



Assessing Performance Problems



When clear expectations have been set, but the employee's performance still falls short of expectations, you must reiterate expectations before considering more serious action, including discipline. Clearly articulating the problem is the first step before considering more serious action.

What is Causing the Problem?

Identifying the cause of a performance problem is key to the performance management process. These include:

- Lack of knowledge or skill
- Lack of motivation
- Performance obstacles
- Inability to perform
- Unclear job expectations

What Type of Problem?

There seems to be no end to the variety of performance problems. While the specifics of each situation differ, performance problems can generally be broken down into one or more of the following categories:

- **Execution:** This is the employee who is simply not doing his or her job functions well (or well enough). For example, a person hired to be an IT support person that cannot answer most questions from users.
- **Conduct:** This is the employee who is acting out. Often the disruptive employee does the core job duties well but makes everyone else's life miserable. An example is the employee who snaps at co-workers or challenges every decision a leader makes.
- **Guidelines:** The guidelines our organization has established that an employee must follow (e.g., attendance, dress policy, etc.). Often violating the guidelines will also fall under the execution and conduct category. However, violating guidelines can be dealt with as a separate problem. For example, if the organization has a "no OT" policy, but an employee still works extra hours. The employee may actually be showing exemplary effort, however, he/she has still violated a policy.

Describing the Performance Gap

Leaders must be able to articulate, very specifically, the answer to these two questions. Once identified, communicate in a 1 on 1 with the employee and reiterate via email.

1) What do you want the employee to do?

2) What is the employee actually doing?