Optimizing Performance
while Creating a Culture of Accountability

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Polling Question – #1……?

How Often do you Conduct Reviews / Evaluations of your Staff

a. Every 6 months
b. Quarterly
c. Annually
d. Other – please provide

WHY do we conduct Reviews?

What is the purpose of the evaluation process?

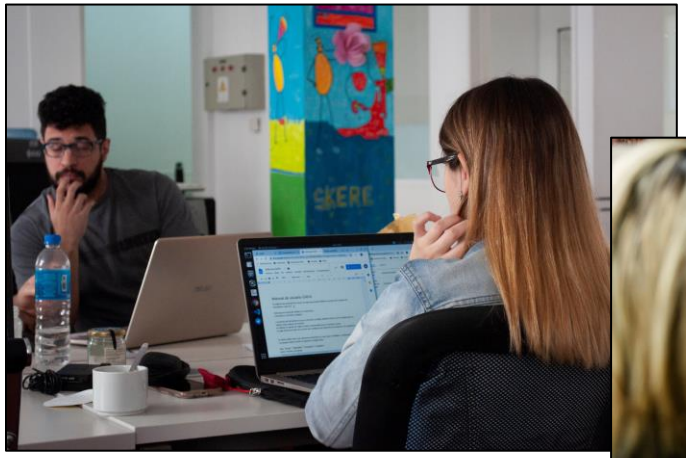
What are Some of the Benefits of your current Review Process?

- Justify raises given
- Determine if the staff member should be promoted
- Identify (Rectify) areas for improvement
- Shareholders to be informed that staff are doing their job
- What else?

What are some detriments of your current Review Process?

- Cumbersome
- Time Consuming
- Ambiguous
- Political
- Ineffectual
- Often skewed
- Creates distracting tension and stress
- It doesn’t always result in change or Improvements in terms of Performance

Comments I honestly hear (often)!



We need you to “do better”, okay?

Why can’t people just do their job?

What exactly do you want from me?

Well …. Let me TELL YOU!

and then I'll **REMIND YOU** (regularly)

… and *then* I'll **REWARD YOU** when you get it right (so you keep it up)!

and everyone will know how well you're doing and you'll feel great about working here…!

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

There are Five (5) Key Areas of Focus for professional service providers:

1. Knowledge & Technical Expertise
2. Client Service & Management
3. Marketing & Business Development
4. Staff Management & Development
5. Leadership & Personal Development

How to Achieve the Goal of Optimal Performance

Create an Impetus for Positive Change & REAL Improvement

Define, Explain, Demonstrate what is wanted – then Rate the Progress

Tie this process to a reward system – i.e. Compensation $

Educate & Inspire all at the firm – Ongoing – through Sharing

Knowledge & Technical Expertise

Possesses deep knowledge of the needs of the clientele and demonstrates a strong ability to provide the services that meet these needs in a satisfactory, timely and accurate manner. Partners develop their skill levels in service / practice areas on-going and share this knowledge – through training of staff internally, advising clients of the firm, with external professionals (i.e., prospective clients and referral sources) and through marketing efforts. Partners do this in compliance with the firm's policies and procedures and pay attention to administrative obligations.

Client Service & Management

Client management includes nurturing relationships with key clients, meeting high realization / profitability of engagements, exceed in client retention, timely billing and collections, scheduling of staff on engagements, and client transitions, as appropriate. Partners do this in compliance with the firm's policies and procedures, paying attention to administrative obligations and focus on growth and improvement in all areas.

Marketing & Business Development

Marketing and Business Development includes obtaining new business, identifying additional services from existing clients, and participation in practice development efforts and activities (these may include involvement / attendance at professional events or community activities, speaking engagements / webinars, publication of articles / blog posts, social media, and development / nurturing relationships with referral sources).

Management & Staff Development

This includes selection of staff on engagements, conducting pre and post engagement assessments / reviews on a regular basis, delegating whenever possible, maintaining a high sense of awareness for improvements in efficiencies in all areas. Partners support the firm in the following areas: recruiting talent and retaining talent – via training, coaching, advising, or mentoring. Partners should educate and engage staff and delegate to others as much as possible. Partners effectively communicate within their department or firm and are highly organized and focused on improving processes and efficiencies, as appropriate.

