How Effective Is Your Firm At Sustaining High Performance?

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Work Expectations

- Do people understand what they are supposed to do? 
- Do people understand what the firm expects in terms of 
  - the degree of their responsibility? 
  - their level of independence/autonomy? 
  - the quality of their performance? 
- Do people consider the firm’s expectations reasonable and attainable? 
- Do people understand why the expected performance is important? 
- Do people understand how the expected performance supports the firm’s client service and business goals? 
- Do people have the mental, physical, and emotional abilities they need to perform as expected? 
- Do people have the supervision, support, and resources necessary to perform as expected?

Performance Rewards and Consequences

- Does the firm reward people for effectively managing and developing others? 
- Do people whose performance is better than expected receive rewards that are meaningful from their point of view? 
- Are there consequences for performance that is below expectations? 
- Do poor performers understand the reasons for any negative consequences (e.g., lack of promotion or bonus)? 
- Do the consequences for poor performance promote the desired performance? 
- Are the consequences for poor performance timely?

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Feedback and Evaluations

• Do people receive relevant, timely, and specific feedback about their performance?
• Do people feel comfortable asking supervisors and partners for feedback?
• Do people receive regular performance evaluations based on stated performance standards?
• Do the evaluations explain how an individual’s performance measures up to the firm’s standards and expectations?
• Does the evaluation process provide time and opportunity for reflection?
• Are under-performers informed how they can improve their performance?
• Do people complete self-assessments as part of the evaluation process?
• Are people asked what the firm can do to help them do their work better?
• Does the firm evaluate people (including partners) on their performance as supervisors and managers of others?

Personal Goal Setting

• Are people asked to set their own learning, development, and performance improvement goals?
• Do people have the supervision, support, and resources necessary to achieve the goals they set?
• Does the firm give under-performers the guidance, support, and resources they need to improve?
• Does the firm provide career planning assistance?

If you did not respond “Yes” for all of the foregoing statements, then your firm needs to re-examine and strengthen its performance management efforts. All of these components are essential for the firm to sustain high performance, produce superior legal work for clients, and succeed in the legal marketplace.

Ida Abbott Consulting specializes in enhancing professional performance. We work with firms of all sizes to audit, create, and improve professional development and performance management through feedback, benchmarks, core competencies, evaluation, mentoring, training, work allocation, and leadership development. If your firm is committed to the successful management, development, and retention of talented people, we can help you make that commitment a reality.

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6114 La Salle Ave, PMB 634, Oakland CA 94611 • 510-339-6883 • fax 510-339-6985 • IdaAbbott@aol.com • www.IdaAbbott.com