People Management For Line Managers
Resource Book

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Foreword

Since its inception, People In Aid has been bringing together agencies working in aid and development with the overall aim of improving the management and support of their personnel – people who often face difficult living and working conditions for the sake of others.

This handbook has been produced to accompany the People In Aid workshop entitled People Management for Line Managers.

The book and the workshop focus on raising awareness of people management and on developing skills. There is particular attention to responsibilities that are shared between line managers and the organisation’s Human Resources function.

One of the guiding resources for selecting which line management skills to cover in this book and in the workshop is the 2007 research by People in Aid: ‘Behaviours which lead to effective performance in humanitarian response’. The significant behaviours described in the research are applicable to line managers in both the humanitarian and development sectors.

The target audience is line managers who have received little or no formal management training, and who work in program country teams, technical teams, and regional offices or in HQ roles. This handbook is suitable for line managers, in any function, who are accountable for people or teams who report to them. Workshop facilitation takes into account current issues, which have an impact on the line manager’s people management role, including the range of change initiatives and the diversity of organisation scale and structure in the sector.

The main aim of the workshop is to provide a selection of practical tools for participants to use so that they can manage people and processes more effectively in their own organisational settings. These tools are structured around the line manager’s role, skills and impact in people management, building on a management cycle that includes planning, recruitment, deployment, managing performance, development and learning, and managing transition.

The other principal aim is for line managers to be able to have informed conversations with the HR function (whatever size) in their own organisations so that those areas of responsibility are clear to all concerned – including employees.

This resource has been produced to support your work on fulfilling your agency’s commitment to Principle 3 of People In Aid’s Code.
Learning outcomes

By the end of the workshop participants will be better equipped to:

- Understand and manage the main employee management steps from planning and recruitment through to transition or departure
- Use the skills and tools required across these people management steps: for example giving and receiving feedback, addressing and supporting performance, dealing with difficult situations, and enabling change
- Work effectively with their own organisation’s HR function and HR processes

Managing your own learning and development

A line manager’s responsibility is to the organisation’s goals, to his or her team, and also to his or her own development and well-being.

An assumption in the facilitation of this workshop is that each of us is responsible for managing our own learning and development.

Learning and development inevitably involves making changes, if development is to be practical rather than theoretical. These changes may be in terms of using processes, but the really significant changes are to do with your behaviour as a line manager.

We work in complex settings and there are many blockages to changing our behaviour and working effectively on improving our people management – as well as opportunities.

It is worth being realistic about how you can take action to develop your line manager skills, in terms of ‘being willing’ – or ‘being able’ – or ‘being allowed’ to make changes that improve your people management.

Authors

People In Aid worked with experienced independent consultants Charles Whitehead and Maggie Pankhurst to produce these guidelines. They have drawn on a wide range of materials generously provided by People In Aid members and other agencies.
About People In Aid

The sector’s central resource on human resources management, People In Aid, is a global network of relief and development agencies. We help organisations whose goal is the relief of poverty and suffering to enhance the impact they make through better people management and support.

We believe that good management and support of staff go hand in hand with quality and effectiveness in relief and development work. The relief and development sector relies on the expertise and experience of its personnel. People In Aid provides support to agencies wishing to improve their human resources management.

As an organisation founded by the sector to promote good practice in human resources management, we:
- undertake research
- produce publications
- offer conferences, workshops and training
- produce policy outlines
- publish benchmarking studies and handbooks
- produce case studies
- facilitate the exchange of information on people management matters
- arrange networking opportunities

The Code of Good Practice

We also provide full support to members of People In Aid in implementing the ‘People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the support and management of aid personnel’, an internationally recognised management tool that enables organisations to improve the way in which they manage their people.

The Code can be used in your organisation to:
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of your existing human resources policies
- provide a framework for the development of HR Strategy
- identify where improvements can be made
- demonstrate to key stakeholders that your people are central to the achievement of your mission.

Implementation of the Code is based on a process of social audit, whereby an independent assurance process certifies agencies with a quality mark.

To access some of our resources, please contact us:

Email: info@peopleinaid.org   Website: www.peopleinaid.org
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Part A: People management in the relief and development sector

This first section focuses on the line manager as a people manager, particularly in the relief and development sector. Organisations in this sector have a great range of scale, goals, working approaches and governance.

Line managers are working in a sector that is experiencing change and adaptation.

In the following section we also cover one of the key organisational relationships for a line manager - the modern Human Resources function. Just as there is variation in organisational scale in the sector, so this function may be covered by one or two people in one location, or by teams of specialists dispersed around the globe.

There is scope to improve the clarity of ownership for some elements of the ‘people management cycle’ where the perception or ownership of practices can be confused between ‘Human Resources’ and line managers.

The sections in this part of the resource book cover:

- The line manager as a people manager
- The modern Human Resources function
- The people-management cycle
1. The line manager as a people manager

Managing People
Most managers’ jobs consist of three parts: doing things, managing things and managing and leading people. Most managers did not set out to become managers. They started their working life as someone who was “doing something” e.g. nursing, teaching and then moved on to being a manager of things and then of people.

For many managers the part of their work that they find most satisfying (and easy) is the doing things. The managing things e.g. budgets, plans may be less satisfying but not too challenging whereas managing and leading people may be less satisfying and also very challenging and uncomfortable. For this reason many managers remain busy doing things and fail to give enough time to the management aspects of their role particularly the managing and leading people role.

Managers are often resistant to undertaking their managing and leading people role because it is:
- not what they do best
- not what they were trained for
- time consuming
- difficult to see the benefits. It often feels as if you are “doing something for HR” and not for the improvement of your own team or organisation
- uncomfortable dealing with people and particularly in difficult situations

John Adair’s ‘action-centred leadership’ task-team-individual model
Leadership is based on three overlapping circles of needs, each of which needs line manager attention:
Using the task-team-individual model in practice

Think about the aspects of performance necessary for success in your own situation, and incorporate local relevant factors into the model to create your own interpretation. This will give you a useful management framework:

Your responsibilities as a manager for achieving the task are:
- identify aims and vision and direction
- identify resources, people, processes, systems, tools, budgets
- create the plan to achieve the task – deliverables, measures, timescales, strategy and tactics
- establish responsibilities, objectives, accountabilities and measures, by agreement and delegation
- set standards, quality, time and reporting parameters
- control and maintain activities against parameters
- monitor and maintain overall performance against plan
- report on progress towards the group’s aim
- review, re-assess, adjust plan, methods and targets as necessary

Your responsibilities as a manager for the team are:
- establish, agree, communicate standards of performance and behaviour
- establish style, culture, approach of the group
- monitor and maintain discipline, ethics, integrity and focus on objectives
- anticipate and resolve group conflict, struggles or disagreements
- assess and change as necessary the balance and composition of the group
- develop team-working, cooperation, morale and team-spirit
- encourage and motivate the group the team towards objectives and aims
- identify, develop and agree team- and project-leadership roles
- enable and ensure effective internal and external group communications
- identify and meet group training needs
- give feedback to the group on overall progress; consult with, and seek feedback and input from the group
- develop the collective capability of the group – progressively increase group freedom and authority

Your responsibilities as a manager for each individual are:
- understand the team members as individuals – personality, skills, strengths, needs, aims and fears
- assist and support individuals – plans, challenges, highs and lows
- identify and agree appropriate individual responsibilities and objectives
- give recognition and praise to individuals – acknowledge effort
- where appropriate reward individuals with extra responsibility, advancement and status
- identify, develop and utilise each individual’s capabilities and strengths
- train and develop individual team members
- develop individual authority and freedom

Based on Chapman 2000-08
Types of leadership

The line manager operates in an environment where there are diverse uses of the word ‘leadership’. The term describes position, influence or power that can be unrelated to the organisational job role. Some examples of types of leaders:

**The charismatic leader**, who gains influence mainly from strength of personality e.g. Napoleon, Hitler, Churchill. The difficulty with charismatic leadership is that few people possess the exceptional qualities required to transform all around them into willing followers.

