

From Performance Management To Success Management A New View Of An Old System

By David Irvine, Best-Selling Author and Leader's Navigator

When I am asked to work with an organization to help improve their performance management system, my first step is to have leaders look at the request differently. If they want a better process for managing expectations and getting a grip on results, while at the same time making it engaging and meaningful, then “performance” management is a limited goal. In today’s workplace, the aim is not so much *performance* management as it is *success* management: creating the conditions that ensure both results and passion.

Following are seven conditions for success management. The goal is to turn these conditions into instinctive behaviors in your culture. But until they become established habits, written agreements can be helpful to ensure clarity, focus, and energy.

- 1. Connection.** I learned years ago, in my first career as a family therapist, that the secret to parenting is not what a parent *does* but rather who the parent *is* to a child. Great leaders and teachers understand that when others are drawn to seek contact with you as a *trusted advisor* rather than simply as “boss,” you have earned the credibility to influence – with or without a title. All the leadership skills in the world will never compensate for a lack of connection.
- 2. Self-Assessment.** Before attempting to “evaluate” others and their performance, it is important to ask people to assess themselves. “How do *you* feel about the results you are achieving?” “What do you need to do raise the bar for yourself?” These are questions about working *with* people, rather than *over* people. You will only want to “evaluate” others and their performance as a last resort.
- 3. Authentic Expression.** What engages people is a connection to their passion, purpose, and values: authentic expression. When you are given the chance to express your unique talents in the service of others, you lose track of time and create abundance in your life and the lives of others. If work doesn’t provide both personal and financial growth, you’re wasting far too much of your life on it.
- 4. Accountabilities.** Results are the name of the game, both in organizations and in life. Mutually negotiated accountabilities are a statement of quantifiable promises to the people who depend on you and the fulfillment of those promises. Accountabilities create a clear, mutual understanding of what *needs* to be accomplished and what *will* be accomplished: from activities to results.

- 5. Support Requirements.** Support requirements are the accountabilities you require from others to ensure that you can fulfill your promises. These include the human, financial, technical, or organizational resources one can negotiate for and draw upon to deliver the expected results. Support requirements lock people into an accountable relationship.
- 6. Consequences.** Consequences specify what will happen – both positive and negative – when you fulfill your promises. This could include financial or psychological rewards, different job assignments, and natural consequences tied into the overall mission of an organization. Consequences are a statement of what is important to you, considering what is *reasonable and respectable* in your current environment.
- 7. Follow-Up.** How will your agreements to each other be maintained as significant, relevant, flexible, meaningful, and engaging over time? How will you hold yourself and others accountable? How often will you review it, and with whom? Far too many performance review programs are make-work projects that become “shelf-development” instead of self-development.”

Take a brief inventory of where you stand on these conditions for success management. They can be applied to a business partner, direct reports, colleagues, clients or customers, or even yourself.

I’d love to hear about *your* conditions for success in building a more engaged and focused success management system or how you have used these conditions in an authentic and powerful way.

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David Irvine is sought after internationally as a speaker, author, and mentor. His work has contributed to the building of accountable, vital, and engaged organizations across North America. David is the best selling author of five books. His most recent book is *Bridges Of Trust: Making Accountability Authentic*. These are available in bookstores or can be ordered at www.davidirvine.com

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