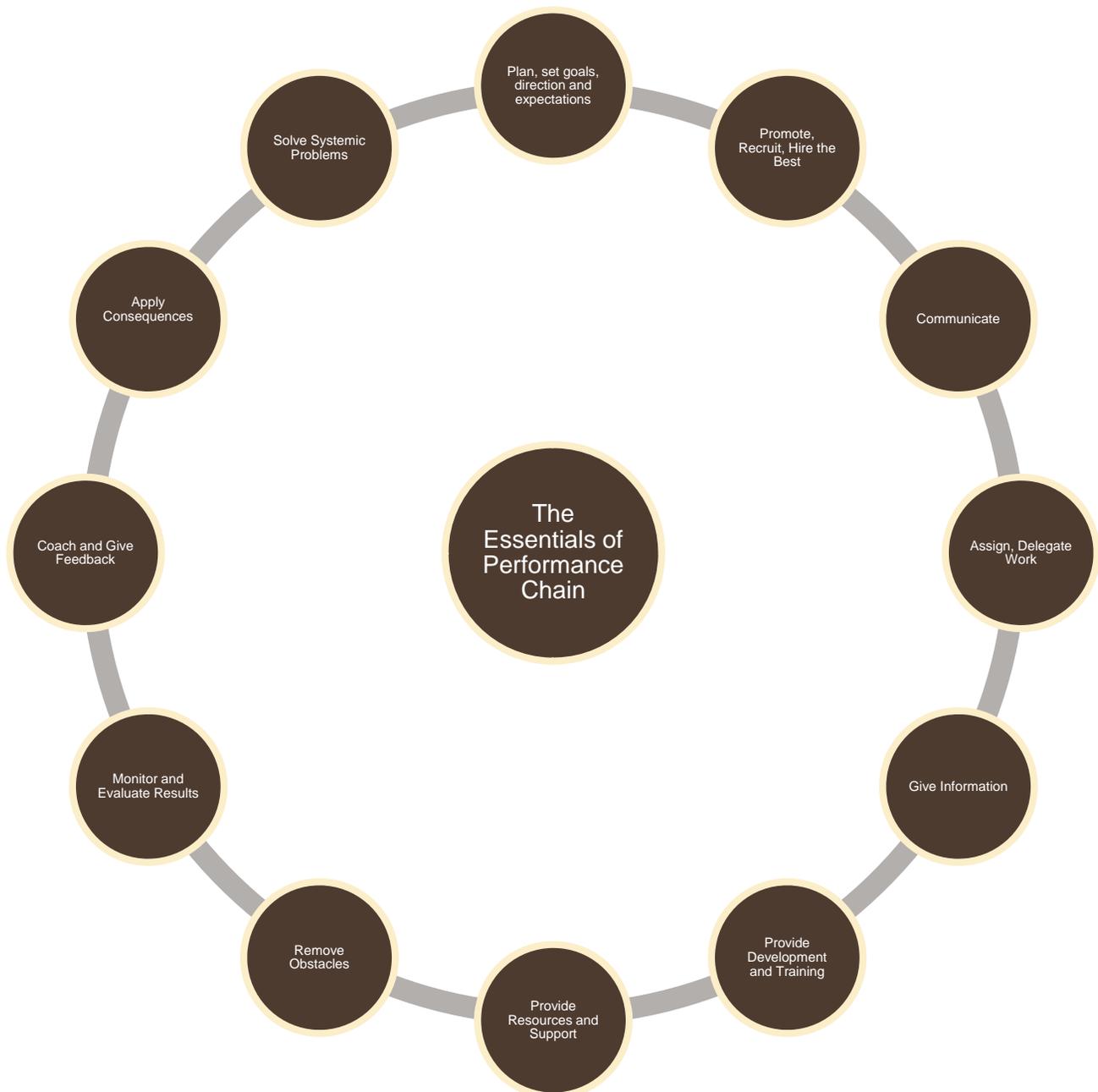


Essentials of Performance

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As managers and supervisors, we often look for a magic key to unlock the door of high performance at the individual staff member level. We go to training classes, read books, talk among ourselves...only to discover that there is no one easy way to affect performance in the work place. The Essentials of Performance Chain (below) can serve as a learning aid to remind us what employees need from management in order to perform at their best.



