

Is the lack of metrics adding anxiety for those working from home?

by Ernesto Solari

In my previous article, I established some connections between performance metrics, the Covid-19 lockdown, and many employees suddenly moving to a new work environment: a home office. My central argument is that in the absence of reliable individual performance metrics these workers have an additional source of anxiety under the current unprecedented circumstances in Canada and other parts of the world. In this 2nd delivery, I will dig deeper into metrics in connection to job descriptions (JD) and how to use the One Page Management approach.

I started using One Page Management reports (Khadem & Lorber, 1986) in my early years as a human resources specialist. I immediately felt engaged with the concept of the one-page simplicity and the synthesis and measurement of the neuralgic aspects of a job. There are three reports covered by the authors: the Focus Report, the Feedback Report, and the Management Report. My goal here is not to conduct a book review but to jump directly into how this tool can help you determine success metrics on the job so people like you (or people you can support) can start making a habit of tracking the things that matter the most at work and hopefully collect some success stories that will help reduce the anxiety of the unknown.

Previously, I established the importance of having an updated JD that outlines the purpose and details of the job: concretely the scope of duties and responsibilities captured as per the company's standards. Let's keep in mind that sometimes JDs may present some disconnects between the day-to-day tasks/activities and your manager's priorities and preferences so you need to trust the intimate knowledge of your job. Ideally, HR should have JDs always updated but it's best when ownership of this administrative process is shared with job incumbents and managers. As we'll see below, you must ensure that there's a clear understanding between you and your manager about performance metrics.

The first of the aforementioned one-page reports is the Focus Report and it is the initial stage that helps determine the Success Areas of your job. Whether you're a Software Engineer, Customer Support Specialist, Production Supervisor, Accounting Clerk, etc you can determine key metrics that reflect individual and group performance. The report is flexible and can accommodate many types of measurements: e.g. due dates, percentages, complaints, incidents, reoccurrences, defects, survey results, attendance and punctuality, product returns, budget management, etc. It is always preferable to have full individual accountability for these Success Areas but don't worry if these are shared with your team or if you depend on others to succeed: you are tracking things that may prompt a root cause analysis of issues if need to.

Examples of Success Areas can be captured as Sales, Quality, Production, Distribution, Financial, Administrative, etc. Just pick the term that best reflects the grouping area(s) or sub-area(s) you perform. Then each success area should have at least one Critical Success Factor. Check some samples in the following table:

Job (sample)	Success Area	Critical Success Factor	Goal	Status
Account Manager	Sales	Widget A sales target	\$10,000 monthly	
Call Center Representative	Customer Service	Customer Satisfaction Survey	Excellent	
HR Recruiter	Talent Acquisition	Filled Vacancies	30 days max to fill	
Software Engineer	Product Development	Produce code and application execution with no errors-Phase 1	Zero errors	
Bookkeeper	Administration	Monthly Reports	5 th business day after month-end	
Team Lead	Supervision	Conduct Team's Annual Performance Reviews	June 12, 2020	



The table represents a variety of job types, Success Areas and Critical Success Factors to illustrate the structure and flexibility of the one-page Focus Report, be aware that the idea is to have a page of Critical Success Factors and goals about YOUR job only. Also, it is worth noting that not all success factors can be tracked under standard periods: there could be daily, weekly, monthly, or project-based factors involved.

Is there enough content here to help you start your own one-page Focus Report? In my next article, the 3rd and last delivery, I will connect the Focus Report with the Feedback Report, which is the report that informs your manager about the good news and the not-so-good news about your job.

Reference:

Khadem, R., & Lorber, R. (1986, Dec 15). One page management: How to use information to achieve your goals // review. Financial Post (Index-Only) ISSN 08388431



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