Section 1: Planning the Journey

What is Performance Management and Why it Matters

The main purpose of performance management is to guide, support, and develop each employee. It is an **ongoing**, **collaborative** process between supervisor and employee that aims to establish and clarify expectations as well as set performance *and* development goals. These mutually agreed upon expectations and goals are documented in an Individualized Action Plan (IAP) for the employee. The IAP is then used to guide performance and generate opportunities for feedback in various supervisor-employee interactions throughout the year.

Photo: Group picture by fauxels on Pexels

The more traditional view of performance management, where communication about performance takes place during one annual review, is a recipe for failure. Effective employee management requires meeting and discussing performance more than once-a-year. This ongoing, collaborative approach is key to driving employee development, effectiveness, and overall contribution to the library. There are many benefits, including:

- Strengthening the supervisor/employee relationship

- Increasing the self-awareness of both supervisor and employee

- Improving employee motivation and building confidence and self esteem

- Helping the supervisor understand what conditions are helping or hindering the employee's success and when adjustments are needed

- Increasing employee and organizational capacity to keep up with today's rate of change through increased flexibility and innovation

- Helping supervisors to set clear expectations for staff and making it easier to hold them accountable

Performance management can be thought of as a cycle in three phases:

Phase 1. Planning: expectations and goals for individual employees are set and documented in an Individual Action Plan (IAP).

Phase 2. Coaching and feedback: progress on the IAP is tracked and the employee is coached to help them meet the goals and expectations as outlined.

Phase 3. Review: employee learning and accomplishments throughout the year are reviewed to see if expectations were met or if improvement is needed.

It is critical that each stage of this cycle be informed by the values and goals of the organization. When planning team and individual goals, you must set goals that reflect the organization's values. When coaching and providing feedback to your employees, you must ensure that you not only guide them along the organization's values but that you help to convey and instill those values in your employees. Lastly, when you conduct your annual review of performance you should consider whether or not the year's efforts have contributed to the organization's desired outcomes.

Additional Resources

- Keep the Quick Start Learning Guide to Performance Management handy for an excellent summary of the performance management process.

Aligning with Organization Goals

Every library organization should have a vision, mission, or goal statements that identify what the library stands for and seeks to accomplish. These values and goals may materialize in a strategic plan or other highly valued operational document. While a manager's focus is often on their team and individual employees, the organizational values and context must always be kept in mind when planning individual goals and outcomes.

Watch: **How Great Leaders Inspire Action** (17:15 minutes)

A manager's job isn't only to observe action, it is to inspire and ensure that goals are well-suited to the organizational culture and context. In this video, ethnographer and leadership author Simon Sinek discusses the importance of understanding *why* your organization does what it does and how this understanding not only motivates customers but also your employees. It is the role of every level of manager to help convey the vision, values, and goals of the organization and establish this 'why'.
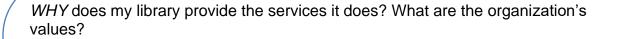

Photo: Performance sign by Gerd Altmann on Pixabay

Take Action

Without looking at the documented values, vision statements, or strategic plan of your library organization, **write down why your library provides the services that it does**. What are your organization's values? Once you are done - compare these with the written statements provided by your organization. How different are they?

Make a list of anything that you think should be in these value statements. If your organization does not have formal vision or value statements, what do you think should go into them? Consider how these can change or inform the goals that you set for your team.

WHY does my library provide the services it does? What are the organization's values?

What value statements could be added or rephrased?

Four Steps to Individual Action Plans

Keeping higher level organization goals in mind, it is up to the manager to clarify expectations and goals for the individual employee within the larger context. Developing an IAP for each employee creates a clear pathway that will guide your performance management interactions throughout the year. There are four key steps to create an IAP for an employee:

- **Step 1**: Set clear expectations
- **Step 2**: Identify performance goals
- **Step 3**: Identify professional development goals
- **Step 4**: Implement an individual action plan to document expectations and goals

Step 1: Set Clear Expectations

Successful employee performance management begins with a good job description that defines the essential duties of the employee's current job. Job duties are the most critical tasks and day-to-day activities for which an individual is responsible.

- Read Best Practices in Job Description Writing to help you assess or improve the quality of existing job descriptions for your staff.

After establishing a good job description, it is critical for employees to know what is expected of them, which is why good performance management includes expectations.

> ***Expectations*** *are the minimum performance standards that an employee needs to achieve in their job roles and duties during the year.*

Expectations allow the supervisor to be specific about what they want the employee to produce in the performance of their duties within a specific timeframe. These should be stated in terms of SMART guidelines; otherwise they will be too vague to be useful.

