

# Performance Management Skills



*...a better way to manage*

the  
happy  
manager

Published by Apex Leadership Ltd.

## HOW TO BE A BETTER MANAGER

# Performance Management Skills

*What's in this guide:*

*Page*

3	<a href="#"><u>About the "How to be a Better Manager..." Series</u></a>
4	<a href="#"><u>How Do You Develop Your Skills?</u></a>
6	<a href="#"><u>Performance management cycle</u></a>
7	<a href="#"><u>Goal Setting</u></a>
9	<a href="#"><u>Action Planning</u></a>
11	<a href="#"><u>Coaching</u></a>
13	<a href="#"><u>Feedback</u></a>
15	<a href="#"><u>Assessing Performance</u></a>
17	<a href="#"><u>Tools</u></a>
17	<a href="#"><u>Tool 1: Skills Development Planner</u></a>
18	<a href="#"><u>Tool 2: Reflecting on Skill Development</u></a>

# How to be a Better Manager...

In order to help others to PERFORM, managers need a good process to ensure there is a focus on developing performance. But if they want to do this well, they will also need to *develop their own skills*. If managing performance is a crucial activity for a manager, then the skills listed below are some of the most important you can learn. This guide outlines the skills you will need to manage performance, and will help you to assess your own strengths in these essential skill areas:

- Setting goals
- Action planning
- Coaching
- Providing feedback
- Assessing performance

## About the “How to be a Better Manager...” Series

**Performance Management Skills** one of a series of practical, thought-provoking guides, designed to help you deal with a wide range of management ideas, activities and situations. Whether you are a new manager, or one who wants to hone or develop existing skills, we’re sure you’ll find something valuable in any of these guides.

This series of e-guides is published by Apex Leadership Ltd. The guides have been developed by a team of professional managers, consultants and educators. The full range of titles is available from [Apex Leadership Ltd](#), or from [the Happy Manager.com](#). Use these guides to benefit from our wealth of management expertise. Let us help you find: **a better way to manage...**”

Phil Higson & Anthony Sturgess  
Directors, Apex Leadership Ltd

## Using the guides

Each guide contains information, insight and inspiration on essential management topics. This guide will enable you to develop your performance management skills using a range of tips and tools. Each designed to help you put ideas into practice.

# How Do You Develop Your Skills?

One definition of performance stresses that it's about accomplishing something, and often to do so with great skill. Indeed management training should be about doing just that: accomplishing something with great skill. Behind what we often perceive as effortless performance are hours and hours of practice. Yet practice frequently does not get the priority it deserves.

So here are some thoughts based on an insightful quote from Peter Drucker:

"Those who perform love what they're doing. Pianists have a wonderful expression I heard years ago: 'I practice until I have my life in my fingers.'"

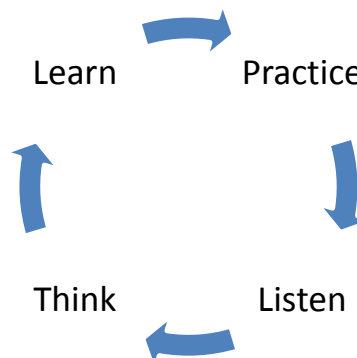
If you are really intent on improving your performance management skills, you need to practice. Practice and then perform. That is: accomplish something with great skill!

Long and intensive periods of training are a pre-cursor to attaining expertise but this in itself is not enough. Recent research suggests that effective learning occurs when:

- Activities are pitched at an appropriate level of difficulty;
- Activities are well-defined;
- Useful feedback is presented;
- Opportunity for repetition and correction of mistakes happens.

Getting better at what you do is not just about practice, it's about practice informed by evidenced-based ideas, from the area of expertise being improved. To become good at something you need to study what works in that area, and practice accordingly.

So, if you want to improve your performance at performance management, practice your skills. How? By constant application of this development process: learn, practice, listen, think.



PREVIEW ONLY  
These pages are intentionally blank

# The performance management cycle

A helpful way to identify the skills needed to manage performance is to use the performance management cycle. The cycle can add a structure and system to a manager's efforts to help others to reach their potential. There are numerous versions of the cycle, each essentially following a common management process of:

- Reviewing what has been done;
- Planning what needs to be done;
- Developing people, where needed;
- Putting those plans into action.



The skills associated with each stage of the cycle are:

Performance Stage	Skill
Review	Assessing performance
Planning	Action planning/ setting goals
Developing people	Coaching
Putting plans in to action	Providing feedback

PREVIEW ONLY  
These pages are intentionally blank

# Feedback

Feedback is one of the most powerful elements in performance management. Most people want to know how they are doing and providing good feedback is an essential way of doing this. However, providing rare, random or inappropriate feedback is a very quick way to demotivate your colleagues. Feedback is a powerful tool but to deliver it properly requires skill. Effective feedback encourages people to:

- Appreciate their strengths.
- Address their mistakes and/or areas where they need to improve.
- Learn as they work.
- Keep trying.

