An Explanation into how to Implement a Successful Performance Management System Into An Organisation

Karen Macken

BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management

2008
An Explanation into how to Implement
a Successful Performance Management System
Into An Organisation

By Karen Macken

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for a BA (Hons) in
Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

2008
Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of B.A (Hons.) in Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: ..............................................

Date: ..............................................

Student Number: ...................................
Abstract

I believe organisations are successful because of the people who work in them. It takes many successful individual performances for an organisation to achieve overall success. People, not the equipment, facilities or processes ultimately determine whether an organisation prospers. Performance Management is designed to align the objectives of staff members with those of the organisation and to develop staff to meet the ongoing needs of the company.

It can take up to two years to fully embed a Performance Management system and it requires considerable effort from organisations both in terms of time, money and perseverance. None of these can be underestimated. Without an effective and embedded system an organisation cannot expect to achieve a high performance culture and it is unlikely to achieve its strategic objectives.
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Chapter One Introduction

The failure by organisations to distinguish between “Good”, “Average” and “Poor” Performance is one of the single greatest contributors to poor morale and de-motivation at all levels within organisations. This ultimately leads to less effective individual and organisational performance.

Performance Management is a means of getting better results from an organisation, team and individual by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals. It is a process for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to manage and develop people.

This can be achieved through the reinforcement of a cascade process whereby goals and objectives are cascaded down through the organisation. This is a key element of any performance management system.

Performance Management systems are characterised by the following elements:

- Clear goals, linked to the organisation’s mission / strategic plan, that are understood and agreed upon by both management and employees
- Up to date job descriptions and role clarification
- On-going formal and informal reviews
- Managers and Employees seeing the process as a partnership
- Clearly distinguishable Goal Setting and Review Meetings
- Enabling self-assessment
- Training for managers and employees on their roles
- Continuous review and modification of the documentation used and the process
- Clearly defined criteria for distinguishing Good, Poor and Average Performance

Performance Management is a process which is designed to improve business, team and individual performance and which is owned and driven by managers. Its aim is to improve the achievement of objectives, knowledge, skill and overall competence, which ultimately contribute to the day-to-day effectiveness of an organisation.
The following document outlines the findings of an evaluation project in respect of an initiative carried out in 2007 in a Recruitment Consultancy Firm, which aimed to introduce Performance Management into the organisation.

I have found that the performance management system itself is fine and adequate for the company's needs. However, I have recommended some changes.

It also outlines the findings and recommendations for the company to consider in respect of the Performance Management system within the organisation.
Chapter Two Literature Review

2.0 Background to Performance Management
The notion of performance management has been one of the most significant developments in the area of human resource management in recent years.

*The phrase was first coined by Beer and Ruh in 1976 but it did not become recognised as a distinctive approach until the mid-1980s, growing out of the realisation that a more continuous and integrated approach was needed to manage and reward performance.* Armstrong (1995)

2.1 What is Performance Management?
Performance management is a process which, if managed correctly, should promote high performance standards to employees, ensure the achievement of company goals, develop employee skills and promote clear two-way discussion between managers and employees.

Performance Management is about connecting individual, departmental and organisational goals, in order to ensure that each individual has a clear understanding of their role, priorities and their contribution to the overall success of the organisation.

Aguinis (2007) proposes that performance management is a ‘*continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation*’.

He considers its two main components:

1. **Continuous process** – he believes performance management to be an ongoing process of setting goals and objectives, observing performance and giving and receiving feedback.

2. **Alignment with strategic goals** – performance management requires that managers ensure that their employees’ activities, goals and objectives are linked with the organisations goals and objectives, and consequently helps the organisation to gain competitive advantage.
He deems performance management to be ‘an ongoing effort to provide feedback and coaching so that performance can be improved’.

Walters (1995) suggests that ‘performance management is about the arrangements organisations use to get the right things done successfully’.

Armstrong (1995) believes that ‘performance management is a process which is designed to improve organisational, team and individual performance and which is owned and driven by line managers’. He believes it should be ‘a process for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and an approach to managing and developing people in a way which increases the probability that it will be achieved in the short and longer term’.

Jane Hanson, Organisation Development Manager in First Direct states that ‘performance management links in terms of cascading business goals and plans into individual performance and objectives’:


Armstrong and Baron (2008) consider performance management to be ‘a strategy which relates to every activity of the organisation set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style and communication systems’. They stress that performance management should be:

- Strategic and about broader issues and longer-term goals
- Integrated, and should link the business, people management, individuals and teams

They believe performance management to be a ‘natural process’ which contributes to the ‘effective management of individuals and teams to achieve high levels of organisational performance’.
Figure 2.1.1 shows the effects of an effective performance management process. At the start of the review year, performance agreements are put in place. The performance is then monitored and reviewed throughout the year. By the end of the year, this performance has improved significantly.
2.2 The Advantages of Performance Management

A well developed performance management system has many advantages for organisations.

A study conducted by Mercer found that good performance management implementation pays off. The study revealed that the 1,200 workers surveyed stated that they could improve their productivity by an average of 26% if they were not held back by a lack of direction, support, training and equipment.


Implementing a well designed performance management system has many advantages which Aguinis has summarised as follows:

‘From the perspective of employees, a good system increases motivation and self esteem, helps improve performance, clarifies job tasks and duties, provides self-insight and development opportunities and clarifies supervisors’ expectations. From the perspective of managers, good systems allow them to gain insight into employees activities and goals, allow for more fair and appropriate administrative actions, allow them to communicate organisational goals more clearly, let them differentiate good and poor performers, and help drive organisational change. Finally, from the perspective of the HR function, a good system provides protection from litigation’.

The Institute of Personnel Management conducted research on performance management and found that the most common reasons for developing a defined framework for performance management include:

- To improve organisation effectiveness
- To motivate employees
- To improve training and development
- To change culture
- To underpin the link between pay and productivity
- To attract and retail skilled staff
- To support total quality management
2.4 Characteristics of a Performance Management System

Performance management aims to create a framework for focused and constructive feedback around performance and development within an organisation. The process supports employees and managers to initiate and participate in performance discussions, and to give and receive feedback on progress toward organisational and developmental objectives.

Aguinis informs that ‘Performance management is an ongoing process. It never ends. Once established in an organisation, it becomes part of an organisation’s culture’.

There to be five critical elements to performance management, which include:

- Job Descriptions
- The Goals Cascade
- Goal Setting Skills
- Process and Documentation
- Quality Assurance

In order for performance management to become part of an organisation’s culture, each of these elements must be implemented.
2.4.0 Job Descriptions

A job description is needed to understand what each individual is actually doing and not what they or someone else would like them to be doing.

Armstrong believes ‘a job description sets out the purpose of a job, where it fits in the organisation structure, the context within which the job holder functions and the principal accountabilities of job holders, or the main tasks they have to carry out’.

He proposes that the performance management cycle begins with a job description and ‘provides the framework for performance management. It sets out the purpose of the role, the key result areas and the key competencies’.

Aguines suggests this to be an important requirement before a performance management system can be implemented. ‘A job analysis is a fundamental prerequisite of any performance management system. Without a job analysis, it is difficult to understand what constitutes the required duties for a particular job. If we don’t know what an employee is supposed to do on the job, we won’t know what needs to be evaluated and how to do so’.

Each employee must be supported to write their job description and indicate the organisational relationships they depend upon to complete their job. This is a vital part of the performance management process.

The manager should then review all job descriptions within their remit and consider the tasks not being performed or being duplicated and act to rectify the situation.

Job descriptions must be continuously maintained and each job description must be re-evaluated at each performance management review session. This is a primary requirement of any performance management system.

Goals for an individual must be set in the context of an accurate job description and individuals require absolute clarity in terms of their job role to be effective.
2.4.1 The Goals Cascade

There is a need to have good knowledge of the organisation's mission and strategic goals before a successful performance management system can be implemented.

Armstrong suggests the cascade commences with the CEO issuing a statement on the operational requirements for the period in the context of the mission and strategic objective.

'Effective performance management provides a basis for the communication of the organisation’s mission, values and objectives to all employees.' Armstrong (2001).

This statement should be then responded to by each department or function clearly outlining what the department/function must do to support the CEO statement in the period. This statement identifies priorities for the department/function and the individuals within.

With the above statements and an agreed and clear job description the individual employee is now in a position to begin the goal setting process with their manager. Both parties are fully informed as to what the organisation wishes to do, understands how their department/function contributes to the overall strategic objectives and each has full visibility on what others are doing across the organisation. This process of agreeing goals requires continuous and consistent effort.

As Williams (1991) has written:

'The setting of objectives is the management process which ensures that every individual employee knows what role they need to play and what results they need to achieve to maximise their contribution to the overall business. In essence it enables employees to know what is required of them and on what basis their performance and contribution will be assessed'
It is also suggested by Williams that objectives should:

- Be jointly agreed in advance between the manager and the individual as both realistic and challenging and, as such, they are owned
- Measure the actual level of achievement so that the basis on which performance is assessed can be understood in advance and is as clear as possible
- Support the overall business strategies of the company so that the objectives, taken together, are mutually supportive and consistent throughout the organisation
- The importance of measurement, feedback and contingency management
- The need to empower people

IDS HR Studies (2005) highlight that 'organisations are increasingly advocating a higher degree of employee ownership of the performance management process'. They recommend that employees 'take the lead in review discussions and play a greater part in establishing their own objectives'. This will 'improve their understanding of how their contribution affects the performance of the business as a whole'.

This approach not only has impact on clarity for the individual but also is an essential element in employee alignment and the channelling of employee initiative, energy and enthusiasm to one end and to the other end, the achievement of the strategic objective. The clarity of each person's job role, departmental priorities and the relating of each of these to the overall organisational objectives also favourably impacts cross functional working and supports employees to improve the processes of the cross functional working.

The provision of information to all in the cascade process is an important principle of the performance management system and forms the basis for a truly two-way process. Without this the employee would not be able to fully engage with the process and would not be able to contribute to the formulation of their goals. In its absence the performance management system would be in effect an imposed system, with lack of buy-in and would fail in its absolute aim of employee alignment.
2.4.2 Goal Setting Skills

The setting of goals is the primary prerequisite of the cascade performance management system.

As Williams (1991) has written: ‘The setting of objectives is the management process which ensures that every individual employee knows what role they need to play and what results they need to achieve to maximise their contribution to the overall business. In essence it enables employees to know what is required of them and on what basis their performance and contribution will be assessed’.

Research has shown that most individuals struggle to write meaningful goals and even have difficulty in understanding the principle of a goal in the context of an individual’s job. Too often goals are developed as additional ‘things’ to be done if the individual has the time or are mere reiterations of the job description. Goals must be set as the focus of the job for the period under review and indicate the priorities for the individual in performing their job. They must be clearly related to the departmental priorities for the period and hence to the organisational objectives. They must be written in such a way that the individual can measure their own performance in the completion of the goal and must not be dependent on someone’s view or opinion as to their completion. Goals are never half done or nearly done. They are completed or they are not completed. There is no in-between. The goal setting process allows the individual influence their job but most importantly the process gives the manager the means by which they can fully direct the employee asset to the needs of the business.

Goal theory (Locke 1968) suggests the following:

- The more specific the goal, the more likely it is to be achieved
- The completion requirement (finish date) should be specific
- Goals that are difficult to achieve may be achieved more readily than easier ones
- Every individual needs feedback on performance to improve

IDS HR Studies (2005) advise that line managers still ‘play an essential part in the performance management process as facilitators, advocates and coaches. They need to be able to bring the best out of high-potential staff, manage underperformers and motivate the vast majority of staff rated towards the middle of the performance spectrum’.
Charles Handy believes that performance management systems can help managers to:

- Be teachers, councillors and friends, as much or more than they are commanders and judges
- Trust people to use their own methods to achieve the manager's own ends
- Delegate on the basis of a positive will to trust and to enable, and a willingness to be trusted and enabled
- Become post-heroic leaders who know that every problem can be solved in such a way as to develop other people's capacity to handle it

Without developed competencies in goal-setting, consistency of approach and subsequent monitoring, the performance management system cannot be expected to perform.

For this reason, organisations must commit the resources to provide the skill to carry out an effective performance management process.

‘They need to know how to set clear, measurable and achievable objectives. They need to know how to define and assess competence requirements. They have to provide helpful feedback and know, not only how to commend staff on their achievement of review meetings but also how to coach them and help them to recognise where their performance has been sub-standard and needs to be improved’. Armstrong (2001)

Many organisations commit resources to the development of the performance management process at the expense of this critical skill and then wonder why the system did not work. In reality if the goal setting process is working to a high standard, in the manner described, the performance management process can be managed on a blank piece of paper.
2.4.3 Process and Documentation

'Performance management is a process, not an event. It operates as a continuous cycle'. Armstrong (2001)

Armstrong suggests that performance management is ‘about planning - defining expectations expressed as objectives and in business plans - and about measurement'. He believes it should ‘apply to all employees, not just managers, and to teams as much as individuals. It is a continuous process, not a one-off event.’

It is recommended by many academics that organisations adopt a quarterly goal setting process with review of performance against goals taking place at the end of each cycle. The overall performance for the year will be the result of the average rating for each performance cycle. Setting goals for twelve months is not considered appropriate, as in today’s fast moving business environment it is believed that the visible horizon is not much more than three months. Importantly, the three month cycle allows a manager and employee address issues of poor performance much more quickly and before it becomes an issue for both. Additionally this approach forces the manager and employee to dedicate time to meeting and discussing the employee’s role and focus, adapting where necessary, to ensure continuous alignment. Additionally the continuous dialog that it creates is one of the keys to ongoing employee engagement being driven by an organisation.

Armstrong considers performance management ‘not just to be a system of forms and procedures. It is about the actions which people take to achieve the day-to-day delivery of results and manage performance improvements in themselves and others.

