

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES EVALUATION

Feraru Andreea
University of Bacau
Faculty of Economics

Ciucescu Nicoleta
University of Bacau
Faculty of Economics

Evaluating performances is an operation that is periodically completed within organizations, analyzing the work balance of the employees in order to discuss with the employees the recorded progresses and the required measures to be taken in the future. Within the Romanian organizations the evaluation process of the human resources has encountered a series of particularities determined by the existing conditions in which it is completed, by the pursued targets and by the selected methods.

Keywords: human resources, professional performance evaluation, organisations, employee, methods and technique of performances evaluation

JEL classification codes: O 15, M 12

1. Human Resources Performances Evaluation Process

In a time where the technological progress has dramatically increased, the velocity with which the goods and services are produced and delivered has facilitated the communication between organisations, the most valuable factor for a more efficient function of a business remaining the human performance level.

The employees working under a performing management system know their priorities, their current activities, their goals, as well as how should they contribute to their team or their organisation performance.

According to Anton Rotaru and Adriana Prodan “the professional performances evaluation represent the process of establishing the way and the measurement in which the employee fulfils its duties and responsibilities that come with the job description, in comparison with the established standards and transmission of the results to the employees”⁶⁵⁷.

As a result, the performance evaluation has a central role and constitutes an important element or a fundamental component of the performance management system, furthermore the means through which the organisational objectives develop into individual ones. From this point of view, the performance evaluation holds a significant number of the performance management system characteristics.

Evaluating performances is the fundamental activity of the human resources management developed in order to determine the degree in which the employees of an organisation efficiently fulfil the assigned tasks.

Evaluating performances is an efficient management process, in which the manager constantly performs a surveillance of the employees’ performance and offers a feedback.

⁶⁵⁷ Rotaru A., Prodan A., *Managementul Resurselor Umane*, Editura Sedcom Libris, Iași, 1998.

Non-formal assessment appears when a leader chooses to. The daily work relation between a leader/manager and his/her subordinates offers the opportunity to make assessments on the performances. These assessments are transmitted through non-formal means of communication or when examining some aspects of the work, within some operative debates or meetings.

Formal/systematic assessment is performed when the contact between the managers and subordinate is formalised and it has already been established a system of reference the employees' performance observations and assessments of their direct leaders/managers.

The responsibilities of evaluating performances belong to managers as well to the personnel department:

Managers:

bring up to date the way in which the performances are evaluated;

draw up formal reports concerning the performance evaluation;

foresee/analyse the evaluations/assessments with the employees.

Personnel department staff:

plan, maintain and bring up to date the formal system of performances evaluation;

establish on time the report of the assessments of the employees performances;

instruct and train the specialists who are in charge with evaluating performances.

Within Romanian organisations, the main objectives are achieved through employees' performance evaluation:

to insure the agreement between the demands from the job description and the employee's qualities (professional, abilities, attitudes);

to stimulate the employees in order to increase the individual professional performance;

to choose the persons for which the results of the professional activity evaluation motivate an adjustment of the job position into a higher one and/or an adjustment of the salary according to the appropriate applicable normative legislation.

At the same time, the human resources performances evaluation provides:

detection of the areas in which professional training actions of the employees are required;

detection of the situations in which a reorientation of the employee is necessary, according to his/her capacity, abilities, attitude and behaviour in comparison with the job demands;

detection of the required elements in order to select the staff to accomplish new, urgent or important projects/documents/programmes;

presentation to each employee the way in which his/her activity was appreciated.

Professional performance evaluation is applied to all organisation employees, except the top manager in proportion with the requests from the job description, with the requests for the specific job position, as well as with the professional evaluation criteria according to the *Personnel Professional Performances Evaluation* operational procedure and established by the leader of the organisation.

It is important that the evaluation to be performed regularly, systematically (usually half-yearly or yearly) for good results. Such a systematically evaluation does not leave out some possible non-formal assessments when are considered required, for example at some organisation or employees' events.

Professional performance evaluation of the staff take place at a given time, which is fixed by the top manager of each organisation and it may take place as it follows:

- usually once a year and has as its main goal to establish the general rank that characterises the activity of an employee;

- every time it is required – when by this action some useful information may be gathered in order to take a decision.

During the year, at each adjustment of the job position or the salary of an employee a professional performance evaluation of that employee is performed, according to the same procedure.

Staff professional performance evaluation consists in the analysis of the performance criteria, according to the form *Professional Activity Reference* (if this particular form exists within the organisation), respectively *Professional Activity Chart*, that leads to the estimation of the employee activity results, the detection of the positive and negative qualities and to establish a plan to improve the future results.

