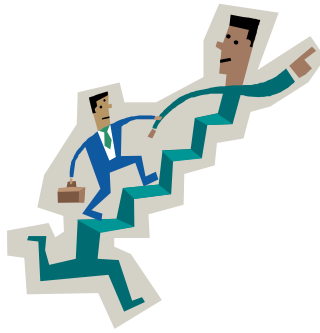


Chartered Management Institute

Diploma in First Line Management



Improving Team Performance

Unit 3008

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HISTORY OF OPENREACH

“Openreach” work on behalf of Communications Providers. Our job is to look after the wires that connect homes and workplaces to the local telephone exchange, where Communications Providers’ national networks take over.

The key purpose of my role as a Field Service Engineer is to Provide or repair communication services / network to end users on behalf of Communication Providers meeting contractual obligations in a professional and cost effective manner and working to Openreach Network Quality Standards.

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PART A – MANAGING POOR PERFORMANCE

Introduction

According to www.businessdictionary.com the definition of performance management is an assessment of an employee, process, equipment or other factor to gauge progress toward predetermined goals.

Performance Map



According to human resources performance management aims to enable everyone to give their best. It includes setting standards, regular performance reviews, coaching and annual performance reviews. It enables managers to give people feedback on their contribution and help them perform as well as they can. The elements that make up performance management can be split into three main phases: [Planning](#); [performing](#); and [Reviewing](#).

What are the benefits if I manage performance properly in my work area?

The benefits are:

- Identifying potential talent & accelerating talent
- Managing under performance
- My team will have a clear understanding of what is expected from them
- A productive team
- An efficient team
- Right first time
- To highlight potential issues before they occur

Poor performance

According to my Self Study Guide **poor performance** is a failure to carry out a job to the required standards. The following are examples of poor performance that have occurred in my work area:

1. Poor attitude to work such as not leading by the right example & not caring for others within the organisation
2. Lack of skills, training or support
3. Personal issues or health problems
4. Not consistently meeting the required standards such as the Productivity or Efficiency targets
5. Poor quality & workmanship

What is my attitude to performance management?

Appendix 1

To measure my own attitude to performance Management my Self Study Guide suggests I should answer a set of questions found on appendix 1. After answering the questions from appendix 1 I feel that I have a good attitude to performance management as of course having a good attitude to performance management is one of the main key factors to good management.

Acknowledging poor performance

I am a great believer that a manager should also get his or hers hands dirty! My self study Guide refers to this as managing by walking around (MBWA). This enables me to:

- Get to know my team members individually. This is good to build a relationship with the individual
- Identify any problems that they may be experiencing
- Coach individuals
- Praise their success
- Acknowledge individuals talent
- Find out what they are doing & how they are doing it
- Be approachable

Some of the above bullet points are stated in my Self Study Guide but they clearly relate to my work area & team members. For example I would carry out regular spot checks to ensure that my team members are working to the correct standards.

Performance is also acknowledged electronically. Data such as figures & results are gathered automatically onto a system that is only viewable by managers & their individual performer / team member.

Managing under performance

Appendix 2 Managers decision tree

My Self Study Guide suggests using the following 4 stage process that manages poor performance effectively:

- **Establishing objectives and standards:** The objective is to achieve the SMART targets:

<u>PERFORMANCE</u>	<u>TARGET</u>
Productivity	3.2 unique jobs per day
Task efficiency	125% (1hr 45mins per job) <i>Lunch & travel time is excluded</i>
Task time	80% per task
Furthering / in completing tasks	80% per day
Completing jobs as you go	0% tolerance
Engineer's actual onsite time	0 failures per day
Repeat Reports	<2%
ELF Early Life Failures	<1.5%
Quality	Zero Defects
Line test OK	Zero tolerance

- **Measuring actual performance.** Each individual's performance results are inputted automatically by a robotic tool into an electronic database. This can be viewed by managers & their individual team members only.

After measuring my team's performance I have found that 1 individual is achieving an average of 2 jobs per day over a monthly period.

- **Comparing results with objectives and standards.** The results from the data base are compared with the SMART targets shown on the table above.

After comparing the individual's results with the current objectives & standards I have found that the individual is under performing on productivity, task efficiency and task time.

- **Taking necessary action to improve things.**

Planning; Set new SMART objectives & standards & manage individual's development & career.

