



Business Advisory Services

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HealthyPractice[®]
Better Business

The Essentials of Staff Management

GPCME Conference Christchurch August 2010



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Overview

1. Recruitment process
2. Training and development
3. Performance management
4. Underperformance and disciplinary processes





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Recruitment process

Develop a
recruitment plan –
and stick to it



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Preparation

Consider:

- How has the vacancy arisen?
- Have the needs of the practice changed?
- Does the position description need updating?
- Person specification – key attributes:
 - What's essential and what's negotiable?
- Is there anything else we need to change before we recruit?
- Future development of the role?





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Confirm

- Hourly rate and benefits
- Hours of work
- Get sign-off from practice principals



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Advertising

- What medium – local and/or daily newspapers, window notices, recruitment agencies, websites?
- Who will be your audience?
- What have you got to offer? Include:
 - Job title
 - Short blurb about the practice
 - Minimum requirements (avoid anything discriminatory)
 - Salary (if appropriate)
 - How to apply and closing date for applications
 - Relevant contact details





Screening and shortlisting

- How will you do this? (use your person specification)
- Written application vs other methods





Interview plan

- Who will interview – where and when?
 - If using a panel, discuss the process beforehand
- Setting the scene – building rapport
 - Explain the work of the practice, outline the role
 - Briefly explain process of selection
- Open ended questions
- Will you use an application form – written record of all the mandatory consents (e.g. credit and reference checking, criminal background, right to work in NZ, disabilities or medical conditions)





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Interview process continued

- Scenarios – question bank
- Maintain control of the interview
- Listen effectively
- Probe and validate your gut feelings
- Avoid discriminatory questions: www.hrc.co.nz/home/hrc/newsandissues/jobinterviewquestionstobeavoided.php
- Privacy Act – obtain permission to check references
- Evidence of qualifications
- Skill assessments and testing
- Confirm salary expectations
- Show them around the practice (if appropriate)
- Confirm when you will be back in touch



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Applicant evaluation

- Take time to make notes
- Read through all applications, interview notes, and compare against selection criteria.
- Discuss with appropriate people (partners or other interviewers)
- Decide on shortlist for 2nd interview (if appropriate)
- Reply to all unsuccessful candidates (and those not interviewed)

Check verbal references

- Stick only to the referees you have permission to contact.





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Make the offer verbally and follow up in writing:

- Letter to include appropriate employment agreement and position description
- Advise them that they may take separate legal advice re the agreement
- Any special requirements i.e. uniform
- Start date and time
- Hours of work (if not in employment agreement)
- Who to report to
- Confirmation of salary details and first pay date



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Some traps we often see:

- Shortcuts – no matter how highly recommended the candidate, **ALWAYS** undertake a full recruitment process
- Hiring family and friends
 - Could you successfully manage performance or terminate the employment should they not perform adequately? Including potential family fallout?
- Taking the best of a bad bunch
- Promoting poor performers hoping increased responsibility will induce higher performance





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- Remember to notify those people who weren't successful
- Department of Labour website:
www.ers.govt.nz/relationships/letters.asp
for example of letters of offer
- How long should you keep CV's and interview notes and why?



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Employment agreements

- Employment agreements are a requirement under the Employment Relations Act.
- Individual or collective?
 - There are hefty penalties for getting this wrong





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Minimum requirements of an employment agreement

- Name of employee
- Name of employer
- Description of work (position description)
- Location of work
- Hours of work
- Wages or salary
- Payment for working on a public holiday
- **Probationary period and 90-day trial periods**
- Explanation of services available for the resolution of employment relationship problems
- Employment protection clause
- Signed and dated by employer and the employee



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Candidate one - Abby

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SKILL / EXPERIENCE
Practice Nurse experience	5 years
Previous employment history	Large GP practice for last 5 years. Hospital ED nurse for 2 years prior to that
Skill assessment	Meets most of PD and skill assessment requirements
Meets current vaccinator requirements?	No
Meets current smear taker requirements?	Yes