**The traditional leader**, whose position is assured by birth, e.g. kings, queens and tribal chiefs. Nelson Mandela is a traditional leader as well as a charismatic leader.

**The situational leader**, whose influence can only be effective by being in the right place at the right time. Someone who is capable of assuming a leadership role in a variety of situations over a period of time. This leader may not be a manager.

**The appointed leader**, whose influence arises directly out of his position, e.g. most managers and supervisors. This is the bureaucratic type of leadership where legitimate power springs from the nature and scope of the position within the hierarchy. The problem here is that although powers of the position may be defined, the jobholder may not be able to implement them because of lack of adequate training or other factors.

**The functional leader**, who secures their leadership position by what he or she does, rather than who they are – for example professional specialists who can have great influence

Line manager’s preferences in terms of ‘sharing power’ with the team

The line manager’s own style preferences are very significant

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Tannenbaum & Schmidt Model of Leadership, 1973

- Where do you see yourself?
- How could this affect your team?
- Where do you see your line manager?
- How does this affect your management style?
Line manager’s style linked to working situation and team maturity

The role that the manager must play varies with the situation which itself is a function of the team maturity and complexity. The manager therefore needs to develop the capability to adopt any of four styles: Manager, Orchestrator, Improviser or Facilitator as the situation warrants.

The diagram provides indicators against each style which can be used to identify the managerial competencies specifically associated with complex situations and the maturity of the team. The question to ask in each case is how can I line manage in a way that will work for our organisational context?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Improviser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad hoc support</td>
<td>Shared leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate reviews, learning, PM</td>
<td>Team coaches and mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach and mentor</td>
<td>Team uses initiative and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely to be involved in day-to-day</td>
<td>Vision created together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates opportunities for trust</td>
<td>High levels of trust and interdependence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Orchestrator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day-to-day workings of team</td>
<td>Sets up systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish basic processes</td>
<td>Sets vision, direction, sense of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on support</td>
<td>Agrees ground rules, ways of working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating, monitoring and reviewing work</td>
<td>Establishes priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agrees communication and governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Builds team capabilities and skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Teams Succeeding in Complexity” Ashridge, 2006
2. The modern Human Resources function

What ‘kind’ of HR do you have in your organisation?

Relief and development organisations have a huge range of sizes and structures.

Some organisations have dedicated Human Resource functions with specialist teams and resources; some organisations have very small teams or even individuals who must act across all the Human Resources roles described below.

For a line manager to work effectively in partnership with Human Resources - and vice versa – it is important for the manager to know the focus of the Human Resources function in their organisation.

For example - is it mainly concerned with achieving ‘Effective Basics’ as in the model below; is the function also acting as a ‘Change Leader’?

Future Strategic Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic HR</th>
<th>Change Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in strategy creation</td>
<td>Build capacity for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure HR practices are aligned</td>
<td>Teambuilding and workgroup dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Business Strategy</td>
<td>Personal leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop the organisation (skills,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future resourcing)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Basics</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create infrastructure by developing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver cost effective administrative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expertise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day-to-Day Operational Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Champion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach managers in people management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to employees and represent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring, consulting, communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Ulrich, 1997

Line Managers and HR working together

“The most carefully thought-through HR strategy is a waste of time unless it is embraced by line managers who have the skills and understanding necessary to engage and motivate employees”

Purcell et al, Understanding the People and Performance Link, Unlocking the Black Box, CIPD, May 2003
3. The people-management cycle

The people management cycle shown below describes the whole range of activities that need to be taken in order to plan for and recruit employees; deploy them in their specific roles; manage them, address their development and learning, and manage their transition – whether that means moving to a new role, or promotion, or departure from the organisation.

This cycle also represents the steps in an employee’s relationship with the organisation.

The line manager is responsible for the people management of employees – that is, for the employees who report to the manager.

The other main stakeholder is the organisation’s Human Resources function, which would play different roles in the different stages of this cycle. That specific HR role is influenced by the organisation’s HR policies and practices, by compliance with local law, and by local and organisational custom. What the HR role looks like in practice is influenced by the scale and scope of the organisation itself: is there an ‘HR team’ of specialists? Is it a small team that needs to multi-task? Is it a remote team?

Other stakeholders influence the activities at different steps of the cycle – for example IT may determine and monitor IT security policies.

The activities and specific elements in this cycle will be specific to your organisation. As a line manager, you need to have a shared understanding with Human Resources (and other stakeholders) about who is responsible for carrying out which activities in this people management cycle.

![People-management cycle](image-url)
**Role clarity between the Human Resources function and line managers**

It is important to recognise the clarity of roles involved in developing and supporting some of the processes that are an integral part of people management – in particular the processes and policies that are developed and supported by the Human Resource function, and correspondingly the activities that are the responsibility of line managers.

For example: the ‘Performance Management System’ would probably be developed for the whole organisation by Human Resources, who might therefore provide formats, deadlines, training, and support record keeping – depending on the size and nature of the organisation. The line manager would be responsible for managing the performance of his or her direct reports – that is not the role of Human Resources.

With the wide range of organisation sizes and structures in the relief and development sector, it is not possible to be prescriptive about precisely who is responsible for different activities in the people management cycle. Line managers should feel confident to ‘ask the right questions’ of Human Resources in order to establish who is responsible for what. To help frame the questions about responsibility or accountability, the ‘RACI’ model below is a useful and practical tool to identify which stakeholders play what roles.

**RACI**

- **Responsible**
  Who is responsible for the delivery of an identified task (who has to ensure that the job gets done, irrespective of other distractions and demands on their time)? The doer.

- **Accountable**
  Who is accountable for the delivery of the identified task (who will lose their job if the task is not delivered)? The decision-maker at the highest level. There should only ever be a single person accountable for a task; no split accountabilities.
  When designing a project team, always tie the accountable person in with the responsible person. If they are the same individual, this is easiest, but this is rarely the case. They (responsible and accountable) have to work closely together, and need an agreed communications loop.

- **Consult**
  Who do you consult in order to get the job done, and remember that while they are consulted, the decision about what gets done remains with the accountable person, and how it is done with the responsible person? Those who are consulted get to make their views and suggestions known, but that is the extent of their contribution.

- **Inform**
  Who do you tell what you are doing and what you have done? They have no input, but are kept in the picture about what is going on. This is normally quite a large group of people, and it may be appropriate to identify various forms of communication to suit the receiving population, while the message remains the same.
Part B: Line manager skills

The effective line manager uses a very wide range of people management skills. There are many features, opportunities, pressures, processes and organisational partners affecting the people management choices the line manager makes in the relief and development sector.