After spending 1 day with the individual using MBWA I have found that the individual requires more training and support on simple faulting techniques using the hawk test equipment. I have planned for the individual to attend the 2 day advanced hawk training course. When the course is successfully completed the individual will be given further support / coaching out in the field for 2 weeks.

Performing; Accelerate individual's talent & manage under performance.

The engineer successfully passed the advanced hawk training course & I have received good feedback from his coach out in the field. The individual's performance & talent was accelerated & he out performed the current targets.

Reviewing; Hold one to one reviews & conduct annual performance reviews. Reward & remuneration.

1 month after the training & coaching I conducted a 1 to 1 with the individual & found he had averaged a productivity of 3.8 jobs per day over a monthly period. I praised the individual & rewarded him with a bouquet (£20 voucher of his choice).

To sum up I had established the objectives & standards, measured the individual's actual performance & compared the results with the objectives & standards. I had identified an issue & took necessary action to improve the issue by offering the individual support. This support consists of training & coaching.

When should I refer issues to a higher authority?

My Self Study guide states that there are bound to be occasions when the poor performance issue I am faced with is either:

- **Beyond my control to deal with.**
- **Is sufficiently complex that I need specialist help.**
- **Involves a team member of mine who is working for some one else**

There has been an occasion when dealing with under performance where the individual feels he has been treated unfairly & feels harassed so the individual has then raised a grievance against the first line manager who is tackling the poor performance. It would be beyond the first line manager's authority to deal with this so then the issue will be escalated to the senior manager to deal.

There has also been an occasion where the reason for under performance is because of personal, domestic or health issues. In this case it may be beyond the first line managers' ability so then the individual would be referred to trained specialists for example; Doctors or professional counsellors. There is an employee helpline for this type of support & individuals are encouraged to use it [08009176767](tel:08009176767).

Adopting a counselling approach

According to www.businessdictionary.com the definition of counselling is a support process in which a counsellor holds face to face talks with another person to help him or her solve a personal problem, or help improve that person's attitude, behaviour, or character.

My Self Study Guide states counselling is a way of discussing a problem with an employee in a non threatening atmosphere.

As I am still only a team member I have never conducted a counselling session but when the time comes my Self Study Guide suggests I should apply some of the following effective counselling tips (*I have used time keeping as my example*):

- 1. Make sure before you start that you can clearly define what would constitute acceptable performance.** Official starting time is at 8am. 5minutes late is acceptable, over 5 minutes is not acceptable.
- 2. Whenever possible conduct the counselling session in a private place so that you cannot be overheard or seen by other colleagues.** This would take place in a quiet location where there are no interruptions & conversations cannot be over heard. A do not disturb or engaged sign will be displayed.
- 3. Make sure you give adequate time to the whole process.** 30 minutes is given for each counselling session.
- 4. Clearly state what standards are acceptable and get the person to acknowledge those standards.** The individual was given a copy of the time keeping standards to read & signed a filed document to confirm full acknowledgement of the standards.
- 5. Make sure you focus on the performance not the individual themselves.** Emphasise the offence rather than the offender.
- 6. Make sure you are always professional and adopt a constructive attitude because counselling is not about "telling someone off"** The individual was reminded of the time keeping standards in a friendly & soft approach.
- 7. Try to get co-operation as opposed to confrontation.** I encouraged the individual to comply with the standards in his own interest.
- 8. Remember that the aim of your counselling session is to improve the performance of the individual, not to win an argument.**
- 9. Use "open" questions to keep the dialogue going.** I would use questions like "what do you think is acceptable within time keeping?" instead of "do you think bad time keeping is acceptable?"
- 10. At regular intervals try to summarise where you have got to without it being too obvious what you are doing.** As this was a straight forward issue regular summarising was not necessary.

11. **Try to make sure you end the session on a positive note.** The individual was reminded of his strengths & how well he was doing in other areas.
12. **Make sure you keep notes and keep them in a safe place so that confidentiality is maintained.** Notes would be entered onto the individuals contact log for future reference, this can only be viewed by only by the individual & his or hers manager.

While conducting a counselling session the individual must be respected & treated fairly simply by just treating them like normal human beings. Respect can also be maintained or earned by:

- Keeping all issues private & confidential
- Listening to individuals
- Giving constructive feedback
- Rewarding & recognition
- Encouraging & praising individuals
- Building good relationships

In my organisation records must be kept of any kind of session or confrontation. Records can be documented & filed in many different ways for example:

CONTACT LOGS Electronically filed	BT SYSTEMS Electronically & paper filed	HR Electronically & paper filed
Informal chats	One to ones	Grievance
General discussions	Counselling sessions	Discipline
Appraisals	Safety checks	Formal sessions
Bouquets	Quality checks	
General information	Performance	

What might happen if I get it all wrong?

