

Highlight: Career Conversations and the 5Ps

Summary

Career conversations are devoted to life-work decisions, and those decisions require action if change is to be implemented. Managers can use the 5P model to structure their conversations as they seek opportunities to facilitate, guide, tutor and counsel their employees. The 5Ps focus on pride, passion, purpose, performance and poise as a series of cycles that individuals experience as they build their careers.

Value

Understanding the 5Ps and incorporating them into career conversations helps managers to assist individuals to:

- Manage change in their lives and work
- Determine next steps to take in order to achieve their goals
- Align their professional goals with those of the organization

Managers who use the 5P model when discussing career related issues with their employees will be able to:

- Build relationships with their staff
- Build a strong team made up of self-directed individuals
- Enhance commitment and in so doing improve employees' performance
- Clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities and 'big picture' issues that can assist employees with their performance decisions
- Create and foster a learning organization

Description

A key element within coaching when facilitating the learning or development of others involves determining what each employee needs to focus on to make the changes required to move towards a preferred future. Kris Magnusson, an active career counselling specialist, has developed the 5Ps of planning: pride, passion, purpose, performance and poise.

This planning process represents a hierarchy of change. The 5 components are best represented as a cycle but each of them is an outcome that employees need to experience in order to affect change in their professional lives. This model can help managers guide their career conversations with employees.

Example

A career conversation with an employee who wants to make his or her work more interesting and challenging may go something like this:

Manager: Tell me about a recent project that you were involved in that you were proud of.

Employee: I think that 'abc' and 'def' projects both turned out well, but I was particularly proud of the 'abc' project.

The rest of the manager's questions, in addition to some clarifying questions might include the following questions based on the 5Ps:

"What were the key components of that project?"

"Why were you proud of the 'abc' project?"

“Can you think of how the two of us might create a new experience or project that would fulfil some of the same values and interests for you?”

“Is there anything you need me to do so that you can get started on this next assignment?”

“Can you let me know when you’re ready to obtain some feedback on your performance, and how you’d like to set that up.”

Process

Although best represented as a circle, an effective starting point when using the 5Ps is to search for pride. The manager facilitates this process by encouraging employees to describe an experience, project and/or service that happened in the past few years in which they took particular pride in accomplishing.

Most employees will have specific reasons for taking pride in an experience. These reasons form the basis for passion - the liking or devotion to some work activity. Passion is an important element of energy. People who are involved in meaningful activities generally exude energy during their involvement. During the activity, and the evaluation that follows, most employees will be able to satisfy many of their values, beliefs and interests (“heart”). A key activity for managers is to help employees pin down the skills and knowledge associated with the pride experience.

The third “P” involves discovering the outlet or purpose of the employee’s passion. The desired path of action will need to satisfy the employee’s current or contextual needs and be seen to be leading towards a preferred future. It must also take into account the current

and enduring needs of the organization. The quest for such an action plan is for the *best fit*, not necessarily an *ideal fit*. The manager’s role is one of facilitating this exploration process.

Once the manager has assisted the employee to identify specific actions, and is able to assist the employee to an outcome thinking approach that clearly identifies a goal or goals, the discussion should shift to action-planning activities.

Poise is simply performance with confidence, competence and grace. Once employees are able to personalize acquired knowledge and skills they will increase their levels of self-confidence and, in turn, expand their “*pride*” experiences thus beginning a new cycle.

As the employee becomes more adept at seeking feedback, the manager’s role eases to that of making non-judgmental observations (refer to SSISA in this series for more detail).

When employees are fully involved in activities that support their growth and development they become more confident in their ability to manage their career building activities.

Implementation

Managers or team leaders who have learned how to incorporate the 5Ps into their career conversations:

- Seek opportunities to facilitate a career chat

- Use non-judgmental language

- Know they are facilitating change rather than directing it

- Encourage employees to take control of their own career building activities