- **Specific** - The staff member should know exactly what is expected

- **Measurable** - Measurements are established so both the manager and staff member can monitor performance or progress toward meeting goals

- **Achievable** - The goal is not just a wish; it has a basis in reality

- **Results-focused** - The goal is focused on accomplishments, not activities

- **Timebound** - The goal has a specific deadline or time frame for accomplishment

Not so great	SMARTer
Plans and delivers early childhood programming.	Visits all daycares in the area every quarter, delivers one storytime per week.
Assists in gathering data and preparing reports.	Pulls monthly statistics from ILS using established templates. Emails results to director by the first Friday of the month.
Employee will come to work on time.	Effective immediately, will arrive to work promptly and be ready to start activities at 8:30 am. If unable to come to work, will notify supervisor by a phone call by 8am.

Take Action

- **Practice** writing clear SMART expectations based on the job duties provided, as if this were an employee in your organization.

Sample	SMARTer
Conducts programs and classes; participates in outreach/liaison activities.	
Prepares library exhibits, displays and publicity materials for library programs and services.	
Compiles bibliographies, content creation for newsletter, website and/or social media.	
Oversees the work of nonprofessional staff and participates in the training of Librarian Trainees.	

- Now **draft SMART expectations** based on the job description and current job duties for each of your employees.

Take Action

- **Communicate** with your employee before the meeting. What information do they need in advance?

The best way to communicate these expectations is to meet individually with each employee. This provides the opportunity to talk through them, explain the SMART framing, and develop them further as needed based on the employee's perspective. You will have greater assurance that you and the employee are on the same page about their expected performance.

Photo: Conversation by Christina Morillo on Pexels

- **Meet** with the employee to discuss and further develop the SMART expectations

REFLECTION: In the upcoming meeting with your employee, how will you explain the performance management process to them? How do you think they will respond? What information do you need to provide them in advance of the meeting?

Step 2: Identify performance goals

Setting individual goals with employees helps them focus and stay motivated. Employees generally will work harder to achieve goals when they have played a role in developing them. The process for developing goals should be collaborative, but ultimately the manager must prioritize organizational needs.

> ***Performance goals*** *are aspirational activities to complete that are outside the regular job responsibilities such as a special project or achieving a specific measurable target.*

Supervisors must assign some goals based on department needs in meeting organizational goals, and these are to be clearly communicated regarding strategic and operational needs. Other goals are best developed from the needs identified by the employee, and may be in areas such as task improvement, operational problem-solving and individual professional development.

Like expectations, goals should be SMART, and the timeline can range from short-term, e.g. "effectively immediately," to a longer timeline based on needs.

Sample SMART goals:
- Secure $30,000 in grant funding for ENL program by the end of the year.
- Attend conflict resolution seminar by June 1.

- Create a draft work plan for developing new performance evaluations by May 30.

- Create first version of online resources directory by October 1.

- Increase Homebound Delivery program participation by 15% by the end of the year.

- Reduce department expenses by 1-2% by March 31, 2020 by following the new purchasing procedures.

- Increase program attendance by 25% in this fiscal year.

Goals should be broken into manageable steps to help the employee focus and stay on target to complete the goal.

Sample Performance Goals and Activities

The goal is only the starting point. It generates the need to articulate the relevant activities needed to achieve the goal and the timeline over which the work will be done.

Sample performance goals:

Goal	Activities	Timeline
Plan, develop and implement an early childhood literacy promotional initiative.	Meet with graphics to design a bookmark.	September
	Compile a list of local agencies and get permission to place the bookmarks.	October
	Place bookmarks in agencies.	November
	Monitor success of program by monitoring bookmarks taken and how many people registered for Read Me into Kindergarten as a result.	December-August
Improve collaboration with other departments	Participate in a committee meeting or initiative and complete a project with a member of another department.	Quarterly By end of the year

REFLECTION: Identify a **performance** goal for yourself, and outline the activities and timeline needed to achieve it.

Goal:

Activities and timeline:
1.

2.

3.

4.

Additional Resources

- [Roles & Goals](#) provides tools and templates for setting and reinforcing clear, measurable goals for your staff

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Step 3: Identify professional development goals

Successful performance management centers on the development of the employee. Development is vital to both the staff member's career development and the future needs of the library. Development and learning have both been identified as key components in employee motivation at work. In addition, a learning culture at work has been shown to boost morale, commitment, creativity and productivity. It has become increasingly important in the knowledge-based economy. Millennials, who now comprise about half of the workforce, highly value acquiring, applying, and sharing knowledge, and strongly desire development programs and appreciate bosses who give feedback, mentor, and coach.