Leadership & Personal Development

Partners exhibit leadership qualities which have a positive impact on staff, educating and inspiring them as they live and breathe the firm's mission and exemplify its core values. Partners are self-motivated *and* motivate others, too. They exude a positive attitude with a mindset that is solution-oriented and are committed to on-going self-improvement through continuing education, goal setting / goal meeting / goal exceeding, and possess an ability to make decisions, clearly define mutual expectations that define success, and are responsible for supporting a culture of accountability.

That's a LOT!!!! (Right?!)

CPA firms who are going to thrive will learn that delegation –(especially of things that you are not qualified for) is key …. For firms who are growing this is a vital best practice …

DELEGATION is KEY –

Staffing a leadership team – HR, Marketing, Firm Administration – is what is needed.

A System of Accountability - Ongoing

It starts with the Job Descriptions … review them and then create questions that keep the focus and core values at the forefront of everyone's mind.

Job Descriptions clearly outline expectations in the 5 key areas, defining:

- **Purpose**
- **Areas of Focus**
- **Responsibilities**
- **Qualifications**
- **Reporting Mechanism**

I can offer a sample job description …

Sample Survey Questions …

Knowledge / Technical Expertise

Explain who (and how) you have trained others internally or externally – this can include internal CPE, external speaking engagements or other form of communicating technical expertise – writing, posting, teaching, etc.

Can you provide a testimony from someone else who has specifically learned from you in a way that has helped them in their career?

How can you demonstrate that you have elevated your knowledge and/or technical expertise in your service area or practice group?

What are you most proud of in terms of your increased knowledge / technical expertise of late?

What is the next topic for learning / continued education that you have identified and why?

Sample Survey Questions …

Client Service & Management

Please share your successful improvement in profitability by relaying #s, %, or $s associated with improved realization / productivity (as opposed to billable hours, please).

Please share any favorable testimonials received from current clients.

Please list any additional services provided to current clients.

Please list any prospects who were referred by current clients (regardless of whether they were won or not).

Please list any issues encountered with clients and why / how a resolution was achieved.

Sample Survey Questions …

Marketing & Business Development

Please relay any information on increased fees to current clients (include $, # or %).

Please relay information on all prospects you have met with and explain whether won or not (and why, if known).

Please relay and account for any new revenues – including service/s provided and referral source.

Please list any marketing activities / events with current clients – such as proactive communication / information, invitations, introductions, etc.

Which new relationships have been developed by your attendance / involvement in community efforts, civic or professional associations and / or expansion of current client relationships?

Sample Survey Questions …

Management & Staff Development

Please provide examples of how staff members improved and grew under your leadership; is there a delegation super story to share?

Can you provide an example of how your team / department was able to improve efficiency, streamline efforts or become more organized?

Can you relay specific success stories / examples that resulted from your successful management efforts?

Can you provide examples that might illustrate how your team / department understands their roles within the group and works well together?

What are the goals that were set for your team, department or niche group and how have you progressed toward meeting that goal/s? Were any obstacles presented during the process, and how were they overcome?

Sample Survey Questions …

Leadership / Personal Development

Share a story of how you were able to influence a staff member to better understand and elevate their roles to meet – or exceed – previously established expectations that defined their success.

Can you share how you have personally assisted with someone else's success – internally or externally?

Do you have an example that highlights your focus on growth or improvement – for yourself, someone else or a process / procedure, etc.?

How instrumental have you been in achieving a personal or team goal? Please explain.

Can you share an example of how you held yourself – or another – specifically accountable for something – and what significance it had on the outcome?

Polling Question - #2……?

Ideally, who should be responsible for holding the professionals at your firm accountable (so that the leadership team is comfortable that work is getting done accurately and efficiently and staff are developing into future leaders of the firm)?

a. Partners
b. Director of Human Resources
c. Firm Administrator / COO, CEO
d. Professionals
e. Other (please specify)

Answer (in my opinion) is “d”

SPECIFIC Example of mini-Survey for Tax Manager

Survey Questions are taken from the Job Description

The Tax Manager helps to ensure that client expectations are met to ensure satisfaction in all working relationships. (Client Management)

Please relay a recent example of how you ensured / met a client's expectations to their satisfaction.

The Tax Manager serves as a member of the firm's salesforce and may be called upon to help promote the firm and develop and nurture a network of clients, potential clients, and referral sources. (Mktg / Bus Dev)

How have you recently contributed to marketing or business development to try and attain a new client? Or additional business from a client?