My Self Study Guide states that poor counselling skills can actually make the issue worse. Getting it wrong can result in:

- Losing credibility & respect from individuals
- Individuals raising a grievance
- Individuals going off sick from work due to stress
- Individuals underperforming
- Change of behaviour for example negative attitude & emotions

PART B – DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCE

DISCIPLINE

Introduction

According to www.businessdictionary.com **discipline** is a process of controlling one's behaviour and actions, either through self-motivation or through teaching and punishment.

According to Openreach disciplinary action is not just a method of imposing penalties, but also manages under-performance in the context of misconduct & also emphasises and encourages improvements in individual behaviour. The disadvantages to discipline are that it costs the company time & resources and can also affect individual behaviour in the context of change in attitude and personal emotions.

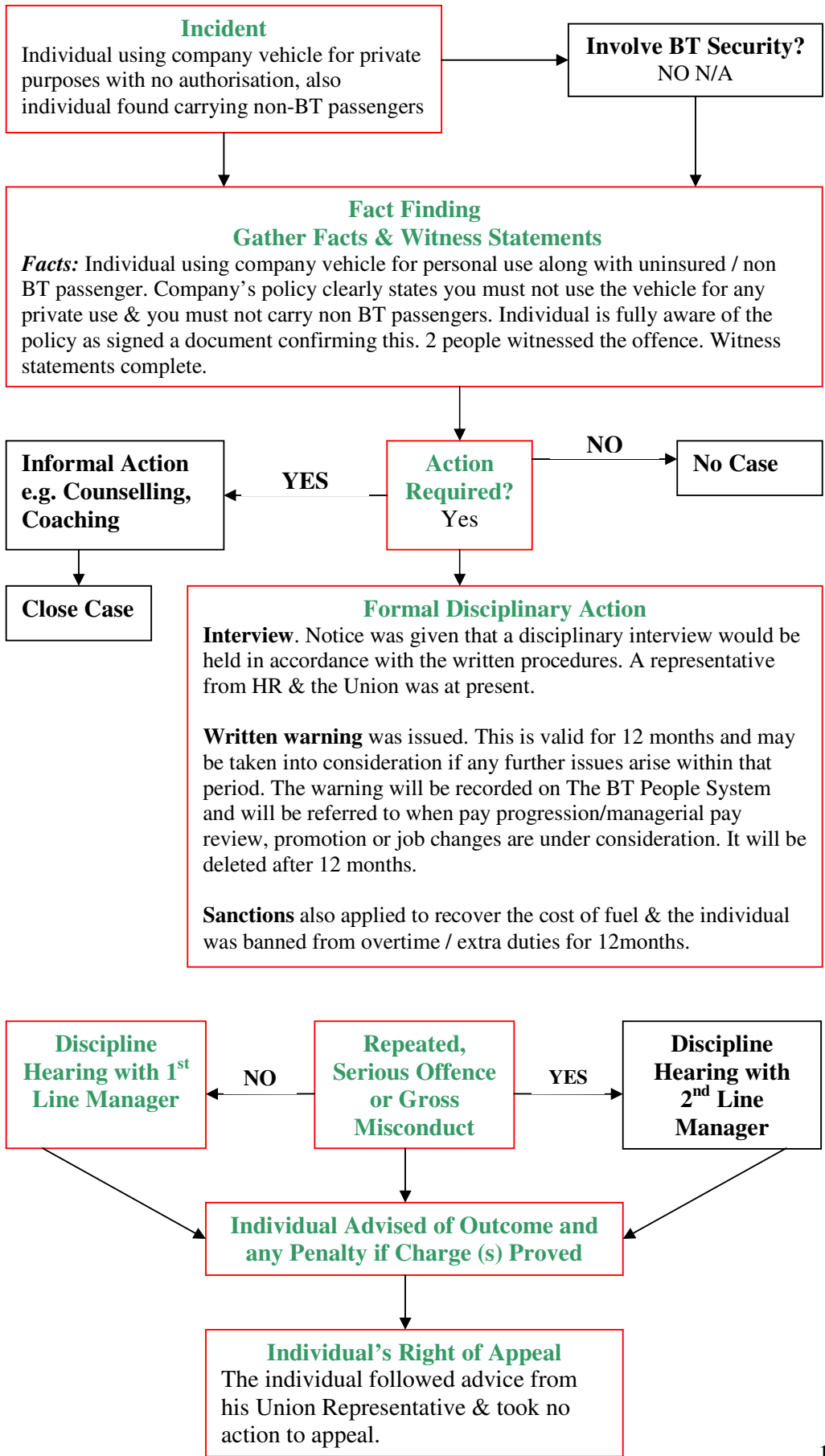
I currently have no responsibility towards discipline. But I do know what the key responsibilities are for First line managers in my organisation. They are to:

- Stop unacceptable behaviour at the outset.
- Refer to “Ask HR” for guidance on appropriate action.
- Register a case on BT people system immediately if appropriate.
- Read the manager’s charter to clarify the responsibilities & undertake the ACAS training referred to on the web.
- Fully investigate the facts in a time scale agreed with a case handler using a project plan approach.
- Discuss and decide on the appropriate level of action with the Accenture case handler.
- Conduct a hearing at their level if agreed and make a decision based on the evidence again within the timescales agreed in the project plan.
- Maintain confidentiality and be sensitive at all stages.

Disciplinary Process

I have never undertaken a disciplinary case but I have attended the Disciplinary & Grievance course on the 24/02/09 to take examples from other Line managers. I have outlined 1 example with the BT discipline procedure:

The red boxes on the flow chart indicate the route taken.



I will now compare my company procedure with the procedure recommended by ACAS:

Be in writing	YES
Specify to whom they apply	YES
Provide for matters to be dealt with quickly	YES
Indicate the disciplinary action which may be taken	YES
Specify the levels of management which the authority to take the various forms of action	YES
Provide for individuals to be informed of the complaint being made against them and be given a chance to state their case before a decision is made	YES
Give individuals the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or by a fellow employee	YES
Ensure that, except for gross misconduct, no employees are dismissed for a first breach of discipline	YES
Ensure that disciplinary action is not taken until the case has been carefully investigated	YES
Ensure that individuals are given an explanation for any penalty imposed	YES
Provide a right of appeal & specify the procedure	YES

Summary of penalties

Warning type	Valid for	Retained for	Minimum Authority	Sanction Available
Oral	6 months	6 months	1 st LM	No
Written	12 months	12 months	1 st LM/2 nd LM	Yes
Final Written	12- 18 months	3 years	2 nd LM	Yes
Dismissal		Records kept for 5 yrs	2 nd LM	N/A

Gross Misconduct

According to Ask HR offences which constitute Gross Misconduct are those which result in a serious breach of contractual terms and are likely to result in dismissal with or without notice. This might include the following which is not exhaustive:

- Theft, fraud and deliberate falsification of records.

- Corruption relating to gifts or hospitality.
- Physical violence.
- Gross bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Deliberate damage to BT/customer property.
- Serious insubordination.
- Misuse of BT's property or name likely to cause detriment of BT's reputation as a fair-trading company.
- Bringing BT into serious disrepute.
- Serious on duty traffic offences.
- Serious incapability whilst on duty due to alcohol or drugs.
- Gross negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury
- Serious infringement of health and safety rules including failure of alcohol/drugs test when testing is required by the customer.
- Serious breach of confidence including Data Protection.
- Serious breach of BT's Security policy including intranet, internet and email misuse and unauthorised access of computer systems.
- Serious criminal offences against BT "[Alleged Offences against BT](#)"
- Serious criminal offences not arising from BT employment but which make the individual unsuitable for BT employment ([Employees accused of Criminal Offences](#))
- Serious misuse of communications media including mobile phones & charge cards.

The Disciplinary Interview

As I have not conducted a disciplinary interview before I had questioned the first line manager from the Discipline & Grievance course using the example illustrated in the above flow chart. I have based my questions on the steps found on my Self Study Guide:

Prior to the interview:

- 1. Did you ensure that the individual knows the nature of the complaint & that they will be attending a disciplinary interview?** Yes this was discussed personally & in confidence. Confirmation was sent to the individual in writing.