For many performance management systems the workload involved and the associated paperwork is often the rock upon which it perishes. The process which works best is where the manager does not write up the ‘forms’. It is the employee’s responsibility to write up their own documentation having completed the performance management meeting. The employee then submits the completed documentation to the manager for sign off. The employee is responsible for ensuring that the information is filed appropriately be that online or in paper format. The managers’ responsibility is to arrange the meeting, ensure that the employee has access to the relevant information (the cascade materials, job description etc) and gives time to thinking about the employee goals (what they want that person to focus on for the period ahead) prior to the meeting. The key to a successful performance management process is to minimise the work load for the manager, ensure that it is a valuable exercise in giving the manager real return and to ensure that the employee has an opportunity to influence their role.
On an ongoing basis all employees in an organisation should have access to the following in one central location:

- All job descriptions
- Mission statement and strategic objective
- CEO operating imperatives period to period
- Departmental objectives and priorities period to period
- All employee goals by department

No manager can be successful in their role unless their reports are successful. The performance management system is the tool provided to the manager to ensure this outcome. This is the primary methodology through which a manager directs, supports and controls the employee. It is also the primary methodology that allows an employee influence their job role.
2.4.4 Quality Assurance

Consistency is a central theme of a strong performance management system. To support the performance management process it is essential that a quality assurance process be set up.

Armstrong believes it is ‘important to monitor the introduction of performance management very carefully but it is equally vital to evaluate it regularly’.

This involves an evaluation committee that meets to review all goals set and ratings awarded. The purpose of the review is to ensure that there is a standard being maintained in the setting of goals, that they meet the defined definition of goals in the organisation and they are rejected if they fail to do so. The process also ensures that goals are not being set too softly in one area or too aggressively in another.

Winstanley and Stuart-Smith propose that ‘four ethical principles’ be built into the performance management process. These include: ‘respect for the individual, mutual respect, procedural fairness, and transparency of decision-making’.


Tyler and Bues identified a number of factors ‘that affect perceptions of procedural justice’. These are: ‘adequate consideration of an employees viewpoint, suppression of personal bias towards an employee, applying criteria consistently across employees, providing early feedback to employees about the outcome of decisions, and providing employees with an adequate explanation of decisions made’.


Failure to implement such a centralised and formal quality assurance process could lead to inconsistencies in the process, feelings of unfairness and ultimately to the failure of the performance management process.
2.5 Why is Performance Management Important?

Armstrong suggests that 'performance management helps in the integration of corporate and individual and team objectives, in communicating these objectives, and in underpinning the core values of the organisation'. He believes that it is 'potentially a lever for achieving cultural and behavioural change and a means of empowering people by giving them more control over their work and their personal development'.

He considers 'performance management to be based on the simple proposition that when people know and understand what is expected of them, and have been able to take part in forming those expectations, they can and will perform to meet them'.

Performance management is important for a number of reasons:

- The process clarifies roles and responsibilities in line with the needs of the organisation
- It is a process to set personal objectives which will ensure that the organisation achieves its key business objectives
- It establishes future knowledge, skills and characteristics that will be necessary for successful performance of the organisation
- It develops a personal development plan to address individual development as recognised through the system
- It ensures that feedback is provided to all staff on performance

Performance management is important because it links individual, departmental and organisational goals and ensures the ongoing success of a company in delivering the organisation's strategic objectives.

A study conducted by Development Dimensions International, a global human resources consulting firm, found that performance management systems are a key tool that organisations use to translate business strategy into business results. They found that performance management systems influence financial performance, productivity, product or service quality, customer satisfaction and employee job satisfaction. 79% of the CEOs surveyed said that performance management systems implemented in their organisations drove cultural strategies that helped to maximise human assets.

2.6 Elements of the Performance Management Process

There are four main elements to the performance management process, namely:

1. **Objective Setting and Review**
   Personal objective setting should take place on a quarterly basis throughout the year. Personal objectives must be linked directly to a company's strategic objectives, and should be measured in line with Key Performance Indicators and/or Business Performance Indicators.

2. **Identification of Development Needs and Training Plan**
   On a quarterly basis, development needs of the job incumbent must also be assessed and a training plan should be developed to meet these needs. Development needs may be addressed in a number of manners, including formal training and study, or mentoring, coaching or other on-the-job initiatives.

3. **Annual Review with Rating and Career Discussion**
   On an annual basis an overall review of performance over the year must be conducted between the employee and his/her manager. This review will focus on performance over the previous year.

4. **On-Going Feedback, Review and Realignment of Objectives**
   The objective setting and reviewing process is a continuous ongoing communication process whereby performance expectations are re-aligned and two-way feedback happens on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis.
The objective setting and review process should take place on a quarterly basis throughout the year. This diagram summarises when the process should take place:

**The Performance Management Year**

**January**
- Review Q4 and year's performance
- Set objectives for Q1

**April**
- Review Q1 goals
- Set objectives for Q2

**July**
- Review Q2 goals
- Set objectives for Q3

**October**
- Review Q3 goals
- Set objectives for Q4
2.7 Personal Objectives

Aguinis describes objectives as 'statements of important and measurable outcomes'.

Armstrong (2001) describes objectives as 'something to be accomplished by individuals, departments and organisations over a period of time. They can be expressed as targets to be met and tasks to be completed by specified dates'.

He goes on to say that 'objectives need to be defined and agreed. They will relate to the overall purpose of the job and define performance areas'.

Objectives are the short term outputs of a job that are based on the organisations strategic goals.

They must be:

- Based on the organisations strategic goals
- Average up to 2 to 3 performance objectives at any one time
- Not cast in concrete
- Reviewed regularly
- S M A R T (specific, measurable, achievable, results orientated, time bound)

In order to successfully achieve a personal objective, the objective must be completed in a manner which reflects the company's values and behaviours.

An objective is not something 'EXTRA' or 'ADDITIONAL' to a person's job. Objectives place the emphasis on the job for the period under review.

IDS HR Studies (2005) suggest that when setting individual objectives the focus must be on 'activities outside the employee's day-to-day activities which will add value to the business'. Objectives 'should not simply be a summary of a job description'.

They recommend that objectives should be aligned with business goals and should have an impact on 'bottom-line profitability and organisational performance'. In order for this to occur, it is 'important that the employee's individual objectives are carefully aligned with the overall business strategy'.

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2.7.0 The Objective Setting Process

Every employee should have a clear understanding of what is expected of him or her and how he or she individually contributes to the overall success of an organisation. It is important to be able to answer the following questions:

- What do I need to deliver?
- How will this be measured?
- What skills, behaviour, and knowledge do I need?

Objective setting is crucial to the performance management process. An organisation that sets objectives knows where it is going in the future and how it is going to get there. The same should also apply to a department or to an individual.

Joe Dugdale, HR Director of Centrica Telecommunication's states that their company complete the setting of objectives in the following way: 'Centrica have 'seven major initiatives on our Management Agenda and we collectively check that individual objectives link back to them. If they don’t, we tell the individual it is probably not the right objective'.


The art of objective setting is to place emphasis on the job concerned for the period under review. Before any review and / or objective-setting meeting takes place both the manager and employee need to ask themselves the following questions:

- **What is to be done?**
- **Why is it to be done?**
- **When is it to be done?**
- **How is it to be done?**
2.7.1 SMART Objectives

Personal objectives represent individual performance targets that should be attained by the end of the review period.

Well defined objectives are SMART:

**S** Specific: they explicitly state what must be achieved and are clear in their language

**M** Measurable in quantifiable terms: objectives set can be evaluated in terms of quantity/quality of the end result and resources used

**A** Achievable with a reasonable effort: they are realistic but challenging

**R** Results oriented, not activity-oriented: the expected outcome is clear

**T** Timebound: they have specific completion times

In constructing a SMART goal, the following rules apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Begin with an action verb:</th>
<th>To reduce overtime hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State the subject of the action or change and be specific:</td>
<td>Of the project team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify measurable standards:</td>
<td>From a current level of 20 hours per week to no more than 10 hours per week ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the time frame for completion:</td>
<td>By November 25th 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to set and agree objectives, you need:

- The organisation / department objectives
- Job description with role purpose and key activities.
2.7.2 Measuring Objectives

Aguinis suggests both the employee and the manager are responsible for performance execution. He explains that ‘the employee needs to be committed to goal achievement and should take a proactive role in seeking feedback from his or her supervisor’. He feels the manager also has responsibilities. These include ‘observing and documenting performance, updating the employee on any changes in the goals of the organisation, and providing resources and reinforcement so the employee can succeed and continue to be motivated’.

Every objective must have a method of measuring it; otherwise it will never be evident if it has been achieved. The clearer a personal objective is, the easier it is to set performance measures against it.

If there is difficulty identifying a measure, first check that the goal is actually SMART. If it cannot be identified how its achievement will impact on the business, you must question the validity of the goal.

2.7.3 Objective Setting

Both the reviewee and reviewer can take steps to ensure that all meetings in the process are as effective as possible.

**Before**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Provide organisation strategic objectives</td>
<td>- Understand organisation strategic objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider how these objectives will be translated to personal objectives</td>
<td>- Refer to the job description to see how these objectives tie in with own role purpose and key activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assess areas where the individual will need particular support</td>
<td>- Consider how these objectives can be translated into own job and objectives for the following year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**During**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss draft objectives and how they are to be achieved and measured</td>
<td>Discuss draft objectives and how they are to be achieved and measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set clear measures and milestones</td>
<td>Set clear measures and milestones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure standard of performance is understood</td>
<td>Agree standards of performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss behavioural strengths and areas for attention during the period</td>
<td>Identify potential difficulties and development needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify potential difficulties and learning and development needs</td>
<td>Identify additional resources needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify additional resources needed</td>
<td>Record mutually agreed objectives on plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree date for review meeting</td>
<td>Agree date for review meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**After**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review the meeting</td>
<td>Review the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the documentation</td>
<td>Sign off documentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8 Communication and Ownership

The success of the Performance Management process is dependent on a number of factors:

- Individual ownership and responsibility for performance and contribution by all managers and employees
- Regular communication, on both a one-to-one and team basis
- Understanding of and commitment to the process
- Ensuring objective clarity at both the organisation and department level
- Keeping job descriptions and documentation up to date

Performance management needs to be a continuous ongoing communication process where performance expectations are re-aligned and two-way feedback happens on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis.

Aguinis advises that performance management should be used for informational purposes. ‘Performance Management serves as an important communication device. They inform employees about how they are doing and provide them with information on specific areas that may need improvement. They provide information regarding the organisation's and the supervisor's expectations and what aspects of work the supervisor believes are most important.

He suggests that ‘feedback is an important component of a well-implemented performance management system. This feedback can be used in a developmental manner. Managers can use feedback to coach employees and improve performance on an on-going basis’.

IDS HR Studies (2005) suggest that the biggest challenge organisations face is to ‘create a culture based on open and honest feedback, sought and provided in a timely fashion.

Performance Management requires everyone involved in the process to demonstrate commitment and ownership. It is not solely the responsibility of the manager to make sure it happens. Each employee is required to take ownership of their own performance.

2.9 Training and Development

Training and development activities are seen as the route to maximising individual performance potential for business and personal success.

IDS HR Studies (2005) propose that ‘a clear trend within performance management is the growing emphasis on personal development. Well thought-out development plans can play a key role in helping employees achieve their targets.’

Aguinis considers the relationship between performance management and training as vital. ‘Performance management provides information on development needs for employees. In the absence of a good performance management system, it is not clear that organisations will use their training resources in the most efficient way’.

Learning and development is a shared responsibility of the individual, manager and organisation. Every individual should have detailed development discussions throughout the year, which should form part of the performance review system. Development is an ongoing activity, which is carried out in the workplace as well as the training environment.

On a quarterly and annual basis each individual's learning and development needs should be identified to ensure everyone can achieve their objectives to a high standard and to build their ability to contribute to the organisations achievement of its strategic objectives. It is not an add-on to the process, but an intrinsic part.

Learning is a lot more than just attending a training course. It is important to consider what the specific need is, how and when it needs to be addressed and by whom.
There are a variety of solutions:

- Ongoing coaching & feedback from manager and/or colleagues
- Training courses and workshops
- Self-study
- Learning groups to research and share learning and experience on a topic
- Computer based training
- Internet
- Cross functional working
- Networking
- Mentoring

The impact of any development needs to be evaluated in relation to the skill / knowledge acquired and its impact on performance. A record of learning should be maintained at both individual and departmental level.
This Recruitment Consultancy Firm was set up in 2004 to provide a service level in recruitment and outsourcing which was previously unavailable in the marketplace.

Specialising in Office, Financial, Banking and HR Staff, they cover Permanent, Contract and Temporary positions.

Their aim is to develop strategic partnerships with their clients by getting to know their particular business and their requirements. By doing so, they are better equipped to recruit people that suit the particular culture and environment.

Their performance management process aims to ensure that individuals are clear about their roles and objectives and can relate these to the overall objectives of the organisation.

The process is designed to achieve high performance, through the achievement of organisational goals, rather than to be a traditional performance appraisal system.

The process is not linked to probation, promotional opportunities or to an individualised performance related pay system.

Some key aspects of the performance management process is that:

- The process promotes two-way communication throughout the performance planning process
- Openness and discussion helps foster identity with organisation values and goals
- It recognises, in a very real way, the contribution of individuals to performance delivery
- The process of involvement, feedback and recognition builds commitment and harnesses the potential and knowledge of all company members
Chapter Four Research Method

4.0 Introduction
This dissertation is intended to constitute a piece of research, defined by Burns (1990) as ‘the application of fact-finding to practical problem-solving in a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it, involving the collaboration and co-operation of researchers, practitioners and lay-men’. This implies that:

- The area of performance management is an area where improvements for the organisation can be made
- By undertaking the research I hope to identify practical solutions for the organisation in improving their performance management system

4.1 Reason for the Research
My interest in performance management has pointed me to this as a fruitful area for research for the following reason:

- Performance Management is associated with improved performance. My organisation wish to enhance the contribution of individuals and hence the performance of the organisation.

4.2 The Research Objective
My role in this process was to:

- Conduct an evaluation of the Performance Management System being operated in the company
- Consult with management and staff as part of the evaluation
- Report and make recommendations on the system

As a result of this I carried out an evaluation in respect of:

- The implementation of the process itself
- The support from the organisation
- The training
The evaluation process was concerned with evaluating the extent to which the process proposed was implemented. It is important to note that the evaluation process did not concern the extent of performance improvement or achievement of Team Goals achieved by the implementation of the performance management process.

4.3 Methodology

I carried out the evaluation using two basic methods:

1. **On-line questionnaire and report**
   I designed a questionnaire which was completed by participants. The process collected quantitative data. The questionnaire was distributed via internal post to the group. Each individual was provided with an envelope so that return of the information was made easy and was confidential.