Nice Model, So What?

First, realize that within each of the circles above are skills that are required by managers. If you don't know how to communicate organizationally or interpersonally for example, a manager needs to: 1) learn why it's important to communicate, 2) how communication is done and 3) apply the learning to the work place. (Seriously, learning why and how is the easy part...but the key is *can you apply good communication to the workplace?*)

This is Not an Advertisement for Training

Although we have and are building methods to help you to learn the how and why and to give you opportunities to practice these skills, you can apply these skills after reading about them in greater depth. Here goes:

Set goals, direction, expectations:

Have an ideal vision that inspires you

Think strategically: what are your desired outcomes for your work unit?

Be SMART, set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound goals

Be clear about the additional expectations you have of your work group such as customer service and team behaviors

Promote, Recruit, Hire the Best

Southwest Airlines hires and promotes people for their attitudes and trains them on their skills. You can:

- Update your job descriptions

- Recruit - go out and for the best

Ask good, behavioral questions in an interview

Use panels of qualified interviewers

Welcome new employees – share those goals, direction and expectations with them at the beginning

Communicate Interpersonally and Organizationally

Use a variety of methods to communicate information

Build trust by getting to know each of your staff members

Listen actively

Communicate regularly and consistently

Encourage others to communicate to you – get feedback

Ask open and closed-ended questions

Communicate “up”

Assign/Delegate Work

List the talents of your people and match work to talents as you can

Check to ensure that the workflow is organized appropriately

Staff-to-workload as much as possible

Provide schedules of work to be completed

Delegate where you can
Follow-up

Give Information

Decide that information is not power until it is given away
Ask and answer: what does every employee need to know to be successful here?
What additional information do they *need* and want?
How much info do they need, when do they need it?
How are they receiving the information now?
Use your communication methods (above) to insure that information is disseminated

Provide Training and Development

Find out what people don't know about their job – both technical and human relating knowledge and skills
Fill the knowledge/skill gap
Use different methods of learning
Insist on transferring learning to the job
Regularly evaluate training effectiveness

Provide Resources and Support

Provide the materials, equipment, information, forms, tools, etc. that each employee will need to do the job
Give them access to the people they need to interact with to perform their jobs
Give them your support and tell them that they have it (don't assume they know)

Remove Obstacles and Barriers

Management cannot expect people to do their work if there are true barriers in their way
Ask yourself: "am I, in anyway, being an obstacle to my staff's performance? If yes, stop being an obstacle"
Look for other barriers that may be in the way or will get in the way of employees doing what you want them to do
Review processes, procedures, work rules, etc.

Measure and Evaluate

Follow-up to the goals and standards of performance you have set
Let your staff members know how they are doing toward achieving your goals
Provide legal, ethical performance evaluations

Coach and Provide Feedback

Provide regular, positive and neutral feedback to get and keep staff members on "track"
When an employee makes poor choices provide coaching that gets them to see what the benefits and costs are of their current undesirable "choice," and guide them to making better, more beneficial choices
Hold them accountable for the work they have been hired to do

Apply Consequences

As you coach:
Apply positive consequences – recognize and reward people for doing good work
Insist on improvement and apply negative consequences, including discipline when appropriate

Solve Systems Problems

Many performance problems are systemic in nature – an employee may have little control over them. It is up to management to:

Look for the “root causes” of problems

Once the cause of the systemic performance problem is determined and solutions are identified, implement them and monitor progress, adjust as needed

Sound Easy?

On one hand these essentials are not that difficult to implement – if you have the knowledge and skills that will support you as you try to do so. On the other hand, you may find it useful to create a development plan for yourself. A plan will help you to prioritize and manage your learning and your application of learning.

For additional information on your next steps, contact the DAS-HRD-Office of Learning and Professional Development to see what we have to offer to help you hone your skills. Diane Luff can get you started if you call her at 614-466-4855