



శ్రీ వేపచేడు విద్యా పీఠము

VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

మన సంస్కృతి

Mana Sanskriti (Our Culture)

Chief Editor: Dr. Sreenivasarao Vepachedu, Esq.

PERFORMANCE AND POLITICS

There are a variety of organizations in this world, such as corporations, government organizations, ministries or departments, non-government organizations, international organizations, armed forces, charities, partnerships, cooperatives, societies, educational, universities, political organizations, etc., to name a few.

Whether it is a private, public or government entity, an organization is a social environment that is a microcosm of human culture because it essentially consists of human beings. As pointed out by Aristotle¹ in his book entitled, Politics, it is natural to the human animal to form a political rule² through alliances and organizations based on their natural inclinations. The “nature” of the human animal involves traits such as male, female, master and slave, and the natural master rules with intellect or power, and the natural slave employs labor³. As pointed out by Sage Manu⁴, human beings are born with certain natural traits based on which the humanity may be categorized into various divisions.⁵ The success of an individual lies in the understanding of the social and political norms and using them effectively in the pursuit of happiness.

Therefore, no organization is going to be immune to politics and interpersonal dynamics, because humans by very nature are social and political animals. Feedback environment is critical to effective employee development. Creating and maintaining a nonthreatening organizational social environment that facilitates ongoing communication and feedback among employees is necessary for exchanging critical and honest feedback with less concern about interpersonal political considerations. Common sense dictates that an organizational environment that encourages team spirit and cordial relations with others is more facilitative of a positive feedback environment than that of a hostile competition.

Research has emphasized the important effect of social context and accurate performance evaluation for the management of teams and employees in developing a wide range of job-relevant knowledge or skills to improve job performance⁶. Unfortunately, many organizations across the world create hostile competition, despite using a performance evaluation system as an important tool in a performance management system (PMS). This is because a) most evaluations are predicated on the “professionalism” without any personal subjective influences, b) it is impossible to remove “subjective” evaluation from the system, and c) PMS involves interpersonal interactions, dynamics and politics, and therefore, feedback information and the method of using it influence the success of the PMS⁷.

The periodic performance evaluation or appraisal is a necessary evil that all humans have to put up with in the civilized world. If an employee is appraised every year for promotion or bonus, a politician faces a similar evaluation at the end of the tenure. Even the kings had to bow down to the peoples’ verdict at some point in their lives, through wars, coups and revolutions. Inevitably, every evaluation involves a presentation

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of the candidate's successes and failures, in one form or the other, and may involve deception, lies, half-truths and manipulation, not to mention the amount of time spent by the boss and the employee. Usually, these appraisals require identification of weaknesses that need to be improved. Any negative feedback may lead to a layoff when the organization changes its direction and needs to show profits to the ever greedy shareholders in today's very dynamic global market, where corporations must look for profits through cheap labor and raw materials. It is not enough to be good at work, but one has to stand out from the crowd, and must have the tools to effectively communicate, collaborate, receive feedback and highlight success. Therefore, this periodic ritual evokes mixed feelings.

Many think that PMS is an old fashioned, paternalistic, top down, autocratic mode of management which treats employees as possessions of the company⁸. If it is old fashioned and obsolete, it will be replaced by another, but there will always be a mechanism of evaluation. Therefore, every human being, whether an employee, self-employed, volunteer or any other available role, must learn to deal with it, to be successful.

For a successful PMS, the first and foremost critically important thing is the goal setting. Learn to say 'NO' to impossible goals. One has to set up proper achievable goals at the beginning of the evaluation period, because the target is successful accomplishment of goals, not setting up the employee for failure, with subjective and unachievable goals. These goals should be objective that are intended to be achieved and measurable through deliverables. By creating actions to follow, defining milestones, identifying resources, and deliverables along a critical path to reach the final target, one would succeed.

No matter what the feedback is, especially when it is bad, getting emotional or defensive is not helpful. Effective performance appraisals are two-way conversations throughout the period of evaluation. Seeking evaluation throughout the year or tenure may be a good idea, so that there won't be any surprises, when it is time for the review. With effective time management⁹ and communication¹⁰ and organizational skills¹¹, job performance can be enhanced with clear and measurable accomplishments.