2. **Did you remind the individual that he was entitled to a Communication Workers Union (CWU) representative or a colleague & that a member of HR will be in attendance?** Yes the individual was advised that he was entitled to a CWU representative or a colleague & was also informed that HR would be attending the interview. This was advised via email to the individual along with the date, time and place of the interview.
3. **Did you make sure you had all the facts?** Yes I had printed a copy of the company's policy "the use of company vehicles". I had produced statements from all witnesses. I had also produced a copy of a filed document that was signed by the individual stating he has a full understanding of the policy.
4. **Did you allow plenty of time for the interview?** Yes the individual was given a 4 hrs absence from normal duties.
5. **Did you plan & organise the interview, making sure you were not disturbed?** Yes I arranged the interview to take place in a private & comfortable room. A do not disturb notice was placed on the door. Tea & coffee was also supplied.
6. **Did you ensure that you know the procedures?** Yes I had completed the ACAS online training package, studied the company's policy & procedures via Ask HR. I had also followed further advice from the Accenture HR services case management team.

During the Interview:

1. **Did you tell the person the purpose of the interview and confirm that it is a disciplinary interview?** Yes
2. **Did you make sure that the individual understood the nature of the complaint that had been made against him & did you give him a chance to state his own case?** Yes
3. **Did you ask open questions?** Yes Ask HR advised me to do this
4. **Did you clarify Openreach's position?** Yes the individual was told that driving a company's vehicle for personal use & allowing non-BT people will not be tolerated, the individual was also reminded of the Openreach's policy & the non insurance position.
5. **Did you listen carefully & take notes?** Yes I did listen carefully, I did not take any notes as personally I find it difficult to listen & take notes at the same time so HR took notes of the interview.
6. **Did you keep calm at all times?** Yes
7. **Did any new facts emerge during the interview?** No

Before deciding on the penalty award:

1. **Does the disciplinary procedure give you any guidance?** Yes
2. **What has happened in similar cases in the past?** First time for me but I understand that the penalty imposed in this case was inline with previous cases.
3. **What is the organisations disciplinary record like?** Records are kept & maintained by HR. As far as I know the organisation has a good record.

Following up actions

- 1. Did you write up your notes?** Yes I did this via my laptop & printed copies on paper
- 2. Did you send the written warning to the individuals concerned & HR?**
Yes
- 3. Did you monitor future conduct?** Yes unexpected retrospective checks were carried out within the next 12months.
- 4. Did you make an appointment for a follow up interview?** No a follow up interview was not required
- 5. Did you take any action that you agreed?** Yes a written warning was given, & was monitored for 12months
- 6. Did you inform HR of all your actions?** Yes all my actions were agreed with HR first.

Right of Appeal

According to Ask HR Individuals must be informed in writing of their right of appeal at each stage of the formal procedure. This must include details of to whom they should address the appeal and their right to be accompanied. The intention to appeal must be lodged with Accenture HR Services Discipline Unit within 5 working days of the disciplinary action being notified. The individual must be invited to attend an appeal hearing. They can in addition supply a written submission to support their appeal. Written submissions should be received within 15 working days of lodging the intention to appeal. Oral representations by either the individual or their union representative will be heard at a date convenient to all parties. Appeals must be heard by an appropriate individual with no prior connection to the case - usually a more senior manager in the line.

Individuals have no right to a second appeal. However if they can show that they have been unfairly treated under the formal process or can cite factors not previously taken into account that cast doubt of the appropriateness of the decision, they may be able to apply for a High Level review under the Grievance Procedure.

Confidentiality

It is Openreach's policy that all individuals maintain confidentiality & that investigating managers should be sensitive at all stages. It is the responsibility as the investigating manager to investigate the case in a confident manner & be aware of the Data Protection Act & BT's data protection policy. Any case must not be discussed with anyone other than those directly involved (where appropriate). Breach of confidentiality will lead to disciplinary action.

Confidential records of any disciplinary cases are held with HR & can also be filed by the investigating manager.

Managing performance while taking disciplinary action

My coach advised me that some individuals will most likely under perform while under disciplinary action & this should be treated as normal through the managing poor performance process e.g. counselling. If the individual persists to under perform while under disciplinary action then the individual may be disciplined again for this also.

GRIEVANCE

Introduction

According to www.businessdictionary.com the definition of Grievance is a specific complaint or formal notice of employee dissatisfaction related to adequacy of pay, job requirements, work conditions, other aspects of employment, or an alleged violation of a collective bargaining agreement.

Ask HR: What is a grievance? Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints raised by employees with their employer.