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Candidate two - Bella

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SKILL / EXPERIENCE
Practice Nurse Experience	12 years
Previous employment history	Solo GP practice for last 3 years until 6 weeks ago. Positive work history with your practice under previous manager.
Skill assessment	Meets all of PD and skill assessment requirements
Meets current vaccinator requirements?	Yes
Meets current smear taker requirements?	Yes



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Candidate three - Carol

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SKILL / EXPERIENCE
Practice Nurse Experience	New graduate
Previous employment history	Work experience in 24-hour A&M centre and a GP practice with documented positive outcomes
Skill assessment	Meets all but inexperienced and will need higher level of mentoring
Meets current vaccinator requirements?	Started training course
Meets current smear taker requirements?	Started training course



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Training and development



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What difference will training make to your business?

Consider cost to employ this person in the first place:

- advertising and/or recruitment company fees
- induction time
- loss of productivity

Getting it right will reduce:

- time spent putting right inevitable errors
- complaints and potential to lose business/patients
- staff leaving because their expectations have not been met





What difference will training make to staff?

- Confidence, motivation and enthusiasm (and may possibly motivate and enthuse other staff)
- Increase productivity and overall provide job satisfaction
- Essentially it will get them up to speed sooner
- It will encourage these habits to be replicated – e.g. when you next take on a new staff member, this staff member will be willing to assist in the same way





Benefits of training for existing staff

- Shows staff you are interested in them and the job that they do
- Acts as a refresher
- Fills in a skill or knowledge gap, sets in place a culture of wanting to know more and improve the way you do things
- Consider who should do your internal training? Will you do it yourself or will you utilise the skills of one of your staff as a 'buddy/mentor' for training?
- Knowledge sharing and retention



How to retain your best staff

Develop and reward high achievers – some options:

- Pay – either by an increase, a bonus, a pure cash reward
- Additional training – personal or professional development as a prerequisite
- Promotion – greater responsibility or a change in title/status
- Additional holiday time – or flexibility around start and finish
- Stock options – giving longer term ownership stake
- Recognition in front of peers – staff meeting or by special announcement
- More challenging job assignments – the next goal to achieve
- Acknowledgement – a simple thank you
- Ask them what they really want





Managing staff performance

Two very separate processes:

1. Appraisal
2. Performance management
 - *Keep separate from annual remuneration review*



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**Coach for
improvement and
development.**



Avoid blame!



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Who are your most dangerous employees?



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Appraisals

An effective system contains two parts:

1. Evaluation
 - identifies any performance gaps that require development
2. Feedback
 - Discussing an employee's quality of performance, their aspirations





Benefits of appraisal

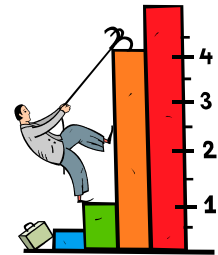
- Identification of personal strengths and direction (including unused hidden strengths)
- Resolving confusion and misunderstanding
- Team role clarification
- Clarifying, defining and redefining priorities and objectives
- Identifying training and learning needs
- Motivation through achievement and feedback
- Counselling / **coaching** and feedback
- Succession planning





Objectives and KPIs

- Are the performance expectations clear and agreed upon?
- Aligned to individual effort with practice goals?
- Provide individuals something to 'aim at' – motivates and directs focus and effort.
- Provides feedback to employee about how they are doing.
- Increases the chances that the result will be achieved.





As an employer what do you want?

Establish and uphold the principle of
accountability

However, to be **credible** in this process you must:

- Know the techniques of appraisal
- Be knowledgeable about the employee's role and performance





Expectations of the appraisee

- To prepare
- Be truthful
- Be positive – no personal attacks or grumbles
- Express problems with a solution-finding attitude
- Ask for help with training and coaching in areas that may increase productivity
- Think about strengths
- Complete a skill assessment form to assess skills
- Think about long-term aspirations
- Identify objectives for the next year





Expectations of the appraiser

1. Translate organisational goals into individual job objectives
2. Communicate expectations regarding performance
3. Provide feedback to the employee about job performance
4. Coach the employee on how to achieve job objectives
5. Diagnose the employee's strengths and weaknesses
6. Determine what kind of development activities might help the employee to improve performance