Personnel professional performance evaluation is performed in conformity with the stipulations of the *Collective Work Contract* and with the *Personnel Professional Performance Evaluation* procedure, when referring to those organisations that have implemented a good quality management system.

The participation of the employees is mandatory in the evaluation of their professional activity. It has to be mentioned the fact that the assessment of the performances evaluation, of the human resources in an organisation may be realised in different ways, such as:

- the superiors may assess their subordinates;
- the subordinates may assess their superiors;
- the employees of the same rank evaluate one another;
- self-evaluation;
- external sources of evaluation.

The evaluation of the employees by their superiors is manifested by different assessments that the superior makes. This type of evaluation is based on the presumption that the manager is the most qualified to realistically, objectively and correctly evaluate the performances of each employee, and the “unity of command” principle underlines this approach. Within an evaluation system, the superiors’ assessments have to be objective and based on the present performances. To achieve this goal, the manager has to keep a strict record of what the employees did or did not performed, a record of individual performances, so not to forget certain achievements of the employees during the time. The assessment is an important part of the personal file of the employee. Managers and employees have different assessment elements when dealing with the system of evaluating performances. The manager appreciates the system according to the way in which it helps to establish and communicate the performances to the employees. The employees appreciate the system according to:

- the salaries and rewards are based on the evaluation;
- the evaluation are based on the present performances;
- the performance standards are consequently applied;
- it is assured the double communication between the manager and the subordinate.

The evaluation of the superiors by the subordinates is a frequent applied concept in some organisations from all over the world and newer in Romania. It is considered that there are two advantages of this type of evaluation. The first one is that, in case in which the relations superior-subordinate are critical, the subordinate’s evaluation may be useful to identify competent superiors. The second advantage is that a system like this determines the superiors to be responsible towards their subordinates. Nevertheless, this advantage might become a disadvantage when the superior – knowing that his subordinates evaluate him/her – tries to be “pleasant” and conciliating.

A major disadvantage is the negative reaction of many superiors to be evaluated by their subordinates. The fear of the subordinates of retaliation from their superiors may lead to unrealistic evaluation. The principles of the relation superior-subordinate may deteriorate or distorted by this type of evaluation. The problems and disadvantages connected with the evaluation of the superiors by the subordinate may be eluded by moderately use of this system in some special situations.

Self-evaluation may be used in some situations. In fact, self-evaluation is an instrument of self development that determines every employee to identify its strong points and weaknesses and to establish certain tasks to improve its proficiency and work results. Self assessment produces a strong feedback and may be a way of increasing every employee trust in its ability to fulfil a certain given assignment.

External Evaluation is completed by groups of specialists, experts from a certain field of activity. The external experts are requested in special cases when higher rank persons are to be evaluated or to determine the potential of a person before a possible promotion. This way of evaluation has the disadvantage that the external experts do not know all the specific aspects of the organisation and furthermore is expensive and time consuming.

An external, clear and useful source is considered the group of the clients, suppliers and consumers of the organisation products and services, which on different ways may supply information that enlighten the way in which the employees fulfil their duties and may influence the organisational performances.

2. Methods and techniques of evaluating performances

The necessity of evaluating the personnel or evaluating the performances in work regardless of the field of work, finally lead to the necessity to develop various methods and techniques of personnel assessment or systems of performances evaluation.

The diversity of the evaluating methods, techniques and procedures is relatively vast, and the dynamics of the development has encountered an ascendant evolution. The personnel assessment quality or performance evaluation became higher and higher, due to the fact, as the literature in the field stipulates, that the quality of the information on performance greatly depends on the quality of the evaluating methods or systems.

The most well-known methods that may be used in performances evaluation are:

The Essay is a written report or a description on the quality and quantity of the work, assessments on the ability of team work, on ways of improvement the work tasks are emitted, some general recommendations for the field of activity are given. The method is useful for the individual feedback and for the development, but it doesn't allow the comparative evaluation of several employees. Being a free form of evaluation, the evaluator describes the performances of an employee, the essay does not require a complex printed form or a complete professional training for the evaluator.

Comparison/in pairs is a more systematic method, that consists in comparing the employees, two by two, until the best one is chosen. The method uses only one criteria of assessment and it is useful for a group evaluation, but it deficient in case of individual evaluations that is compulsory for development.

