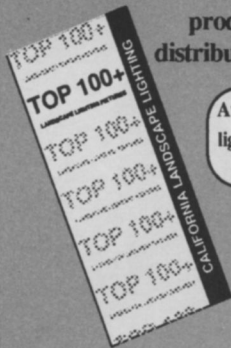


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Managers wanted?

by E.T. Wandtke

■ Over this past winter, I was shocked by the number of companies I found are without a system for employee evaluations. Why can't a growing company find managers from within? Does your company have this problem? Do you have an effective employee evaluation system in place?

Who to promote?—To develop an effective employee evaluation system, remember three things:

1) Make sure the system is two-sided. If a manager is going to evaluate one of his employees, he too must be evaluated by the employee. The reason for this is that you can more effectively identify what areas in the company need work.

Suppose the branch manager says in an evaluation that a crew member doesn't meet the standards for acceptable work. Typically, this could be the result of not properly explaining what the standards are, or the crew member could be a poor worker. With a two-sided evaluation system in place, the crew member would have the opportunity to explain that perhaps he needs more training.

2) Set measurable written goals for your employees. If you don't convert your goals into measurable terms, you will never know when you have actually achieved them.

Often, I hear from employees that their manager has told them they will be evaluated on their work. But what does this mean? Is it based on how many days you don't show up for work? What exactly is a "good job"? What are you looking for when you evaluate the employee? Not telling your employees what you want, in specific terms, often results in mediocre performance.

3) Provide employees with feedback. How will someone know if they are not meeting goals unless you, the manager, provide some form of feedback? Set up regular meetings to discuss an employee's performance.

The sign of a poor manager is someone who fires an employee without ever telling him/her that he/she is not performing up to the desired level.

Developing managers—Once areas for development are identified for employees, companies often fail to develop a comprehensive plan of training to meet the employee's needs. Educational programs for potential managers in the green industry can be found at state or national conventions, in independent training programs, and through customized programs developed by industry consultants.

A formal development system for potential key managers can provide for the continued growth of your company and assure the owner that he or she will be able to fill future needs with responsible individuals. Failure to develop managers can strain the future growth of a company and result in lower profits, lower morale, and possible turnover of your best employees.

Now is the time to set up an effective employee evaluation system. It can benefit your employees short-term and your company long-term. Profits, efficiency, morale can all be improved.

—The author is a principle in Wandtke & Associates, a management and marketing consulting firm. Write 2586 Oakstone Dr., Columbus, OH 43231 or phone (614) 891-3111 for more information.