I currently have no responsibilities towards grievances but the investigating managers responsibilities are to:

- Investigate the individual's grievance in the strictest confidence
- Make a decision based on the evidence presented to you of the reality of the situation
- Investigate & respond to the grievance within 15 working days

Grievance Process

Appendix 3 Grievance Procedure

I have never investigated a grievance case but I attended the Disciplinary & grievance course on the 24/02/09 to take examples from other Line managers. I have outlined 1 example with the BT grievance procedure found on appendix 3:

- **Grievance received.** Bob complains that another certain individual keeps calling him "old man". The grievance was received via email to 1st line manager. Investigating manager arranges for a meeting with the individual holding the grievance.
- **Informal.** Bob requested that this was dealt with informally at this stage.
- **Listen to Grievance.** Bob explains; "Bill keeps calling me a useless old man & states that I am out dated & need to keep up with the latest technology" Bob also states " I am 55 years old & find it difficult to use the computer, I am not computer literate"
- **Investigate & Respond.** A meeting was arranged with Bill to investigate his side of the story. Bill states the remarks made were only a joke & didn't realize that it offended Bob. Bill stated "If I had realized that it offended Bob then I would never make the remarks". Another meeting was arranged for Bob & Bill to attend together
- **Grievance Resolved.** Bill apologized to Bob for the remarks made & stated that he didn't realize it offended Bob. Bill also told Bob that he would not make those remarks again. Bill was advised by the investigating manager that if the remarks & name calling persisted then disciplinary action may be raised against him. Bob accepted the apology & was happy with the outcome. The case was solved & training was offered to Bob based on computer skills.

The Grievance Interview

As I have not conducted a Grievance interview before I had questioned the first line manager from the Discipline & Grievance course using the example illustrated above. I have based my questions on the steps found on my Self Study Guide:

Interview preparation

- 1. Did you find out the facts behind the grievance?** Yes Bob had sent me a letter of complaint stating the alleged facts.
- 2. Did you find out who was involved?** Yes the letter stated that Bill was involved.
- 3. Did you get advice from HR?** No I felt that it was not necessary in this case because I was treating it as informal at this stage.
- 4. Did you enquire as to whether this situation had occurred before?** No
- 5. Did you check the grievance procedure & follow it?** Yes I had studied the grievance procedure via Ask HR.
- 6. Did you conduct the interview in a private room?** I conducted all of the interviews in a private room in a quite location to ensure there were no interruptions. A do not disturb sign was displayed. Tea & coffee was supplied.

Conducted the interviews

- 1. Were you aiming for a win/win situation?** Yes the aim was to resolve the dispute & ensure that there was repetition. In addition it was important to arrange for Bob to receive training to cure his feelings of inadequacy & to enable him to perform better. This was definitely win/win/win!!
- 2. Did you remain calm?** Yes
- 3. Did you allow Bob to let of steam at the start?** Yes I gave him time at the beginning of the interview to express his feelings & I listened carefully to his complaint.
- 4. Did you summarise?** Yes
- 5. Did you unravel the reasons for the complaint?** Yes I investigated the complaint with Bob & Bill separately & then conducted a joint interview with Bob & Bill together.
- 6. Was there a positive outcome?** Yes Bill apologised & said he would not repeat the offence. Bob accepted the apology & the offer of the computer training.

After the interviews I wrote up my notes and entered them onto Bill & Bob's person files via BT system. This is to refer to in case of any repeat offence. I also followed up to make sure that Bob received the promised training.

Right of Appeal

As Bob was completely satisfied with the outcome there was no question of an appeal. If Bob had not been satisfied then the right of appeal is as follows:

In cases where the complainant feels that their grievance has not been fully answered they can raise any outstanding concerns with their manager's manager. Individuals are encouraged to put any concerns in writing (email is acceptable) and may find that the best method is to use the appeal template This should be done within no later than 10 working days of receipt of the grievance decision letter.

The involvement of the individual's second line manager (or equivalent) is to thoroughly and objectively investigate the facts surrounding any outstanding aspects of the grievance in a timely and sensitive manner.

The Investigating Manager should remind the employee of their right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing.

Investigating managers should ensure notes of the meeting are taken. The investigating manager should respond to the individual in writing within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal template.

Only in exceptional circumstances will a case be extended beyond these timescales and this should be for no more than one month. The individual who raised the grievance (complainant) and the alleged offender(s) must be advised in writing of any extension with an explanation and given the revised timescales. The complainant and alleged offender should be updated on case progress as appropriate

This concludes BT's standard Grievance Procedure.

The disciplinary procedure may be instigated in cases where

Confidentiality

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