

Performance Objectives Made Easy



By Joan Henshaw

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About the Author



Joan Henshaw has been working as a management trainer, consultant and coach for the past 15 years. She works with business owners, managers, team leaders and supervisors helping them to develop their effectiveness in managing and improving employee performance

She specialises in helping her clients to refine and improve the way they motivate their staff, and specifically how they motivate their staff to high performance using performance objectives

She has worked in a wide range of industries – from financial services to security services and manufacturing to museums. She works with businesses of all sizes from major blue chip companies to small business enterprises and with large public sector organisations. Her clients are based both in the UK and worldwide.

Joan is the author and presenter of the *10 Minute Management Toolkit* – an online management training video series - visit www.Managing-Employee-Performance.com for more details.

She is also the author of '*Instant Performance Objectives. 200 Performance Objectives and How to Use Them*', a ground breaking eBook she created specifically to help managers, business owners, supervisors and team leaders in the workplace. For more details visit: www.Performance-Objectives.com

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Introduction

Performance objectives are an amazingly effective tool for improving employee performance and employee job satisfaction.

They make managing employee performance not only more effective - but much, much easier.



They're a tool that managers, just like you, can use again and again – not just for improving and managing performance but also for:

- improving career development discussions
- effective employee training and process improvement

In short, they're *dynamite!!*

But, it's fair to say, identifying the **right** performance objectives and then writing those objectives in clear, action focused language is very time consuming, difficult and (let's face it) sometimes downright boring! You may find it's often one of those jobs that –although important – just never gets done.

This means you'll be missing out on a great management resource... and that's exactly why I created this 100% FREE report just for you! But, before we get into the 'how' of identifying and writing performance objectives let's start by getting clear on the 'what' and the 'why'

Just what are 'performance objectives'?



Performance objectives are simple written descriptions of what good performance in the job looks like; performance related to the 'what' of the job – the quantity, quality and time elements – and to the 'how' of the job – the behaviors.

Your employees **need to know** exactly what they need to do in order to help your organization meet its goal – and performance objectives will help you do just that.

In fact, you absolutely must understand performance objectives so you can identify and define clearly what good performance for your employee's job role.

I'd like to share some interesting research with you, so you can really appreciate how performance objectives can and will improve employee performance and job satisfaction.

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So why are performance objectives so important?

Research shows us that:

1. When employees have clear objectives with effective measures their performance improves by over 30%. Now, imagine what a difference 10%, 20% or even 30% improvement in performance would mean you to YOUR results, YOUR team and YOUR business? An awful lot, I would imagine!
2. Team members who know *what's expected* of them are found to be both more productive and profitable with higher satisfaction ratings than those who don't.
3. Employees who reported feeling lack of any real commitment to their job, gave the main reason for this as not knowing what was expected of them.

Can you see why performance objective are the easiest way to help your employees understand what is expected of them?

In short, they improve performance... of the employee and of the business. Not only that, they also improve employee motivation and job satisfaction. And there's more...



So what about you as the Manager?

A couple of key points:

- ❖ Getting clearer on what you want from your employees, means you'll get more of what you need from them. Don't make the mistake many business owners and managers make by assuming your employees know what's expected of them. Perhaps they should... but they often don't.
- ❖ Your employees will struggle to give you what you want if they are unclear of your objectives. This causes so much frustration in the workplace, time and again we hear unhappy employees say, *"I just want to know what my boss wants from me. Why doesn't he/she just tell me?"*
- ❖ By agreeing on performance objectives with your employees you're putting the foundation stones in place to ensure effective employee management. Without them you'll struggle to give your employees the feedback they want and indeed, need (and tell us they want a lot more of).

OK, hopefully you've got a better idea of the 'what' and the 'why' in using performance objectives to improve your employee performance and job satisfaction.

Let's now look at how you can use them make managing people a whole lot easier for yourself.