For this handbook the authors have selected a range of people management skills to explore in greater depth.

The purpose is to:

- cover line manager skills that are priorities required at the different stages of the whole people management cycle.
- reflect on the degree and clarity with which you, as a line manager, work with your organisation’s Human Resources function in practising these skills at the various stages of the people management cycle.

The use of any one of these skills is not limited to one step of the cycle. For example, the line manager’s feedback skills can be used in the Recruitment, Managing, Development and Learning, and Transition Management stages of the cycle.

The specific involvement with the HR function cannot be definitely prescribed here, because of the huge range of organisation structures and HR function establishment in this sector.

The following sections of this handbook cover these skills:

**Core Skills:**

- SMART objectives
- Problem Solving
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Asking Questions

**Situational Skills:**

- Supporting performance
- Enabling change
- Building teams
- Dealing with difficult situations
5. Core Skills

The skills selected here are generic skills that are called on in many different people-management situations.

SMART Objectives

Line managers need to provide clarity and direction to the people they manage. Developing ‘SMART’ objectives with individual reports is a core skill that will support clarity of expectations.

| S | Specific | Precisely what do you aim to achieve and to what extent? |
| M | Measurable | How will you know if you have been successful? What is the anticipated outcome of the objective? |
| A | Agreed | Have all the relevant people signed up to the objective? |
| R | Realistic | Is the objective demanding but achievable? |
| T | Time bound | Is there an agreed timetable for completion? |

Example of a SMART objective

Work to carry out:
You are going to update the donor funding application, monitoring and Reporting deadlines over the next year on the database

SMART OBJECTIVE:

Enter all the donor funding deadlines the donor database by Thursday 19th November so that the team can view an updated report that details all the application, monitoring and reporting expectations of our current donors between now and November 30th next year

Problem Solving
Line managers need to solve problems every day. Understanding this tool will support team and individual problem solving.
Problem Solving Cycle

1. **State the problem**
   - What is the problem as it appears to you at this stage?

2. **Gather facts, feelings, opinions**
   - What happened, when where, how?
   - Who and what is affected?
   - Who want what to change?

3. **Restate the problem**
   - The information gathered will help you check your initial assessment

4. **Decide whether to take action**
   - What will happen if you do not do anything?
   - How will you or others feel about that?
   - If this is not your problem, are you prepared to give it attention because it matters to others?
   - What are the consequences if you do not take action?
   - What are the benefits if you do take action?

5. **Identify options**
   - generate ideas
6. Check out different options
   • Who must be involved?
   • How, when, where?
   • What might go wrong?
   • Who might get upset?
   • What backing and support will you need to persuade others? Can you get this?
   • What are the risks? What are the benefits?

7. Agree a solution and an action plan

8. Evaluate

Feedback

One of the most critical parts of a line manager’s role is giving feedback to the individuals and to the team about the issues that are causing difficulties or conflict. It is important therefore to plan how you are going to address the issue with the person and also to be prepared for the feedback that you might get from the individual or team. An important part of addressing these situations is to understand that each person involved has a perspective on the issue and that a resolution will only come by the different perspectives being shared and addressed.

Feedback can be either positive: reinforcing ‘good’ performance and behaviour; or negative: correcting and improving ‘poor’ performance and behaviours. Both types of feedback can, and must, be constructive.

Where feedback is not given then there is no recognition or affirmation of good performance. When negative feedback is not given constructively it becomes destructive feedback.

**Constructive feedback:**

- Provides information about behaviour and performance against objective standards in such a way that recipients maintain a positive attitude towards themselves and their work
- Encourages recipients to commit themselves to a personal plan to move towards agreed standards of behaviour and performance

When you give feedback you are helping someone to learn – new knowledge, skills or improved performance and behaviours.

**Constructive feedback tells people:**

- What the standards are
- How they are doing
- What they need to change in order to meet the standards
- How long they have to improve
- What support they can expect from you (and others)
Receiving feedback

The line managers need to give individuals space to explain their side of the story. This may involve receiving personal feedback on your own behaviour and performance. It is important to listen to this feedback and to respond in a positive manner. Being negative or hostile about the feedback will be a barrier to finding a resolution to the problems.

You should take the following steps:

- Encourage the individual to follow the guidelines on constructive feedback and the steps to good feedback below.
- Support the individual in defining the feedback.

Tips for receiving feedback from others:

- Listen to what is being said.
- Look at the person giving feedback to you.
- Treat feedback as receiving information.
- Distinguish between what the content of the feedback is . . . and your reaction.
- Seek clarification but do not argue. Ask for specific examples if appropriate, to help you to understand what is being said.
- Discuss what alternative actions or behaviours would be more helpful.
- Choose what you wish to do with the feedback (Accept or reject; whole or part).
- Take the time you need to think about the feedback.

Giving feedback

The people who report to you as their line manager expect and need feedback from you. Even if you feel uncomfortable giving feedback, feedback should not be limited to the times you have formal performance review meetings. There should be an ongoing process for exploring feedback between a line manager and her or his team. Feedback establishes a connection between what employees are doing and how their actions are perceived by others. It is one of the most crucial elements in assisting employees to improve their performance.

Feedback is not criticism – criticism is evaluative while feedback is descriptive. Effective feedback, both positive and constructive, is helpful to others. When you give feedback you are offering valuable information that will be useful to another person in making decisions about how to behave.
## Tips for giving feedback:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. <strong>Pick the right time and place</strong></th>
<th>Feedback needs to be well timed. In general, immediate feedback, as long as the person is ready to hear it, is the most useful. What about location? Is the feedback something to be made public; praising someone for good work, for example? Or must it be private: highlighting to someone a problem his or her behaviour is causing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Focus on behaviour - what actually happened, what you observed.</strong></td>
<td>It is important that we refer to what a person does rather than what we think or imagine about them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You made only one or two comments in the meeting today. Why was that?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I could tell you weren’t interested in the meeting - you hardly said anything!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Be specific and non-evaluative</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Why do you do presentations? You’re a hopeless speaker!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I had difficulty hearing you in the presentation, because of the speed at which you were talking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Explain how the behaviour makes you feel/the effect of the behaviour</strong></td>
<td>“When you don’t meet targets that we’ve agreed, I feel let down by you and also less confident in your ability to deliver”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I appreciate the comments you make on my proposals, even when they are critical because it makes me believe that you consider my ideas worthwhile”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Give feedback about behaviour that the receiver can act on</strong></td>
<td>“If you were able to speak some basic French, it would have helped in this situation. How do you think we could get around the problem?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I know you have transport problems visiting communities and I’d like to give you use of the pool car, but you are just too short!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Consider the amount of information the receiver can use,</strong></td>
<td>Sometimes we provide more feedback than the person may be able to adequately process. When we give more than can be used, we are not helping the other person. Giving feedback is not just about telling the other person about their behaviour and its effects. It is also about setting up a dialogue to decide how to use, or change that behaviour in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Get feedback from the individual</strong></td>
<td>“You have shown great skills in visual design during this campaign. How could develop those skills further? How could we use those skills elsewhere?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You are consistently late for our team meetings. What can we do about this? Is there something we can help you with?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. *Describe the consequences to win commitment to change*  

| ☑ | "If you arrived on time to our meetings, you would gain more support from the team and be involved in decision making." |
| ☑ | “If you continue to be late, we’ll have to consider changing your role to something with a lower profile and less responsibility.” |

