

H4 Consulting Brief

Managing for Performance

Maximising public outcomes requires managing for performance within publicly funded organisations. These organisations can sometimes be slow to identify and respond to individual underperformance and many incentives, and disincentives, that are widely used in the private sector are less common. The H4 Consulting Managing for Performance model is a conceptual framework for assessing and addressing individual performance.

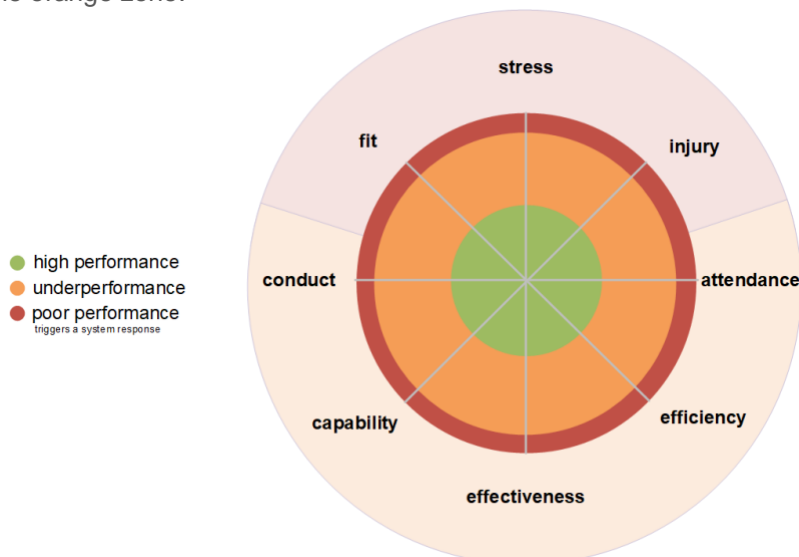
The performance of an individual varies on a number of dimensions. Some dimensions tend to be related to individual abilities and attitudes, such as capability and conduct, while others are heavily influenced by the work environment, such as cultural fit and risk of injury, but all dimensions tend to interact over time.

The high performing centre is the target for all staff, in all roles. Deteriorating performance on any dimension is plotted progressively further from the centre on that dimension. Poor performance usually triggers a formal response once it hits the 'red zone.'

The best time to address a performance issue is to make a minor adjustment as soon as performance on any dimension enters the orange zone.

As issues become more serious or entrenched the adjustment required becomes larger and it becomes increasingly likely that other dimensions of performance will also suffer. A high performing individual placed in a role or team where they are not a good fit may begin to experience stress, which may gradually lead to reduced efficiency and attendance.

Managers, particularly in large teams, often struggle to recognise early signs of underperformance or lack the confidence to act until a minimum performance threshold has been breached. Once one or more dimensions are in 'the red zone,' a formal response from the system has usually been triggered, and it may be too late for a quick local remedy.



Publicly funded organisations have a responsibility to protect staff and stakeholders by mandating minimum performance standards and taking corrective actions when those standards are not met. They take this responsibility seriously and, for reasons of efficiency and consistency, formal system responses triggered by very poor performance or behaviour are often administered by specialist central office teams.

Over time, if performance issues compound and exacerbate each other, system responses and formal processes may be triggered from several different parts of the organisation at the same time. This can make it even more difficult for individuals, managers, and systems to negotiate the various processes and pathways to support and advice.

Many serious performance problems begin as relatively minor issues. These issues are best addressed within the local context as soon as they enter the orange underperformance zone and before they become habitual or spread to other dimensions.

Leaders need to be trained, empowered, and supported to actively manage all aspects of staff performance and be able to identify and respond to issues quickly and professionally.

The H4 Consulting Managing for Performance model encourages strong local management for performance and helps managers to recognise and respond quickly and appropriately to issues on each dimension, so that every individual can hit the performance bullseye.

To find out more about how you can use this approach in your organisation, contact us: info@h4consulting.com.au
Find additional resources at www.h4consulting.com.au/resources