

Effective People Management Systems

by Will Phillips

Key Elements

There are a number of distinct elements to managing people in an organization well. Here is an outline of the key ones.

1. Appropriate Job Structure

- Jobs are clearly defined.
- Jobs are appropriately defined to achieve the organization's purpose.
- Appropriate centralization/decentralization.

2. People Planning

- Proactive planning on who you will need to hire or promote.

3. Hiring

- Sourcing
- Evaluation
- Recruiting

4. Management and Supervision

- Two way communication.
- Involvement.
- Accountability and appraisal.

5. Climate

- Teamwork and cooperation as needed;
- Open and honest communication.
- Mutual respect and trust.
- Fairness, equity, justice.

6. Work Environment

- Resources, tools, equipment; Physical layout.
- Safety.
- Ergonomics.
- Health.

7. Opportunity to Develop

- Career paths.
- Career plans.
- Learning.
- Promotions.
- Raises.

8. Training

- Orientation.
- Organization basics.
- Problem solving.
- Work skills.
- Sales/Customer Service.

Organizational Factors

It is important to realize that even if you do all of the above things outstandingly well, you still might not manage your people well if the rest of the organization is not in good health. Some of the major organizational factors that have an impact on people include:

1. Good leadership.
2. Clear and agreed upon plans.
3. Appropriate flow of information about the organization's performance.
4. An appropriate incentive and benefit system.

Evaluation of Your People Management System

It is the responsibility of your organization to document its system of people management and to review its effectiveness at least on an annual basis. This review should include input, not only from senior and middle managers, but also from current and ex-employees.

Based on this feedback, you can redesign and improve your system. Even if you cannot afford a full time human resource development person, you can afford to take the time to review and improve the way you manage people. You can use the following checklist for a quick evaluation of the current way that you manage people.

Checklist to Evaluate Our People Management System

Rate Each Item: 1 = LOW, 10 = HIGH

1. Selection

- A. Jobs defined with skills, qualities and compatibility.
- B. Interviews planned.
- C. Interviews are behavior based.
- D. Interviewed by peers.
- E. Interviewed by subordinates.
- F. Abilities demonstrated to you.
- G. References from former boss.
- H. References from former peers.
- I. References from former subordinates.
- J. Personality Profiled.
- K. Rational and gut data utilized.
- L. Criteria met.
- M. Team interviews used when appropriate.
- N. _____

2. For Moderate Motivation and Productivity

- A. Pay is satisfactory.
- B. Benefits are satisfactory.
- C. Job's clear and challenging.
- D. Resources to do job available.
- E. Performance appraisals good and frequent.
- F. Personnel policies and procedures clear and communicated.
- G. Benefits are clear and communicated.
- H. What it takes to get a raise or promotions clear and communicated.

3. For Highest Motivation, Productivity and Loyalty

- A. Potential for ownership.
- B. Purpose of the organization and your work unit is clear, agreed and meaningful.
- C. Steps to achieve purpose spelled out.
- D. Praise and recognition for individual and team performance.
- E. Communication is open, 2 way and frequent.
- F. Organization barriers being removed.
- G. Participation in decisions.
- H. No negative management styles: aloofness, sarcasm, put downs, punishments, arbitrary decisions.
- I. Significant delegation.
- J. Tough accountability.
- K. Organization has a demonstrated commitment to high morale and high productivity.
- L. Career paths:
 - Have employee input.
 - Are jointly negotiated.
 - Are realistically integrated with organization plans .
 - Take account of career stage and individual strengths.
- M. Support for employees pet projects.
- N. Mistakes are okay.
- O. Other team members are competent and team players.
- P. Teamwork occurs.
- Q. Mutual respect exists.
- R. Mutual trust exists.
- S. Strong leadership.
- T. Training and development is consistent and regular.
- U. Communication is open, timely, complete and two way.
- V. _____
- W. _____

Benefits of a Successful People Management System

With a successful process for managing people, you should be achieving consistently high results in the following six areas. When you are managing your people well, you should expect these results.

1. No unwanted turnover. By the time unwanted turnover is happening, the people in the organization have not been managed well for a fairly long time.
2. No training for the benefit of your competitors.
3. Superior performance and results.
4. Managers and supervisors focus on solving problems, not fixing people.
5. Costs are declining.
6. Employees are satisfied.

Warning Signs

One of the earliest indicators of poor people management is job dissatisfaction. Qm² can help you design an Employee Morale Survey to assess this. Contact us through www.qm2.org.