9. *Encourage others to ask for feedback by asking for feedback yourself*  

Feedback is far more powerful if someone has asked for it. In a culture of Performance Management, giving and receiving feedback should be a natural, everyday activity. If individuals ask for feedback, it makes life so much easier for the giver! To encourage this atmosphere of ‘natural feedback’, the manager can set an example by asking for feedback from others about his or her own behaviour and its effects.
The Question Funnel

**Open Questions**
When you want information

*Tell me about / describe / explain why / I would be interested to*

**Probing Questions**
When you want added detail

*Will you please expand on / tell me more
I’m not sure I understand*

**Direct Questions**
An instruction using the name

*Tell me, Sam. Explain to me, Mary. Describe to me, Ibrahima*

**Reflective Questions**
Getting the person back on track

*So what I am hearing is that . . . / What you are saying is . . .*

**Closed Questions**
For agreement or commitment

*So you do not agree with . . . / Would you have made any changes?
How would you summarise?*
6. Supporting performance

Performance Management compared to a Performance Management System

What do you understand by ‘Performance Management’ (PM)?

Performance Management is the systematic process by which an organisation involves all its employees in improving the organisation’s effectiveness through
- regular review of achievement of goals
- measurement of level of ‘value added’ activity
- regular review of ongoing development targets

Employee surveys often show that effective performance management is an area for improvement in organisations, and that staff want it.

‘Performance Management’ is a core, continuous management responsibility
- a regular activity
- a shared process in which both main stakeholders take part – both the ‘manager’ and the ‘direct report’ (meaning a person who reports to the manager)
- a dynamic, continuous process
- part of a manager’s responsibility

A Performance Management System (PMS)

A PMS is a tangible, visible system that is just a part of performance management – a process that supports PM. PM and PMS are not synonymous.

A PMS is the process of recording performance formally, by way of paper or virtual documents. There are other potential formal components – links to reward, to talent management for which the coordination or ownership lies with Human Resources.

The principles of Performance Management will be the same for any organisation whereas a PMS will look or feel very different across organisations as each chooses the most useful design and delivery method for its needs. However, most PM Systems share similar steps.
A performance management cycle

This cycle illustrates the main steps that a line manager is involved with to manage performance. The typical steps in an organisation’s Performance Management System are added in italics:

- Performance planning (steps 1 to 3)
- Performance and development discussions (step 5)
- Annual review (steps 6 and 7)

(This model: C Whitehead, 2004)

Communicating performance expectations

This section prepared for People In Aid by Joan M. Johnson, 2008

As a manager of people, you will have your own preferences and habits. The way you manage depends on the context, the type of work you supervise, and the individual employees themselves. You will achieve your best results as a manager when your preferred management style matches your context.

Some situations call for a more top-down management approach, for example:
- The work is prescribed, compliance-based, or related to safety procedures.
- The employee is new to the agency and needs this approach to get started.
- The employee prefers and works best with this approach.
- During an emergency situation where timelines and coordination of tasks are critical.

Top-down management styles, however, create and sustain a more dependent supervisor-employee relationship, which then adds to the burden held by the manager. So if we assume that you have hired the right person for the job, then:
- If you tell your good employee what to do, they will go out and do it. Then they'll come back for more instruction.
- Alternatively, if you ask your good employee what they are going to do, they will begin a process to discover it for themselves. If you continue to resist telling them what and how to do things, they will take increasing responsibility and ownership for the work.

“Great managers define outcomes, not steps”

This phrase is from First, Break All the Rules, by M. Buckingham and C. Coffman, 1999.

In order to deal with the potential burden of people management on a daily basis, great managers will spend the time to clearly define, negotiate, and communicate the desired outcomes to their employees. The focus needs to be on the ‘pivotal’ responsibilities and outcomes that are essential to the job purpose, not on all the possible activities the jobholder may do.

Outcome  This is the end result to be achieved as a result of the employee’s efforts. It is what you will be seeing, hearing, feeling and saying to yourself once it is achieved. It can be written as a noun (as verbs usually describe the activities that lead to an outcome). The desired outcome should be within the employee’s circle of influence – in other words, it should be actionable by the employee. If you are writing them down, you can use the familiar SMART formula for writing outcome statements, as long as you focus on end results and not on activities.

Example:  A pivotal responsibility of your field director is to report on program activities, expenditures, etc. The activity is “reporting” (a verb). An outcome statement to set and clarify expectations may be: “Monthly program status reports are completed according to the approved format by the 5th of each month.”
Example: A pivotal responsibility of your admin assistant is to maintain the files in good order. The activity is “maintaining files” (a verb). An outcome statement used for setting clear expectations might be: “Files are kept accurately and up-to-date, such that they may be audited at any time.”

Example: A pivotal responsibility of your Program Coordinator is to raise awareness of important issues in the field. “Raising awareness” (a verb again) is a difficult activity to assign to a clearly defined outcome. The manager and the program coordinator may work together to identify a specific project, which would lead to raising awareness. For example: “On 30 November, 20xx, a detailed research report will be presented to internal and external stakeholders at the regional planning meeting.” (This outcome statement requires the program coordinator to undertake research, write it up, and plan a presentation.)

In addition to stating the end result expected, it is useful to also specify standards for how it should be done.

Standards Standards are statements of quality or quantity. The language of standards helps you to clarify what is important to you about how the work is done (inputs) and the quality of the outputs. You will use more specific standards when the work is compliance-based, or when the employee doesn’t have the knowledge or experience to know about best practice.

Example: If the outcome is: “On 30 November, 20xx, a detailed research report will be presented to internal and external stakeholders at the regional planning meeting”, then standards may be:

- A 10-12 page report covering background, current issues and resources, ways forward.
- Research incorporates a participatory process including all stakeholders
- Stories are documented using audio and video formats
- A multi-media presentation of 15 minutes to share the findings

Note the difference between this approach and the top-down approach of outlining steps. Imagine using steps instead, for example ‘first, schedule a trip to the field; second, draw up an interview questionnaire;...’. How time consuming could that be? How de-motivating for the staff member involved?

Steps for agreeing outcomes with an employee:

1. Identify internal and external stakeholders for the employee’s work.
2. Identify stakeholders’ expectations.
3. Identify the employee’s pivotal responsibilities in relation to those expectations.
4. Select 4-5 desired outcomes (nouns)
5. Clarify expectations using the language of standards.
7. Enabling change

In this section, we are focusing on some of the roles a line manager has in terms of enabling change in organisations – change such as restructuring, or the development of new strategies, or mergers. We are not covering all of ‘change management’ – what we have included are practical tools that a line manager can use in order to understand, support and communicate change and its implications with a team.

How are the people you manage going to react to change?

There are two dimensions to be considered in terms of individual response to change:
1. Perceived potential impact (which can be positive or negative)
2. Energy of the response by the individual (which can be active or passive)

The impact of organisational change can be perceived as a loss of power or positional influence, or new opportunities for advancement and personal development.