2. **1:1 Interviews with representatives from each team within the organisation**
   I also used interviews to gather information from individuals. This method collected qualitative data through open ended questions.

   The agenda was to collect information under the following headings:

   - Linkages between the objectives set and the company plan
   - Aspects of the system that are working well
   - Benefits being achieved
   - Aspects of the system that are not working well
   - Aspects of the system which should be modified
   - Actions that could be taken to help overcome any difficulties
   - The timescale and agendas for meetings
   - The amount of training provided

3. **Other sources of data and information included:**

   - Observations made throughout the period.
   - Sampling performance review documentation.
5.0 Introduction

Following the evaluation process I can report that the performance management process is appropriate for the organisation.

This initiative has been successful in respect of assessing the performance management process.

I have found that the role of managers is critical to the process and the success is a direct result of the hard work and genuine commitment of the staff (reviewees) and the managers (reviewers).

The findings reinforce my view that the success of any performance management system lies in the hands of the people that manage the process. Therefore commitment and active involvement from the CEO in providing clear direction in respect of what is expected of each manager in the next performance period is critical.

In the following sections I have set out as to why this is my view.
5.1 Overview of Findings
On interviewing both staff and managers I have found that:

- The managers have completed the process and have actively introduced the performance management principles into their teams.
- The goal setting process and the identification of key performance indicators together with regular meetings benefited individuals, and the direction and active involvement from managers was appreciated.
- Employees found it easy to identify linkages between the company's strategic plan and their own goals.
- The managers agreed that the goals were achievable and this contributed to the staff enjoying greater clarification of roles and responsibilities and how their work fits into the larger picture.
- The managers reported an understanding of the performance management process as a means of improving performance through goals setting and regular review.
- Employees could see benefits from engaging in the process.
- The process is reliant of genuine commitment of managers and their active engagement with their staff in planning and reviewing performance.

5.2 What Worked Well

*The Performance Management Process*
Employees agreed that they understood the purpose of this process. It was felt that the information given and the training provided clearly outlined the process. All employees stated to have been actively involved in the process.
**Goal Setting Process**

Goals were set and agreed at the outset of the process. Most found this process straightforward and easy, and individuals understood the goals and their part in achieving them. All persons interviewed felt that the goals were achievable.

One individual reports having regular meetings and discussions with their manager so that goals were revised. This critical activity seems to have benefited the individual in the process, as they report being happy with the managers job and active support in the process.

The majority of individuals kept reviewing their goals throughout each quarter, and met regularly with their manager. This seems to have benefited them in understanding their goals.

Managers were quoted to have been supportive and directly involved in the process, and this was reflected in the overall positive answers to this survey from that grouping. There is little doubt that a direct correlation exist between ‘the level of active leadership and involvement’ and ‘the success of the process’.

**Planning Activities**

There was an overall positive response from the reviewees in respect of the planning activities that took place.

The reviewees quoted to have benefited from the training, initial meetings and discussions. Hard work was mentioned being a main contributor to the success of the planning.

Monthly meetings seemed to have worked well for some individuals where they reported to have been integrated into normal meetings. Here the performance management process worked well when it was integrated in formal activities.

One individual reported using brainstorming sessions to develop the process and to plan for the initiative.

One individual reported challenge in getting the process started, and commented on the late start in the year (March).
Support from the Company

There were varied responses to this question.

One individual reported an understanding that the purpose of the performance management process is for the manager to drive the process and for the company to support it. They quoted that support from HR was not a problem.

One person also had previous experience of performance management which seemed to have helped them.

One individual stated they did not need any further support from the company and did not seek it.

How the process helped performance?

The process gave individuals more focus on goals, their role and what they were doing.

Greater communication.

The bringing in of different strengths.

Things got done, individuals were focused and the hard work paid off.

The process was motivating to employees.

Feedback was good from all members.

The reviewees agreed that the process had supported their performance. All were able to identify how the process helped them individually.

Reviewees quoted greater awareness of other team members' needs and other teams' responsibilities, greater individual awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses and understanding of their own future development needs.
Managers

Reviewees report getting on well with their managers. Based on these results it is important that the manager drives this process with the following attitude:

- Active involvement.
- Open communication and active listening throughout the year.
- Planning and organisation skills.

Summary

- The process gave greater awareness to people of their job and the jobs of others. Persons were able to link in with each other and gain an understanding of each others priorities and responsibilities.
- Managers stated that the process helped their team’s performance and they experienced benefits from taking part in the process.
- The documentation has been actively used to manage the goals and update on progress. The process was documented well, and the system itself was uncomplicated and not too cumbersome.
- The training was effective and helped get the performance management process under way.
5.3 What Needs Improvement / Change:

**Leader Competence**
The performance management process is suited to any type of company / individual but is heavily reliant on the competence of the manager. Therefore managers must be developed so that they have the confidence and the competence to manage this process.

**Regularity and Quality of Meetings**
The meetings serve the purpose of updating on progress and to provide an opportunity to review goals and revise them in case this is necessary. The meetings were reported to have greatly benefited the process, as it gave the reviewees and reviewers the opportunity to come together to discuss performance related issues. For the process to function well, it is important that these meetings are regular and timely. Sufficient time should also be allocated to this activity.

**Summary**
- The performance management process is suited to any type of company / individual, but is heavily reliant on the competence of the manager. Therefore managers must be developed so that they have the confidence and the competence to manage this process.
- Appropriate support from the CEO needs to be identified, agreed and delivered.
- The performance management process is based on goals being cascaded through the organisation, from the strategic plans to individual goals in order to ensure its delivery. These links must be verified and goals should be monitored and quality checked to ensure they are SMART.
- For the process to function well, it is important that meetings are regular and timely. Sufficient time should also be allocated to this activity.
Chapter Six Recommendations

6.0 The Process
I recommend that the performance management process does not significantly change. The process itself represents a best practice model.

It is important that Performance Management is not seen as a HR initiative, but an operational initiative that will help the company to achieve its business plans and strategic objectives moving forward.

6.1 The Training Programme
Training should be provided for all new managers. Coaching should be provided for all new team members. This training / coaching should be rolled out in a timely fashion.

6.2 The Ongoing Support
I recommend that Managers are supported throughout the process, as its success very much lies in their hands. This support comes in the form of clear direction and clarification of priorities by the CEO, and ongoing coaching

For the performance management process to be successful in the company, the reviewees require support from management and from HR.

The CEO must commit to preparing departmental plans that support the delivery of the strategic plan. Each manager must provide direction to their team, in terms of what needs to be done in that section of the business to achieve the strategic plan. This activity will be critical to achieving cascaded goals throughout the organisation and really SMART goals that contribute to the company achieving its strategic plan for the period.

The CEO should also make themselves available to individual managers on a one-to-one basis throughout the year so that goals can reviewed and discussed, and direction provided to anyone that is struggling.
It is vital for the success of this process that HR support the teams by committing to and scheduling training or coaching for new reviewers and reviewees in a timely fashion.

HR should ideally be available to teams that struggle with the goal identification process.

Also recommended would be the set-up of a central registry of goals, where goal set are saved. This would serve the purpose of ensuring quality control of the goals that are set. A Quality Board must be set up consisting of the CEO, Directors and HR at the outset of the process, so that all goals can be reviewed.

6.3 Leadership
Competencies required for the effective management of the performance management process include:

- Leadership and communication skills
- Knowledge of the performance management process
- Knowledge of the strategic plan and goal setting process
- Planning and organisation
- Meeting management skills
- Feedback skills
- Evaluation and analysis

6.4 The Performance Management Documentation
The performance management process must be documented. Documentation should be agreed centrally and used consistently across the organisation. This will allow for quality checks and monitoring of progress by the CEO and the Quality Board.
6.5 Summary of Recommendations

- The Performance Management process suits the company and should continue to take place. The process does not drastically need to change.

- Managers must be supported throughout the process, as the success of performance management lies in their hands. This support comes in the form of clear direction and clarification of priorities by the CEO, and on-going coaching.

- The process must be documented; documentation should be agreed centrally and used consistently across the organisation. This will allow for quality checks and monitoring of progress by the CEO.

- Training should be provided for all new managers and those promoted to management posts. Coaching should be provided for new reviewees. This training / coaching should be rolled out in a timely fashion.

- Top up training to keep the principles and practices fresh.
Chapter Seven Conclusion

To conclude I believe the success of this performance management process will be determined by a number of factors, which include:

1. **Rules** – dates and deadlines for the goal setting and review meetings should be agreed and consistent throughout the company. These should not be negotiable. *E.g. all goals should be agreed by the second week of each new quarter*. Non-compliance will be a performance issue.

2. **CEO Involvement** – CEO needs to clearly communicate plans and priorities in order that the managers are clear on what is expected of them and their teams.

3. **QA Process** – a Quality Board to be set up who meet quarterly.
   - Mid January to review all goals
   - Mid April to review goals and reviews

4. **Coaching for Managers** – Managers must be given ongoing support of the process so to ensure effective implementation and confidence.

These factors are critical to the success or failure of the system in place and it is critical that these recommendations are implemented.

I believe the insight I have gained from this project has given me a practical insight into performance management and through this piece of research I feel I have been able to make useful recommendations on how this process can be improved. My findings add to my belief that performance management is a necessary and fundamental contributor to organisational success.
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Appendix Two – Evaluating the Performance Management Process

1:1 Interview Questions

These interview questions will be used to evaluate the recent Performance Management Process that was rolled out in the organisation in 2007.

A group of 5 employees have been selected for these interviews, three reviewees and two reviewers. The interviews are to be carried out in January 2007.

Questions:

1. Do you understand the performance management process?  
   If no, why?

2. On reviewing your goals, can you remember what they were and did you understand your part in achieving them?  
   If no, why?

3. Can you identify clear links to the strategic plan and your goals / your teams goals?

4. Do you feel your goals were achievable?  
   If no, why?

5. Were you supported by the company in achieving your goals?  
   If no, why?

6. Was there sufficient planning activities to help you achieve your goals?  
   If yes, what did you do?  
   If no, why?

7. Did the process help your performance?  
   If yes, how?  
   If no, what were you expecting it would do for you?

8. Where the time scales involved in the process suitable?  
   If no, what would be a better time frame?
9. How would you describe the direction from your manager? Was it sufficient? 
   If yes, what did they do to support you? 
   If no, what were you expecting they would do for you? 

10. What aspects of the system worked well? 

11. Can you identify any benefits you enjoyed from partaking in this process? 

12. What aspects of the system did not work well? 

13. Do you think that any aspects of the system need to be modified? 

14. Did you experience any difficulties with the process 
   If yes, what actions can be taken to help overcome these difficulties? 

15. Did you receive sufficient training in this area of performance management? 
   If no, why? 

16. Do you feel extra training would be beneficial in this process? 

17. Can the training be improved on? 
   If yes, how? 
   If no, what was effective about it? 

18. On review of the past year, do you have any recommendations for the company of how this process 
    could work more effectively in the future?
Interview One – (Reviewee)

Questions:

1. Do you understand the performance management process?  
   If no, why?  
   Yes.

2. On reviewing your goals, can you remember what they were and did you understand your part in achieving them?  
   If no, why?  
   Yes. I was familiar with the goals that I worked on. I understood my part in achieving the goals. Any doubt speak to the manager. She was excellent. Any problems with not being clear on the goals, you could go to her.

3. Can you identify clear links to the strategic plan and your goals / your teams goals?  
   One goal was clearly linked to the strategic plan, the others not so much.

4. Do you feel your goals were achievable?  
   If no, why?  
   Yes no hesitations.

5. Were you supported by the company in achieving your goals?  
   If no, why?  
   Team supported the process and company drove it.

6. Was there sufficient planning activities to help you achieve your goals?  
   If yes, what did you do?  
   If no, why?  
   Yes, action got things done. The system worked well. The goals were discussed and set, a number of brainstorming sessions took place where I shared ideas and discussed what would work well, how to go about the process etc.

7. Did the process help your performance?  
   If yes, how?  
   If no, what were you expecting it would do for you?  
   Yes, found it very helpful.

8. Where the time scales involved in the process suitable?  
   If no, what would be a better time frame?  
   Yes. Once or twice had to review timescale as it was tight so changes were made.
9. How would you describe the direction from your manager? Was it sufficient? If yes, what did they do to support you? If no, what were you expecting they would do for you?
   Excellent. Very important aspect. Excellent communication, planning and organisation skills. Needed this to drive the process.

10. What aspects of the system worked well?
   The planning and the manager.

11. Can you identify any benefits you enjoyed from partaking in this process?
   Understand my role and the roles of others in my team better since partaking in the process.

12. What aspects of the system did not work well?
   Change in 1 team member. 1 left and 1 came in. Not necessarily an aspect that didn't work well was just unfortunate. The managers organisational and communication skills helped here.

13. Do you think that any aspects of the system need to be modified?
   No.

14. Did you experience any difficulties with the process?
   If yes, what actions can be taken to help overcome these difficulties?
   Work required. Lot of work involved. Had to be disciplined as it was hard work. I knew the timeframe and made time for it.

15. Did you receive sufficient training in this area of performance management?
   If no, why?
   Yes.

16. Do you feel extra training would be beneficial in this process?
   See what comes out of the evaluations...possibly a refresher.

17. Can the training be improved on?
   If yes, how?
   If no, what was effective about it?
   As above.

18. On review of the past year, do you have any recommendations for the company of how this process could work more effectively in the future?
   Process driven by manager.
Interview Two – (Reviewee)

Questions:

1. Do you understand the performance management process?
   If no, why?
   Yes.

2. On reviewing your goals, can you remember what they were and did you understand your part in achieving them?
   If no, why?
   Yes. In general we were made aware.

3. Can you identify clear links to the strategic plan and your goals / your team’s goals?
   Understood where it was all coming from. Broke down to specific goals and whether they were achievable. Could see where it all connected up. Was linked well to strategic plan.

4. Do you feel your goals were achievable?
   If no, why?
   Yes they were. Had meetings. Recognised where things were changing and were able to sort them out and continue to achieve the goals.

5. Were you supported by the company in achieving your goals?
   If no, why?
   Yes I was. It was really for their benefit. Was set up by them. Worked out whereby you were doing your job better than you were before.

6. Was there sufficient planning activities to help you achieve your goals?
   If yes, what did you do?
   If no, why?
   Yes. Had meetings. Discussed any problems. Tried to sort out anything that wasn’t happening that should have been as regards somebody may not be aware that they should be doing something at a certain time. That would be discussed in order to help reach the goal.