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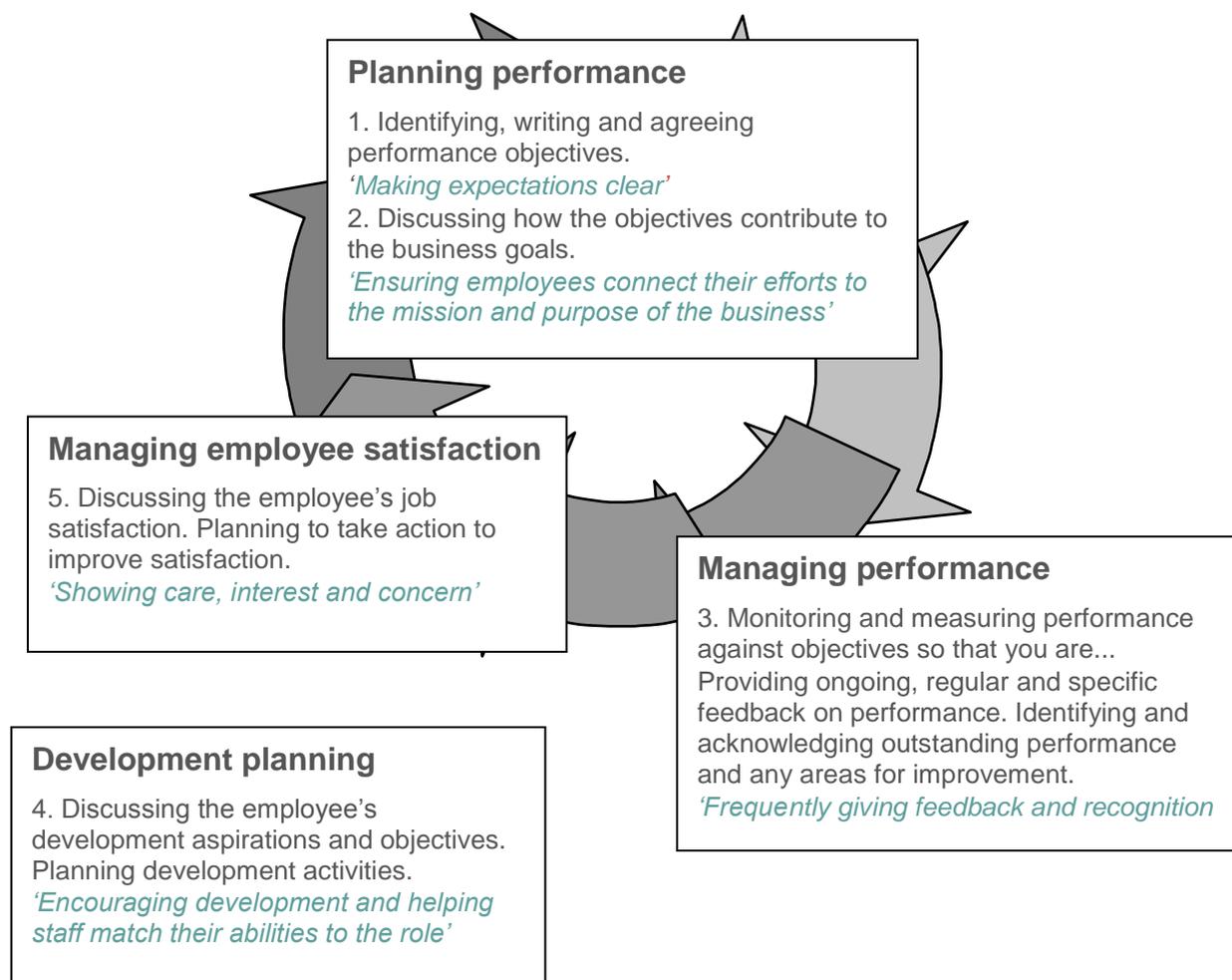
Using Performance Objectives as the Foundation of Effective Management

Managing people's performance is so much easier when you apply a structured and planned approach – an approach based on research and best practice on what 'effectively managed' actually means, which is:

- ✓ Making your expectations of your employees clear
- ✓ Helping employees connect their efforts to the mission and purpose of your business
- ✓ Frequently giving feedback and recognition
- ✓ Encouraging development and helping employees match their abilities to their role
- ✓ Showing care, interest and concern for your employees

A simple approach is to visualise our description of 'effectively managed' as a step by step management system:

The effective management system



What you can see from our model is how performance objectives are the foundation of effective management. By planning to use performance objectives as part of a structured management approach you make the whole issue of managing people's performance (and improving their job satisfaction) much easier

But of course, we are still left with the issue of the amount of time, effort and energy it takes to identify and write performance objectives. Let's move on to look at my top tips for

- Saving time
- Saving effort and energy

You can find out how to monitor and measure performance against objectives and how to provide on-going, regular and specific feedback on performance in my e-book titled '*Instant Performance Objectives*' by visiting www.performance-objectives.com

Tip #1: Only use performance objectives that will significantly improve performance

Many managers and business owners make the mistake of assuming they have to be applied to each and every part of the employee's job role.