The energy of the response is harder to predict because it depends on the individual’s perceptions of uncertainty and their attitude to risk. A greater potential perceived risk results in passive behaviour in some individuals, and an active response in others.

These two dimensions are illustrated in the graphic below, which also labels four categories of individual response:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of Change</th>
<th>Energy of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Traditionalists Resistors</td>
<td>Passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Bystanders Change agents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a line manager, it is useful to anticipate which of your team members you believe will fall into the different categories of response to change. You need to ask four questions:
1. Who is likely to respond actively to the change and see it as an opportunity? (Change Agents)
2. Who is likely to respond actively and see the change as a threat? (Resistors)
3. Who is likely to respond passively to the change and see it as an opportunity? (Bystanders)
4. Who is likely to respond passively to the change and see it as a threat? (Traditionalists)

It is important to take action with the people who report to you, and move from perceived impact and expectations about reactions to addressing the reality of change.
individual and team responses and use of energy. To do that you need, as the line manager, to help your team understand the change and be specific about implications and impact.

*This page is based on The Managing Change Pocketbook, by Neil Russell-Jones Management Pocketbooks Ltd, 1999*

**Managing reactions to change**

The line manager has the key role of supporting team members during change – including when the first rumours start. This is not a role that can be ‘left to the change team’. To carry out the role effectively, the line manager should first understand a proposed change and deal with personal reactions – and also be honest with the team if he or she does not ‘have all the answers’.

The model below describes the common stages of individual reaction to change, and also shows the activities the line manager can carry out to support the team.

(Graphic: C Whitehead, 1995)
Communicating change with the team

The line manager is the most effective communicator to his or her own team – as manager and leader, the line manager is the person who will be present over time during a change process.

Communicating clearly and simply, without jargon, will be highly valued by the team.

If you can answer, with your team, the five questions below, the team will be well placed to understand what is going on – where this change has come from, what it means for the team, and what the desired benefits are.

The line manager may need to prepare...for example, get some of the ‘answers’ and key facts from other colleagues in the organisation. The manager can also use this framework to explore the team members’ reactions– for example in terms of the range of personal reactions - in an open way, and in a framework that sums up all the important points.

Five questions to support managing change

Use these questions with your team to explore, explain, confirm and check understanding. These questions can be used to share and map reactions to change, or to take stock at milestones of a large and complex change.

1. Where have we come from?
   Think broadly and with colleagues beyond the team or the organisation.
   Have we ‘done all this before’; have we kept or lost the institutional memory and learning.

2. Where are we now?
   Why is this change being addressed now; what is the prompt? Is it external or internal to the organisation; a ‘nice to do’ or a ‘must do’? Is it only us, or all our sector?

3. Where are we going?
   What will success look like? What does it mean for me / ‘What is in it for me’?

4. How are we going to get there?
   Identify the stakeholders, roles, activities, resources, timescales, dependencies, communication needs and plans, milestones. What surprises may crop up, and how will we address them?

5. How will we know when we get there?
   ‘How will we measure success?’ Identifying the answer to this question puts the focus back onto understanding the desired impact and benefits of change.
**Organisation and team language, metaphors and images for change**

As you plan to support change as a line manager, it is useful to know the organisational context of how any change is being presented and perceived.

What is your organisation’s or team’s cultural approach to change – is it private or public, based on a view of the organisation as a machine or as a living thing, ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’, based on ‘control’ or on ‘emergence’?

What shared language and imagery does your organisation use to talk about change?

What are the terms or metaphors for change in your organisation or team? For example, ‘Success’; ‘Achieve Impact’; ‘Survival’; ‘It’s going to be tough’.

As well as using language and metaphors to explore meaning in your organisation and team, you can also develop and select visual images to use for visioning change, or for sharing understanding of a process. What value do they add in global and multilingual organisations?

Two examples:

**A specialist team’s image to illustrate and focus the desired way they intend to work together and be perceived by others in the organisation.**

(An international NGO, 2008)

**A development organisation’s model for a gender integration methodology**

(Commission for the Advancement of Women, 1999)
8. Building teams

Where do we put our focus as line managers? Our goal is to provide the outputs or impact agreed in our own objectives, and to do so using the behaviours agreed in the organisation.

The people who report to us are the implementers of the plans and activities that will achieve our task objectives as line managers. We must be effective people managers to achieve high performance – people as individuals and people in teams, as well as effective managers of resources, finance, and technology.

In modern organisations a third area of focus is learning – within a team, or discipline, or organisation, or with clients, partners, peers, donors and civil society.

Keeping an appropriate balance of focus is very challenging to line managers’ skills, energy and time. Good team building skills aim to help line managers to ‘work smarter’, with tools for developing teams so that your people are able to be as effective as possible.

It is not your role to ‘have all the answers’ before you start. As the line manager you should actively involve the skills and experience in the team to plan and carry out the routes to support team development, just as all are involved in carrying out the work of the team.

You do need a vision for what the team is aiming to achieve, and the patience, influencing, and relationship skills to work well with a ‘people focus’ alongside your task objectives.

![Three-way balance of line manager focus](image)

**Graphic: C Whitehead, 1995**
Integrating ‘Task’ and ‘People’ development milestones

Line managers and their organisations usually place most emphasis on the ‘task’ elements of planning, whether it is work plans, project planning, or country strategic plans, than they do on the ‘people’ elements of those plans. People may figure in the plans in terms of ‘resourcing’.

To achieve a balanced approach to line management, plan people-oriented actions and milestones to match the task milestones. These do not need to be unusual milestones – get the basics right for elements of communication, planning, inclusion, progress reviewing.

Integrating task and people development milestones

Building the new team

This may be the first time any of you are working together as a team. There will be a mixture of professional and cultural backgrounds, and expectations. Teams will not only have to be built but also rebuilt as new members join and others leave.

Issues:
- Team vs. Group – need to form first from second
- Stages in team’s development – forming, storming, norming, performing, – and in emergencies reforming
- Role of programme managers
Problems can arise:

- individuals can feel isolated
- teams do not function due to poor communication between or within them
- feuds can start between sections
- there can be a duplication of work or tasks can be left undone as everyone thinks it was someone else's job.

You can address these problems in a number of ways:

- Ensuring that new team members receive the best possible induction, training, briefing and handover
- Mentoring or buddying of new team members during their probationary period.
- Encouraging good communication
- Encourage sections, e.g. finance, programme, logistics, to work together to find solutions rather than always coming to you for guidance or decisions.

**Team member expectations**

Failure to clarify information about the programme, individual team members' roles and the local context they will be working in, can lead to unrealistic expectations and future difficulties.

Strategies for mitigating unrealistic expectations:

- Ensure offer of employment, contract documents are clear and unambiguous
- Try to address as many potential queries as possible during induction and briefing
- In the case of deployment overseas, identify additional briefing tools – this may include a couple of relevant web links for the country context (i.e. Alertnet, local UN sites etc) and key programme documents (i.e. proposals, feasibility or needs assessments). Keep it simple and use existing material. Visual images are also useful i.e. photos, video clips.
- In the case of deployment to a post reporting to another manager, the opportunity to talk to the manager prior to deployment is beneficial.