7. Did the process help your performance?
   If yes, how?
   If no, what were you expecting it would do for you?
   It did – more awareness. More focus on my role. Usually wouldn’t have been so aware of other people needing certain things by a time whereas now more awareness and focus on getting things done for a certain date.

8. Where the time scales involved in the process suitable?
   If no, what would be a better time frame?
   Just went along with plan. Seemed to work out the way it was meant to.
9. How would you describe the direction from your manager? Was it sufficient?
   If yes, what did they do to support you?
   If no, what were you expecting they would do for you?
   Very clear. Easy to communicate with him. For that reason it went well. If there was
   anything to say my manager would be there and he’d listen. Feel your getting good direction.

10. What aspects of the system worked well?
    More awareness of the job and different parts of it whereas before you just did your job and
    didn’t realise how it would link to another job within the team. You knew they would link but
    never really thought of it. The whole awareness.

11. Can you identify any benefits you enjoyed from partaking in this process?
    Communication. More helpful toward people because you understand why they need a
    particular thing at a particular time.

12. What aspects of the system did not work well?
    None.

13. Do you think that any aspects of the system need to be modified?
    No, no complaints.

14. Did you experience any difficulties with the process
    If yes, what actions can be taken to help overcome these difficulties?
    More control since the new system. Used to be delays maybe because other people weren’t
    so aware.

15. Did you receive sufficient training in this area of performance management?
    If no, why?
    Training was very good. Left knowing a lot more that I did when I first went in. It was clear
    and the advice was good.

16. Do you feel extra training would be beneficial in this process?
    No, clear on process.

17. Can the training be improved on?
    If yes, how?
    If no, what was effective about it?
    No was clear. Good advice given and specific.

18. On review of the past year, do you have any recommendations for the company of how this process
    could work more effectively in the future?
    No can’t think of anything.
Interview Three – (Reviewee)

Questions:

1. Do you understand the performance management process?
   If no, why?
   Yes. Goals were concise and clear. Everyone was activity involved. By the end – may not have reached the goals fully but 80% achievement.

2. On reviewing your goals, can you remember what they were and did you understand your part in achieving them?
   If no, why?
   Yes, any issues were clarified.

3. Can you identify clear links to the strategic plan and your goals / your teams goals?
   Everyone more aware of how things click together. How one person’s job effects others and vice versa. All have a common goal at the end of the day, their goal just one link in the chain.

4. Do you feel your goals were achievable?
   If no, why?
   Yes, very much so.

5. Were you supported by the company in achieving your goals?
   If no, why?
   To a certain extent. At the end of the day it’s my own work. Didn’t seek help – didn’t need it. Up to me.

6. Was there sufficient planning activities to help you achieve your goals?
   If yes, what did you do?
   If no, why?
   Yes, had numerous meetings. Set out strategy from one quarter to the next.

7. Did the process help your performance?
   If yes, how?
   If no, what were you expecting it would do for you?
   Yes I have a better understanding of how my role and the companies goals interlink. Also, how what one person does affects other people. Gave me greater understanding of what each section does.

8. Where the time scales involved in the process suitable?
   a. If no, what would be a better time frame?
      Sufficient.
9. How would you describe the direction from your manager? Was it sufficient?
   If yes, what did they do to support you?
   If no, what were you expecting they would do for you?
   Excellent. Supportive. He lead the meetings. Brought information back etc.

10. What aspects of the system worked well?
   The communication.

11. Can you identify any benefits you enjoyed from partaking in this process?
    More wider understanding of my role.

12. What aspects of the system did not work well?
    Nothing – worked well within it. Everyone was supportive of one another.

13. Do you think that any aspects of the system need to be modified?
    No.

14. Did you experience any difficulties with the process?
    If yes, what actions can be taken to help overcome these difficulties?
    No.

15. Did you receive sufficient training in this area of performance management?
    If no, why?
    Yes.

16. Do you feel extra training would be beneficial in this process?
    No – days training was sufficient. Knew what we had to go back and do. Was clear and concise.

17. Can the training be improved on?
    If yes, how?
    If no, what was effective about it?
    No – for my goals it was sufficient.

18. On review of the past year, do you have any recommendations for the company of how this process could work more effectively in the future?
    More encouragement. May be more effective.
Interview Four – (Reviewer)

Questions:

1. Do you understand the performance management process?
   If no, why?
   Yes

2. On reviewing your goals, can you remember what they were and did you understand your part in achieving them?
   If no, why?
   Yes

3. Can you identify clear links to the strategic plan and your goals / your team’s goals?
   Yes

4. Do you feel your goals were achievable?
   Yes. Have experience of Performance Management from a previous job.

5. Were you supported by the company in achieving your goals?
   Yes. Monthly meetings. 1 hour long. Worked exceptionally well. Also quarterly reviews.

6. Was there sufficient planning activities to help you achieve your goals?
   Yes, how?
   More aware of where you are going. Achieved a lot. Part to play in bigger picture, working towards a common goal. Feedback was good from all team members.

7. Did the process help your performance?
   Yes, how?
   More aware of where you are going. Achieved a lot. Part to play in bigger picture, working towards a common goal. Feedback was good from all team members.

8. Where the time scales involved in the process suitable?
   Yes – late start – started in March. In that respect was slow to start. However still got everything done.

9. How would you describe the direction from your manager? Was it sufficient?
   Yes, what did they do to support you?
   If no, what were you expecting they would do for you?
I am the manager. Had experience of Performance Management from a previous job. I feel it went well.

10. What aspects of the system worked well?
   The goal setting. The key performance indicators. Having the measures. The team giving feedback.

11. Can you identify any benefits you enjoyed from partaking in this process?
    The meetings together. Usually would work independently but in the case of Performance Management, worked more as a team. It brought everyone together to achieve the goals.

12. What aspects of the system did not work well?
    None.

13. Do you think that any aspects of the system need to be modified?
    Happy with the system. No need for improvement. Template used to record goals etc was useful but I also used my own system.

14. Did you experience any difficulties with the process?
    If yes, what actions can be taken to help overcome these difficulties?
    No.

15. Did you receive sufficient training in this area of performance management?
    If no, why?
    Yes.

16. Do you feel extra training would be beneficial in this process?
    More organisational support i.e. coaching and mentoring people through the process. I was ok and didn't need the support but other teams may not be so aware of the process.

17. Can the training be improved on?
    If yes, how?
    If no, what was effective about it?
    Being aware that more support may be needed.

18. On review of the past year, do you have any recommendations for the company of how this process could work more effectively in the future?
    Communication needs to be clear. The whole of company needs to be clear on why its happening, the benefits, the advantages of it etc to get the message across.
Interview Five – (Reviewer)

Questions:

1. Do you understand the performance management process?
   If no, why?
   Yes – after the first workshop was clear on the process and the basis of it.

2. On reviewing your goals, can you remember what they were and did you understand your part in achieving them?
   If no, why?
   Yes – I am the manager and acted as reviewer in my team. The goals were broken down and were achievable.

3. Can you identify clear links to the strategic plan and your goals / your team’s goals?
   Yes clear link. I look at it as being a bit of a hierarchy. The strategic plan and my team’s individual goals. They are all part of the hierarchy although more at an operational level. Hierarchy and strategic plan all link up.

4. Do you feel your goals were achievable?
   If no, why?
   Yes – for my team yes they were.

5. Were you supported by the company in achieving your goals?
   If no, why?
   Yes, time was put aside. Meetings scheduled. Anything that was needed there was no problem. Any support needed from HR etc was not a problem.

6. Was there sufficient planning activities to help you achieve your goals?
   If yes, what did you do?
   If no, why?
   Yes, came from the team members, had a plan and carried it out. The workshop helped but planning came from each individual.

7. Did the process help your performance?
   If yes, how?
   If no, what were you expecting it would do for you?
   Yes, my strengths were used. I found that this process focused people in on what they were doing. Contributed to the goals of the whole department and to the organisation. Contributed to the communication within the team. Brought in different strengths.

8. Where the time scales involved in the process suitable?
   If no, what would be a better time frame?
Yes, over the year there was no time issue.

9. How would you describe the direction from your manager? Was it sufficient?
   If yes, what did they do to support you?
   If no, what were you expecting they would do for you?
   Everyone was on board. A live issue over the year. Discussed and supported. Time put in.
   Meetings took place. Everyone was aware of it and it was discussed.

10. What aspects of the system worked well?
    It was documented well. Uncomplicated system of recording goals. Not too cumbersome.

11. Can you identify any benefits you enjoyed from partaking in this process?
    Everyone on the team partook as opposed to being isolated. Gave everyone a sense of the
    part they are playing in the overall scheme of things rather than being isolated into doing one
    thing. The importance of all the various functions along the way for the greater good.

12. What aspects of the system did not work well?
    It was over the year with 4 reviews – tended to put it aside until closer to the deadline.

13. Do you think that any aspects of the system need to be modified?
    Can't think of any.

14. Did you experience any difficulties with the process
    If yes, what actions can be taken to help overcome these difficulties?
    No

15. Did you receive sufficient training in this area of performance management?
    If no, why?
    Yes – was clear enough after that.

16. Do you feel extra training would be beneficial in this process?
    No – once its explained which it was through the workshop. Setting goals can be tricky and
    woolly. More work perhaps on setting goals. Perhaps it should come down more from
    management or be linked more to the strategic plan.

17. Can the training be improved on?
    If yes, how?
    If no, what was effective about it?
    Goal setting needs to be solid and exact. Process itself working. Once the right people are
    involved in it it works quite well.
18. On review of the past year, do you have any recommendations for the company of how this process could work more effectively in the future?

*Goals need to be specific.*
Summary of all 1:1 Interviews

Questions:

1. Do you understand the performance management process?
   If no, why?
   - Yes.
   - Yes.
   - Yes. Goals were concise and clear. Everyone was activity involved. By the end – may
     not have reached the goals fully but 80% achievement.
   - Yes
   - Yes – after the first workshop was clear on the process and the basis of it.

2. On reviewing your goals, can you remember what they were and did you understand your part in
   achieving them?
   If no, why?
   - Yes. I was familiar with the goals that I worked on. I understood my part in achieving the
     goals. Any doubt speak to the manager. She was excellent. Any problems with not being
     clear on the goals, you could go to her.
   - Yes. In general we were made aware.
   - Yes, any issues were clarified.
   - Yes.
   - Yes – I am the manager and acted as reviewer in my team. The goals were broken down
     and were achievable.

3. Can you identify clear links to the strategic plan and your goals / your team’s goals?
   - One goal was clearly linked to the strategic plan, the others not so much.
   - Understood where it was all coming from. Broke down to specific goals and whether they
     were achievable. Could see where it all connected up. Was linked well to strategic plan.
   - Everyone more aware of how things click together. How one person’s job effects others
     and vice versa. All have a common goal at the end of the day, their goal just one link in
     the chain.
   - Yes
   - Yes clear link. I look at it as being a bit of a hierarchy. The strategic plan and my team’s
     individual goals. They are all part of the hierarchy although more at an operational level.
     Hierarchy and strategic plan all link up.

4. Do you feel your goals were achievable?
   If no, why?
   - Yes no hesitations.
   - Yes they were. Had meetings. Recognised where things were changing and were able to
     sort them out and continue to achieve the goals.
   - Yes, very much so.
   - Yes.
   - Yes – for my team yes they were.
5. Were you supported by the company in achieving your goals?
   If no, why?
   - Team supported the process and company drove it.
   - Yes I was. It was really for their benefit. Was set up by them. Worked out whereby you
     were doing your job better than you were before.
   - To a certain extent. At the end of the day it’s my own work. Didn’t seek help — didn’t need
     it. Up to me.
   - Yes. Have experience of Performance Management from a previous job.
   - Yes, time was put aside. Meetings scheduled. Anything that was needed there was no
     problem. Any support needed from HR etc was not a problem.

6. Was there sufficient planning activities to help you achieve your goals?
   If yes, what did you do?
   If no, why?
   - Yes, action got things done. The system worked well. The goals were discussed and set,
     a number of brainstorming sessions took place where I shared ideas and discussed what
     would work well, how to go about the process etc.
   - Yes. Had meetings. Discussed any problems. Tried to sort out anything that wasn’t
     happening that should have been as regards somebody may not be aware that they
     should be doing something at a certain time. That would be discussed in order to help
     reach the goal.
   - Yes, had numerous meetings. Set out strategy from one quarter to the next.
   - Yes. Monthly meetings. 1 hour long. Worked exceptionally well. Also quarterly reviews.
   - Yes, came from the team members, had a plan and carried it out. The workshop helped
     but planning came from each individual.

7. Did the process help your performance?
   If yes, how?
   - No, it was very helpful.
   - It did — more awareness. More focus on my role. Usually wouldn’t have been so aware of
     other people needing certain things by a time whereas now more awareness and focus on
     getting things done for a certain date.
   - Yes I have a better understanding of how my role and the company’s goals interlink.
     Also, how what one person does affects other people. Gave me greater understanding of
     what each section does.
   - Yes. More aware of where you are going. Achieved a lot. Part to play in bigger picture,
     working towards a common goal. Feedback was good from all team members.
   - Yes, my strengths were used. I found that this process focused people in on what they
     were doing. Contributed to the goals of the whole department and to the organisation.
     Contributed to the communication within the team. Brought in different strengths.

8. Where the time scales involved in the process suitable?
   If no, what would be a better time frame?
   - Yes. Once or twice had to review timescale as it was tight so changes were made.
   - Just went along with plan. Seemed to work out the way it was meant to.
   - Sufficient.
- Yes – late start – started in March. In that respect was slow to start. However still got everything done.
- Yes, over the year there was no time issue.

9. How would you describe the direction from your manager? Was it sufficient?
   If yes, what did they do to support you?
   If no, what were you expecting they would do for you?
   - Excellent. Very important aspect. Excellent communication, planning and organisation skills. Needed this to drive the process.
   - Very clear. Easy to communicate with him. For that reason it went well. If there was anything to say my manager would be there and he’d listen. Feel your getting good direction.
   - Excellent. Supportive. He lead the meetings. Brought information back etc.
   - I am the manager. Had experience of Performance Management from a previous job. I feel it went well.
   - Everyone was on board. A live issue over the year. Discussed and supported. Time put in. Meetings took place. Everyone was aware of it and it was discussed.

