

ASK<sup>®</sup>

# PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP



**raising the bar**  
beyond performance management

UNASHAMEDLY  
BUSINESS  
PASSIONATELY  
PEOPLE

“You do not grow a plant by instructing it to do so, or worse by pulling on it. You do not get people to innovate by tasking them with innovating. You grow a plant by providing the Soil, the Space, the Sun... and letting it happen.”

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**YANN CRAMER**  
GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY LEADER, SHELL

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Introduction	2
Current Problems with Performance Management	3
What is Performance Leadership?	6
Top Ten Tips for Performance Leadership	7
The ASK® Performance Improvement Model	9
Our Solutions	11
Training Options	13
The Benefits of Performance Leadership	15

“If I put a person into a job and he or she does not perform, I have made a mistake. I have no business blaming that person.”

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PETER DRUCKER

# INTRODUCTION

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There are clear and proven links between the way people feel at work and the performance of a company: good work really does lead to great performance.

To answer the question “How do the world’s best managers find, focus and keep talented employees?”, Gallup interviewed over 80,000 managers at varying levels in a number of industries and sectors.

The companies whose employees rated them in the top 25% brought on average, about £55m in sales per year more than those whose employees have rated them in the bottom 25%.

Performance Leadership has many strands beyond simple appraisal. It is not only about results, although these are obviously vital. It is also about inputs: about behaviour as well as targets, about opportunities to give time, listen and explore – and playing to others’ strengths. It is not a firmly delivered speech, but an opportunity to engage in a dialogue about how to optimise performance.

What follows is ASK’s proven approach to developing a high performance culture.

# CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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## IT IS DISLIKED BY MANAGERS...

- Takes too long at year end to do all those appraisals
- I don't have time to manage people – what about the day job?
- Why don't HR just do their job and replace my poor performers?
- Or at least train them properly so that I don't have to do everything!
- You mean I have to inspire them as well?

## ...AND IT IS DISLIKED BY EMPLOYEES

- Not seen as a fair or equal process
- How can I do a job properly when no-one tells me what is expected of me?
- I'm told all the time what I'm doing wrong but no-one helps me to develop
- Getting a promotion around here does not seem to be connected to how well you perform, so why should I bother?

As it is currently all too often practised, performance management can have a negative impact not just on the organisation itself, but on the managers and those they manage.

## MANAGERS...

- Don't accept that performance management is a critical personal priority in delivering organisational results
- Act to enhance the performance of others only once or twice a year, and only in a formal review process
- Don't take the time to agree clear objectives and expectations
- Tolerate 'excuses' from individuals for continued under-performance
- Avoid potential conflict by giving inaccurate appraisal ratings on annual reviews.

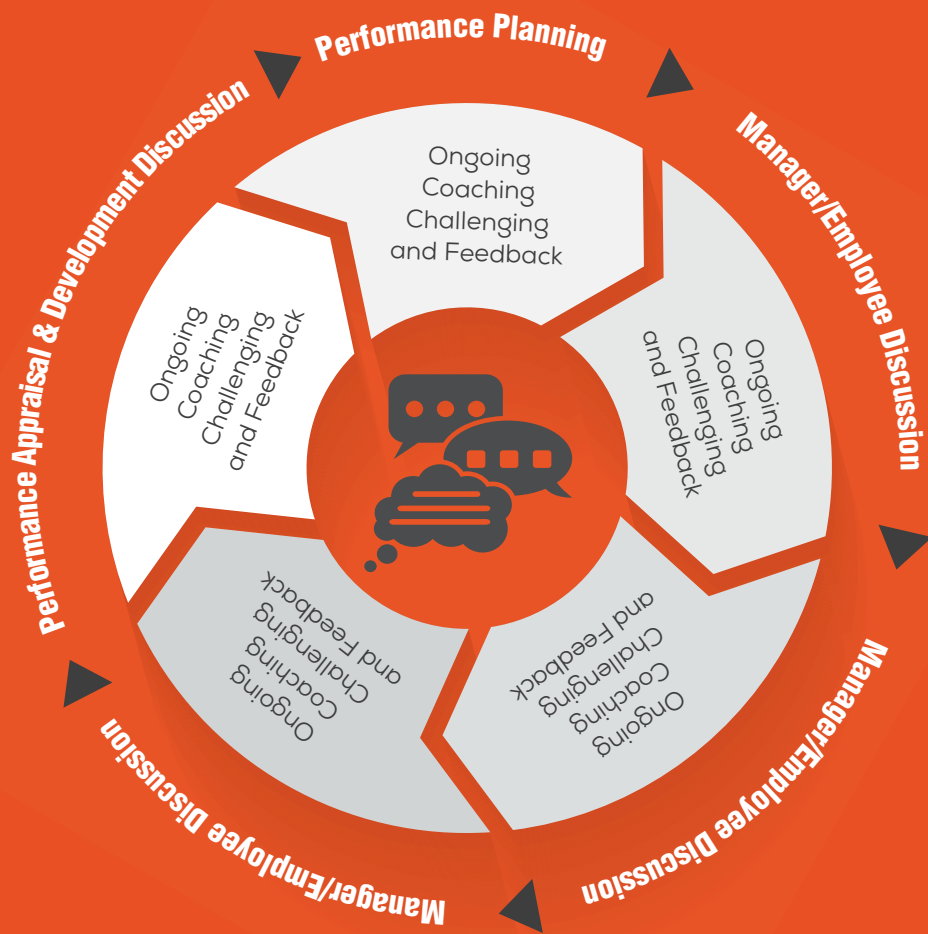
## PEOPLE...