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Appraisal process

- Prepare
- Inform
- Venue
- Layout
- Introduction
- Review and measure
- Agree an action plan
- Agree specific objectives
- Agree necessary support
- Invite comments and questions
- Close positively
- Record main points, agreed actions and follow-up



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Feedback – the **GOOD** focuses on:

- The behaviours rather than the qualities of the person
- Observations, not interpretations or judgements
- Specific and tangible evidence of performance – evidence and examples
- Solutions – aim for improvement
- Being genuine, honest and fair
- Building confidence - things within the individual's control and sensitively conveying your comments
- Being timely
- **No surprises**





The BAD

- Critical or judgemental of the person's qualities
- Non-specific or intangible evidence of performance – leaves the individual unclear about what they need to change
- Blames for things out of individual's control
- Conflict between verbal and non-verbal messages





The UGLY

- Given in public
- Insults or condescending
- Delivered with negative emotion (e.g. anger)





Avoid these pitfalls

- Defensiveness
- Beware of the 'horns' or 'halo' effect
- **Don't make up your mind beforehand** and then seek behaviour to support that view
- Don't get personal
- Don't compare with other staff members
- Be objective – not subjective
- Mind your language and your body language





GP appraisals – where to start ...

Reference point:

Medical Council's Domains of Competence that are detailed in their booklet ***Guide to Good Medical Practice*** found at:

www.mcnz.org.nz/portals/0/guidance/goodmedpractice.pdf



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GP appraisals – what one may look like . . .

Preparation - written:

1. GP self evaluation
2. Clinical feedback
 - By peers in group practice
 - Neighbouring GP or through PHO for solo practitioners
3. Staff feedback

This information is then collated by practice manager (*usually anonymously*), and used as base for discussion during appraisal meeting



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Workshop



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Managing underperformance and discipline



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Take a solution-finding approach

Behavioural/Attitudinal – what the individual might need to start doing differently

Knowledge/skill-based – knowledge or skills the individual may need to acquire

Job-based – development or modification of guidelines, workloads, systems, procedures etc

Other external factors – e.g. need to involve a third party to affect change



Types of problems

1. Failure to perform

- Provide specific examples and clear evidence of the areas of non-performance.
- Who else has contributed to the problem?
- Have you given adequate training/supervision?
 - Is it because the person **can't** do it OR because they **won't** do it?
- Is anyone else not performing?





Process (informal chat):

- Meet with them privately
- Explain this isn't a disciplinary meeting, outline your concerns and ask them for their side of the story
- Explain clearly the improvement you expect to see and by when
- Explain the consequences if performance does not improve, i.e. if you don't... this will lead to a formal warning situation, and if it goes beyond this it may ultimately result in termination of your employment
- Consider what you can do to help them improve, i.e. extra training, buddy system





Take time to consider:

Are there any justifiable causes for the employee's underperformance?

For example is there:

- A lack of knowledge or skill?
- Insufficient, inappropriate or no training?
- A shortage of resources required to perform well?
- A lack of motivation for a number of reasons?
- Is the job-person fit right?
- Is there a good match of the practice culture-personal values fit?





Few people are wilful underperformers

To increase performance, once you have identified issues, use a basic coach approach to:

- Agree goals – meet their preferences AND achieve your requirements
- Listen to your staff
- Develop an action plan and support structure
- Review progress and provide feedback
- Celebrate success
- Create social interaction





Sometimes all it takes are some basic reminders

- About acceptable levels of behaviour
 - e.g. please treat all patients and fellow staff in the way you would wish yourself or family members to be treated
- Or reference to the correct process if a task is being performed incorrectly



Other situations will require a meeting with the employee to:

- Record the employee's explanation
- Develop a well documented Performance Improvement Plan that identifies the performance that you are unhappy with and sets out the corrective action required
- Provide any additional support that is warranted in the circumstances (e.g. some accounting training)
- Detail the time period where improvement must be seen (will depend on the issues in question and may be a few days or a matter of months)
- Advise required outcomes
- The implications of any further issues (e.g. a further warning or may result in dismissal)