10. What aspects of the system worked well?
   - The planning and the manager.
   - More awareness of the job and different parts of it whereas before you just did your job and didn’t realise how it would link to another job within the team. You knew they would link but never really thought of it. The whole awareness.
   - The communication.
   - The goal setting. The key performance indicators. Having the measures. The team giving feedback.
   - It was documented well. Uncomplicated system of recording goals. Not too cumbersome.

11. Can you identify any benefits you enjoyed from partaking in this process?
   - Understand my role and the roles of others in my team better since partaking in the process.
   - Communication. More helpful toward people because you understand why they need a particular thing at a particular time.
   - More wider understanding of my role.
   - The meetings together. Usually would work independently but in the case of Performance Management, worked more as a team. It brought everyone together to achieve the goals.
   - Everyone on the team partook as apposed to being isolated. Gave everyone a sense of the part they are playing in the overall scheme of things rather than being isolated into doing one thing. The importance of all the various functions along the way for the greater good.

12. What aspects of the system did not work well?
   - Change in 1 team member. 1 left and 1 came in. Not necessarily an aspect that didn’t work well was just unfortunate. The managers organisational and communication skills helped here.
   - None.
- Nothing – worked well within it. Everyone was supportive of one another.
- None.
- It was over the year with 4 reviews – tended to put it aside until closer to the deadline.

13. Do you think that any aspects of the system need to be modified?
- No.
- No, no complaints.
- No.
- Happy with the system. No need for improvement. Template used to record goals etc was useful but I also used my own system.
- Can’t think of any.

14. Did you experience any difficulties with the process?
   If yes, what actions can be taken to help overcome these difficulties?
- Work required. Lot of work involved. Had to be disciplined as it was hard work. I knew the timeframe and made time for it.
- More control since the new system. Used to be delays maybe because other people weren’t so aware.
- No.
- No.
- No

15. Did you receive sufficient training in this area of performance management?
   If no, why?
- Yes.
- Training was very good. Left knowing a lot more that I did when I first went in. It was clear and the advice was good.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Yes – was clear enough after that.

16. Do you feel extra training would be beneficial in this process?
- See what comes out of the evaluations...possibly a refresher.
- No, clear on process.
- No – days training was sufficient. Knew what we had to go back and do. Was clear and concise.
- More organisational support i.e. coaching and mentoring people through the process. I was ok and didn’t need the support but other teams may not be so aware of the process.
- No – once its explained which it was through the workshop. Setting goals can be tricky and woolly. More work perhaps on setting goals. Perhaps it should come down more from management or be linked more to the strategic plan.
17. Can the training be improved on?
If yes, how?
If no, what was effective about it?
- As above.
- No was clear. Good advice given and specific.
- No – for my goals it was sufficient.
- Being aware that more support may be needed.
- Goal setting needs to be solid and exact. Process itself working. Once the right people are involved in it it works quite well.

18. On review of the past year, do you have any recommendations for the company of how this process could work more effectively in the future?
- Process driven by manager.
- No cant think of anything.
- More encouragement. May be more effective.
- Communication needs to be clear. The whole of company needs to be clear on why its happening, the benefits, the advantages of it etc to get the message across.
- Goals need to be specific.
Survey Questionnaire

These survey questions will be used to evaluate the recent Performance Management Process that was rolled out in the organisation in 2007.

All employees will partake in this survey which will be launched on Monday 14th January 2008.

How would you rate the following?

1. The effectiveness of the overall performance management process?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

2. The suitability of the performance management process for the organisation?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

3. The quality of the support from the Human Resources Department?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

4. The quality of the support from your manager?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

5. The effectiveness of the planning session facilitated by the CEO and HR?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

6. The goals you agreed?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

7. The achievement of your goals?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

8. The review meetings during the year?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective

9. The final review meeting at the end of the year?

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

   Not Effective Very Effective
### Evaluation of the Performance Management Process Rolled Out in 2007

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Review of Flexible Working

Yvonne Crowley

BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management
2008
Review of Flexible Working

By Yvonne Crowley

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland
2008
Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of B.A (Hons.) in Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: [21 July 2008]

Student Number: [07116659]
Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my colleagues at Élan for their support in helping me complete this dissertation.

A special thank to you my family who helped with all the babysitting throughout the college year. I couldn’t have done it without you!!

I would especially like to acknowledge the contribution that Geraldine Grady had in providing me with information on the 2007 Work Life Balance Study in Ireland.

Finally, thank you to our supervisor Serge Basini for his support to the group.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

CIPD research published in 2007 has shown that employees who work flexibly tend to be more emotionally engaged, more satisfied with work, more likely to speak positively about their organisation and less likely to quit.

The challenge to any organisation is to unlock the potential of flexible working for both the organisation and the employees.

The purpose of this research project is to identify the current challenges to flexible working arrangements within different areas of my organisation and to explore the employee perception that the organisational climate within the business does not embrace flexible work practices. It is important to understand what I meant by organisation climate. “The concept of organisational climate is closely allied to culture, it has existed in a form for considerably longer and can be traced back to the work of Kurt Lewin (1951)” Rollinson (2005). Organisational climate can be defined as: “a characteristic ethos or atmosphere within an organisation, at a given point in time which is reflected in the way its members perceive, experience and react to the organisational context.

By engaging with line managers, I hope to identify the challenges they perceive in operating the business with a more flexible workforce and to help them identify benefits of having a more flexible approach to work within their business groups.

The company has a number of flexible working policies and work life balance programmes in place but the number of employees availing of these policies is low. As a manufacturing facility, there are business and operational constraints that may restrict the availability of flexible or alternative work arrangements. As part of this research project, I would hope to get greater clarity on some of these constraints to see if the business could better support
employees who want to remain with the organisation but would like
greater flexibility in their working arrangements. There is
considerable employee interest in flexible or alternative work
arrangements.

As part of this research project, I have distributed an online
questionnaire to Managers within the business at Director and
Associate Director Level. This population was surveyed as there is a
perception that the organisational climate would not be favourable
to a more flexible approach to working. The purpose of the
questionnaire was to identify the concerns that the senior managers
in the business might have in relation to flexible working and to
assess the organisational climate in terms of attitude to flexible or
alternative working arrangements. I want to identify the barriers to
greater flexibility, and to identify what support is required to ensure
greater availability of flexible and alternative work arrangements.

In conducting this research, I have reviewed data from both the UK
and Ireland concerned with Flexible Working and Work Life
Balance issues across various industries. The Work Life Balance
issue is becoming an increasingly important human resource topic
both in the private and public sector employment. According to a
recent study on Work Life Balance in Ireland, the arrangements in
use vary between the Public and Private Sector employees.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

The world of work has changed significantly over the last 25 to 30 years. More women than ever before are choosing to remain in the work force while bringing up families. This development has greatly altered the relationship between work and family life. Family life has changed significantly since the 1970's when the majority of women did not remain in the workplace after having children. More and more people face the dilemma of having to balance family life with the requirement to earn a living.

As far back as 1995, Morley et al wrote an article published in the International Journal of Manpower on the “Developments in flexible working practices in the Republic of Ireland”. A central issue in the article was how the model of future employment involves “a reorganisation of firms’ internal labour markets and their division into separate components, in which the worker’s experience and the employer’s expectations of him or her are increasingly differentiated”. There was a visible increase in non standard working arrangements from the use of contractors to employees being retained on Fixed Term Contracts rather than in full time permanent positions. Part-time working was also on the increase.

The changing profile of the workforce means that organisations are faced with ever increasing demands and expectations from current and perspective employees in terms of achieving an effective work life balance. Employees both male and female are looking increasingly for a better balance between their personal and professional lives.

This desire for increased flexibility poses a significant challenge to both public and private sector employers. However, the move to increased flexibility does offer some significant advantages to many businesses. It helps to provide customer service on a 24 7 basis, providing services when required by customers. Flexible working
can also stimulate higher job satisfaction and commitment levels from employees when they can see a clear personal benefit from the change. (Stredwick & Ellis 2005)

Flexible working also brings significant challenges. For instance, organisations may have the perception that costs increase by facilitating these arrangements. Business can be concerned about continuity and standardisation of work. There can be fears about the loss of managerial control and employees becoming self-managed as they work from different locations or work a non standard working pattern.

During this research, I particularly looked at flexible working both in the UK and Ireland. There are many similarities and differences between the two countries however, what is clear is that employers in both countries are responding to requests for greater flexibility from employees on an ongoing basis.

There have been two comprehensive studies in recent years on the area of flexible working. In 2005, the CIPD in the UK conducted a survey on Flexible Working: Impact and Implementation. In 2007, a national study on Work Life Balance was undertaken at NUI Galway in collaboration with the National College of Ireland and Dublin City University. Both studies looked extensively at the types of flexible working arrangements and work life balance programmes that were in use in both the public and private sector.

In Ireland, the most popular arrangements in the public sector are flexitime, time off in lieu, work sharing, and part-time working. In the private sector, the approach is somewhat different, concentrating on membership discounts, time off in lieu, informal flexibility, onsite medical facilities and education schemes. The private sector arrangements are typical of what is available within my organisation and that of our competitors within the pharmaceutical sector.
CIPD Survey 2005 – Key Findings

In 2005, the CIPD conducted a survey on Flexible Working: Impact and Implementation. The survey explored how organisations were making use of flexible working practices, their motivations for doing so and the impact that flexible working was having on their businesses. The survey also looked at the challenges around effective implementation of flexible working. It was completed by 585 UK organisations from the public and private and not-for-profit sectors.

Some of the key findings identified by the Survey were:

- The most prevalent form of flexible working is part-time working with 9 out of 10 survey respondents offering this option to their employees.
- Participants reported helping to retain staff and meeting employee needs as the drivers for using flexible work practices.
- Over half of those surveyed believed that recruitment had benefitted from the implementation of flexible work practices.

The most commonly reported issue identified on implementing flexible work practices was operational issues. Over two thirds of those surveyed identified this as a very important constraint.

The ability of managers to manage individuals working more flexibly and their attitudes to flexible working also emerged as major constraints. Senior level support from within the organisation and the organisational culture also pose significant challenges. Given that this would be a perception in my own organisation, I chose to send my questionnaire to managers at the two most senior levels within the organisation – Director and Associate Director.
The CIPD UK survey also confirmed that women make more use of flexible opportunities than men. Where flexible working was available, senior managers and graduate trainees were the least likely to make use of it. Manual and craft workers were identified as the groups who had the least access to flexible working. This is particularly interesting in the context of my organisation and the challenges that we face with implementation of flexible working where approximately half the employees are engaged in manufacturing and production activities. Flexible working arrangements are not currently available to those engaged in production activities in my organisation.

The UK survey showed that people in administrative, secretarial and technical areas were the most likely to take advantage of the flexible working arrangements.

Operational pressures were one of the most significant constraints for organisations when implementing flexible working practices. Senior level support was also identified as an important challenge for many organisations with regard to introducing more flexible working practices.

The culture of the organisation was also a significant factor with management style being identified as a key issue. For organisations with a command and control style of management, flexible work practices can be seen as a threat to management. Managing employees on the basis of their presenteeism is difficult to reconcile when operating more flexible working arrangements.
National Work-Life Balance in Ireland Study

In 2007 a National study on Work-Life Balance was undertaken at NUI Galway by Dr. Alma McCarthy and Geraldine Grady in collaboration with the National College of Ireland and Dublin City University. 15 large organisations participated in the study, 10 from the private sector and 5 from the public sector. The study used a combination of face to face and telephone interviews conducted with HR Directors/Managers and 130 Middle/line Managers to investigate work life balance policy and practice in their organisations. In addition, the employee’s perspective on work life balance was also explored with 729 completed questionnaires being returned from employees in the participating organisations.

Key findings from the study revealed:

75% of employees indicated that they are slightly satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied with their work life balance. Employees working in the public sector reported higher levels of work life balance satisfaction when compared with those working in the private sector. Women reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction with their work life balance compared to men.

Working above their contracted hours was more frequent among employees working in the private sector organisations. The average actual hours worked in the private sector was 42 hours compared to 34.5 hours in the public sector. The most cited reasons for employees working above their contracted hours were:

- Temporary increase in the workload of the business
- Employee’s own desire to get the job done (more evident in the private sector)
- Backlog of Work
- The necessity to cover staff shortages (more evident in the public sector)
The study found that there is a wide range of work life balance arrangements, programmes and policies available in organisations. Temporal arrangements that allow employees to reduce the number of hours that they work (e.g. job sharing/work sharing, part-time working and term-time) are more commonly available in the public sector. This view would be borne out by the findings from my own organisation also where job sharing is the only temporal arrangement operating with any degree of success. The part-time working arrangement is very restrictive so most employees wishing to reduce their core hours opt for job sharing.

Organisations also offer flexible working arrangements including flexi-time, e-working/homework and time off in lieu. Many organisations also provide work-life balance supports such as employee counselling, tuition/education fee support, on site or discounted medical facilities and the provision of financial advisors. These arrangements were particularly popular in the private sector. These work life balance supports are available in my organisation and would be typical of what our competitors in the pharmaceutical sector offer also.

The study found that the public sector tends to offer more programmes that are geared towards reduction of hours compared with the private sector. However, the private sector tends to offer more Work Life Balance support initiatives compared with the public sector which does not have a direct effect on working time and the number of hours worked.

The provision of Work Life Balance arrangements and policies and procedures by an organisation does not necessarily indicate higher levels of uptake or usage by employees. There are a number of key factors that affect employee usage of these programmes such as lack of awareness of the options and opportunities that are available, inconsistent access to the programmes for employees, particularly
those in management positions and lack of support from management to use work life balance programmes.

The use or uptake of temporal arrangements is much higher in the public sector than in the private sector where the most popular programmes used by employees tend to be more supportive in nature rather than focussed on reducing working hours and flexible working schedules.

The most common reasons that employees stated for availing of work life balance initiatives was for childcare reasons, the desire to have more personal time and to reduce commuting time.

The study also explored the reasons why employees do not avail of work life balance programmes even when they are available to them. There were a number of interesting differences highlighted in the survey for private sector employees compared with public sector employees. Public sector employees cited the fact that they were already satisfied with their work life balance as the primary reason for not availing of work life balance arrangements. Private sector employees cited the negative career consequences of taking up flexible work practices as the top reason for not engaging in flexible working practices and reduced hours. Other reasons for not availing of these programmes were that they were not available to the employee or their job does not lend itself to flexible working. Certainly, this appears to be the case when employees move into more senior positions as their career progresses, it is seen as career limiting to avail of reduced hours.

