PERFORMANCE ROAD-MAPPING

3-step strategy for proactive career management

Managing how we are perceived is an essential element of managing one's career. The 'confidence' in which others view our abilities to do a specific job is a direct function of 'how' we go about it as well as 'what' we achieve. Taking the initiative, therefore, to access good quality data about how we are perceived is an essential pre-requisite for proactively managing your career. It is not about periodically asking 'how am I doing?', and getting the answer 'fine' and carrying on in the same way! It's also not about blaming the boss for not providing feedback! Your career is your responsibility, and this note outlines a 3-step strategy for taking control of your own career management.

The 3 key stages are:

- **self-assessment**
- **boss feedback**
- **performance road-mapping**

Self-Assessment

The first task of self-assessment is to outline a set of criteria or competencies which you believe would be associated with successful performance in your current role. The criteria should include 'hard' business criteria as well as 'soft' behavioural and attitudinal criteria. You should take a few weeks to do your self-assessment in order to enhance your understanding of the behaviours and attitudes expected by the most effective delivery of each criterion or competency. Then compare yourselves with other colleagues and other senior managers on each criteria, and then, and only then, scale or rate yourself on a 10-point scale.

Boss Feedback

Getting 'accurate' ongoing feedback from line managers is frequently a difficult task. There are problems with time for the line manager, level of comfort with the dilemma from the line manager's perspective of seeking to maintain someone in their current role even though they may have limited potential to develop further.

The key skill in accessing good quality feedback data is to be able to ask the right questions. The techniques of benchmarking, scaling, comparisons, critical incidents, and derailment questions are powerful strategies for eliciting good quality data. For example:

Benchmarking: How well am I currently meeting your expectations for being an above average performer in my current role?

Scaling:	How would you rate me on a 10-point scale? What would you need to see to give me a higher number?
Comparison:	How would I compare with other past or current colleagues at my level in terms of my contribution or effectiveness? How do I compare with managers at the next level?
Critical Incidents:	What situations or behaviours can you think of to describe very effective performances in my current role? To what extent have I demonstrated these behaviours?
Derailment:	What types of style, behaviour, attitude or competency underdevelopment could possibly "derail" me or inhibit my progress to the next level?

Performance Road-Mapping

Following an analysis of the feedback and your self-assessment, a very logical process can be adopted to demonstrate to your line manager how you plan to make progress. The key requirement is to demonstrate that you have heard and internalised all the feedback messages, objectives and expectations of your line manager, and that you are taking responsibility to demonstrate what progress is being achieved. Future success then becomes a function of how well you have demonstrated progress.

The 'performance road-map' is quite simply a framework for tracking progress on a range of business, leadership and personal development objectives. It will also hopefully act as a vehicle for ongoing dialogue and discussion with your line manager about the extent to which expectations are being met. As an illustration, the performance road-map headings might include:

- Delivering Results
  - business performance indicators
  - performance measurement issues
  - cost management indicators
  - future projections

- Building a High Performance Organisation
  - process management issues (execution, productivity, efficiency)
  - team management issues (leadership, talent, performance management)
  - corporate culture
  - structure (lack of bureaucracy)

- Best Practice Model Development
  - service issues
  - quality issues
  - technology issues
  - client satisfaction issues

- Growing and Expanding the Business
  - product/service development ideas (innovation)
  - strategic direction
  - marketing/networking opportunities

- Personal Development Progress
  - multi-task management
  - pace-setting
  - influence
  - team leadership
  - idea leadership
  - the championing of key values
  - time allocation