



## Performance Management

### Introduction

Performance Management is based on the science of applied behaviour analysis. According to the science, human behaviour is influenced by two key aspects. The first aspect is what goes before it and thus prompts behaviour to occur (antecedents). The second aspect is what follows a behaviour (consequences).

The fundamental principle underpinning Quo's approach is that "**behaviour is a function of its consequences**". This means that behaviour is fundamentally controlled by the consequences that flow from its performance.

Antecedents are necessary to initiate a behaviour, but are usually insufficient to ensure that the behaviour is repeated, increased or intensified. Whether people perform specific behaviours habitually depends on the experience that follows their performance. People will only develop habitual performance of behaviours if the consequences that follow are reinforcing for them.

To increase a desired behaviour, there needs to be reinforcement and this can take two forms. It can be negative: the performer increases the desired behaviour to avoid a negative consequence ("do it or else" or "just enough to get by"). It can also be positive: the performer experiences a desirable consequence flowing from the performance of a specific behaviour. Behaviours can be decreased by punishing people when they deliver a behaviour that is not desired, or through ignoring them. The classic scenario is when a new member of staff performs to a high standard upon joining the company, and over time the performance reduces to a similar level of a lower 'norm'. The reality here is that the desired behaviours initially being carried out by the performer were taken for granted and no reinforcement was delivered to the person for their performance. The result is that the person sees what others are doing and so, either consciously or unconsciously, it makes sense that they join the 'norm' group.

It is important to recognise that in any organisation the senior team are the most powerful consequence holders. Staff look to them for guidance and direction to identify the desired behaviours that are required to be adopted to be deemed 'successful'. Thus, senior managers need to both walk and talk in a behaviourally consistent manner, otherwise staff will see straight through their behaviour - saying

one thing and clearly doing another. This will inevitably lead to mistrust and confusion by staff and result in alignment to the lower 'norm' performance.

By using this understanding of human behaviour you can bring about change in an individual or group in a planned, predictable fashion. The format for changing behaviour is through a five step process: Pinpointing the requirements, measuring the performance, providing feedback on the performance, delivering positive reinforcement for desired behaviours and results and then evaluating the overall results to better plan the next time.

Quo would normally expect to see a 15% to 30% rise in productivity and engagement when this approach is implemented.

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