)**
Class member: Associate Member
Job title: Senior Security Officer
Employer: Lai Sun Development Co. Ltd – Property Management

Name: **Mr Gonzales Danilo Chan (陳聿龍)**
Class member: Associate Member
Job title: Security Manager
Employer: Lai Sun Development Co. Ltd – Property Management

Lack of Confidence to Do the Job

In this situation, there are two reasons employees do not believe they can do the job successfully.

The first reason is that employees do not believe they personally have the skill, abilities, or knowledge to do the job. This may be an expression of insecurity, lack of confidence, or the low self-esteem. This is a critical issue because employees have ultimate control. What they perceive becomes their reality.

Being right is one of the few things we all share equally in life. If employees do not believe they can do the job, they are right – they can't! If they do not believe in themselves, there is a very low probability they will experience success.

Turnaround Strategies

Your influence in overcoming these issues of belief is severely limited. Many times the source of these issues is very deep, perhaps rooted in childhood. There may be many negative things going on in employees' personal lives to effectively reinforce these low self-perceptions. You are not a psychologist, counselor, or personal adviser.

You can influence only that which you have influence over.

While options may be limited, they do exist. Effective strategies include:

- Effective use of positive recognition
- Fixing problems early
- Assigning tasks to employees' strengths

Effective use of positive recognition

Positive recognition and reinforcement are essential in helping to build employee confidence. It takes no talent to continually point out what someone is doing wrong. However, it does take high levels of positive leadership skill to identify areas of strength (even in the face of weakness) and give consistent, appropriate, positive feedback. Positive recognition must be very specific and frequent. Avoid telling employees that they have done a good job. While general praising is better than the proverbial sharp stick in the eye, it really doesn't accomplish a whole lot. It is far better to offer specific praising: "Stella, you did an excellent job in dealing with that difficult customer. Not only did you solve the problem, you were able to effectively diffuse his anger and prepare him to listen to your solution."

Specific positive feedback communicates your awareness of employees' individual contributions and "specialness." We all want to be seen as unique, not just one of the herd, and unfortunately, bad attitude employees rarely have their uniqueness acknowledged in a ***positive*** way. For employees with low self-confidence, positive praising must be ongoing. Seek every opportunity to heap praise upon them. Regardless of what they don't do well – find something positive. When things are not going well, step in to offer encouragement, not criticism. Criticism just reinforces what they already believe to be true, and they tune it out due to its predictability. Help them to see an upside.

Fix problems early Monitor low confidence employees and react quickly to any significant mistakes they may be making. Your quick reaction is intended to fix the problem, not to criticize or punish. You can effectively influence behavior before bad habits develop and become entrenched.

It's easier to stop one event from re-occurring than to break a habit.

This also prevents the employee from digging a deeper hole of poor performance. Fix a problem while it is a mole hill, before it becomes a mountain, or worse, a whole mountain range.

If you do not fix problems early, there are a number of negative consequences:

1. Not reacting quickly and fixing problems early communicates to employees that poor performance is acceptable. The longer you allow poor performance to continue, the more comfortable employees become with their low level of productivity. You also devalue the employee and the job by not reacting.

2. A clear message is sent to the entire workforce that poor performance is okay. When employees witness a peer's performance decline and see no response from management, they become resentful. In a relatively short period of time they will also reduce their level of performance. "Why should I work so hard when they let the other guy get away with doing nothing?"

3. Not reacting quickly may also create a potentially vulnerable legal situation. You may be establishing a precedent/past practice of accepting poor performance. Once an employee is allowed to maintain a lower level of performance over an extended period of time, that level of performance may be considered a personal standard. If you are going to require one employee to improve, you must demand the same improvement from all employees. Once poor performance becomes acceptable, it is very, very difficult to turn it around. Your inaction legitimizes the lesser contribution. Prolonged acceptance entitles the employee to maintain the current level of performance.

Assign tasks to employees' strengths

Identify the particular strengths of low confidence employees, and assign tasks that have high potential for success into that strength. Build confidence with a series of "quick wins." When they do something well, help them to do more of it! Generate the momentum of winning and, as their confidence builds, expose them to increasingly more challenging and difficult situations.

The second reason for employees' lack of confidence to do a job is that they do not believe the standards can be met. They may believe the standard are inflated or unrealistic and that the job cannot really be done in accordance with the existing policies and procedures.

When employees are not meeting the standards and expectations, frequently their first line of defense is to attack the standards. Will your standards hold up under the attack? Is everyone meeting the standard? Why are some employees able to meet them and others not? If the answers to these questions are not crystal clear, the standards may need to be reconsidered.

Poor performing employees will challenge the legitimacy of your standards.

Turnaround Strategy

The most effective way of dealing with challenges to standards, policies, and procedures is to meet them head-on during initial training. If employees have been properly trained, the legitimacy of the standards never comes into question. If you are just telling employees what to do without actually showing them what to do (and proving it *can* be done), the standards may be open to challenge. If the standards, policies, and procedures are not legitimized during training, it is *never* too late to do so. If it has not already been done, do it now! "This is what we expect you to do, and I will prove to you it can be successfully accomplished by following our policies, procedures, and guidelines. Here is how…."

Extracted by Sunny CHAN : Harry E. Chambers, *The bad attitude survival guide : essential tool for managers*, 1998, Addison – Wesley.

Who's job is it - *editor*

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody get angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Editor of the ITP LINK : Sunny CHAN (e-mail: <xge@netvigator.com>)

Institute of Training Professionals 培訓專業學會

Promote your Service to thousands of Training and Development Professionals

培訓專業學會

Web Site : *www.itp.org.hk*

INSTITUTE OF TRAINING PROFESSIONALS

香港九龍亞皆老街 107 號皆旺商業大廈 2507 室

Rm. 2507, Richmond Commercial Building, 107 Argyle Street, Mongkok, Hong Kong.

Phone: 2393 3377 Fax: 2309 2799