

MANAGING FOR A PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE

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In the modern workplace, filled with distractions and illusions of grandeur, it can be an overwhelming task to maintain motivation, and drive a workforce to deliver productivity. To achieve this, 21st century managers should focus on two elements; getting people to work, and making work for people.

American automobile executive Lee Iacocca once said; “Start with good people, lay out the rules, communicate with your employees, motivate them and reward them. If you do all those things effectively, you can’t miss.”

Mark Orpen, Chief Executive Officer at The Institute of People Development (IPD), agrees, but has a few in-depth pointers to add. “Getting people to work entails managing their performance, skilling the talent within the organisation, managing management effectively, and assigning the correct position to the right employee,” says Orpen. “Making work for people requires delegation skills, and a dedication to both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship.”

Managing performance requires the ability to have difficult discussions, while training for skills and not for budget. “Managing others takes finesse, and various soft skills must form part of their management training. While it may appear a rewarding position, any manager will face challenges,” adds Orpen.

Skilling talent requires a professional skills gap analysis, with a view to creating a Personal Development Plan (PDP). With this structured approach, real Return on Investment can be achieved – in financial and non-financial terms. “The gap analysis begins with an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, while the PDP requires the prioritisation of the development of needs. Once the training has taken place, it is essential to review the results and adjust the PDP going forward, as necessary.”

Managing management requires the development of management skills and tools – which means that organisations must recognise the need to continue to develop managers. “Learning should never end and, even at management level, there is always a new skill to learn or one to hone to perfection. Technical expertise does not, after all, equate to management expertise.”

To ensure the right people to do the right work, succession planning is also crucial. “This will ensure that the employees with the requisite skills and potential are channelled into the correct management positions to drive the organisation forward. Skills audits should be held annually, and ownership of performance criteria is crucial to garner an effective, up-skilled, and productive workforce.”

With a productive workforce, management must focus on *making work for people*. “Through effective delegation, the workload (and responsibility) is shared. By adopting an entrepreneurial approach, employment can be created. By encouraging intrapreneurship, a person is identified as the captain of a project, taking direct responsibility and accountability for turning an idea into a profitable finished product,” concludes Orpen. “In all three scenarios, work is created, and effective leaders can be developed – through careful management, targeted training, and expert guidance.”

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Boilerplate:

Founded in 1999, Workplace Skills Solutions t/a The Institute of People Development (IPD) strives to equip, prepare and certify practitioners to serve South Africa’s skills development strategy and facilitate the transformation of education and training. Over the years, IPD has become the preferred people development partner to most state owned and private enterprises in Southern Africa. IPD has assisted over 500 public and private training providers across most sectors of the economy to achieve or maintain accreditation through consulting, training and providing published guidelines. For more information, please contact IPD at trainingenquiries@peopledev.co.za on (011) 315 2913 or visit www.peopledevelopment.co.za.

Mark Orpen is the Chief Executive Officer of The Institute of People Development (IPD). With an undying entrepreneurial drive, Orpen founded IPD in 1999. He holds National Diplomas in Marketing and Sales, Learning and Development and a National Higher Certificate in Occupationally-Directed Education, Training and Development Practices. Orpen is represented on the board of more than ten companies and has the skills necessary to execute his duties as CEO of IPD. With a keen desire for the acquisition of knowledge, he has also completed many training courses in Human Resource Development, Marketing, Corporate Governance, Maritime Studies and Commercial Property Investments. Orpen can be contacted at mark.orpen@peopledev.co.za.