



DPMAP: 21st Century Performance Management

IMCOM Update - #7

DPMAP: Collaborative Efforts

Performance management is an integrated process by which an agency involves its employees in improving organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of agency mission and strategic goals.

So, what exactly is organizational effectiveness? Organizational effectiveness is how well an organization is able to meet its goals.

Performance management does involve supervisors engaging with their employees to plan, monitor, and evaluate employee performance. This includes but is not limited to providing constructive feedback, address training and development needs, and recognize and reward performance when appropriate. It involves more “soft” concepts such as building trust throughout the workforce; establishing credibility, transparency, and equity in the processes; treating employees fairly; and increasing accountability. When executed properly, performance management practices can greatly increase employee commitment, engagement, and performance.

However, Performance Management is not a one-way street. Employees can assist their supervisors be more effective when they feel a sense of ownership in the organization and engage in open communication about how to improve organizational effectiveness and employee engagement. Supervisors need to understand how employees accomplish work to understand how to best support them. There can be differences between how supervisors perceive the strengths and areas for improvement of employees versus how employees perceive their own performance. To increase mutual understanding of the different perceptions related to performance, supervisors and employees can engage in a collaborative communication.

Three key Employee roles:

Team Empowerment: Sharing the load of team management with the supervisor by being an active partner in the team. Employees can help a supervisor manage the team by:

- Helping to maintain team cohesion
- Understanding what others on the team do
- Sharing their sense of the team’s strengths and areas for improvement
- Sharing their understanding of the team’s biggest challenges

Upward Coaching: Transparency into how the work gets done.

- Helping the supervisor understand both the team’s and their responsibilities
- Sharing the best informal ways of getting things done
- Sharing the team’s long-term work goals
- Teaching their supervisor a new skill, concept, process, or procedure

Upward Feedback: Communicating about the supervisor’s effectiveness in engaging employees:

- Giving their supervisors constructive feedback
- Providing feedback on their supervisors’ ideas
- Sharing their understanding of supervisors’ strengths and areas for improvement

This collaborative engagement by employees has the potential to increase significantly the effectiveness of the supervisor and the productivity of the work unit. It is important for supervisors to facilitate the process of employees engaging in these activities. For example, supervisors can ask employees for their feedback and discuss with them how the feedback will be used. This open communication, in addition to increasing supervisory effectiveness, has the added benefit of building employee engagement because employees feel a sense of ownership in the organization when they see that their input is valued.

Regardless of method, it is most effective in a trusting supervisor-employee relationship with honest two-way communication.