



Louise Broekman, HR Coach Network

STAR PERFORMANCE

MAXIMISING PRODUCTIVITY

The Challenge

In good times, it is easier to grow business, build confidence and, unfortunately, inefficient business practices. It sneaks up on you!

In times of uncertainty, the good businesses can continue to operate effectively – they are known as STAR Performers. The businesses with inefficiencies are hard hit and exposed to a high level of risk.

The risks include cash flow management, sales growth and expense control.

The “Productivity Challenge” is one that businesses need to continually assess and plan for. Let’s have a look at an example.

A growing business will develop systems, processes and people as they go. Operations can become complex very quickly. The key to productivity is simplicity. When systems are complex, they are very often doomed to fail and therefore not sustainable in a business.

Keeping in check what people do and how they do it is a strategic imperative. If a business is growing or just changing to meet the varying demands of the market, a workplace improvement plan or a HR Plan is a good way to proactively manage productivity improvements or efficiencies.

A Planned Approach

We know that as business owners and managers we are limited in time and resources. So, when we are time poor – sometimes we make poor decisions because we make them on the run.

Productivity improvement can be managed

proactively through a planned approach. Generally a planned approach includes four key steps:

1. Strategy – look at your business now and gather the facts. Know the numbers and drivers of your business. Identify what you are satisfied with in relation to your business performance and what keeps you awake at night. Then look at the strategic alternatives both worst and best case scenarios for your business future.
2. Team – identify what satisfies your team and measure their capabilities. This will help you to identify the pressure in relation to their roles, in assisting you to make your strategy happen.
3. Action planning – review the Strategy and Team data with key people to review what planning and productivity improvements can be managed or managed out. Developing a 12 month plan will enable tasks and roles to be delegated and managed proactively.
4. Results monitoring – creating milestones in a plan is important to keep the team focused on your return on investment and will enable you to track results and amend the plan along the way.

Planning for productivity is not a one time event. It should be integrated into the way you do business. If it is a part of how you manage your business, it will stand a chance to be sustainable and “self managed” without a hands on approach by you.

Providing “stretch” assignments to employees is a well known development technique

which can provide a great learning environment for employees and therefore a cost effective employee retention program.

Partnerships for Improvement

We reviewed earlier how businesses with good productivity management and a continuous improvement philosophy survive in tough times. These are our STAR Performers. The HR Coach Research Institute studied this factor and identified that growing businesses actually do something else as well. They create partnerships around them.

How does this work? Businesses that have a healthy relationship with others have healthy businesses. This includes different groups of people:

Employees: Employers and Employees working “together” or employees working “with me” rather than “for me” have a solid problem-solving working relationship.

Clients and Suppliers: Involving Clients and Suppliers to improve the supply chain, service and efficiencies in delivery door to door, develop a good future focused on a long term relationship that is outcome focused.

Alliances and Service Providers: – gaining feedback on how to position the business more effectively and build strategies of comparative advantage enables experts and complementary businesses to add value to the business. It also creates a temperature gauge for the business in relation to the external environment, government policy and changing market conditions. Feedback from individuals from “outside” of the

“The key to productivity is simplicity. When systems are complex, they are very often doomed to fail and therefore not sustainable in a business.”

business will assist with gaining an “objective” view of the business.

Productivity improvements can therefore be improved in many different dimensions. By measuring the internal and external pressure factors and gaining feedback from the key stakeholders creates a well rounded picture on how productivity is produced. This is known as the Productivity Partnerships Model© displayed below. By creating strong partnerships, it can effectively shift loyalty to commitment – based on hard data, involvement and a positive approach.

Productivity Checklist

So practically, how do you put a productivity improvement plan in place?

1. Nominate a productivity improvement co-ordinator – preferably an individual that has good potential to learn from taking on the role. This will provide employees

with “stretch” or growth opportunities in their jobs and gain recognition in the workplace.

2. Objectively measure your satisfaction as an Employer with your Strategy and how it is implemented by your people.
3. Objectively measure your employee satisfaction and gain their suggestions for improvements and feedback on what works well.
4. Gather information on your business. Financial performance, errors, mistakes, reworks, client satisfaction rates, productivity ratios.
5. Conduct a review with key employees to review the data above and start creating a 12 month plan. Have this process facilitated by a trained HR Coach if you want to actively contribute and get the most out of the process.

6. Meet with external stakeholders and ask for their feedback on how your business can be improved. Measure this information so that you can continue the process on an ongoing basis and measure your improvements over time.
7. Finalise a plan and delegate tasks and responsibilities. Make sure that you have scheduled milestones to track your progress.
8. Conduct milestone reviews and amend the plan as you go.
9. Measure the results on scheduled times so you can track your return on investment.
10. Celebrate the results and use this as a platform for the next years plan.

The STAR Workplace Program

The STAR Workplace Program is an objective benchmark and monitoring system for Australian businesses, delivered by members of the HR Coach Network. It has been designed to measure productivity and to provide a blue print for businesses improvement strategies for 12 months. Businesses who participate can be recognised through the display of the logo. ❖

About the Author

Louise Broekman is the founder of the HR Coach Research Institute, the HR Coach Network and creator of the STAR Workplace Program.

**Phone: 1300 550 674
Email: business@hrcoach.com.au
Website: www.hrcoach.com.au**



Productivity Partnerships Model©

