



Causes and solutions for performance issues

A table to assist managers trying to resolve performance issues

Issues	Possible causes	Options for actions
<p>Employee doesn't seem to understand directions or job requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Failure to understand what is required (lack of training, unclear job description) › Inability to perform tasks (lack of training or unclear instructions and feedback, literacy, job fit) › Lack of practice on aspects of the role – needs to come 'up to speed' › Workplace problem (work environment, job design) › Personal or external issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Begin with informal performance discussion › Be clear about meeting the performance requirements in the position description and expected contribution of the role to the work of the business › Focus on interest in work tasks, and how they might be improved › Look at possible options for training and development if a lack of skill is identified › Explore opportunities to practice and get 'up to speed' in a safe environment (consider off the job coaching in situations of safety or customer service) › Explore opportunities to give the employee a role model/ buddy, so that they have someone close to check in with – be sure to select a buddy who follows policies and processes properly › Explore options for opportunities in other areas of the business, if a job fit issue › Refer to EAP/counselling service if personal circumstances are impacting performance.



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<p>Employee doesn't do or complete work, the quality of the work they do complete or do is fine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Job content and design › May not be getting sufficient feedback, including positive feedback, and therefore feel unable to move forward › Unclear or unrealistic expectations › Personal or external issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Begin with informal performance discussion › Talk about what is going well and put in place regular meetings for clear, consistent feedback › Make sure the performance requirements and expected contribution of the role to the work of the business are clear › Focus on interest in work tasks, and how they might be improved › Refer to EAP/counselling service if personal circumstances are impacting performance.
<p>Employee doesn't acknowledge there are performance issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Unclear or unrealistic expectations › Performance issues have not been adequately explained › Feedback is only negative or not happening at all – difficult to understand what is good › Management problems (guidance and feedback lacking, sees others recognised and feels demotivated, cultural misunderstanding) › Work environment (co-worker relationships, workplace bullying) › Employee doesn't accept management assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Re-establish expected outcomes, use evidence of how performance doesn't meet expected standards, explain the impact of this on the success of the business › If possible work together to identify solutions › Seek independent review of expectations and performance › If necessary, start formal performance management process.
<p>Employee doesn't complete work tasks to the required standard (quality).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Management problems (guidance and feedback lacking, sees others recognised and feels demotivated, cultural misunderstanding) › Work environment (co-worker relationships, workplace bullying) › Job design or job fit › Lacks the required skills and capabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify training and development opportunities as a part of performance improvement plan. › If employee fails to develop required skills, progress through performance management process to possible options such as reassignment of duties, or transfer to another area to achieve a better job fit (if possible) › Explore options for opportunities in other areas of the business, if possible › Review recruitment practices to ensure appropriate selection decisions are being made.



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Signs of lacking motivation or disengaged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Other performance issues going unmanaged creating challenging work environment › Is good performance ignored and allowed to pass without positive feedback or recognition, while poor performance is noted and acted upon? › Are there incentives or rewards (not necessarily monetary) for superior performance? › Do well-performing employees feel discouraged because their rewards are the same as those of lesser contributors? › If there are performance-related incentives and rewards, do employees know about them? Are these provided on a consistent and regular basis? › Is good performance 'rewarded' with extra work? Are employees who complete their own work then expected to 'help out' poor performers? Are good performers given additional tasks which make it more difficult for them to complete their core activities? Is extra work seen as 'reward' (eg more interesting or significant tasks) or 'punishment' (ie additional workload)? › Unfilled vacancies contributing to work overload and feeling overwhelmed › Unhealthy work environment (poor leadership and conflicts with others) › Has become disillusioned with work environment › Fails to understand value of work being undertaken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establish team culture based on respect and support › Fill vacancies › Don't just reward good performance with more work › Consistently and proactively manage performance development and feedback for all employees, address all performance issues › Celebrate success consistently › Take the time to have a discussion with the employee on the purpose of the position, and the value of outcomes delivered by the role to the organisation › If appropriate, explore opportunities for career transition and movement.



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Employee is regularly absent without cause.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Job content and design › Inappropriate job fit › Management style (feel bullied, lack guidance, overwhelmed) › Personal or workplace issues › Undisclosed secondary employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Identify cause behind absenteeism › Explore possible strategies for job redesign, job fit, changes to working arrangements, management of health issues, improve work environment › Re-establish expectations of attendance.
Employee will not follow directions or perform tasks as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Failure to understand what is required › Inability to perform tasks › Personal issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Begin performance improvement process starting with informal discussions about what is required in the position. Look at possible options for training and development if a lack of skill is identified. › Start formal performance management process if no improvement.