**Team development**

The line manager is best placed to analyse, keep track of, anticipate and act on the team’s own development needs. And as a manager he or she is an actor in that team – so it is important to present activity as development for ‘us’, to have an impact on ‘our’ performance’, not just for ‘you, the team'. The next section of five questions and tools are designed to provide some language to help you address team development.
Questions to address in team development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team development question</th>
<th>Resource to use to facilitate response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What stage of team development are we at as a team and what do we need to do to support our performance?</td>
<td>‘Stages of Team Development’ - tool A below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do we recognise and value the roles that need to be played in an effective team?</td>
<td>‘Team Roles model’ - tool B below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we systematic about sharing views of the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of our team’s work?</td>
<td>‘20 Questions’ - tool C below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What level of diversity is there in the team? In particular, how does the line manager respond to different learning styles?</td>
<td>‘Learning Styles and Diversity’ – tool D below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Team Development Tool A

How to identify your team’s stage of team development

‘Team building’ is a commonly-used term used to cover a range of development activities to reach a range of potential goals. It is worth being explicit about what is meant by the term.

Tuckman described the steps that a team goes through in its development – the classic ‘Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing’ stages – and described the behaviours that the team and line managers will demonstrate and observe at these stages.

Depending on the team’s ‘stage of development’, there are different team building, development and maintenance activities that can be taken to support the team’s performance.

While the process may appear simple and linear, of course the wider working environment can provide shocks to the team’s development – such as a change of personnel, or location, or objectives.

The line manager should identify at what stage of development the team is operating, and then identify what is the appropriate action to take with the team to support performance.
Developing team performance

It is the line manager’s responsibility to take action to develop team performance, linked to the team’s ‘stage of team development’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of team development: Form</th>
<th>Storm</th>
<th>Norm</th>
<th>Perform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teambuilding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Team development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Failure to maintain a developed team</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Based on Tuckman 1965

The team’s stages of development

Tuckman (1965) described the stages of growth that teams normally go through:

This text describes project teams, but the model applies equally to all teams who experience change in terms of purpose, roles, membership (both the loss and gain of team members) and location.

This graphic illustrates the outline behaviours with relation to collaboration and to knowledge management. (DR Clark, 2008)
Forming

In this stage, team members are introduced. They state why they were chosen or volunteered for the team and what they hope to accomplish within the team. Members cautiously explore the boundaries of acceptable group behaviour. This is a stage of transition from individual to member status, and of testing the leader's guidance both formally and informally.

Forming includes these feelings and behaviours:
- Excitement, anticipation, and optimism
- Pride in being chosen for the project
- A tentative attachment to the team
- Suspicion and anxiety about the job
- Defining the tasks and how they will be accomplished
- Determining acceptable group behaviour
- Deciding what information needs to be gathered

Activities include abstract discussions of the concepts and issues; and for some members, impatience with these discussions. There is often difficulty in identifying some of the relevant problems as there is so much going on that members get distracted. The team often accomplishes little concerning its goals. This is perfectly normal.

Storming

The team's transition from the "As-Is" to the "To-Be," is called the Storming phase. All members have their own ideas as to how the process should look, and personal agendas are often rampant. Storming is probably the most difficult stage for the team. They begin to realise the tasks ahead are different and more difficult than they previously imagined. Impatient about the lack of progress, members argue about just what actions the team should take. They try to rely solely on their personal and professional experience, and resist collaborating with most other team members.

Storming includes these feelings and behaviours:
- Resisting the tasks
- Resisting quality improvement approaches suggested by other members
- Sharp fluctuations in attitude about the team's chance of success
- Arguing among members, even when they agree on the real issues
- Defensiveness, competition, and choosing sides
- Questioning the wisdom of those who selected the project and appointed the members of the team
- Establishing unrealistic goals
- Disunity, increased tension, and jealousy

These pressures mean that team members have little energy to spend on progressing towards the intended goal. But they are beginning to understand each other.
Norming

The Norming phase is when the team reaches a consensus on the "To-Be" process. Everyone wants to share the newly found focus. Enthusiasm is high, and the team is often tempted to go beyond the original scope of the process. During this stage, members reconcile competing loyalties and responsibilities. They accept the team, ground rules, roles, and the individuality of fellow members. Emotional conflict is reduced as previously competitive relationships become more cooperative.

Norming includes these feelings and behaviours:

- An ability to express criticism constructively
- Acceptance of membership in the team
- An attempt to achieve harmony by avoiding conflict
- Friendliness, confiding in each other, and sharing of personal problems
- A sense of team cohesion, spirit, and goals
- Establishing and maintaining team ground rules and boundaries

As team members work out their differences, they have more time and energy to spend on the project.

Performing

By now the team has settled its relationships and expectations. They can begin performing by diagnosing, problem solving, and implementing changes. At last, team members have discovered and accepted each other's strengths and weakness. In addition, they have learned what their roles are.

Performing includes these feelings and behaviours:

- Members have insights into personal and group processes
- An understanding of each other's strengths and weakness
- Constructive self-change
- Ability to prevent or work through group problems
- Close attachment to the team

The team is now an effective, cohesive unit. You can tell when your team has reached this stage because you start getting a lot of work done!
Team Development Tool B

How to identify the team roles we need to be effective

There are some easily identifiable team behaviours that line managers value in their teams – for example: ‘providing ideas’, or ‘looking after the details’, or ‘summarising progress’, or ‘finishing the job’. These are team roles – not the same as your work role or your objectives.

That does not mean every team member has to provide all these team working roles – that would be impossible. It also does not mean that each team member should have the same roles – that would be a very one-dimensional team, which might be very hard to manage!

These team roles are typically individuals’ own natural preferences, and each of us may have several of these roles as preferences.

Each of us can develop our range to tackle areas of limitation within our preferences – but it is most effective to build on strengths in the first place.

It is worth considering as a line manager what the team’s strengths and limitations are in terms of the important roles – this is useful information when it comes to planning individual development, or sub-team work, or taking stock of effectiveness, or recruiting for vacancies.

One model (Belbin team roles) suggests that to be fully effective there are nine team working roles, which need to be represented in a team. That does not mean each team should have nine members! It does not mean some roles are more important than others. However, the organisation’s working culture, or the line manager’s own preferences, may reward or recognise or be biased in favour of some team roles.

(Roles © Meredith Belbin Associates)
For the line manager to consider:

**For individuals –**

Which roles are individuals’ preferred roles?

Which are individuals’ least preferred roles?

**For the team as a whole –**

Which roles are well represented?

Which roles are under-represented? How do we know?

Which roles naturally link with – or are in conflict with – other roles? With what impact?

Which roles look ‘inwards’ at the team; which roles look ‘outwards’ beyond the team?
**Team Development Tool C**

**Twenty questions addressing the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of the team’s work**

The line manager can use this tool as a group or one-to-one exercise, or face-to-face, or at a distance to provide the personal responses of the individuals in your team, and to discuss the issues. The responses make up a snapshot and the process can be repeated – some answers will change over time as new challenges develop, and as people join or leave the team.

The tool is intended to provide a forum to explore shared understanding of valuable areas that make the team effective. It is not intended to be run a ‘pass/fail’ compliance test.

