Download # 16

STRATEGY EXECUTION HEROES

Write a great performance story

An example

This is a real-life example of a performance story with regard to the individual performance management cycle, the bottom part of the 8.

As you will see, it's written in the first person ('I') in an instructional style.

Content

Introduction

Throughout the performance management cycle, I will have two meetings with my manager.

The first meeting consists of two parts:

- The performance review at the end of the year during which I discuss the achievement of my objectives as defined during the planning conversation with my manager.
- The planning conversation during which I discuss with my manager my individual objectives for the year to come.

The second meeting is the mid-year review. This meeting takes place six months after the planning meeting and is used to review the objectives in the event of a changing context or pre-conditions that have changed during the first half of the year.

The planning and review conversations are described below, but will take place during the same meeting.

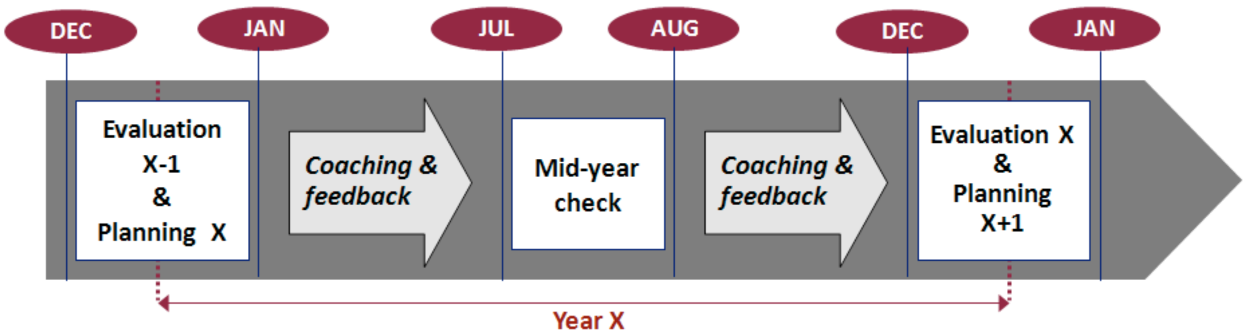

Figure: Planning individual performance management cycle

Part 1: The planning meeting

A. Preparation

The time for my planning meeting is here. I will have to make a number of agreements with my manager. The planning conversation is part of a longer meeting during which we first carry out a review of last year's objectives. I have to ensure that the review is well finalised before we can start the planning conversation.

What should I do to prepare for the planning meeting?

Prepare my objectives: With regard to my individual objectives, I will have to prepare two kinds of objectives: business (1) and leadership (2).

- The business objectives indicate 'what' I want to achieve in the coming year. I will use the objectives defined for my business line in the light of the strategy translation or cascade exercise and the budget overview, as an input for my individual objectives. I verify how I can translate these objectives into objectives for my team (for which I am responsible) or for myself. In addition, I verify whether my management team has defined certain business objectives that I need to include in my own individual objectives.

- The leadership objectives consist of two types:

    - Firstly, objectives that support the realisation of our performance barometer. For these objectives, I will use the following elements as an input:
        - The results of the barometer scan that are further specified into departmental objectives in the strategy translation exercise.
        - The performance management audit.
        - Other surveys/audits/etc. that are related to the barometer themes.

    - Secondly, individual development objectives that are relevant to my business context and role or for my individual development needs (to be able to achieve my business objectives). I can use the following input for these objectives/
        - Personal points of attention regarding the further development of my competences that were identified during last year's review.
        - The comparison between my actual profile and the overall leadership competences.
        - The comparison between my actual competences and the competences I will need to achieve my business objectives.

      Remark: I also indicate how I will develop these competences (e.g. training, working on projects, internal mobility etc.).

Tips: for all the objectives – both business and leadership – that I will determine, I take the following elements into account:

- I limit the number of objectives: business objectives to a minimum of two and a maximum of five and leadership objectives to a total of three, of which one is an individual development objective.
- I make sure that every objective can be verified at the end of the year according to what extent (cf. scores 1-to-5) they have been achieved.
- I introduce a start and end date for every objective.
- I define a target for every objective.

- I give each objective a weight, with the help of the performance grid available in the e-tool, that was defined for the new reward policy.

