



Policy No: JSD/HR/23	Authorised by: Davina Powell	Review Date:
Policy Date: 6th April 2023		Date of Next Review: 6th April 2024
MANAGING POOR PERFORMANCE		

What is poor performance?

By definition, poor work performance occurs when an employee fails to fulfill the expectations or responsibilities of their job.

Performance problems can also be related to how an employee engages with or behaves on their team. Basically, poor performance at work is anything from consistently arriving late, to forgetting crucial tasks, to causing conflict with their work colleagues.

Examples of poor performance

Unsatisfactory performance at work can harm the productivity and morale of the entire team. Even if they're unintentional, mistakes must be addressed. Here are a few examples to demonstrate what poor performance might look like:

- **Never on time:** whether it's a meeting or a deadline, poorly performing employees are never able to meet expectations when it comes to time.
- **Negative attitude:** instead of collaborating with team members and taking on new projects with a positive attitude, employees complain and cause conflict.
- **Failure to accomplish tasks:** whether it's because they have a lack of ability, or are just lazy, underperforming employees simply don't get things done.
- **Unable to take feedback:** when you share feedback to help your employees improve, they don't take it into account and ultimately, make the same mistakes repeatedly.
- **Lack of attention to detail:** whether it's failing to reply to important emails or missing steps when completing projects, employees seem to have their heads in the clouds, rather than focusing on their work.

What are the causes of poor performance?

Before you can address performance problems, it's a good idea to understand the root cause. Every employee is different, and poor performance can come from anywhere.

Here are some of the most common causes of poor performance at work:

- **Problems in their personal life:** When are exhausted from taking care of family or suffering from medical problems, it can have a big impact on their work. If life is getting in the way, you need to can work together to find a temporary solution until the personal problem is resolved.

- **Burnout or other well-being problems:** It can be tough to maintain a work-life balance. If burnout is causing performance issues, you'll need to coach them through it while providing the support they need to recover.
- **Workplace conflict:** Often, a conflict between work colleagues is subtle — but even if it's not obvious, it can create stress, distraction, and frustration for the individuals involved. That inevitably leads to poor performance.
- **Skill gaps:** The employee have responsibilities they have no idea how to handle, but they're afraid to admit they need help. They need a manager to provide training and guidance.
- **Lack of motivation:** Sometimes, employees just aren't motivated enough to care about their work. Maybe they believe their work won't make an impact, so why put in the effort? They could also feel overwhelmed, unclear on their responsibilities, or just plain bored. All this can reduce their motivation to perform.

Identifying poor performance

It may take some intentional observation to separate a pattern of poor performance from the occasional workplace mistake.

No one can be perfect all the time, so here are a few questions to ask yourself when identifying poor performance among your team members:

- Has an employee failed to accomplish their goals for a month or more at a time? Missing one goal makes sense, but if it's consistent, that's a red flag.
- Is the quality of work they submit consistently subpar, or was it just one assignment?
- Do they fail to finish tasks, meet deadlines, and communicate? Are they consistently holding up your team's ability to get work done by not fulfilling their own responsibilities?
- Do they have a pattern of conflict with their work colleagues or management? Or did you just see one out-of-character disagreement?
- Do they respond positively to feedback, making changes right away when you ask? Or do they become defensive and fail to implement constructive criticism?

How to tackle poor performance

Performance management process can be intimidating.

1. Prepare for an emotional response
2. Address the problem one to one
3. Involve HR early on
4. Make a plan for success
5. Follow up and make tough decisions when you needed

1. Prepare for an emotional response

Before any difficult conversation, you should practice — and be prepared for anything.

- What will if they deny all work performance problems?

- What if they start to cry?
- What if they gets angry? Or shows no emotion at all?

If the meeting becomes too emotional to continue the conversation, take a break. However, always come back to the discussion. Don't abandon the conversation because it is difficult.

2. Address the problem one to one

Once the performance issues have been clearly identified sit down one to one with the employee (or a Teams call) if necessary.

Try an opening statement like, "name, we've had this conversation a number of times, about [these specific errors], and we're still seeing them. Help me understand what's preventing you from doing this work in a way that meets expectations."

Once you've started the conversation, here are some tips to make it as successful as possible:

- Avoid the "compliment sandwich" technique. Some people try to soften the blow of negative feedback by doing this, but it can actually distract from your main message. People often choose to hear the good stuff and ignore the bad.
- Take on a coaching role. Ask lots of questions to understand if performance issues go deeper than the surface level. The best managers coach employees — they don't just expect employees to figure out a solution alone.
- Listen actively. A frank conversation can often reveal new information, so listen to your teammate closely. This will give them the space they need to voice their own concerns, which can then help you create a strategy to improve their performance.

3. Involve human resources early

Get BrightHR involved early when it comes to performance problems. They will be very helpful in making sure that's things are done correctly. For instance, they can help determine the right amount of time to correct the issue.

4. Make a plan for success

Now, it's time to create a strategy that will help your employees improve their performance. With the right plan you will see underperforming workers begin to thrive again.

Here are the most important components of a plan to improve poor performance:

- **Set clear expectations:** Make sure that employees understand exactly what they're supposed to be doing differently. Put it in writing so that they know what they're striving towards.
- **Address skills gaps:** Are there specific skills that the employee is lacking? Do they need retraining? Is there a learning pathway that could help them upskill and improve performance? Decide on concrete actions that your employee can take, and make sure they actually follow through.

• **Review overall job fit:** If an employee doesn't have the right technical skills for their current job description, how are their other skills? If they're a great team player and company culture fit, you might be able to find a better role for them within the company.

5. Follow-up, and be ready to make a tough decision if needed

Once you've agreed strategy to help your employee improve their performance, make sure you check in regularly. If you don't see changes, you'll need to start asking some tough questions.

For example, does your employee have all the right skills but is just not getting the job done? If so, additional training won't help improve performance, and it might be time to consider termination. That's never the call you want to make as a manager, but the best managers know how and when to make difficult decisions.

In the long term, even if it comes down to termination, everyone will benefit — your employee will find a role that's better suited to their skill set, and SJD Homes will be able to hire someone that's a better fit for the team.

Improve motivation by creating a sense of purpose

Employees who feel a sense of purpose at work tend to be far more engaged and motivated to perform?

Research shows that when employees are connected to an organization's mission or purpose, it reduces employee turnover — and improves efficiency. Employees need to feel a sense of ownership over their work, and they need to see how it makes an impact beyond their day-to-day.

Improve the staff motivation and help them feel a greater sense of purpose by making things personal:

- Have conversations with your team about what matters to them, what they value on a personal level, and how that connects to the company's mission.
- Help them see how their personal strengths and daily responsibilities can make a real difference in the world and in the company.
- Connect team goals and individual projects to the company's bigger purpose, and talk about how each of these drive real impact.

These actions can help you create a high-performance culture. Employees will feel a true sense of purpose, and as a result, will be motivated to do their best work.