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Self Monitoring Systems Are Good For Recognition

By Chris Herrmann

Performance Management is coming under critical fire because the complexity of some of the

processes is beginning to over-ride the fundamental principles. However, as Hogan Armstrong knows, elements of Performance Management work well for both employees and managers. Hogan is an IT Service Engineer for a large multinational organization. He spends the majority of his working life away from his home office but his Self-Monitoring System lets both him and his manager know how he is performing.

Any personal objective important enough to be included in a performance plan should be measurable in one way or another. One of Hogan's principal objectives is:

"To follow up each service call after two working days to check system functionality and customer satisfaction. Where problems are revealed, I will take responsibility for immediately reporting the fault and initiating a remedy within 24 hours."

This can be tracked objectively and simply. Hogan keeps a register of service calls, customer follow-up calls and Emails on the network that he can refer to and update. His manager also has access to the file at any time. Although some organizations have sophisticated Customer Relations Databases that contain this information and even flag up calls to be made each day, a simple paper system or spreadsheet can work just as effectively.

The main guideline here is that these objectives are agreed and so your team-members ought to be motivated to monitor their own progress throughout the year. If objectives are important, which they should be, there ought to be a Self-Monitoring System for each objective that makes up-to-date information easily available to whoever needs it in the organization.

In companies where Performance Management is well established, individuals and teams take great pride in displaying their Self-Monitoring Systems. To them it is a form of publicity. "If we are good at what we do, then everyone should know and there is more chance of us being recognized as key contributors to the organizational goals."

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In one clothing manufacturer's buying department, they were suffering from greater than average sickness absence. The manager knew this but the buying team was not aware that it was a problem. Now, because the manager recognized that sickness absence and managing the workload around this was his responsibility, he undertook to display a measure of "lost days" for his department. The chart simply had an anonymous line graph showing the number of days per week lost to sickness. Two weeks after displaying the chart, keeping it updated and not doing much else, the lost days in his department reduced to zero and stayed pretty much that way.

This manager was originally very skeptical about Performance Management. After this experience he said "Surely if you pay attention to anything, it gets better". Absolutely right! And by displaying the "Lost Days" chart he was broadcasting to his team that sickness absence was a key issue for him as a manager. Without talking to him about it, they changed their behavior and helped him to meet his objectives.

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How Does A Fire Alarm System Work?

By Gray Rollins

A fire alarm system alerts people in the building of a possible fire. They help protect those inside by notifying them that they need to evacuate for safety. Most fire alarm systems will also automatically notify the nearest emergency personnel so they can take care of the fire.

Fire alarms can be triggered by smoke detectors, heat detectors, or manually. They are generally set to detect levels of smoke or heat that may indicate a fire. There is a loud bell that sounds to alert those in the building. This may also come with lights that blink in case of someone who is hearing impaired. There are many models of fire alarm systems on the market. Research for which one is best can be done on the Internet or by doing a search in your local area for manufacturers. Many fire alarm systems come bundled with intruder alert systems for maximum safety and protection of your home.

There are two costs to a system. The cost of the equipment can either be purchased or leased. The system will need to be installed which may also add a one-time fee. Systems start at approximately \$20.00 for basic models and range up to \$2,000.00 for more sophisticated models. For home use, a basic system with monitoring is usually sufficient. These will range anywhere from \$100.00 to \$300.00.

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Because the system will alert the local fire department, there is also a monitoring fee generally paid monthly. These are typically inexpensive and cost approximately \$30.00 per month. The one time expense of the equipment, installation, and the regular payments for monitoring are a valuable investment. Considering the costs associated with fire damage or the tragedies of losing a life in a fire, the investment is well worth it.

It is important to know what to do in case the alarm goes off. Fire drills are helpful in ensuring everyone in the family knows what to do. Practice this at least annually. If there is a small fire, one person should be in charge of using a fire extinguisher while the others leave the area. For a larger fire, everyone should immediately evacuate the premises and gather at a predetermined location. Once everyone is there, a count should be taken to ensure everyone is out safely.

A fire alarm system should be tested annually to ensure it is working properly. Notify the fire department of this before testing so they do not come out needlessly. False alarms are often charged to the consumer to account for the time wasted. A fire alarm system is a valuable investment. It can help provide safety and security to your family and home.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for FlameAlarm. To learn more about fire alarms, visit us at

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