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THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FEEDBACK INTERVIEW: A ROLE-PLAY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

A simulation is developed to train students of management to conduct an effective performance upon aspects of role-play and behavioral role modeling behavioral skills to conduct this form of interpersonal communication.

INTRODUCTION

Feedback is crucial to improving performance of individuals in the work place. Feedback is information that increases employees' 1) knowledge about their performance, 2) motivation through the knowledge of the behaviors that must be performed to achieve rewards, and 3) knowledge of the rewards that are associated with performance. The performance appraisal feedback interview should provide this information.

Students, therefore benefit from learning to conduct a performance appraisal feedback interview. A simulated interview provides practice with the uncomfortable setting and teaches the student to make the interview beneficial for the employee.

The Performance Appraisal Feedback Interview

For performance appraisal feedback to be effective, the recipient of the feedback must accept and utilize the information (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979) Acceptance depends on the source of the information, the nature of the message and the disposition of the recipient.

To ensure that negative feedback is accepted, Meyer, Kay and French (1965) recommend 1) preparing recipient for negative feedback, 2) couching negative feedback in positive terms, 3) make negative feedback very specific, and 4) reinforce negative feedback with examples. Feedback alone is not sufficient to improve performance. An extensive review of feedback and goal setting studies reveal that both are necessary to improved performance. Ten behaviors that characterize an effective developmental performance appraisal interview are (Schuler et. Al., 1989): 1) Make comments specific using examples of behaviors, 2) Focus on employee behaviors, not the person, 3) Give helpful feedback, not hurtful, 4) Focus on factors that can be improved or changed, 5) Share information, don't give advice, 6) Encourage the employee to solicit information rather than impose it upon him/he, 7) Avoid information overload. Point out only a few, most critical problems, 8) Establish specific, agreed-upon goals for improvement, and 10) Ensure communication clarity in both directions.

Role Play and Behavioral Role Modeling

Role Playing is the process whereby students are placed in a simulated environment to act out a Characterization generally without benefit of a script. Behavioral role modeling differs from the role-play in that the student first observes an effective role model and then must imitate the role model's behaviors.

The effectiveness of the role play or behavioral role modeling is modified by the realism of the setting, the willingness of the student to participate, social acceptance of peers and the perceived value of the exercise (Goldstein, 1986)

PROCEDURE

The instructor and class should discuss the characteristics of effective performance appraisal feedback. Students are then divided into groups of five and numbered one to five. Students are asked to adopt one of the roles- advisor, student or one of three observers. All group members are provided with a copy of the student's performance appraisal. The ten-minute interview with the student, observers provide a total of five minutes of feedback to the advisor indication effective an ineffective behaviors. Roles are then rotated at the conclusion of the interviews. Instructors should conduct a fifteen-minute summary.

DISCUSSION

This role-play contains the elements that make it an effective learning tool. First it is realistic. Second, students are willing to participate in exercise where they see relevance to their work experiences and performance feedback is familiar to this exercise. The most interesting aspect of this exercise is the role played by the observers. Observers are given five minutes to critique the advisor's role. This critique is another performance appraisal feedback interview!

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