Prepare the style of the conversation: The planning meeting is a two-way dialogue. I will assume as much responsibility as possible and explain the objectives that I thoroughly prepared. I will be receptive to the comments and suggestions of my manager. Together, we will attempt to reach an agreement on my objectives.

B. The planning meeting itself

The planning conversation is a *two-way dialogue*. I take as much initiative as possible, but am open to comments and suggestions from my manager.

Remarks:

- Since the planning conversation takes place during the same meeting as last year's performance review, I will make sure that the performance review is definitively finalised before starting the planning conversation. This means that I am ready to determine new objectives. If I feel that this is not the case, I will request postponement of the planning meeting.
- The results of the performance review of last year's objectives are a useful input for my planning meeting. I will consider the following questions:
  - Are there some objectives that I did not (completely) achieve last year? If these objectives are still relevant, I might have to include them in my objectives for this year.
  - Did I reach certain leadership objectives for which a continuation is recommended? (e.g. basic vs. advanced skills).
  - Were some objectives badly formulated or irrelevant? I will have to take this into account for this year's objectives.
- After I have explained the objectives and competences for development that I have prepared, I listen to my manager's feedback. We will discuss these further to then finalise the objectives and competences, the aim being consensus and commitment.

C. To fix the objectives

I introduce the objectives in the e-tool. This means that I fill out the following elements:

- Category (business, leadership).
- Description of the objective.
- Targets.
- Start and end dates.
- Weight: to be determined by use of the performance grid.

As soon as my manager has validated the objectives, they will be considered final and formalised.

Part 2: The mid-year review

During the year, I discuss with my manager the way I am working under my own initiative or that of my manager's. This will happen regularly and usually informally.

In 2010, the purpose of the mid-year review is to verify with my manager if my objectives have to be modified because of changes in the context or changes to the pre-conditions relating to the achievement of my objectives.

A. Preparation

In the period after my planning meeting, I ***evaluate my experience*** in relation to the different objectives I have to achieve. I evaluate every objective separately and ask myself if any need to be changed.

Prepare the style of the conversation: As recommended for the planning meeting, I will try to assume as much responsibility as possible during the mid-year review, while listening carefully to my manager's comments and suggestions.

I will write down my experiences per objective and any necessary changes for discussion with my manager during the mid-year review.

B. The mid-year review itself

The mid-year review is a ***two-way dialogue***. I discuss the status of my objectives with my manager. We take a look at the agreements made during the planning meeting. This gives me the opportunity to highlight problems I might have with certain objectives because the context or pre-conditions have changed or if I have questions. If necessary, we change the objectives.

C. To fix the changes

I introduce the main remarks that were made during the mid-year review in the field 'intermediate results' of the e-tool. If certain objectives need changing, I modify them in the e-tool for validation by my manager.

Part 3: The evaluation

In the evaluation meeting, I discuss with my manager the extent to which I realised the objectives agreed upon at the beginning of the year. If the planning and review meetings went smoothly, the evaluation should not bring any surprises. This meeting is part of a longer conversation, the first part dedicated to the evaluation of last year's objectives and the second to the definition of the coming year's objectives.

A. Preparation

Self-assessment: To prepare the evaluation meeting with my manager, I make a self-assessment of the extent to which I have achieved my objectives. I fill this out in the e-tool. I document my assessment as far as possible with concrete facts or examples. For the business objectives, I will refer to facts (e.g. sales volume, milestones realised). For the leadership objectives and the competences to develop, I will refer to concrete initiatives that I have brought to a favourable conclusion (e.g. training) or to examples of behaviour that I displayed. If I wish, I add a final score to my self-assessment, taking into account the weight of every objective.

Prepare the style of the conversation: The evaluation meeting is also a two-way dialogue, just like the planning and mid-year review meetings. This means that I will take initiative and be receptive to my manager's comments.

B. The evaluation meeting itself

The result of the evaluation meeting should never be a surprise since discussions between my manager and myself took place in a formal (mid-year review) or informally throughout the year.

During the evaluation meeting, I will provide the necessary input by means of the pre-prepared self-assessment which my manager will complete, confirm or refute. It is important that the focus of the conversation is the achievement of my objectives and development areas and not on determining a final score.

C. To fix the evaluation results

My manager has to introduce the results of the evaluation into the e-tool, to which s/he will also add the scores from the evaluation meeting.