If things don't improve

1. Commence a formal disciplinary process, advise the employee why you remain unhappy about their performance and the level of your concern
2. Put your concerns in writing – if the employee could be dismissed; **say so** e.g. you have reached the stage where if you don't improve we intend to terminate the employment relationship.
3. Advise the employee to seek representation or legal advice
4. Put a further review period in place – the length will depend on what you are requiring of them



If things don't improve continued

5. Outline precisely what you require of the employee during this period
6. Be mindful to respond to any incidents during this period, where the employee's performance falls short. This may involve further meetings and further letters.
 - e.g. “I am concerned that, despite our recent meeting and my request that you (details of required performance), you continue to (details of failings). As advised, I require you to ...”



Final stage

Where dismissal seems very likely, write to the employee setting out your views and setting out how you see this matter and invite them to another meeting:

- e.g. “We have reached the stage where we believe there is no other option but to terminate your employment. Prior to making that decision we would like to meet with you and hear what you have to say. You can bring a representative with you to that meeting, we recommend that you do, please advise who that person will be and what their role will be”)
- Meet with the employee and hear what they have to say.
- Take time to consider their input before communicating your decision to them formally with a written record of the meeting notes



Process

- Depends on detail in employment agreement, policies or staff manual.
- If no process outlined then usual process is a verbal warning, followed by written warning, then final warning, then termination.
- NB: Be very clear if the warning you are giving is the final warning.
- The test = **“What would a fair and reasonable employer do in this instance?”**



Misconduct vs serious misconduct

- Refer back to AND follow process in your EA or staff manual.
- Misconduct vs serious misconduct definitions*:

Misconduct	Serious misconduct
Behaviour or actions by an employee that warrants some sort of disciplinary action.	Something done by an employee that's so bad that, so long as a fair process is followed by their employer, it warrants their dismissal without giving them verbal or written warnings first.

* *Employment & Your Business – Thomson Brookers*



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Summary of disciplinary principles

- The decision-maker runs the process
- Start with an open mind – don't pre-judge
- Be open with them
- Provide all relevant information
- Ask for, and **consider** their response





Key points

1. The **position description** is your benchmark of what performance you expect
2. Keep **written records** of all occasions where staff have failed to perform, including dates, discussions you had with them about it, explanations given etc
3. **Not sure** what's 'fair and reasonable' – **get legal advice**
4. **Never accept the resignation of an employee during a disciplinary meeting.** Tell them to think about it overnight and take advice. If they still want to resign the next day, ask for it in writing acknowledging they have considered their decision





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5. Ensure (where possible) that you **have a witness present** (yours) and minute the meeting for all disciplinary meetings
6. Ensure you have **an accurate picture** of the issue
7. **Never pre-prepare warning letters or dismissals** even when summarily dismissing someone
8. **Never give an immediate decision**, always take time to consider
9. Keep all proceedings **confidential**



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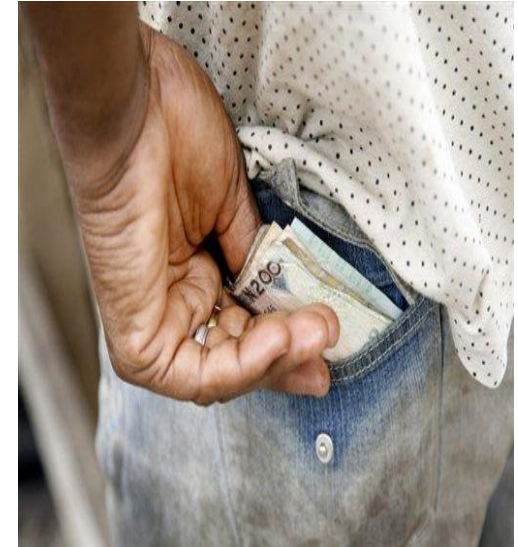
Workshop

One receptionist observes another slip two \$20 notes into the pocket of her jacket hanging on the back of her chair, whilst she is doing the end of day cash up.

You (the practice manager) are informed immediately, upon walking past the chair you can readily see the notes in the pocket.

You count the float yourself and find it is \$40 short.

It is now 4.50pm on a Friday – what do you do next?



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Questions?

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