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed." - Mahatma Gandhi
Hinduism is a way of life, with diversity of religion, and Indian teachings share the importance of seva (service).

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Om! Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya, Om Shantih, Shantih,
Shantih!
(Aum! Lead the world from wrong path to the right path, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to
immortality, and peace!)

¹ Aristotle (b. 384 – d. 322 BCE), was a Greek philosopher, logician, and scientist. Along with his teacher Plato, Aristotle is generally regarded as one of the most influential ancient thinkers in a number of philosophical fields, including political theory.

² Human beings are by nature political animals, because nature, which does nothing in vain, has equipped them with speech, which enables them to communicate moral concepts such as justice which are formative of the household and city-state (Political Naturalism, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-politics/supplement3.html>).

³ Aristotle lays the foundations for his political theory in Politics book I by arguing that the city-state and political rule are “natural.” The argument begins with a schematic, quasi-historical account of the development of the city-state out of simpler communities. First, individual human beings combined in pairs because they could not exist apart. The male and female joined in order to reproduce, and the master and slave came together for self-preservation. The natural master used his intellect to rule, and the natural slave employed his body to labor (Political Naturalism <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-politics/supplement3.html>).

⁴ Manu (the Original Man), like Aristotle, attempted to explain the world of human beings and natural behaviors. Natural order of social hierarchy in which individual nature along with the nurture makes a human being into any one of the four types, which is not specific to a tribe or caste of India, but applies to all humans. Sage Manu is a mythological person or entity, who is the progenitor of all humanity, according to ancient Indian Vedic literature. Later invaders of India disputed the definitions and explanations, by misinterpreting and limiting “universal natural” principles or laws, taking them out of context. Further, Laws of Manu that laid down civil and criminal procedure code and code of conduct were not followed by all countries in the Indian Continent; because they followed the teachings of their respective preferred other prominent philosophers who defined human behavior and politics, and their own penal codes, respectively.

⁵ 1) Priests and Teachers (Brahmin: has the knowledge), 2) Rulers and Warriors (Kshatriya: has the power), 3) Business and Agriculturists (Vaishya: has the money), and 4) Artisans (Shudra: has the labor); *Manu Smriti*- 31/I. Atharva Veda (IV 6.1; XV. 8.1), Satapatha Brahmana (II.1.4.11) and Taittiriya Brahmana (III, 12 9.2) describe 1) Priests and Teachers (Brahmin: has the knowledge), 2) Rulers and Warriors (Kshatriya: has the power), and 3) Business and Agriculturists (Vaishya: has the money). See also: <http://www.vepachedu.org/manasanskriti/Brahmins.html>; <http://www.vepachedu.org/caste.htm>; and http://sanskritdocuments.org/all_pdf/manusmriti.pdf

⁶ Ock et al., Managing the Interpersonal Aspect of Performance Management, Industrial and Organizational Psychology / Volume 8 / Issue 01 / March 2015, pp 111-119 : available at:

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=6&fid=9665676&jid=IOP&volumeId=8&issueId=01&aid=9665675&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=&fulltextType=AC&fileId=S1754942615000085>

⁷ Id., Conclusion

⁸ Appraisals Don't Work; The Traditional Performance Appraisal Process, available at:

http://humanresources.about.com/od/performanceevals/a/perf_appraisal.htm

⁹ One of the most important organizational skills is the ability to meet deadlines and use time wisely. Time management skills will help you stay on schedule with everything you do to avoid the last minute rush to complete tasks, eliminating potential stress in the process. Use an organizer or software scheduler, which usually includes a calendar, daily schedule pages and pages for notes.

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/organizational-skills-work-2884.html>

¹⁰ Being able to communicate effectively is the most important of all life skills. Communication skills include interpersonal skills, writing skills, presentation skills, speaking and listening skills. Interpersonal Skills are the skills we use when engaged in face-to-face communication with one or more other people. The ability to be able to write clearly and effectively is key to communication. At:

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/general/communication-skills.html#ixzz3bqceK1yc>

¹¹ Organizational skills in the workplace can include general organizing, planning, time management, scheduling, coordinating resources and meeting deadlines. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/organizational-skills-workplace-1277.html>

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