> ***Professional Development Goals*** *ensure employees continue to learn and adapt to the changing nature of their jobs and library service. These may include growth in knowledge, skills, attitude, and behavior.*

Competencies can be a useful tool in the development of professional development goals as well as performance goals. Competencies assist the supervisor in clarifying job

standards and measuring performance and are an effective tool to use in identifying development needs of an employee.

> **Competencies** *are measurable patterns of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors and other attributes that a staff member needs to be successful in a job and/or organization*

Generally, competencies include a definition and identify observable behaviors that, when performed, help demonstrate presence of that competency in the employee. For example, a competency statement defining teamwork and the attendant behaviors might look something like this:

> **Teamwork:** The ability and desire to work cooperatively with others to accomplish objectives.

Key Behaviors:

- Listens and responds constructively to other team members' ideas

- Provides assistance to others when they need it

- Offers support for others' ideas and proposals

- Gives honest and constructive feedback to other team members

- Listens to constructive feedback and incorporates suggestions to achieve collective objectives

- Expresses disagreement constructively

- Works for solutions that all team members can support

Core competencies, such as teamwork, are the main skills and abilities the organization believes *all* its employees need to be successful in the organization. Each organization will define what they consider to be core, reflecting behaviors that are consistent with the organization's mission, culture, values and priorities. In addition to an organization's core competencies, there are professional competencies. These are competencies identified for jobs in a certain field or category. Two good sources of library competencies:

- ALA's Core Competencies of Librarianship defines the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies.
- WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field defines competencies for all library staff, whether degreed or not. The primary focus is on public libraries, but many competency sets are universal.

REFLECTION: Consider *one* of your employees.

What knowledge, skills and abilities do they need to do their job well?

What are the future needs of the department and library and what are the skills the employee might need in the future?

What are the career goals of the employee and what should they do now to prepare?

What should the employee accomplish this year to support departmental and library goals and priorities for the upcoming year?

Using competencies as the framework, **professional development goals** should specify the training or activities that would help the employee grow. Employees can learn in many different ways. Attending conferences and seminars are good, but there are many other options. For example, if a staff member needs to enhance their presentation skills, you might require the staff member to develop and deliver a training program for the department or library. Other possibilities to consider:

- Arranging to have the employee talk or work with people in specific areas.
- Giving them a stretch assignment aimed at skill development or department task need.
- Encouraging the employee to become involved in association or community organizations.
- Providing opportunities for job shadowing.
- Selecting reading materials and discussing them with the employee.
- Requiring them to take an online course from Lynda.com or another provider.
- Mentoring and sharing your experience, knowledge and ideas on specific topics.
- Modeling or role playing which can be effective in working on behavior in certain situations.

Sample development goals:

Goal	Activities	Timeline
Improve collaboration with other departments	Participate in a committee meeting or initiative and complete a project with a member of another department.	Quarterly By end of the year
Improve written communication	Complete the grammar course in the Online Adult Learning Center. Write 1-page, single-spaced monthly reports summarizing your activities for manager to proof read.	By April 2019 Due by 1st of each month

REFLECTION: Identify a professional **development** goal for yourself, and outline the activities and timeline needed to achieve it.

Goal:

Activities and timeline:
1.

2.

3.

4.

The personal aspect of development goals

Successful employee development requires that the supervisor be genuinely interested in learning about their employees not just as workers, but as people. This knowledge is necessary for identifying areas for development and improvement by tailoring goals to organizational needs and employee interests and skills.

- Watch [The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement and Creativity at Work](#) (9:45 minutes) for insights into the importance of meaningful forward progress for employee performance
- Read [Tips from the Progress Principle](#) for a one-page summary of highlights of this approach

As you prepare for a participatory discussion/dialogue with your employees about their development goals, consider sharing the following questions. It can be helpful for responses to be turned into the supervisor prior to the meeting in order to facilitate the ongoing discussion of goals.

- *What were your most significant work-related accomplishments or contributions last year?*
- *Describe changes you could make within the next year to improve your work performance or that of your department.*
- *Did the work environment aid or impede your ability to achieve your goals?*
- *What future career-related goals do you have?*
- *Are there any special projects or tasks that you would be interested in working on in the next year?*

This provides the employee with a pro-active opportunity to provide their perspective regarding their activities and performance, department activity input, and ideas on their professional development needs.

Take Action

Meet with a willing employee to practice participatory discussion of their development goals for the upcoming year. Provide a list of questions ahead of meeting that will help both of you understand the employee's interests and aspirations. Together, identify at least one goal related to their development and identify what learning activities would help them develop the skill/behavior (i.e., through training, special assignment, coaching, practice, etc.).

