

Alwyn Fouché started Apprenticeship at S.A.A. Technical in Electroplating in 1983. He qualified in 1987 and was promoted to Supervisor in 1996. In 2000 he was appointed as Snr. Inspector of NDI Laboratory. They are responsible for all tests carried out on aircraft fluids, micro biology of fuel and water and testing of all chemicals and cleaners used on aircraft.

Are we doing things right or are we doing the right things?

•Factors influencing Lab Staff Performance

Recruiting and Retaining

First of all, if there is a vacancy in your Lab and you need to recruit someone, you have the right to recruit the best candidate for the job. It is not always easy as the person who performs the best in the interview is not always the best worker.

To cover yourself and the company, introduce a probation period with written and practical exam at the end of the period. Always give regular feedback during the probation period.

Retaining Staff is much more difficult, it is less demanding working with an instrument than a human being. It is a fact that 90 % of people resigning are caused by their direct Boss whenever a Supervisor, Manager or Director.

As Supervisors or Managers we often treat the symptom instead of the cause of a problem.

Here are a few signs, which can help you identify:

POOR ATTITUDE

1. Little or no initiative
2. Withdraw
3. Disinterested
4. Increased complaining
5. Blaming failure on others
6. Uncooperative
7. Defensive responses

DECREASE IN PERFORMANCE

1. Decrease in productivity
2. Poor quality of work
3. Not meeting due dates
4. Do easy jobs and avoid tough ones
5. Disorganized
6. Depending on others for direction
7. Absenteeism

Here are a few of many questions that you can answer yes or no to, which can help you address attitude or performance problems:

1. Does the person know what is suppose to be done and when?
2. Has the employee been trained and does he have the skills to do the job?
3. Does he/she have adequate resource to do the job?
If no, what does he/she need?
4. Are factors beyond his control affecting performance?
If yes, which factors and how can they be addressed.

5. Have I been giving feedback in a proper manner?
If no, improve the quality, frequency of feedback.

Training

In specialized areas like testing and calibrating Labs on going training is very important.

We focus a lot on external training by attending courses and seminars, internal training – job specific and company related matters. Most important is on the job training and refresher courses, keep record of all training, you might be thinking from habit that you are doing things right, but in the meantime you are not doing the right things.

Evaluating Competence

An Employees performance must be measured to determine if he is productive, competency is measured through the ways of training discussed above. The most competent employee will usually be the most productive, they are directly related.

Following is an example of how I measure daily and weekly performance and the same time calculate backlog (outstanding work)

Conclusion

Always attempt to treat the cause of a problem and not the symptom, keep up training and communication and it might help you doing the right things and doing those things right.