They don't... in fact; the best way to use performance objectives is to focus only on those that will improve employee and business performance.

Here's a way to identify those objectives:



The 4-Step Process

Step 1

Take a blank sheet of paper and write down as many answers as you can think of to this question: "*What do I want from the people I manage?*"

Feeling stuck?

Have a look at these 'attributes' provided my business owners and managers I've worked with previously:

Examples of attributes managers would like from their employees:

- *Good interpersonal skills*
- *Meets targets*
- *Works well under pressure*
- *Great with clients*

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- *Follows procedure*
- *Meets deadlines*
- *Accurate work*
- *Team worker*
- *Open to change*
- *Good time management*
- *Solution focused*
- *Creative*

Step #2

Now make a list for each one of your employees and delete any attribute the employee is already demonstrating to the standard you are satisfied with.

Step #3

You should now be left with the list of the attributes your employees are NOT currently demonstrating. In short, you need something from your employee that they are not currently giving you.

Step #4

For each attribute left on your list ask yourself this question, *“Have I clearly described to my employee what I mean by this attribute?”*



Say, for example, you still have *‘Good interpersonal skills’* on your list for a particular employee, you need to ask yourself if you have clearly described to him/her what you mean by *‘good interpersonal skills’*?

If you still have *‘Meets targets’* on your list, have you specifically described those targets?

Lack of clarity could be the problem

Lack of clarity on expectations is the single most important reason why employees don’t perform to the standard their managers require.

This is why writing and agreeing performance objectives for these *‘attributes’* are so vital when you are seeking to improve employee performance.

Now you have identified those attributes you are not seeing demonstrated by the employee.

You can use specific performance objectives to clarify your expectations with them and to seriously improve their performance. Let’s look at an example.

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Here's an example of an incorrect and a correct way to clarify expectations:

Let's say for this exercise you want your employee to be a better 'team worker'

Scenario 1 (incorrect way)

You say to Jack, your employee, *"I want you to be a better team worker Jack, to support the team more, to be more of a team player."*

Jack replies: *"Err, OK"* (whilst thinking – "What on earth does that mean?")

Result: Nothing happens – no improvement in Jack's performance

Scenario 2 (correct way)

Conversation between you and Jack:

"Hi Jack, I'd like to have a chat with you about the way we are currently working together as a team and to explore how we might improve this. As I'm sure you know we've got some big challenges facing us as a business including increasing our client retention rates.

It seems to me that if we can improve the way we work together as a team, we can improve our efficiency so that we improve the service we give to our clients, and so improve staff retention.

As a start point, I think we need to understand what effective team work looks like in practice. So I'd like to share an example of the performance objectives I've got here with you, so that we can agree what you need to do differently..."

EXAMPLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES for 'TEAM WORK'

Consistently demonstrate:

1. You can explain the team objectives and your role in meeting those objectives
2. Meeting your own objectives
3. Identifying when other team members need help or assistance and offering that help and assistance
4. Full participation in team meetings and events by:
 - Preparing for team meetings and events – reading the agenda, looking for areas where you can contribute to the discussion, researching (if appropriate) e.g. looking for data the team would find useful
 - Contributing to team meetings and events – talking through ideas at the appropriate time (when the agenda item is reached or when asked), making points clearly, checking that other team members have understood what has been said
 - Demonstrating listening - not interrupting, building on others ideas, asking questions

5. You take action to identify ways in which the team can work together more effectively
6. You identify and share knowledge and expertise that other team members can use to improve performance
7. Effective use of team resources – time, knowledge, expertise, physical resources (materials, equipment etc.) AND WHEN
8. Any feedback from your team members is positive

Can you see the difference having 'team work' described as a range of performance objectives can make? How you can achieve the level of clarity with your employee that improves performance and satisfaction?

Do you see how you can use a range of objectives to make the discussion with your employee a collaborative one?

It's a common misunderstanding that you need to impose performance objectives – you don't - if you have a range of objectives you and your employee can work with (see Tip 3 for more information on this).

The simple principle here is that your employees can't give you what they don't know you want. The whole purpose of performance objectives is to ensure that your employees know exactly what they need to do.

You can find a full, comprehensive list of over 200 Performance Objectives (describing attributes) in my instantly downloadable eBook ***Instant Performance Objectives*** by visiting: www.performance-objectives.com which includes a wide range of objectives for:

- Change management
- Client management
- Interpersonal skills
- Management skills
- Organisational skills
- Personal Effectiveness
- Recruitment Skills
- Team Work



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