SPECIFIC Example of mini-Survey for Tax Manager

Survey Questions are taken from the Job Description

The Tax Manager has an important role in the training and development of the accounting staff. (Mgmt / Staff Dev)

Please relay an example of how you have served in a role of training staff in this last quarter.

The Tax Manager will provide updates to Senior Managers and Partners on a mutually agreed upon basis, on the following metrics:

How are you communicating / justifying any scheduling changes regarding staff to the senior staff on jobs? (Mgmt / Staff Dev)

Have any clients informed you they will be using another accountant in the future – and, if so, do you know why? (Mgmt / Staff Dev)

SPECIFIC Example of mini-Survey for Audit Manager

Survey Questions are taken from the Job Description

The Audit Manager is responsible for overseeing the process of audits, making recommendations on policies, and ensuring that the organization fulfills obligations of compliance. (Knowledge / expertise)

Have you made a recommendation on a policy or procedure change to meet with compliance or streamline efficiency in the last two months? If so, please explain…

The Audit Manager offers audit solutions proactively and is trusted to handle confidential issues. (Client mgmt / Staff dev)

Without revealing details, can you demonstrate how you applied finesse in handling a confidential situation – internally (with staff) or externally (with a client)?

IDEA – Incentivized Compensation

Conceptually, each of the 5 categories are to be gauged for competency, as follows:

Poor
Fair
Good
Very Good
Excellent

Simply, 5 key areas of importance are rated in 5 tiers.

CPAs love to take this “report card” approach and create convoluted scoring systems for each … ! Ranges of points which equate to a $ amount

The BEST part of this system is that ALL are poised to achieve high scores.

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IDEA – Incentivized Compensation

Some of my clients have used this approach successfully:

Example (Client Mgmt): I maintain knowledge and understanding of our clients and their industries and how outside environmental factors affect them (social, political, economic).

Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Agree

An example of this is:

_____

_____

Example (Client Mgmt): I manage my time effectively – often managing multiple tasks throughout each day.

Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Agree

An example of this is:

_____

_____

IDEA – Incentivized Compensation

Some of my clients have used this approach successfully:

Example (Staff Dev): I am mindful to provide work at an only-partner level, delegating responsibility and authority to others appropriately.

Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Agree

An example of this is:

_____

_____

Example (Staff Dev): I consistently train and mentor employees, offering constructive feedback, sharing successes and giving credit to others.

Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral Somewhat Agree Agree

An example of this is:

_____

_____

IDEA – Incentivized Compensation

You can apply this directly to compensation - conceptually:

KISS it

Keep
It
Simple
Sweetheart

PreKindergarten Report Card

Student Name: _____ Teacher: _____ Year: _____

READING READINESS	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.
Identifies rhyming words				
Identifies uppercase and lowercase letters				
Identifies sounds of all consonants				
Identifies sounds of short vowels				
Listens for sounds at the beginning of words				

Names the following letters:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Identifies the sounds of the following letters:

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

MATH CONCEPTS	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.
Counts by rote to (#)				
Counts objects to (#)				
Demonstrates ordinal words				
Matches objects one-to-one				
Makes equal sets				
Makes sets with objects to (#)				
Classifies objects				
Creates patterns				
Matches numerals to sets				

Shapes:

Recognizes: ● ■ ▬ ▲
Names: ● ■ ▬ ▲
Reproduces: ● ■ ▬ ▲

Recognizes numerals:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Identifies colors:

red yellow blue brown orange
green purple pink black white

FINE MOTOR SKILLS	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.
Traces lines accurately				
Uses pencil with control				
Correctly writes first name				
Can use scissors accurately				

ART / MUSIC / P.E.	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.
Participates in musical activities				
Participates in art activities				
Participates in P.E. activities				

BIBLE	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.
Bible reading daily				
Memorizes Bible verses				

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.
Listens while others speak				
Follows directions				
Works well independently				
Puts forth best effort				
Attentive				
Completes work within reasonable time				
Cleans up after work/play				
Obeys rules				
Keeps hands to self				
Is quiet when necessary				
Cares for materials				
Shares				
Respects others				
Accepts correction cheerfully				
Has a positive attitude				
Displays self-control				
Displays self-confidence				

GRADING CODE: A=all of the time; M=most of the time; S=some of the time; N=not yet; not marked means concept has not been introduced.

Contact Lisa Tierney, CLSC

To arrange for one complimentary coaching session

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