

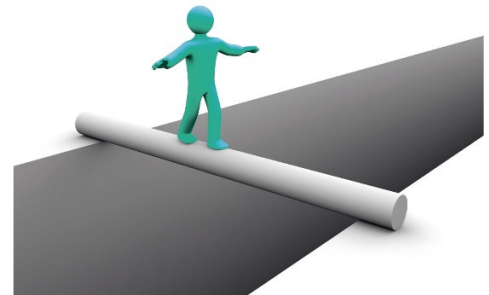
The 7 Performance Traps

An article by David Klaasen

The pressure is on

Leading and managing people is tough! I know this from my 10 years working as a chef in five-star hotel and Michelin Star kitchens. The extreme challenges presented by the current crisis and many people working from home means that providing customers with good service is no longer enough.

It has to be excellent service just to maintain satisfaction. In recent months many clients have been complaining about how to get better performance from their managers and their people. Most of them have fallen into one or more of the 7 Performance Traps. Are you getting snared?



Challenging trading conditions are making sales far more difficult, especially when offering a premium service, because many competitors are sacrificing margins just to survive. There is also a reluctance amongst regular customers to spend any money. Everyone is working harder for their money and they are demanding more value for money.

During the boom years, many 'people management' and business practices became a bit complacent. There was a huge emphasis on keeping people happy because the labour market was so tight.

However now that the economic climate has changed there is an opportunity to work with all levels of staff to improve all aspects of the business. But sometimes people just don't seem to be doing what they should be doing!

Balance People Vs Task

There is a definite shift in management style at the moment, moving from a high people-focus to a high task-focus. This is still a very new style for many, because they've never been through a serious crisis or recession and some people have become used to calling the shots, making demands of their employers or just leaving to go elsewhere. The latter is no longer such an easy option.

In order to avoid stress, managers need to be very careful about the language they use, and the way they apply pressure to people as they become more task focused. If people are not performing to the required standard, managers need to be aware of the reasons why people don't do things. They need to be able to spot what is missing and fill the gaps. Applying unreasonable pressure without appropriate support is going to lead to a significant rise in the number of people going off with stress and/or making claims through employment tribunals.

Don't get caught out. Look at the list below to identify what is missing so you can fill the gaps.

The 7 Performance Traps – Why people don't do things

Many years ago I was shown this list; several things on it may seem obvious to you, and in fact you may have even seen them before. However it never ceases to surprise me that when I discuss these topics with managers who are complaining about their people not performing, there is often one item on the list which when addressed makes all the difference. I have added some interesting statistics from the research by Rodger Bailey into Motivation Traits and Working Traits in the workplace (for more on this see the book 'Words that change minds' by Shelle Rose Charvet). Bailey's stats highlight just how many people need each topic to be covered.

1. They don't know how

According to the research, 60% of the working population are motivated by the need for a procedure, and about 40% of the population may even grind to a halt if they don't have a procedure

to follow. As a manager, often with many years of experience doing particular jobs, it is easy to assume that a particular task is so easy that 'anyone can do it'. Make sure that you give people a procedure. Specify the steps and stages of the task and if necessary make a list of bullet points. Work with them to develop checklists so they don't make silly mistakes.

2. They don't know why

The research also identified that 60% of the population will need a reason to do something in order to be motivated. Again, about 40% of the population are simply not motivated to do something if they don't think there is a valid reason for doing it. How effective have you been in explaining the reasons why a particular task or job needs to be done? What is the purpose of the task and the ultimate outcome and value it delivers? Some of the reasons for certain tasks are changing in the current climate, and it will be critical to explain this to your people.

3. They didn't know they should

This is about clarity of the rules. Over the last few years the predominant management style was very collaborative and 'requests' were made rather than 'orders'. I'm not advocating ordering your people about, but for some people (only 7% in Bailey's research) unless they are explicitly told the rules they will not know what things should be done. In fact I've had some clients who have had to resort to the formal disciplinary procedure just to get some individuals to understand that there are standards and rules that need to be complied with.

4. They can't (lack of resources)

This is definitely a management problem. You can't expect people to perform tasks if they don't have the proper equipment or enough time. The time problem is an interesting one because it raises the issue of managing priorities, delegation skills, efficiency and effectiveness. Unless you can provide the resources or appropriate training this can become a recurring excuse.

5. Too painful (or psychologically uncomfortable)

Back in the early 1980s when I was a chef, I worked in a kitchen with the most horrendous fridges. They were very old and had lots of sharp edges and rusty corners on the inside. Almost every time we had to deep clean it we would end up with cuts to our hands and fingers. Did that fridge get cleaned as well as it should have? Only by the very dedicated! There are also a number of tasks that people find psychologically painful such as reprimanding a member of staff, cold calling or credit control. Once again, without proper equipment or training the job just won't get done to the required standard.

6. No consequences

This is a surprisingly common issue. Most managers have a genuine reluctance to discuss what will happen if something is not achieved or completed on time, it's as if they don't want to be 'negative'. However the research shows that if there are no negative consequences up to 60% of the working population will not be very motivated to complete the task or job. For up to 40% there need to be specific problems that must be avoided or they will be distracted by other issues. These people also need assistance with clarifying priorities because they are focused on what they don't want rather than what they want.

7. "My way is best"

This is an interesting one. Do they have a point that you have not thought about? If not, you need to offer plenty of facts and make some suggestions for them to consider. Up to 40% of the population have an 'Internal' sense about what is the right thing to do based on their own set of standards in a given situation however this is usually combined with a reasonable level of compliance to follow the rules.

But people who have a strong 'Internal' mindset will resist being told what to do. So if you have addressed all of the above and they are still resistant, you can suggest they think about the consequences of not complying and make up their own mind about whether this is the right

approach to be taking. If they decide to continue being insubordinate without good reason you may need to invoke your disciplinary procedures.

A shortcut to discovering motivation

It's tough being a manager especially when you have a very diverse team. The work of Rodger Bailey has led to a number of very interesting profiling tools that can rapidly identify an individual's motivational drivers in a specific context.

The most accessible one is the Harrison Assessment which is based on Enjoyment Performance Theory not personality. It uses an online questionnaire that allows you to collate numerous reports to identify the key strengths, drivers and engagement factors of your people. There are also reports which give you very specific tips and guidance on exactly what you need to say and how to say it in order to engage and motivate your people.

To understand more about the Paradox of Driving Performance [check out this very short video](#).

If you are interested in finding out more and identifying what really motivates and drives you and your people contact me on the email below.

If you would like to know more about how to improve communication, or learn about our robust yet practical system for clarifying complexity, inspiring your people, avoiding common problems and driving performance during uncertain times please click here to book a no-obligation call to discuss your needs. <https://calendly.com/t4p-david/free-consultation>

Remember, when it comes to performance . . . Stay Curious!

With best regards

David Klaasen

david@talent4performance.co.uk

© 2009-20 David Klaasen