

WE KNOW

# HUMAN RESOURCES

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (PDP)

QUICK GUIDE

This guide has been provided to assist you to align your organisational goals with the personal goals of your workforce. This will result in highly developed and motivated employees working together with the organisation to achieve both business and personal success.

### ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND PERSONAL GOALS

As an organisation you will frequently be deciding what the organisation's goals are and what it will take to achieve them. Once these goals are rolled out into the workforce, management should do everything in their power to facilitate their acceptance and achievement. This includes providing training and development opportunities for employees and removing any impediments that may hamper an individual's performance.

Alignment of organisation goals with the personal goals of a workforce is not an easy task. It requires effective linkage and the key to this is communication.

Have clear conversations at the beginning of the year when you are setting objectives so that the manager is not just dictating to the employees what they must be doing. Writing a PDP would work alongside an appraisal system and it should be seen as a collaborative effort between management and the individual employee.

### WHAT IS A PDP?

A PDP is simply another name for a plan of action, only this one refers to aspirations regarding someone's personal development. A PDP allows an individual to set their own targets and find the best way to achieve them.

A PDP will help staff visualise what they are doing and keep track of their achievements. To be totally effective it should be a fluid document that is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant, realistic and achievable.

PDP's are a personal document, however, with permission a copy may be kept on file.

### SIMPLE STEPS TO WRITING A PDP

Some people may feel confident enough to go straight ahead and fill in a template. Others will need more guidance and questioning to help them see the direction that they wish to go in.

The best way to write a PDP is for the individual to ask themselves three questions:

- Where am I now?
- Where do I want to be?
- How can I get there?

#### Step 1 – Where am I now?

Firstly you need to look at your current situation. Focus on what you are good at the moment and what you need to work on.

This could be established through self-assessment, results, management observation or feedback from colleagues or customers.

**Step 2 – Where do I want to be?**

Many factors need to be taken into consideration when establishing where you want to be. The organisational goals and direction, your personal goals and direction, external influences and barriers are some to consider.

The following self-assessment questions may help:

- What do I like doing?
- What is my motive for being here?
- What method of study suits me best?
- How much time can I allocate to learning new things?
- What is my ultimate goal?
- Am I aligned with my organisation?
- How will I measure success?

Once you have considered all of the above, you will have decided upon some future goals. This could be many smaller goals or perhaps one large goal to aim for.

By completing steps 1 & 2 the 'gap' has now been defined.

**Step 3 – How can I get there?**

Consider splitting your task into bite-sized pieces and then establish which ones can be achieved in the short, medium or long term. Such timeframes will mean different things to different people. Some PDP's may last a year, others much longer.

**TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR A PDP**

It is important that PDPs are reviewed by both the manager and the individual on a regular basis. This will ensure that the goals and tasks are still relevant, allow for change and will ensure that the plan remains foremost in someone's mind. Managers must be careful not to 'own' the PDP for their employees. Remember it is the employee's goal and it is their effort and focus that will help them to achieve it. A manager should only seek to support this process and not to control it.

It is important that the individual buys into the whole process at the start and does not have a PDP just inflicted upon them or they will show no ownership. For example, it may not be essential that every single person has a PDP at any one time. Some people may be quite happy where they are and, as long as they are contributing towards the organisation's overall goals in an effective manner, this should be acceptable.

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For further information on personal development plans or any other aspects of human resource management, please contact the Chamber, email [info@cecc.org.nz](mailto:info@cecc.org.nz) or phone 03 366 5096.