# Avoiding the Need for Discipline

The goal of performance management is to support and improve employee effectiveness and success. Supervisors and employees work together to plan, monitor and review an employee's work objectives and their overall contribution to the organization. Communicating effectively with employees before and throughout the employment relationship, and recognizing that performance management is an ongoing process of identifying, measuring and developing employee performance can help avoid the need to apply discipline.

Consider the tools available to you to help you inform employees about what performance is required and provide early coaching interventions to help avoid the need for discipline.

**Recruitment and Selection**

* job postings based on a current job description that illustrate required behaviours – both job specific and fundamental behaviours such as effective communication, teamwork, problem solving and innovation (all of which are illustrated in the LEADS framework)
* behaviour descriptive interviews that focus on required performance
* multiple interviews and/or interviews with peers from similar business units/departments or internal customers
* appropriate testing
* reference checks that validate candidate claims of required performance with past supervisors, clients, peers and reporting staff

**Probationary Period**

* use the probationary evaluation
* closely supervise and actively assess new employees’ ability to meet performance expectations within the probationary period – including fundamental skills defined in the LEADS framework and the individual’s ability to accept and integrate positive and constructive feedback
* if mitigating factors prevent the manager from reasonably being able to assess the new employees ability to perform the job, extending the probationary period may be appropriate

**Training and Development**

* provide orientation and training, or retraining as expectations change
* train managers to coach and provide positive and constructive feedback so intervention in problem situations based in coaching rather than discipline
* provide formal mentoring programs affording employee the opportunity to seek constructive feedback from management other than their immediate supervisor/manager

**Performance Feedback**

* Illustrate what is expected of employees, provide regular and continuous, positive and constructive feedback to communicate how well employees are meeting requirements, and what they can do to improve and address any gaps in performance
* avoid problems with early coaching interventions
* informally “check-in” with employees about their work and their comfort level with their work assignments on a frequent basis
* seek informal or formal feedback from internal/external clients and members of work teams
* hold regular one-on-one meetings with each of the employees who report to you
* hold regular group/department/division meetings with the employees you supervise to discuss, and then document processes and procedures that will help their performance
* apply coaching techniques to support employee development and to correct inappropriate behaviours and substandard performance before the behaviour(s) become habitual
* have employees track and report measures of performance and report them to you in regular progress reports
* illustrate possible career paths and the skills and behaviours required in positions that are attractive to employees; assist employees in documenting their skill development goals in Performance Development Plans (PDPs)
* have regular performance conversations, formal and informal, at least annually
* provide clear direction and redirect the employee if they are not meeting performance requirements

**Communication Tools Supporting Performance Requirements**

* letter of offer/job contract/collective bargaining agreement
* current and accurate job descriptions that illustrate performance standards and accountabilities (clean floor) vs specific job activities (sweep floor, wash floor, wax floor)
* policies, procedures, documented processes and standards
* meeting minutes

**Additional Strategies and Tools from the class room discussion**

Remember to Document! Keep records of your discussions with your employees. If it isn’t documented, it didn’t happen.