

MANAGERS; THE PERSONAL DEVELOPERS OF THE FUTURE

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American writer, Warren Bennis, is quoted as saying that; “Success in management requires learning as fast as the world is changing”. Amidst an ever changing world, a constantly shifting economy, booming technological advances, and a myriad of macro- and micro-environmental variables, the management of a workforce is a position that requires highly skilled, well-trained managers.

Why is it so important for managers to upskill themselves? It’s simple. The fate of the company, which provides their livelihood, is in the hands of the staff that they manage. Ultimately, the responsibility for the team’s performance rests with the manager. Without a functioning, effective and productive staff complement, failure is inevitable.

Managers must embrace their true role; that of personal developers. As such, Professional Development Plans (PDPs) should be established for all staff members, providing a framework for training and development of skills, a roadmap to achieve stipulated goals, and a clear path to success. To achieve this, managers must understand, embrace and practice the value of development.

The first step to creating a PDP that is on-point and beneficial to the manager and the organisation, is to conduct a gap analysis. By evaluating the skills that the team does have (strengths), and identifying those that it does not (gaps), its strengths can be celebrated, its weaknesses can be addressed, its opportunities can be capitalised on, and its threats can be eliminated. Through this skills audit, actual real-world training needs are identified. At this point effective skills development management can occur, with a strategic direction ensuring a real return on investment. Constant complaining that training is a waste of money stems from not understanding what training to send the employee on.

While the gap analysis is being done, a PDP is developed and training and development begins, the company’s leadership must continue to manage and mentor or coach the team’s performance. It is essential that staff are made aware of what is expected of them using proper feedback techniques (also taught in good management programmes). Effective performance management builds confidence while monitoring and measuring performance, filling gaps that effect performance and developing employees into superstars. Through

continuous and innovative improvement interventions, individual and team talents will be fostered and allowed to shine.

The management role is complex and intricate, consisting of much more than professional development alone. From delegation to decision making, the application of emotional intelligence, managing and resolving conflict, facilitating change, and handling governance, finances, risk, legal and ethical requirements, the title “manager” holds many responsibilities. It would be prudent then, for managers themselves to take Bennis’ advice, and focus on their own skills development with as much vigour as they do their teams’.

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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.