Forced distribution requires a comparison of every employee with the other ones, taking into consideration several assessment criteria, "forcing" the results to define into a curve; the given hypothesis is that the great majority of the subjects provide mediocre results and few provide weak or excellent results, the curve of the results has in the end the shape of Gauss bell curve. The advantage of the method is that one may be able to make an efficient assessment of the employee groups, as well shaped entities.

The checklist method helps to establish the assessment criteria, to which is attached an importance coefficient, encoded through percentage, the sum being 100%, and ordering the subjects, on a numeric scale, according to the obtained percentage. The ordinal level scale is Likert scale alike (from 1 to 5), assimilating grades such as "unsatisfactory" (score 1), "satisfactory" (scale 2), till "good" (scale 4) and "very well" (scale 5). The method is easy to use and offers a close connection between the job description analysis and the performance evaluation, that may be numerical expressed.

Critical Events start from identification of the behaviours that lead to weak or exceptional results, generated by the work environment; it constitutes an important feedback from the employer point of view, but it is a time consuming method.

Graphical scale method is, probably, the most exploited method, more rapid than the essays or critical events, the results may be quantified by quantity, more assessment criteria are taken into consideration, a standardisation of the scales is performed, that allows afterwards comparing a greater number of subjects. The scales distinguishes by three characteristics: (1.)- qualifier that express an affirmative response from the evaluator (“fully agree”, “agree“, “neutral”, “disagree”, “absolutely disagree”); (2.)- degree of clarity of the interpretation of the answer by the evaluator; (3.)- the way of define the level of performance, from the evaluator point of view (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, well, very well). The only amendment to the efficiency of this evaluating method consists in the lack of clarity that appears sometimes at the scale reference.

Evaluation Centres are a specialised system of evaluation that contains an organised way of completion. The system evaluates a person for 3-5 days, using a complex of methods, in an institutionalised enviroment. The evaluation tests, alone or in groups is monitored by a specialist that completes the assessment with the observation results. The final characterisation is accompanied by recommendations that are useful in solving the problem.

Despite the inconveniences in evaluating the employee performances, the implementation of a human resource performance evaluation programme must be a priority. The managers should be greatly and constantly concerned to apply the most effective and judicious methods of assessment, taking into consideration their motivational character.

3. Conclusions

Top managers and middle managers form Romanian organisations are confronting with situations in which they have to evaluate to employee performances, a process that assesses the contribution of each employee, regardless its rank at a certain time. In other words, these managers should underline at the same time the negative aspects of the employee performance, and on the other hand to provide support through counselling to the employee, establishing which are the possible ways of improvement. Performances evaluation may lead to discover the weak points but at the same time the potential and the professional training requests.

The assessment process may be used by organisation and by the employees. The organisation may have an evaluation on the quality of its employees and their capacity to obtain the desired performances. However, sometimes, the performance evaluation may produce some tensions, especially if it is not performed objectively. As for the employee, he/she may get to know the way in which the evaluation performed by his/her superior corresponds to his/her self evaluation and if there is a correlation between the results of the work, the performances and the salary.

To improve to professional performances and abilities in the majority of Romanian organisations it is absolutely mandatory an efficient foresight of the future evolution of the work environment, the human resources activities, the motivation of the employees and the continuous professional development of the employees.

References

1. Amstrong, M., *Managementul resurselor umane*, Editura Codecs, Bucureşti, 2003.
2. Effron,M., Gandossy, R., Goldsmith M., *Human Resources in the 21-st Century*, Editura Wiley, New York, 2009.
3. Harrison, R., *Learning and Development*, Editura CIPD, Fifth Edition, Edinburgh, 2009.
4. Jeffrey,A.M., *Strategic Human Resources Management*, Editura South-Western,College Pub, Boston, 2008.
5. Lukacs, E., *Managementul organizațional și al resurselor umane*, Editura AIUS, Craiova, 2005.

6. Marchington M., Wilkinson A, *Human Resource Management at Work*, Editura CIPD, Edinburgh, 2009.
7. Mathis, R.,Nica, P., Rusu C., *Managementul resurselor umane*, Editura Economică, București, 1997.
8. Nica, P., *Management*, Editura Sedcom Libris, Iași, 2004.
9. Postăvaru, N., Andrei C., *Managementul resurselor umane*, Editura Matrix Rom, București, 2006.
10. Rotaru A., Prodan A., *Managementul Resurselor Umane*, Editura Sedcom Libris, Iași, 1998.
11. Turcu, O., (coord), *Management*, Editura Alma Mater , Bacău, 2008.