The line manager’s next steps may be to communicate and build understanding, or there may be specific areas to address across the team, or specific individuals to work with. Responses can be used to clarify what your team ‘offers’ to the rest of the organisation.

1. I am clear about my individual role in this team. What is it?
2. What do I believe is the primary purpose of this team?
3. Who are the team’s clients?
4. Who are the main internal and external stakeholders this team works with?
5. What are the key priorities for the team so that we achieve our purpose?
6. Specific results the team must deliver are............?
7. Today .............result areas are on track, and ............are not
8. By the end of the year,.............results will be achieved, .............results are uncertain, and.............results are at serious risk
9. The actions we are taking to reduce the risk of failure are.......................?
10. We can build on the following opportunities to enhance our performance.............?
11. Progress against the team’s improvement projects will deliver these benefits.............?
12. To support my colleagues’ performance, I will.............?
13. What is the team good at – the team’s strengths? Are we acting to keep doing these?
14. What is the team not good at – the team’s limitations? Are we addressing these?
15. How effectively are decisions made in the team?
16. How effectively is conflict and failure handled within the team?
17. How effectively is success and recognition handled in the team?
18. How far do I feel able to express my views openly in the team?
19. What is not discussed, or is even unmentionable in the team?
20. What needs to be different in this team, and why?

*Questions: C Whitehead, 1995*
Team Development Tool D

Learning Style and Diversity
Valuing and working effectively with diversity is a challenge for the line manager. It’s also true that diversity is a stimulus that provides great energy. Diversity can be expressed in a range of ways, including nationality, faith, tribe, language, politics, status, power, poverty, age, health, mobility, specific physical conditions, sexuality and gender.
There will be ‘organisational’ diversity in terms of functional role and job level, and including other stakeholders and partners, consultants and contractors. Depending on the setting, some aspects of diversity will be common and predictable, and the line manager needs strategies to work with the expected range. There will always be diversity in terms of personal preference and personality. One example of difference in personal preference is Learning Styles:

- **activist**
  - “I’d like to try this out”

- **pragmatist**
  - “how can I apply this?”

- **theorist**
  - “what’s the background to this?”

- **reflector**
  - “I’d like time to think about this”

Based on Honey & Mumford ‘Learning Styles’, 1982

All these styles can be equally effective...and in a team it is useful to have all styles represented. Do not polarise some styles as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. However, some functional teams or organisations can be more comfortable with, favour or reward some styles – explicitly or implicitly.

Line managers have their own preferred styles, and your own preferences can influence how effectively you work with different teams and individuals.

Build your capability to work with all learning styles as you find them represented in the teams you line manage. Provide different ways of working that will build on these different preferences: for example in the way that meetings are chaired, or in the time you allow for a new strategy or plan to be developed, or the way you ask for reactions to a report.
9. Dealing with Difficult Situations

It is widely recognised that good people management is key to organisation success. HR departments provide support to good people management by putting in place a range of policies, which provide a framework for people management. These policies would normally include:

- Disciplinary procedure
- Grievance procedure
- Harassment policy and procedure

They may also include policies on the following:

- Competency (this may also form part of performance management policy)
- Absence
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- HIV/AIDS
- Long-term sickness

The HR department should make these policies and procedures available to managers and be able to provide managers with advice and support in implementing them.

This chapter focuses on the behaviours required for dealing with difficult people rather than the specific procedures.

**How do you respond to conflict and difficult people situations?**

There are three common responses – which way do you respond?

**Fight** You react in a challenging way. At work this might mean shouting or losing your temper.

**Flight** You turn your back on what's going on. This is a common reaction – by ignoring a problem you hope it will go away.

**Freeze** You are not sure how to react and become very passive. You might begin to deal with the issue but things drift or become drawn out through indecision.

These three reactions are almost instinctive.

In this chapter we explore a fourth approach to conflict and difficult situations – **FACE IT**. The chapter will describe some processes and give ideas to help line managers take a calm, rational and planned approach to resolving the problem.
Dealing with difficult people situations

Dealing with difficult people is one of the most challenging aspects of the line manager’s role. The people who are best at dealing with difficult people tend to show the following behaviours:

1. **Build Relationships**
   Just talk to people. Listen to people. Spend time with them and show that you truly care.

2. **Focus on Outcomes**
   Bottom line - you have an organisation to run - you have goals and visions for your organisation. While you are working towards these you are able to take really **objective** positions. Working in tandem with a ‘difficult person’ is challenging, but focus on where you are going, not the personal issues you face.

3. **See Value**
   Recognising the potential of 'difficult people’ is half the battle. They are a value and flicking the switch that truly turns them on is a worthwhile challenge.

4. **Meet Regularly**
   For an ongoing issue, make sure that you show and keep your commitments to them. This builds trust and that, in turn, makes resolution a whole lot easier.

5. **Be Honest and Open**
   It is no good trying to resolve issues when **Dealing with Difficult People**, if you are going to either renege on your agreements or fall down on your targets. Now is the time to be **frank and honest** and get a stake in the ground. These people have been lied to enough. Be really clear on your expectations and stick to them. Change their view on authority forever!

6. **Deliver**
   If you can go some way to help them resolve the cause of their anger, and it fits with everything you and your organisation stands for, then do it - and do it fast. Whatever you promise, deliver on it. Liaise with them in good time. Over-deliver on pace and issues, where you can. You will be amazed at what a difference this makes. Want to become a **hero**? This works!

7. **Respect Them**
   These people are real human beings. They hurt just like you do. They are, it's true, showing some tricky behaviours, so help them with them. Make a difference to that person. You could be changing their life in a way you would never have thought possible. Have some fun even. Share a laugh maybe?

8. **Find a Win-Win**
   Solutions when **Dealing with Difficult People** are not cop-outs on either side. A compromise means that someone is losing here. Find a common position and seek to meet half way without losing sight of what is the most important to each of you. There is usually a win-win out there. If not, it's time to find a solution that removes them from your business.
9. **Stick to the Point**
   Be clear where you are going with your challenges. It is vital to have everything in place with the most difficult of ‘difficult people’. It is also of great value to have a majority on your side, albeit subtly to avoid an apparent ‘ganging up’. Play this game from a position of strength.

10. **Focus on Behaviours**
    There are often ways of highlighting a ‘difficult person’s’ qualities. Usually when **Dealing with Difficult People** you’ll find they do have them! In many ways these people stick around because they like bits of the role, but not others, so you can play on their capabilities and leverage them. Treat them as a valuable person and work on the behaviours.

**Five Simple Actions You Can Take Today!**
- Some people will cause you pain in your organisation. Who are they? What is it costing you to have them behave in this way? What have you failed to do in the past? How have you impacted on their behaviour? Do you need to do anything differently?
- What would you wish it to be like with them? How would they behave? This is your goal.
- What do you need to do to make this better? What have you tried? What have you not tried and why not?
- If you have to have a difficult series of conversations, get all your facts straight and if necessary, start again. Set clear expectations, goals and timescales. This works!
- Include in the discussions the good stuff too. They are mostly good people and want to do well. Can you find their button to press? Because that is the most cost-effective goal.

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**Managing Conflict**

In situations of conflict there are two main factors to consider that will have a bearing on the approach taken to the problem.