- Only receive negative feedback that reduces their confidence to take action to develop and improve their performance
- Are 'told' what to do rather than being actively 'engaged' in seeking improvements
- Receive feedback on poor performance too late, if at all, for them to take corrective action.

## ORGANISATIONS...

- Are continually trying to improve processes and systems that neither deliver the expected performance levels nor provide quality data on performance ratings that can be used to inform pay, promotion and talent management strategies

Ultimately, performance is not a process that needs to be managed: it is an activity that needs to be led.





# WHAT IS PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP?

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It is a process, not an activity: an on-going cycle of activities that use the challenges of every day working to encourage learning, engagement and growth.

It aligns the performance and development of the individual and the team with the performance and development of the organisation and its business objectives: it is focused on delivering better business results.

It involves taking time to provide support. While challenge and stretch are key approaches to development, performance leaders also acknowledge that mistakes are both inevitable and natural. What really matters about mistakes is how they are dealt with, and that the chosen approach allows for learning without undermining confidence

It is about the leadership style of the manager: openness and honesty are critically important behaviours in creating the engagement and trust required in enhancing performance.

# TOP TEN TIPS

## FOR PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP

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- 1 Think 'leading performance', rather than 'performance management' – performance leadership is a business imperative, not an HR project.
- 2 Introduce the skills of performance leadership before you introduce new processes – the quality of the conversation between manager and employee is more important than the paperwork.
- 3 Personal objectives must be genuinely 'agreed' and aligned with team, business unit and corporate objectives, not imposed from above. Create parallel processes to agree business objectives ('what we do') and to identify the behaviour needed to succeed ('how we do it').
- 4 Performance leadership isn't an annual event: help managers understand that the ingredients of performance are clear expectations followed by skilful and timely, on-going feedback and coaching.
- 5 Put in place a clear statement of Company Values and a concise framework of Behavioural Competencies: reward people that 'live the values'.

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- The background of the page features a series of concentric circles in various shades of purple, creating a ripple effect that emanates from the center. The circles are of different diameters and are semi-transparent, allowing the underlying purple color to show through. The overall effect is a modern, abstract design that adds visual interest to the text-heavy page.
- 6 Ensure that performance leadership skills are part of every manager's core competence, and appraise - and support - their performance of them.
  - 7 Feedback is the 'fuel' of performance leadership: provide good training in both giving and receiving feedback - encourage managers to constructively challenge rather than tolerate under-performance.
  - 8 Identify good performance leaders and ensure that their focus on performance improvement is visibly rewarded.
  - 9 Conduct formal but short reviews of performance at least three times a year. They are no substitute for on-going dialogue but they provide a formal opportunity to agree actions that will be taken over the next period.
  - 10 Challenge managers who claim they don't have time to invest in performance leadership: most will have chosen to retain tasks and activities that could be delegated, and many will be spending time dealing with the consequences of failing to lead performance effectively.

# THE ASK<sup>®</sup>

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT MODEL

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It is common for managers to observe that their performance management effort to date has been 'upside down': they have placed their emphasis on review and appraisal and under-invested in planning, feedback, coaching and challenging. The focus of our approach is to ensure an appropriate investment of time and effort in the activities that improve performance.

## **PLAN FOR PERFORMANCE**

Planning and agreeing high quality objectives and expectations of behaviour are the foundation of good performance, without which enormous amounts of time and effort will be expended with little return.

## **GIVE FEEDBACK**

Once meaningful objectives are in place, feedback must be provided, skilfully and frequently, so that individuals can evaluate their own progress, avoid repeating mistakes and recognise achievements.

## **PROVIDE COACHING**

Providing feedback will almost always stimulate requests for support in becoming better, and the most effective way a manager can do this is by providing coaching. Where managers provide clear expectations, regular feedback and skilful coaching, the majority of performance issues will be countered before they arise.