The research clearly shows that it is not enough to have a broad range of work-life balance programmes available at a policy level but employees need to have the opportunity to avail of these programmes.
Organisational Context

Elan Corporation plc is a neuroscience based technology company that is focused on discovering, developing, manufacturing and marketing advanced therapies in neurology, autoimmune diseases and severe pain. The company employs approximately 1,700 people worldwide and are listed on the New York, London and Dublin stock exchanges. Its headquarters are in Dublin and it has locations in Athlone and in the US in Gainesville and King of Prussia, New York and San Francisco.

The company is involved in the development of drug delivery technology which focuses on designing delivery systems so that drugs may be released into the body over a specific period of time. Élan’s manufacturing business unit develops and manufactures pharmaceutical products for Élan and other customers.

Élan currently has almost 600 employees based at its Manufacturing facility in Athlone, Co Westmeath. The breakdown of the workforce is as follows – 238 female employees and 356 male employees. In 2007, 29 employees were on maternity leave, 73 employees took parental leave and 20 employees availed of paternity leave.

Faced with increased requests for flexible working initiatives the business established a working group in October 2007 to review Flexible and Alternative Working Arrangement at the elan manufacturing site in Athlone, Co Westmeath. The group comprised 13 employees from across the business both manager and individual contributors. I was the HR representative on that group. The purpose of the group was to review the current élan policies in respect of flexible working arrangements and to devise proposals for revising the existing policies or to identify possible new alternative proposals for the site senior management team to consider. Employee perception of the existing flexible working policies and access to those policies would have been quite negative at that time.
At the time of the review Élan currently had the following flexible working policies in place:

- Flexi-Start Policy
- Job Sharing Policy
- Part-time Policy
- Career Break Policy

The remit of the working group was to review the existing policies, to put forward suggestions/recommendations for improving their accessibility for employees and to put forward recommendations regarding other alternative working arrangements that were not already available in the business. The final proposals from the group would then go to the site's senior management team for consideration.

There is limited availability of part-time working and job sharing. Part-time working under the current company policy is only available in limited and exceptional circumstance and is only granted for a defined period of time. Permanent part-time opportunities do not currently exist in the organisation. At the time of writing, there are only two employees availing of part-time working. Employee feedback on this policy had been extremely negative.

In general feedback from employees suggests that people do not understand the current policies and their implementation, including supervisors and managers. Decisions around who approves employee applications are also ambiguous. During the meetings held by the Flexible Working Group, it became apparent that there is an incorrect perception that the HR function is the decision maker rather than individual line managers and supervisors.

The job-sharing policy operates with somewhat more success than the part-time policy on the site. They are currently 14 people employed in job share arrangements. However, given the profile of
the workforce, the uptake is low and the business could potentially facilitate more requests in this area.

The working group identified a number of issues with the job sharing policy:

- There is often a disjoint between the skill sets of the individuals involved – people using job sharing as alternative to part-time working.
- Job sharing does not work seamlessly in departments.
- Managers do not request cover from the job share partners in line with the policy which causes difficulties to both job sharing parties and in turn the business.

In addition to reviewing these two existing élan policies, the working group made proposals on the following flexible working arrangements that were not in place in the organisation.

- Time in Lieu
- Compressed Hours
- E-working
- Flexible Working Hours

The company does not currently operate a formal time in lieu policy. However there is anecdotal evidence of this arrangement being operated informally in certain parts of the business. This causes its own challenges in a manufacturing environment where all employees irrespective of job are required to clock in and out on a daily basis.

Compressed Hours and E-Working were put forward as solutions that might work best in some of the support functions, such as IT, HR and Finance.
Benefits and Challenges for Organisations

Changing demographic trends, particularly the growing number of women in the workplace in recent years means that most employees will combine work with caring for children, adults or elderly relatives at some stage in their working lives. There is also a growing demand for flexibility to meet changing business needs. For organisations to be competitive, it is essential that they develop the full potential and engage the commitment of all members of the workforce.

According to the IBEC Report on Family Friendly and Work Life Balance Policies, (Coughlan 2000) Flexible Working Programmes can be of benefit to employers in the following areas:

- Reduces casual sickness absence – employees may have had to miss days or arrive late or leave early to deal with family issues
- Improves retention – individuals stay with a company longer because of access to these type of policies and programmes
- Improves recruitment – these policies can attract potential recruits who can make comparative judgements of job offers
- Improves productivity – people are more focussed on their work when at work as they have time available to deal with personal issues outside of work
- Improves morale and motivation
- Allows the balance of employer and employee needs – employers can offer customers and employees flexibility in service delivery and hours worked
- Potential cost savings – in the areas of recruitment and training costs of replacement staff
- Attracting experienced workers back into the workforce – which allows employers to take advantage of the availability of skilled, experienced people
- Reduces Stress – employees are better able to balance their work and non work lives
- Enhanced corporate image – improves the perception of the company both among its employees and customers and enhances equal opportunities policies

However, there are concerns for both employers and employees that arise in relation to Work Life Balance or Family Friendly policies. For example, many employees would believe that companies send out mixed messages – rewarding people who work long hours but at the same time want to be recognised for having progressive work life balance programmes and initiatives. Even where these policies do exist, employees are often reluctant to sign up for them because of the potential impact on their career progression. The 2007 National Study in Ireland shot that this was particularly true in the private sector.

In many companies, there is the perceived tension between organisational policies that are promoting and encouraging a more balanced approach for employees working and home lives but the work culture within the organisation assumes that committed employees work longer hours.

Naturally companies are also concerned about getting work done on time and within reasonable cost levels. Companies also have concerns about allowing different working arrangements for staff and of being accused of favouritism in favour of some employees. This would be a particular concern in my business, where flexible arrangements are not available to those engaged in production activities. In some cases, managers also feel threatened with a loss of control.
Potential Solutions for Organisations

Before implementing flexible working policies or family friendly programmes, a company should seek the views of the employees and examine its own local labour market. By taking this approach, the organisation will be able to identify the types of policies best suited to their organisations. The options chosen by companies will differ depending on the results of such and assessment. Companies will find that certain types of flexibility will not suit them or the processes in their organisation. Neither will all jobs within an organisation be suitable for flexible arrangements. It is important to note that employees may chose a particular flexibility option for only a short period of their working careers and that all employees will not necessarily opt for flexible arrangements at the same time. Not all employees will take up flexibility options. Research confirms that companies who have had experience of family friendly policies are more likely to see them as being advantageous to the company rather than companies who have had no experience of them. Any organisation needs to be aware of the business reasons for bringing in flexible policies and the potential cost of not having such policies – i.e. the cost of loosing valuable skilled employees and recruiting their replacements. Often times managers are concerned that Work Life Balance programmes will mean more work for them, in terms of managing the administrative process and ensuring that the work gets completed in an appropriate time period. However, the organisation can give employees responsibility for designing an alternative work schedule, detailing aspects of the how the current job will be done and the impact on colleagues or customers.
Company culture is an important aspect to consider when building a flexible work environment. In some cases, this means examining the company culture which has traditionally focused on rewarding ‘presenteeism’ (i.e. assuming that the presence of the employee in the organisations for long hours in the day equates with commitment) rather than productivity or what the employee actually contributes to the organisation.

Research in the US has stated that the success or failure of work life policies or family friendly programmes for employees depends on the extent to which employees can exercise some degree of control over their work time and the respect and trust that the organisation has in the individuals.
Financial Costs of providing flexibility

Costs will vary depending on the types of arrangements that an organisation puts in place. Certainly, companies would be aware of the cost of proving something like a childcare facility. However, it can be more difficult to establish the cost of providing job sharing or part-time work. Factors to be considered when assessing costs are as follows:

- Administration costs
- Record keeping for monitoring purposes if required
- Equipment, insurance and health and safety costs for telecommuting and home-working
- Temporary staff costs to cover for career breaks
- Training costs for the introduction of work life balance initiatives
- Any direct costs associated with the provision of child care or the provision of an Employee Assistance Programme
Evaluation of Programmes

Many organisations fail to evaluate the benefits of their work life balance programmes. However, it is an important area that the organisation should not neglect.

Statistics should be collected in relation to turnover, absenteeism, productivity etc prior to the introduction of the policies. This will make it easier to assess the impact of the policies and it will be easier to compare the before and after situation.
Chapter 3 Research Methodology

This chapter will give details on the methodology used to collect the data for this research project. It will explain how and where the information was gathered and provides details on the sample group that was selected to participate in the research.

Access to the Organisation

The research was carried out in Élan Pharma International Ltd based in Athlone, the organisation where I am employed as HR Manager. The Director of Human Resources and the Site General Manager granted permission for the research to be carried out. I held a number of meetings with the Director of Human Resources and other members of the HR team to discuss how the research should be conducted. The research project changed significantly as discussions progressed. The initial proposal was to focus on Employee Well Being as the core topic but it proved very challenging to get sufficient literature and the scope was then broadened to focus more on flexible working and the work life balance debate. The revised proposals also tied in with the work of the Flexible Working Group on site.

Development of the Research Project

The organisation had been asked to participate in the 2007 Work Life Balance Survey and whilst very interested in the whole area of Flexible Working and Work Life Balance programmes was unable to participate at the time for business reasons.

In late 2007, the company formed a Flexible Working Group at employees request to review the current Élan policies around flexible working and work life balance issues. The purpose of the group was to review the existing policies and to make proposals on how the policies could be improved and to propose alternative formats of working that the company might consider for implementation.
This group met over a period of 8 / 10 weeks and their findings and recommendations were presented to the Site Senior Management Team in early 2008. Following this presentation, it was agreed that the site HR team would review the following flexible working policies with a view to improving the availability of work life balance arrangements for employees. The proposals put forward by the Working Group were:

- **Part-Time Policy** – was found to be very restrictive and not available as a viable option for employees as part-time working was only available for finite periods of time. It was agreed that the business would review this policy to make the policy less restrictive in terms of its scope.

- **Flexi-Start Policy** – proposal to extend the existing flexi-start policy from 7.30 – 9.30 to 10.00am, giving employees who wished an opportunity to drop kids to school in the morning before coming to work.

- **Parental Leave Policy** – feedback on this policy was positive as employees have the option to spread the cost of their leave over a 12 month period. Recommendation to offer 5 floating days which employees could use at relatively short notice. This 5 day option was rejected by the company but they did agree to 2 floating days which employees could avail of in a 12 month period.

- **Paternity Leave Policy** – increased paid paternity leave to two days and 3 days unpaid leave

- **Job Sharing Policy** – review in conjunction with the part-time working policy. The provision of cover in the absence
of a job sharing partner was a key area identified to be reviewed. It was also recommended by the group that some re-education of managers is carried out in relation to the management of this policy.

The company also agreed to give consideration to the following flexible arrangements as it does not currently have any formal policies in place in respect of these areas:

- Formalising a Time in Lieu Arrangement – there appears to be strong evidence that many parts of the business are operating a time in lieu policy. However, the company does not have a formal policy

- Compressed Hours – explore with function heads opportunity for a pilot programme where an employee group could work compressed hours

- E Working – explore possibility for e-working for support functions such as the IT group

- Flexible Working Hours – explore this opportunity with function heads to see if viable from a business perspective

Following discussions with the HR Director in order to bring the project to the next phase of development, it was agreed that I would do part of the work as part of my dissertation.
Pilot Testing of the Questionnaire

As part of my research for this project, I reviewed the questionnaire materials that were available from the 2007 Work Life Balance Study conducted by NUI Galway in collaboration with the National College of Ireland and Dublin City University. The 2007 study on Work Life Balance had used 3 different questionnaires as part of the data gathering exercise. There was a specific questionnaire for managers, a specific questionnaire for HR professionals and a questionnaire for employees of the target organisations.

For the purpose of this research project, I based my questionnaire on some elements of the 2007 questionnaire that was sent to Managers within the target companies that participated in the survey on Work Life Balance.

The first draft questionnaire was reviewed by the HR Director. Some alterations were made to the questionnaire at the request of the HR Director given the target audience of Senior Managers in the business. There were some sensitivity around how particular questions were phrased and these questions were changed.

The final draft of the questionnaire was pilot tested by two of my HR colleagues. Both were sent copies of the sample email which included the Questionnaire link hosted on the Survey Monkey tool. They completed the questionnaire on line and reported back on any difficulties they encountered in completing the survey.

There were issues with the design of two questions where the correct format of question option had not been selected in the survey design tool which resulted in the testers not being able to complete two questions in full. This problem was identified in the design of the survey and the format changed. One of my HR colleagues then did a final test of the questionnaire on line to ensure that there were no further issues with the survey design.
I then checked the analysis of the two completed pilot questionnaires on the Survey monkey tool to ensure that the correct information was being provided. As there were no further issues identified the survey was deemed okay for circulation to the senior managers.

Research Aim

One of the aims of the research was to make an assessment of the organisational climate in terms of flexible working. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that senior managers were not hugely in favour of providing more flexible working arrangements for employees.

In addition, I also wanted to measure how the managers were rewarding employees who regularly work above their contracted hours. This area was identified as there was a view on site that managers were operating an unofficial time in lieu policy in a number of key areas but yet were not open to more official forms of flexible working.

A significant portion of the research focussed on if managers were able to offer greater flexibility even on a limited basis and if they indicated that they were not, they were asked to confirm the reasons why it was not possible from a business perspective. The respondents were also asked to identify benefits to the organisation by offering greater employee flexibility.

My aim in focussing on these areas was to better understand concerns the business may have about offering greater flexibility to employees, so that we could make proposals that would address some of these concerns as part of the recommendations.
Sample

The participants in the research were all Senior Managers within Élan Pharma International Limited in Athlone, Co. Westmeath. Questionnaires were sent to 31 Managers at Director and Associate Director Level within the organisation at the Athlone location. All the participants would have responsibility for teams of varying sizes. 20 Surveys were started and 18 were returned completed by the sample group. The response rate was 58%.

The sample respondents were 60% male and 40% female. All the participants were asked to indicate their length of service with the company as part of their responses. 45% of the respondents had 10 or more year’s service with the company. 35% of the respondents had between 5 – 10 years service with the company. 10% of the respondents had 3- 5 years service and 10% had less than 2 years service with the organisation.