Additional Resources

1. [Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go: Career Conversations Organizations Need and Employees Want](#) – this book is a bestselling employee development classic
2. [Mentoring Millennials](#) – with millennials comprising a large percentage of the workforce, it helps to understand ways to mentor them

Step 4: Create an Individual Action Plan to document expectations and goals

Once expectations, performance goals, and development goals have been agreed upon, the best practice is to formally document these in an IAP. The IAP is an essential document that functions as the foundation of the Annual Review process, defining what successful job performance looks like for the employee in the upcoming year. IAPs allow supervisors to be specific about what they want to see from the employee throughout the year and help employees understand what is expected of them. It functions as their roadmap to success.

As a living document referred to regularly, the IAP helps the supervisor monitor the employee's progress, keep performance on track, and provide opportunities for feedback, coaching and growth. It should be signed by employee and supervisor and referred to regularly throughout the year.

Photo: Tauranga Library staff by People's Network on Flickr CC BY-NC 2.0

Any form used to document the IAP should be easy to use with clearly defined sections. The following example has distinct sections for listing expectations, performance goals, and development goals. There is specificity in the statements and the timelines.

Individual Action Plan

A: Main Duties with Performance Expectations

Review the employee's Civil Service Duty Statement and specify S.M.A.R.T. expectations for each duty. Be sure to include timeframe.

Main Duties	SMART Expectations	Timeline
Assists the Library Director with all aspects of Library administration with particular responsibility for business (budget, finance, insurance, etc.), personnel, maintenance, statistics, grants)	Supervises custodians, develops painting schedule and runs yearly meeting.	Ongoing; Summer
	Supervises security and runs yearly meeting.	Ongoing; May
	Makes sure all PDPs and Reviews are carried out; completes PDPs and Reviews for security, custodians and department heads.	Ongoing; December
	Hosts page meetings.	Quarterly
	Establishes yearly priorities with director.	August

B. Goals and Development

Goal	Steps	Timeline
Improve staff awareness of policies, procedures, events and services.	Blog summary of board meetings.	Monthly
	Write and host trivia review for Employee Handbook.	2x annually
	Write and publish weekly briefings for staff.	Weekly
Oversee and expand Project Outcome implementation.	Measure summer reading club and target programs for measurement in fall and winter.	August 2019
	Create a report in PO for next year's budget vote.	March 2020

Take Action

By this point, you've gathered information about each employee's job duties, related expectations, performance goals and professional development goals. Create an IAP for each of your employees. Use the PML Performance Planning Form or devise one of your own.

PATCHOGUE-MEDFORD LIBRARY **Performance & Development Plan**

Employee Name:	Department:	Date:
Title:	Supervisor Name:	

A: Main Duties/Responsibilities			
Review the employee's Civil Service Duty Statement and specify SMART expectations for each duty. Be sure to include timeframe. Supervisors may opt to attach any guidelines/expectations already created within their department that apply to all employees.			
% Time	**Main Duties**	**SMART Expectations**	**Timeline**

B. Goals and Development

Please specify 1-3 performance or development goals for the employee to work on during the upcoming year. In identifying goals, consider: 1) any areas/behaviors for improvement identified in the evaluation discussion 2) the present and future needs of the department/Library 3) the career goals and self-evaluation of the employee. Please list steps and timeline necessary to achieve each goal.

Goal		Steps	Timeline
1.			
2.			
3.			

C. Other Professional Development

For each development goal on the left, list any conferences, work assignments or other experiences the employee desires to attend for their development on the right.

Development Goal	Development Activity

D. Follow Up Meetings

Please list the dates of follow up meetings throughout the year below.

E. Signatures

An employee's signature means that this Performance Plan has been reviewed with them and that they have received a copy.

Supervisor:	Date:
Employee:	Date:

Conclusion

As you've seen, performance management embodies multiple processes in order to plan an ongoing supportive and collaborative journey for you and your staff. Taking the time to layout a clear roadmap of expectations, goals, activities, and timelines creates a healthier and more productive work environment for everyone.

With the journey planned, the next phase is to "walk the walk" in order to achieve the performance aspirations laid out in the roadmaps. Part Two of this module guides supervisors on positive ways to manage employees' performance –having conversations, holding them accountable, documenting interactions, and conducting annual reviews.

Supervisor Success Series

Performance management involves creating a work environment in which people are motivated and trusted to perform to the best of their abilities. For more insights into the holistic environment, see the other two modules in the Supervisor Success series:

- [Encouraging Motivation in the Workplace](#)
- [Managing Conflict for Supervisor Success](#)