## **CHALLENGE GAPS IN PERFORMANCE**

On a few occasions, however, a gap appears between an agreed objective and the actual performance: it is then essential that a manager can 'challenge the gap' and gain acknowledgement that its closure is the responsibility of the employee.

## **REVIEW AND APPRAISE**

These skills will ensure that, when the time comes to periodically review and appraise annual performance, every individual will have had an opportunity to give their best.

# OUR SOLUTIONS

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ASK's performance leadership solutions are always customised to your needs, but are rooted in:

## CONSULTANCY

- Design and implementation of Performance Leadership processes and behaviours
- Internal HR development programmes on performance leadership

## TRAINING

- Bespoke design of performance leadership training in formats to fit your working environment – from ½ day to 3 day events, incorporating on-line learning and support tools
- Delivery of training programmes
- Delivery of Train-the-Trainer programmes

Our workshops typically cover the following areas (see opposite page):





## PERSONAL STYLE

- Managers' awareness of their own style and approach

## PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP

- Understanding the performance leadership cycle and the ASK® Performance Improvement Model
- Understanding the differences between objectives (today and what) and competencies (tomorrow and how)
- Linking performance leadership to organisational mission, values and goals

## DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE CULTURE

- Creating focus and motivation in others
- Linking performance objectives to the business plan
- Setting clear and appropriate objectives
- Assessing performance against objectives
- Challenging under-performance

## FEEDBACK

- Giving honest, constructive, timely and direct feedback on performance

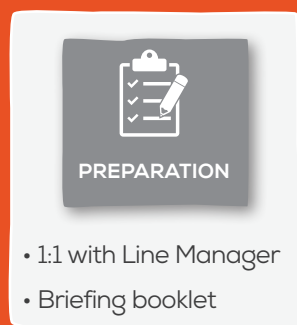
## COACHING

- Performance coaching for present job roles
- Coaching for future capability

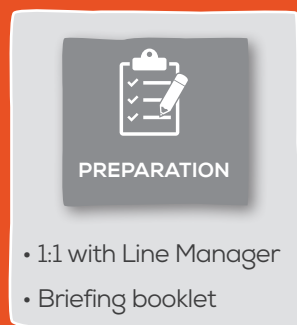
## APPRAISAL

- Assessing overall performance against objectives and competencies
- Conducting an effective appraisal

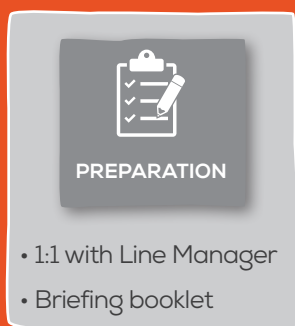
## SINGLE MODULE PROGRAMME



## MULTI-MODEL PROGRAMME



## INTEGRATED PROGRAMME



**3 MONTHS LEARNING TRANSFER**



## TRAINING OPTIONS

3 MONTHS LEARNING TRANSFER

MAKE IT STICK

### OPTIONAL ½ DAY MODULES

COACHING  
AND FEEDBACK

MANAGING  
CHANGE

PLANNING AND  
PRIORITISATION

MANAGING POOR  
PERFORMANCE

MOTIVATING  
YOUR TEAM

DEVELOPING  
YOUR TEAM

3 MONTHS LEARNING TRANSFER

MAKE IT STICK

WORKSHOP

1 DAY

Motivating and  
Developing your Team

WORKPLACE  
LEARNING

3 WKS

WORKSHOP

1 DAY

Managing Change and  
Poor Performance

MAKE IT STICK

# THE BENEFITS OF PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP

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Gallup's research asked employees and managers hundreds of different questions on every aspect of their roles, experiences and corporate life. Using a combination of statistical analysis and a range of organisational performance figures (absenteeism, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, operating profits etc.), they reduced the list of questions to just twelve.

## THESE INCLUDE

- Do I know what is expected of me at work?
- In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for good work?
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
- Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel like my work is important?
- In the last six months, have I talked with someone about my progress?
- At work, have I had the opportunity to learn and grow?

*Source: Gallup Q12 survey*



By aligning the personal and working development of the individual with the organisation, performance leadership increases engagement. Organisations with higher levels of engagement typically show higher levels of productivity, turnover and profit, and lower levels of staff turnover and absenteeism.

Adopting ASK's performance leadership approach supports the creation of a working culture where more of your people will be able to answer these questions positively.

Managers can leverage this higher engagement into higher performance levels, deliver their own targets and spend less time on onerous 'appraisal' processes.



We understand that a lot of time and effort is expended in organisations in managing performance.

With over 20 years of experience in helping organisations develop a performance leadership culture, ASK is well positioned to support you in maximising your return on these previous investments.



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