The participants were asked to confirm the number of employees currently working in their business area. 35% of the respondents managed teams of 10 or less people. 30% managed teams between 10 – 25 people. 20% of the group managed teams of 25 – 50 people. 5% managed between 50 – 100 employees and 10% managed a group of a 100+ employees.
Method of Data Collection

The format of data collection used for this project was a self-completion questionnaire (See Appendix A). Originally, I had planned to do structured interviews with the Directors of the business. However, following discussions internally, it was agreed that it might be more useful to broaden the target population to include Associate Directors. This expanded the group size from an original sample group of 12 to a group of 31. As a result, it wasn’t logistically practical to interview a group of this size and it was decided to use self completion questionnaires for the data collection instead.

The questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data from the participants. The participants were informed about the research by an email distributed by the researcher. The email outlined the purpose and content of the questionnaire. (See Appendix B). The email guaranteed confidentiality in terms of the information provided and confirmed that individual managers would not be identified in any way by participating.

There was a web link included in the email which the employees clicked on to access the survey. The online survey tool that was used was Survey Monkey. The use of this online survey tool enabled the easy distribution and collection of the survey data and it also ensured anonymity to the participants.

To ensure that as many questionnaires as possible were returned, I sent a follow up email (Appendix C) to the target audience six days after the original mail. The follow up email was shorter, reminding people to complete the survey and including the web link to the online survey again. The use of the follow up email helped in increasing the response rate. 10 Managers had completed the survey after the initial mail, a further 10 Managers started the survey after
the follow up email and 8 of those completed it. Resulting in a total of 18 completed surveys being returned.

**The Questionnaire Content**

Section 1 of the questionnaire was in the format of a letter to participants confirming the purpose of the questionnaire and re-iterating the confidentiality of the process.

Section 2 focussed on two areas, the first section concentrated on general employment data of the respondents and the second set of questions focussed on what additional hour’s employees in their groups worked and why they were working above their contracted hours. The respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements in relation to the reasons why employees worked longer than their contracted hours. These statements were rated along a 5 point Likert scale where 1 equalling strongly disagrees and 5 equalling strongly agree.

Managers were also asked how these additional hours worked by employees were rewarded and if they operated any policies that were outside the scope of the current company policies in relation to rewarding additional hours.

Section 3 focussed on Flexible Working Programmes. Respondents were asked to confirm what &agrave;ilan flexible working policies employees in their areas had availed of in the last 12 months. In addition, they were asked if it was possible to facilitate more flexible working in their groups even on a limited basis. If they answered no to this question, they were then required to provide reasons as to why it was not possible. The respondents were also asked to identify what benefits it would bring to the organisation if flexible working was more easily available.
The respondents were asked to identify challenges for their organisation in operating more flexible working arrangements.

The next section posed two questions around manager discretion in terms of the arrangements that employees can avail of.

Finally, the respondents were asked to confirm if they had previously engaged in flexible working. If they had, they were asked to confirm the reasons why and if they had not availed of it, they were also asked to confirm why they had not.
Chapter 4 Analysis of Results

This section of the research project will examine the results of the analysis that was carried out.

Demographic Data

The Survey was distributed via email to 31 Senior Managers at Director and Associate Director Level at the Élan site at Athlone. 20 Managers started the survey and 18 Managers out of the target group of 31 returned completed surveys. 60% of the respondents were male and 40% were female. This is a response rate of 58% for the survey which is high.

The Survey was completed via the On Line Tool Survey Monkey.com. The replies were completely anonymous and only available to me as the data gatherer. No identifying data was gathered in respect of the respondents. The on line tool allows you to collect IP addresses of respondents when designing the survey but I chose to leave that out. The respondents were not asked to confirm their business areas in their responses.

The respondents were asked to confirm how long they have worked for Élan.

Length of Service of Respondents
**Employees working above their Contracted Hours**

The respondents in the Survey were asked to confirm if employees in their groups regularly work above their contracted hours of 39 hours per week.

60% of the respondents said that employees within their teams did work above their contracted hours. 30% of the respondents indicated that employees within their areas only infrequently worked above their contracted hours. 5% indicated that employees didn’t work above their contracted hours and 5% indicated that they didn’t know if employees in their groups worked above their contracted hours.

47% of the respondents indicated that their employees worked between 2-4 additional hours per week. This was in addition to the 39 hour week that all full time employees are required to work. 36.8% of the respondents confirmed that their employees work between 0-2 hours overtime per week and 15.8% confirmed that their employees work between 4-6 additional hours per week.

The respondents were asked to confirm how these additional hours worked by employees were rewarded.

25% confirmed that they were rewarded as paid overtime. 30% confirmed that the additional hours were rewarded as both paid overtime and time in lieu. 45% indicated that there was no method of reward for these additional hours. This could suggest that these were people were not eligible for overtime payments.

It is important to note that the company does not have a formal time in lieu policy in place, yet 35% of the respondents were rewarding additional hours worked with both paid overtime and time off in lieu.
Reasons why Employees work more than contracted hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Respondents %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backlog of work</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Increase in Workload</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees desire to get the job done</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the request of the employer</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the organisation culture</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covering for employees who avail of flexible arrangements</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing cover for sick leave</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of Informal Arrangements outside current policies

The respondents were asked to indicate if they operated any informal arrangements that were outside of the current company policies. Whilst 80% of the respondents indicated that they didn’t, 20% indicated that they did operate outside of the current policies.

However, in the previous question, Q.7 35% of the respondents were operating outside of current formal policies by rewarding employees with both time in lieu and overtime payments.

Managers who answered yes to this question were asked to indicate what arrangements they used outside of the current formal policies.

The comments provided by the respondents went as follows:

1. “Occasionally allow time off in lieu for medical appointments or for time worked up on specific work activities”.

2. “Where IT resources at particular levels are not entitled to overtime, time is given back in lieu for work completed out
of hours and at weekends to get the job done. Work often has to be carried out outside of normal working hours to minimise disruption to the business. In some cases, there is no choice but to work out of hours to get the job done”.

3. “Occasionally facilitate a later start time”.

4. “Have paid overtime and given time in lieu”.
that there is a strong compliance focus in the business in terms of adherence to policies and procedures.

**Facilitation of more requests for Flexible Working**

The survey asked if Managers would be able to facilitate more requests for flexible working with their functions for certain job roles. 77.8% of the respondents said that they would be able to facilitate more flexible arrangements on a limited basis. 22.2% indicated that they would not be able to facilitate more flexible working arrangements.
7% of the respondents indicated that there was no demand from employees in their area for more flexibility. A further 21% cited other reasons but we are unaware of what those reasons are.

Interestingly, only 7% believed that it would not be cost efficient. I would have expected the amount of managers expressing this point to be higher, given that all would have budget responsibility for their functions.
Benefits to the organisation - if flexible working was more easily available

The respondents were asked to identify in Q12 what benefits it would bring to the organisation if flexible working was more easily available to employees.

The respondents provided the following responses to Q12:

- Increased motivation and productivity
- Staff retention and loyalty
- Work on projects can involve intensive periods of activity with significant unpaid hours being worked at key stages in the projects. This can be seen as a downside in the project engineering area. If we were in a position to compensate even just for the times that the unpaid hours went beyond a particular threshold, then the perception of the project work would become more attractive
- Sometimes people need to remain after normal hours to facilitate meetings held at US Sites. It would be beneficial if on a limited basis, there was some facility to allow these individuals to use an hour or more of the “overtime” on subsequent days e.g. leave an hour early, come in an hour later etc.
- Employee goodwill and reduced absenteeism
- More supportive workforce and would improve culture
- Improve morale and trust. It would change the culture from a “clock watching” public sector mentality
- Better scheduling of work – more contented employees
- Limited flexibility and pedantic application of time management has a negative impact currently, increased flexibility would increase employee loyalty
- Reduced costs if offering time in lieu rather than present overtime rates
- Limited benefits to the business as the core business operates on a shift basis
- When employees work late to resolve an issue, they should be allowed some flexibility the next day
- Provides a better balance of professional/personal life for certain employees. Demonstrates the value that Élan applies to an individuals position and commitment
- Increases the level of activity and responsibility certain individuals can bring to their role
Challenges in Operating more Flexible Working Arrangements

In Q13 of the survey, the respondents were asked to identify the challenges for their organisations in operating more flexible arrangements.

The challenges identified by managers were as follows:

- Business continuity and coverage still needs to be maintained, flexible arrangements may not provide this
- Lack of maturity by decision makers to be willing or able to exercise discretion preferring a “one size fits all” solution
- Some areas cannot operate more flexibility due to production e.g. shifts but these groups tend to be very vocal about groups that can operate more flexible working
- Change of mindset required at Senior level
- Ensuring that employees work basic hours to address business demands
- Manage flexibility to ensure adequate staff on site to meet changing business demands
- Individuals don’t work on their own, so we won’t be able to deliver the output if half the people in support functions are not around
- Ensuring that all activities assigned to an individual partaking of flexible working arrangements are executed in a timely, responsible and professional manner
- That there are no critical impacts resultant from a lack of accountability or responsibility being displayed by an individual working to a flexible working pattern
- It would need to be controlled and pre approved with the manager
- Providing adequate support for the manufacturing operation
- Tracking the time in lieu and overtime would be challenging
• Insufficient staff in certain departments – job sharing would be impractical
• Difficult to cope with flexi arrangements that are outside your area of control
• Ability to cover peak working requirements that occur, such as budgets, quarter end
• In the case of job sharing, getting the person to increase their hours to cover off a job share partner
• Some areas tend not to follow the policies currently in place which leaves it difficult to manage and work with those areas of the business
• The challenge would be defining the system and integrating into the existing site wide systems
• It needs to be strictly managed and could potentially be abused.
• In some cases it is not cost neutral and would need to be budgeted for
• It can be career limiting and employees struggle to hold down management positions while operating in a part-time capacity

There were a lot of similarities in the concerns raised by the respondents and these concerns should be addressed as part of the communication strategy when the business progresses to the next stage of development with the project.

In Q. 14, the majority of the respondents confirmed that the organisations first responsibility is to ensure that it achieves its business goals. However 72% of the respondents agreed that employees work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives. From the managers who replied, 50% felt that the company had a responsibility to help employees balance their work and home lives. However, 55% also indicated that employees
often do not consider the implications to the business in terms of
cost or disruption to the business when making requests to change
their work pattern.
In Q15, the respondents were asked what discretion they had as managers around the types of arrangements that employees have:

The Managers completing the survey were asked to indicate the amount of discretion that they had concerning the types of working arrangements that were available to employees.

They were also asked to indicate what discretion they had regarding the participation of employees in these types of working arrangements.
Manager discretion around the participation of employees in these types of flexible arrangements

These results were somewhat disappointing from an empowerment perspective. Only 29% of the respondents indicated that they had a fair amount of discretion in relation the participation of employees in these type of arrangements. 65% confirmed that they had a little discretion.
In the final section of the questionnaire Q.16, Q17, and Q. 18 the respondents were asked questions on their own working arrangements. 72% of the respondents had not previously engaged in flexible work practices but 27.8% had. Those respondents who confirmed engaging in flexible working practices cited childcare responsibilities and commuting issues as the reasons that they engaged in flexible work practices.

If the respondents indicated that they hadn’t previously engaged in flexible working, they were asked to confirm the reasons why. The most commonly cited reasons by the respondents were that they were satisfied with their current hours or that the job didn’t lend itself to flexible arrangements. Relatively low numbers cited the culture of the organisation and the potential career consequences or impact as potential reasons for not availing of flexible working.
Chapter 5 Conclusion

This is the final section of the research project whereby conclusions will be drawn and the limitations of the research shall be highlighted and suggestions for any future research of this area within the Elan organisation.

Making flexibility work in any organisation is challenging. It is an important issue for managers, employees and HR professionals. The challenge to manage this becomes even greater in a manufacturing environment such as Elan where significant numbers of employees are routinely engaged in production activities covered on a two cycle shift basis. However, the workforce is diverse and a large number of employees are engaged in support functions that work normal business hours.

The challenge for us is to manage employee expectations while endeavouring to facilitate a better approach to flexible working. Of course, a one size fits all approach will not work, there will be roles that will not be suitable for a flexible approach. However, this doesn't mean that the business should not review its current arrangements in particular areas of the business where a more flexible approach might be considered.

Research shows that there are many benefits to both the organisation and the individuals if flexible working is successfully introduced in an organisation.

Analysis of Findings

It is clear that some respondents believe that they could facilitate more flexibility in terms of work patterns in their area on a limited basis. Over 77% indicated that they would be able to provide some additional level of flexibility on a limited basis. This response is very positive in terms of the organisational commitment to some elements of greater flexibility as the employee perception would be
that the organisational climate is not conducive to a more flexible approach. From my knowledge of the organisation, I believe that this is a significant change in mindset.

It is also encouraging that the Respondents believed that the organisation had a responsibility to ensure that the employee had a positive work life balance approach.

The respondent group highlighted a lot of benefits to the organisation by facilitating greater employee flexibility. They highlighted benefits such as:

- Increased motivation and productivity
- Greater staff retention and loyalty
- Reduction in the levels of absenteeism
- Positive impact to morale and the culture of the organisation
- Provides a better balance of professional and personal life for employees

All of these benefits would be in line with research conducted on the area of flexible working to-date.

Obviously, some of the respondents had concerns about offering greater flexibility to employees. Reasons for not offering greater flexibility included:

- Flexible working increases the pressure on other employees
- Difficult to operate where a large percentage of the employees are engaged in production type activities
- Increase in manager and supervisor administration

Only small number of respondents cited an increase in costs as a potential concern.

These are legitimate concerns and expectations and commitments need to be managed carefully.
Limitations of the Research

There are some limitations to the research. Whilst the response rate to the survey was high at 58%, it is hard to know if it is a true reflection of the views across the site management group. The respondents were definitely split into two groups, those that were in favour of greater flexibility and those that were not.

The second limitation to this research may have come from the method of data collection used. Managers were informed of the study via an email which had a link to an online questionnaire. Although using email and online questionnaires have many benefits for informing managers about the research including easy distribution and return of the questionnaire as well as ensuring anonymity, I believe another method might have worked better on this occasion.