These are:
- The concern for achieving objectives
- The concern for maintaining relationships

Personal style adopted in response to conflicts tends to vary according to the strength of the concern in each of these two areas.

This can be represented by the diagram below:
Defining the conflict management styles:

Accommodation
Characterised by cooperative and unassertive behaviour, this means placing the other person’s needs above your own, even if your own needs are strong. An accommodating style can build goodwill and avoid disruption. It is often seen when one person has more power than the other. Overuse of this style can diminish influence, respect and recognition.

Avoidance
Evading the issue and withdrawing from discussion are the hallmarks of this approach. It can be used appropriately to allow a cooling-off period; to delay until more relevant information or analysis is available, or when there is insufficient time to resolve the issue. Too much avoidance causes problems; not participating in problem resolution results in unbalanced contribution to decisions and low commitment to them.

Competition
Used predominately by the most assertive and least cooperative people. Uses whatever power is available, be it position, information, persuasive ability, sanction or coercion. Used by some when stakes are high, or quick decisive action is needed. Used in excess can foster anger and frustration and may damage communication. Tends to produce win/lose situations.

Compromise
Occupies the middle ground of the diagram. Expects that outcomes will be a partial fulfilment of the needs and objectives of both parties. Never fully satisfying, but mutually acceptable. Appropriate for temporary solutions or when time is short.
Develops bargaining and negotiation skills. Can be challenging to compromise without losing sight of values and principles.

**Collaboration**
Produces creative win/win agreements and solutions, and a strong commitment to them. Requires time and energy. Going through the process can lead to personal growth as values, assumptions and potential solutions are explored. Collaboration requires openness and trust...from all parties.

**In summary**
Nothing is inherently wrong or right about each of these different conflict management styles. Each may be more or less appropriate depending on the situation and the parties involved.

For the line manager, both maintaining relationships and achieving goals are very significant, so it is important to try and get an appropriate balance.
SPIN Model for conflict resolution

The SPIN model offers a vehicle for conflict resolution. Through its logical sequence of steps, you will be able successfully to uncover problems in your working relationships and develop solutions to them.

At each stage of the SPIN sequence, a statement can be followed (or replaced) by a series of questions designed to probe the viewpoint of the other party to the conflict.

**S**

**Statement:** The situation is... (describe the situation clearly and specifically) *The situation is that you are coming in late twice a week*

**Questions:** Probe for background information: *Is there a reason you aren’t getting to work on time?*

**Remember to listen to the answers to your questions!**

**P**

**Statement:** The position is... (Describe the problem the situation is giving you) *The position is, other people have to cover for you... or Questions:* *that causes problems – can you see what they are?*

**I**

**Statement:** The implication is... say what the effect is on you, the team or the organisation: *I don’t know if you are coming in or not, so I can’t plan; your colleagues are not able to get on with their own work; the Unit seems unprofessional to our customers*

**and/or questions:** *what impact do you think that has on the way customers see the unit?*

**N**

**Statement:** I need you to... *start coming in on time every day*

**Questions:** *How can you make sure you are here on time more regularly?*

The process ends with a plan of action. Make sure it is specific, time-related and that you have put in plans to monitor it. If you get bogged down – go round SPIN again

But remember – SPIN is a framework, not a rigid formula.

*model from H Bolton, 2004*
Part C: Resources and References

The final part of this handbook includes two main sections:

1. Material on managing your own learning, including a personal learning log
2. Further resources to support your own exploration of people management for line managers

10. Managing your own learning

A simple learning log

Use this page to record anything that you experience, hear or see during this programme, that you feel will be useful to you after you have returned to your work.

| Worth Remembering | Worth Doing Something About |
Supporting your own development

Line managers in the relief and development sector should have access to support from their organisations to enhance their own people management skills. The prompts for access to these kinds of support can be performance management, restructuring of roles, new organisational strategies, new ‘markets’, new partners. This support could be in many forms, including:

- Coaching
- Reading – books, journals, internet
- Network membership
- Participation in blogs and wikis on the internet
- Action learning set membership
- Internal or external training courses
- Longer internal or external development programmes
- Mentoring
- Secondments
- Project team membership
- Exchanges

Depending on your own ‘learning style’ there are many routes for managing your own development, in combination or concentrating on one method. These different forms of encouraging learning have different resource implications in terms of direct costs, time to participate, time to reflect, time to move on to practical application and feedback on impact.

Web-based development is growing and changing very quickly, often blending e-learning with project work and face-to-face workshops as in-house or public programmes.

Larger organisations may be expected to have more systematic and holistic approaches to line manager learning and development, but this is not always the case. Smaller organisations may have smaller gross budgets; opportunities for innovative and practical high quality development are always present, whatever the size of the organisation. Smaller organisations may be more active in taking part in consortium-based learning alongside other organisations, with the benefit that line managers meet other managers.

This handbook has mentioned some of the conflicting pressures that can reduce or remove time for reflection and planning and feedback in terms of people management. Taking part in a learning programme does not automatically mean that development takes place:
- All development must have objectives, and also be responsive to changing needs
- All development should have measures for success
- All development benefits from support from your own managers, your peers, and your team.
- All development requires a forum for testing and practising what you are learning – so it is a process, not a one-off event – so you can track benefits and impact over time.

To accompany this workshop and handbook, here is a sample format for a personal learning log about people management for line managers.
**Detailed Personal Learning Log**

| 1. | What areas of development should I address to be a more effective people manager?  
For example: to do with task and goal achievement; to do with people and relationships; to do with managing my own development and well-being? |
|---|---|
| 2. | Why do I believe that addressing these areas will make me more effective?  
For example: from feedback; from my performance appraisal |
| 3. | What impact and benefit do I believe there will be if I address these areas? |
| 4. | In this programme, what have I heard or observed that can support the effectiveness for my people management, and that I want to apply?  
*On Day 1* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.</th>
<th>In this programme, what have I heard or observed that can support the effectiveness for my people management, and that I want to apply?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On Day 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I want to apply my learning. What steps can I take?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>How will I know if I am successful? Are the factors in 3 still appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Who can I involve to support my progress in carrying out the steps in 6?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Resources on people management for line managers

Websites:


Managing conflict at work: a guide. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
http://www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/1EB2AE66-D1A8-4641-AB8B-B6C67D38E6D9/0/4334ManagingconflictWEB.pdf

Managing yourself and others. Oxfam ‘Pick up and Go’ Training manual
http://publications.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam/add_info_027.asp?TAG=andCID=

Promoting Institutional and Organisational Development DFID

People In Aid offer a Performance Management Policy Guideline and Template found

Books:

The Policy Press, University of Bristol.


Other resources:
To support the line manager as trainer and facilitator:


12. References used to prepare this booklet


Purcell, G et al. (2003) Understanding the People and Performance Link, Unlocking the Black Box. *CIPD*


Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode questionnaire (1976) sample at http://www.bluffton.edu/courses/bcomp/301sup/thomas.htm


**13. People In Aid**

A primary resource is People In Aid’s *Managing People in Emergencies* website: http://www.managing.peopleinaid.org/

People In Aid also has downloadable reports and manuals on a wide range of topics at: http://www.peopleinaid.org/resources/default.aspx

The People In Aid Code, People In Aid, 2003, www.peopleinaid.org/code