By far the most important kind of feedback is positive feedback. One of the best ways to enhance performance in your people is to provide them with *motivational feedback*. This type of feedback reinforces the behaviours and actions that you want to encourage. Where you want people to correct or improve their performance, *formative feedback* is used to indicate where improvements are needed. It's always best to keep the two kinds of feedback separate. To be effective, all feedback should be:

- Specific
- Descriptive and focused on actions not the person
- Honest and sincere
- Fair and accurate

## Things to do:

- Start now. From today, give praise as feedback when you see behaviours and actions you want to see – don't wait.
- Try to build a balance. Wherever possible, try to place greater emphasis on motivational rather than formative feedback.
- Make formative feedback future-oriented – focus on improving a skill rather than dwelling on the past.
- Avoid *too much* feedback. Concentrate on the one or two key areas that are important.



Use this tool to help you develop your skills in providing feedback. For each of the statements in the table give yourself a score for your current skill level.

Feedback	Score ( 1 is low, 4 is high)			
	1	2	3	4
Praising more than criticizing				
Providing regular feedback on progress and development - to encourage performance				
Making feedback specific				
Describing the specific behaviour and how it helped or hindered in a particular situation				
Keeping motivational feedback separate from constructive feedback				
Listening to your colleagues responses				
Basing your comments on facts				
Inviting responses to the feedback you've given				
Providing timely, future-oriented, formative feedback				
Objectively assessing performance				

You can find out more on how to give effective feedback in Guidelines for Giving Feedback tool, and in these two guides:

Managing Performance and Potential  
 Conducting a Performance Review

PREVIEW ONLY  
These pages are intentionally blank

## Tool 1: Skills Development Planner

The SHARP action plan tool helps you plan an activity to develop your performance management skills.

Skill to be developed:

---



---

Goal:

---



---

**S** - are your goals *Simply* stated?  
**H** - *How* will you achieve them?  
**A** - what *Actions* are needed?  
**R** - are they *Reviewed* regularly?  
**P** - is *Progress* being made?

Check that the goal and actions are straight forward and **simplified**. Write your plan of how you hope to develop the skill and what actions you intend to take under the appropriate headings.

Target: (What is the measure of success for this goal?)

**How:** (What needs to be done?)

**Actions:** (What steps do you plan to take?)

**By When:**

1

2

3

4

5

Make a note of the review dates you intend to keep. Complete this second part of the SHARP tool when reviewing and reporting on your progress

**Review dates:**

**Progress:** (Review progress and note achievements. Record any next steps needed.)

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

[Return to chapter](#)

PREVIEW ONLY  
These pages are intentionally blank

## HOW TO BE A BETTER MANAGER

### Updates

For more information on the content of this e-guide, and other related topics, visit: [www.the-happy-manager.com](http://www.the-happy-manager.com)

**Join the community:** subscribe to the Happy Manager Newsletter for regular updates and advice on better ways to manage.

Join the conversation: bookmark the Happy Manager blog.

([www.the-happy-manager/blog](http://www.the-happy-manager/blog)) And leave any comments, suggestions or examples of your own experiences for the benefit of other readers.

### Titles available:

How to be a Happy Manager  
Have a Good Workday  
How to Build a Happy Workplace  
Workstyle, Lifestyle

Build a Better Team  
Team Building Exercises  
Team Health Check  
The Problems with Teams  
Why is Teamwork Important?

Leadership Essentials  
Defining Leadership  
Leading with Style and Focus  
Leading Insights

Transformational Change  
Sustaining Change  
Making Change Personal

It's All About Performance  
15 Performance Management Tips  
Managing Performance and Potential  
Performance Management Skills  
Performance Management Toolkit  
Conducting a Performance Review  
Manage Your Own Performance  
Motivating Performance

Managing for Strength to Strength  
Managers Make the Difference  
Re-defining Middle Management  
Do More with Less  
Managing Time and Priority  
Extreme Thinking: Unlocking Creativity  
SMART Goals, SHARP Goals  
Making Better Decisions  
What's the Problem?

### Copyright Apex Leadership Limited 2012

Efforts have been made to contact the copyright holders of works referred to in this publication. Apex Leadership Ltd hopes that copyright holders will permit references and quotations, where small extracts of their work have been used.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publishers. This book may not be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published, without the prior consent of the publishers.

First published in Great Britain 2012

**Copyright Apex Leadership Limited 2012**

# HOW TO BE A BETTER MANAGER

## Notes