Given the target audience for the research, I believe either face to face or telephone interviews might have been better methods of data collection, particularly when I was interested in getting a better assessment of the organisational climate for flexible working. However, given the sample group size and the time available to me, these were not possible on this occasion.

Future Research

Further research is required to assess where in the organisation it would be possible to provide greater flexibility to employees in terms of their working arrangements. Clearly, this will be more relevant to those areas not directly engaged in production/manufacturing type activities.

In order to progress this research further within the Élan business context, I am currently scheduling one to one interviews with the Heads of Functions. The purpose of these meetings is to explore further opportunities for flexible working. To understand what
arrangements might be more suitable than others. The types of arrangements that currently work well both formal and informal within groups. To better understand business barriers to offering more flexible arrangements. To understand what support would be required to develop an effective culture that would support greater flexibility.

**Recommendations**

It is obvious from the research findings that a time in lieu policy is being operated informally in large parts of the business. This is one area I would recommend needs to be reviewed. Formal guidelines regarding a time in lieu policy should be put in place by the HR team and the business as soon as possible.

The business does not currently measure the effectiveness of the flexible working arrangements that it has in place. All the research indicates that if you don’t measure, how do you know something is working? The company needs to put a process in place to measure the effectiveness of the current flexible working arrangements.

Following the review of the existing policies by the Flexible Working Group, a number of the existing policies have been identified for review and updating. The practices and policies already in place should be examined and the benefits and problems associated with these identified and appropriate actions taken.

I would recommend the development of pilot programmes in some areas to trial new flexible working options. By using pilot programmes, it is a useful way to assess what flexible options might work best in a particular area and it might also help identify any unforeseen difficulties. The organisation will reap the benefits of utilising a pilot programme. It helps to assess and evaluate the viability of a particular option before making it accessible to the wider population.
Simmons (1996) provides a very comprehensive guide to the activities within a trial implementation of flexible working. One of the challenges to successfully implementing greater flexibility, will be to ensure that any new flexible working initiatives do not generate more work for those impacted either directly or indirectly by the changes. There will be resistance if people feel that it will mean more work for them. This came through in the research where it was expressed by some managers as a possible barrier – increasing administration for Supervisors and Managers of those employees who would engage in flexible work practices.

Getting the key stakeholders on board with any proposals around greater flexibility will be key to the future success of any such initiatives. Previously, the company just had the policies in place to say that they were in place but now there appears to be more of an appetite to make them work better for employees, managers and the business.

The one to one meetings that I have planned with the function heads will be instrumental to the future success of this project. Managers are more likely to support ideas if they are bought into them from the beginning. This can be done through involvement and consultation at the outset of the process. It is important to observe both the facts and the feelings about the issues of those people involved. Diagnosing key issues and concerns will be critical in terms of alleviating future problems.

Draft proposals on flexible working can be prepared following the one to one meetings. It is possible at this stage to start generating ideas of what might be achievable in terms of applying some flexible working practices. Again, it is important to note, that it will not be a one size fits all solution. Policies may be developed that may only suit particular parts of the business due to the operating
constraints of the manufacturing environment. The key to the
success of this project will be to provide solution that will work for
particular areas.

Influencing the Senior Management will be critical to the success of
this phase of the project. It will be important to sell the key benefits
of the greater flexibility. Greater flexibility has to assist the business
in terms of achieving its objectives and goals. Operational
efficiencies, cost reductions and improved employee engagement
and motivation should be important selling points of any flexible
initiative. If the proposed initiatives cannot deliver on these
objectives, it is likely to fail.

Managers are going to be concerned about the unpredictability or
inconsistency of a service that might result from flexible working.
There will be concerns about loss of control, particularly, if groups
are adverse to change. They will need to be reassured that the
proposed flexibility will at least be no less reliable than the current
system. This can be difficult to do in reality but it is useful if you
can demonstrate a similar programme that is working well
elsewhere or perhaps by introducing a particular change on a 3
month pilot project basis. This may alleviate concerns if there is a
get out clause in case of problems that may be encountered during
the trial phase of any new initiative.

Flexible working programmes need to be introduced in planned, co-
ordinated manner so that any difficulties can be handled in a
professional and effective manner.

The HR function will need to be a strong driving force behind any
pilot programmes or new initiatives around flexible working. The
HR role will involve championing the change process, ensuring that
the systems and processes are capable of supporting the changing
requirements. The HR Team can provide guidance and support to
managers that may be considering new flexible options or those that may be engaging in any pilot projects around flexible working. They will also ensure compliance with any legislative requirements. These types of initiatives may require a greater level of HR support than the business would typically require under the current policies. A process of re-education on the policy management will also be required for managers and employees.

Quantifying the benefits for a business can be difficult. However, it is recommended that you assess any pilot projects that are undertaken to ensure that there aren’t any major cost implications for the organisation that could be stumbling blocks.

Personal Learning
This research has been really interesting for me from a personal perspective. The journey commenced with the set up of Flexible Working Group to review our existing Flexible Working Policies and Procedures here at Élan in the autumn of 2007. The project entered its second phase with the research work done for this project. I am now engaged in the third phase of this project which is the one to one meetings with the Heads of Function. Our aim is to have identified a pilot project on a new flexible initiative for roll out in autumn 2008. The organisation has made significant progress in terms of our attitude and approach to flexible working over the last 12 months and hopefully, we will make further progress in the coming months.
Bibliography


Dear Colleague,

Elan operates a number of Work Life Balance Programmes and Flexible Working Policies as part of our current employee benefits programme. Employee participation within the available programmes has been limited however, feedback from employees indicates that employees would like to avail of these arrangements on a more frequent basis.

I am currently undertaking research into the effectiveness of the current programmes and I am seeking your support and participation as a manager. The purpose of the questionnaire is to provide us with a better understanding of the benefits and challenges of flexible work practices in your particular area.

I would be grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire which should take no longer than 10 minutes.

The purpose of the research is to gather information about work life balance and flexible working initiatives from the business managers perspective. Therefore, your views and insights are very important to the success of the project. The findings from the research will be used as part of an internal review on our policies and also as part of a dissertation that I am completing in this area. Confidentiality is guaranteed and individual managers will not be identified in any way.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to participate. Your support is greatly appreciated. The findings will provide a greater insight into the challenges that managers face, as they strive to support employee requests for greater flexibility while balancing increasing business demands.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Crowley
HR Manager
Elan Pharma International Limited
Flexible Working Programmes at Elan

2. General Employment Data

1. Please indicate your gender.
   - Male
   - Female

2. How long have you worked at Elan?
   - Less than 2 years
   - 3 - 5 years
   - 5 - 10 years
   - 10 or more years

3. How many employees are currently employed in your function?
   - 0 - 10 people
   - 10 - 25 people
   - 25 - 50 people
   - 50 - 100 people
   - 100+ people

4. Do employees within your business area regularly work above their contracted hours?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Infrequently
   - Don't know

5. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the reasons why employees work more than their contracted hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backlog of work</td>
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<td>Shortage of employees</td>
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<td>Temporary increase in workload</td>
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<td>Employees desire to get the job done</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the request of the employer</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is part of the organisation culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing cover for sick leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Covering for employees who avail of flexible work arrangements (e.g. job sharing / part-time / career break)</td>
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</table>

6. How many additional hours on average per employee are worked per week?
   - 0 - 2 hours
   - 2 - 4 hours
   - 4 - 6 hours
   - 6 - 8 hours
   - 8+ hours

7. How are these additional hours rewarded?
   - Paid as Overtime
   - Time off in Lieu
   - Both
   - Neither
8. Do you currently operate any informal arrangements with your employees that operate outside of the current policies?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If Yes, please indicate what arrangements are in use?
Flexible Working Programmes at Elan

3. Flexible Working Programmes

9. Please specify what flexible working policies employees in your function have availed of in the last 12 months.

- [ ] Job Sharing
- [ ] Part Time Working
- [ ] Career Break
- [ ] Time Off in Lieu

10. Is it practical to facilitate more requests for flexible working within your function for certain job roles?

- [ ] Yes on a limited basis
- [ ] No

11. If you answered No to Q.10 please indicate the reason for it not being practical or feasible to offer employees more flexibility in your area:

- [ ] Not cost efficient
- [ ] No demand from employees
- [ ] Will increase manager/supervisor administration
- [ ] Difficult to operate/manage due to the type of work
- [ ] Increases pressure on other employees
- [ ] Other Reasons (please indicate if not covered above)

12. What benefits would it bring to the organisation if flexible working was more easily available?
Flexible Working Programmes at Elan

13. What are the challenges for your organisation in operating more flexible working arrangements?

14. As a Manager, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees who request to change their working pattern often do not consider the implications to the business in terms of cost or potential disruption to the business</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees work best when they can balance their work and other aspects of their lives</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>It is not our responsibility to help employees balance their work and other aspects of their lives</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Policies that help staff balance work and other commitments are often unfair to some employees</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tr>
<th>The employer’s first responsibility has to be to ensure that the organisation achieves its business goals</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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15. As a manager, I have discretion around the types of working arrangements that are made available to employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In terms of the type of arrangements that employees have, the participation of employees in these types of working arrangements</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>A fair amount</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>None at all</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>

16. Do you currently engage or have you engaged in flexible work practices?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

17. If you have engaged in flexible working, please indicate the reasons why?

- [ ] Childcare responsibilities
- [ ] Commuting issues
- [ ] Needed/wanted more personal time
- [ ] Other reason
Flexible Working Programmes at Elan

18. If you have not availed of flexible working practices, please indicate the reasons why?

- Satisfied with current hours
- Career Consequences/Impact
- Financial Considerations
- Culture of the Organisation
- Job doesn't lend itself to flexible arrangements
- Other
Crowley, Yvonne

From: Crowley, Yvonne
Sent: 25 June 2008 13:27
To: Shanahan, Phil; O'Connor, Declan; Hickey, Declan; Doyle, Grace; Mahony, Anthony; Ryan, Colette; Neenan, Susan; Logue, Paul; O'Connell, Michael; Fogarty, Mairéad; Lacey, Gillian; Parker, Mary Jo; Dunne, Edel; Warnock, Damon; Bastin, Rick; Dwyer, Caroline; Ryan, Helen; O'Reilly, Mark; Flannery, Louis; Lynam, Nuala; Cullinane, Marion; Gerety, Doreen; Devery, Mary; Finneran, Mary; Fogarty, John; Ryan, Paul; Feeney, Sean; McGrane, Ronan; Duignan, Vincent; Dunne, David; McGuinness, Neil
Cc: Crowley, Yvonne
Subject: Flexible Working at Elan - Questionnaire

As you will be aware, an Employee Working Group was formed late last year to review our current Flexible Working arrangements within Elan. The Working Group recently reported back to the site senior management on the findings and the HR department are engaged in follow up activities as a result of this review.

A National Study conducted in 2007 on the effects of Flexible Working and Work Life Balance programmes confirms a number of benefits for employers who operate such programmes. The benefits include increased effectiveness and engagement from employees, better recruitment and retention of employees and general improvements in employee well being. Absenteeism is reduced and productivity increased. It also demonstrated a positive culture in the organisations surveyed.

As the HR member of the Flexible Working Group, I am engaged in a number of activities to bring this project to the next stage. Over the coming weeks, I am meeting with Heads of Functions on a one to one basis to discuss the current flexible working arrangements in their areas and to look at possible alternative arrangements that could be considered for future implementation thereby achieving some/all of the benefits referenced above.

In addition, I have developed a questionnaire which I am circulating to you as Directors and Associate Directors on site as part of the data gathering exercise. The purpose of the questionnaire is to provide us with a better understanding of the benefits and the challenges of flexible work practices in your particular area. The information gathered will also be used as part of a Dissertation that I am completing on Flexible Work Practices in Industry. Confidentiality is guaranteed in terms of the information provided and individual managers will not be identified in any way by participating.

Please click on the link below to complete the Questionnaire:


I would be grateful if you could complete the Questionnaire no later than Friday, 4th July 2008. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for taking the time to provide your support and participation as a senior manager.

Kind regards.

Yvonne Crowley
HR Manager
Elan Pharma International Ltd
Monksland
Athlone
Co Westmeath

Tel: +353 90 6495198
Email: yvonne.crowley@elan.com

21/07/2008
Appendix C
Crowley, Yvonne

From: Crowley, Yvonne  
Sent: 01 July 2008 23:17  
To: Shanahan, Phil; O'Connor, Declan; Hickéy, Declan; Doyle, Grace; Mahony, Anthony; Ryan, Colette; Neenan, Susan; Logue, Paul; O'Connell, Michael; Fogarty, Mairead; Lacey, Gillian; Parker, Mary Jo; Dunne, Edel; Warnock, Damon; Bastin, Rick; Dwyer, Caroline; Ryan, Helen; O'Reilly, Mark; Flannery, Louis; Lynam, Nuala; Cullinané, Marion; Gerety, Doreen; Devery, Mary; Finneman, Mary; Fogarty, John; Ryan, Paul; Feeney, Sean; McGrane, Ronan; Duignan, Vincent; Dunne, David; McGuinness, Neil  
Cc: Crowley, Yvonne  
Subject: FW: Flexible Working at Elan - Questionnaire

Thank you to those of you who have already taken the time to complete the questionnaire that I circulated last week regarding Flexible Working.

Just a reminder that the final day for completion is Friday, 4th July 2008. It only takes a few minutes to complete.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your support and participation as a senior manager.

Please click on the link below to complete the Questionnaire:


Kind regards.

Yvonne Crowley

From: Crowley, Yvonne  
Sent: 25 June 2008 13:27  
To: Shanahan, Phil; O'Connor, Declan; Hickéy, Declan; Doyle, Grace; Mahony, Anthony; Ryan, Colette; Neenan, Susan; Logue, Paul; O'Connell, Michael; Fogarty, Mairead; Lacey, Gillian; Parker, Mary Jo; Dunne, Edel; Warnock, Damon; Bastin, Rick; Dwyer, Caroline; Ryan, Helen; O'Reilly, Mark; Flannery, Louis; Lynam, Nuala; Cullinané, Marion; Gerety, Doreen; Devery, Mary; Finneman, Mary; Fogarty, John; Ryan, Paul; Feeney, Sean; McGrane, Ronan; Duignan, Vincent; Dunne, David; McGuinness, Neil  
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21/07/2008