



**UNIVERSITY
OF LAGOS**



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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE WORKFORCE THROUGH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Within any organization, fostering a workforce characterized by high efficiency and productivity is crucial. Performance management serves as one of the cornerstones for cultivating such workforce.

Research demonstrates the efficacy of performance management in enhancing the quality of employees, their engagement, and productivity (The Managers Tool Kit: A Practical Guide to Managing People at Work (Coursera)). This edition of the ST&DU Newsletter, aims to guide departmental heads towards leveraging performance evaluation to bolster the engagement and productivity of their teams. This will be achieved through a structured focus on the following areas:

1. Definition of Performance Management
2. Distinguishing Performance Management from Performance Appraisal
3. Identifying Challenges in Performance Evaluation within the University
4. Strategies for Heads of Departments to Foster Staff Improvement, Employee Engagement and Productivity Through Performance Evaluation

Definition of Performance Management

Performance management is a cyclical process aimed at enhancing performance, entailing systematic reviews and realignments for sustained success. This process involves establishing measurable behavioural goals, enhancing performance monitoring systems, and refining appraisal and rewards systems. It encompasses planning, monitoring, and reviewing employees' work objectives, the contribution of workers and their overall contributions to the organization.



(Credit: LinkedIn)

It is notable that the university still operates on an age-old performance appraisal system, often failing to adhere to the provision for assessing junior staff twice a year.

Distinguishing Performance Management from Performance Appraisal

In performance management, evaluation and feedback occur periodically, fostering continuous performance reviews. This allows workers to address noted weaknesses and improve performance over time. Conversely, performance appraisal is a one-shot assessment.

Identified Challenges in Performance Evaluation within the University

Despite the importance of performance evaluation, several challenges are observed within the university context:

STDU NEWSLETTER

1. **Lack of ongoing feedback:** Single evaluation at the end of the appraisal year deprives workers of opportunities for improvement during the assessment period. This one-shot nature neither provides insights into employees' weaknesses nor ignites efforts toward improving the inadequacies of employees.

2. **Subjective and biased evaluations:** Quite often, performance evaluation fails to reflect the true picture of the employee's performance due to subjective evaluation on account of favoritism, biases, halo effect, poor record keeping among others. A member of staff who scored 96% might be a low performer in reality. This demotivates a hardworking member of staff and severely hampers growth of the organisation.

3. **Lack of training for evaluators:** Those responsible for conducting performance evaluations do not receive training on how to effectively assess employees' performance to provide constructive feedback and set attainable goals.

Strategies for Improving the Quality of Workers through Performance Management

Heads of Departments can create fit-for-purpose employees through the following strategies:

- **Setting Clear and Realistic Objectives**
This establishes objective and realistic evaluation criteria devoid of favoritism subjectivity, and ensures fair measurement of individuals' contributions to organizational success.

- **Continuous Performance Review**
While the discontinuation of the one-shot appraisal system is the prerogative of the University Management, heads of departments should conduct periodic performance reviews, recognize outstanding performances, address observed inadequacies, document critical incident reports, keep records of attendance, punctuality, and individual performances and maintain open communication channels with the members of their teams, among other things. These would aid the achievement of objective performance evaluation.

- **Provision of Feedback**
It offers timely and constructive feedback to employees, thereby facilitating their improvement.

- **Providing Necessary Tools and Resources**

This is to ensure that employees have access to the tools and resources required to fulfill their roles effectively.

- **Identification of Training Needs**
It identifies and recommends training opportunities to address skill gaps and enhance employee capabilities.

- **Motivation of Staff**
It is to acknowledge outstanding performance, recommend rewards and sponsorships. This reinforces a culture of excellence.

- **Regular Meetings and Discussions**
This facilitates open dialogue and collaborations, which fosters a supportive and cohesive work environment.



By implementing these strategies, heads of departments can effectively utilize performance evaluation as a means to enhance the quality of employees, their engagement, productivity and ultimately, organizational success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective performance management stands as a pivotal tool in improving the quality of employees, staff engagement and productivity within the university setting. Through the systematic implementation of performance evaluation strategies, departmental heads will not only identify and address challenges but also cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and excellence among their teams and ultimately, the success of the University.