

Managing Performance in the Public Service

In Barbados, the Performance Review and Development System (PRDS) has been identified as a suitable system to evaluate public officer's performance. It will act as a means to providing an environment in which public officers will embrace this new professionalism, since they will understand their role in helping their respective ministries and departments meet their goals and objectives, and furthermore, assist the organisation in contributing to national development objectives.

An alternative performance evaluation system is being introduced in the local public service to replace the current one which has been perceived as being subjective; that is to say, it focuses more on behaviours, rather than attributes and skills that are directly related to the specific job.

It is also perceived as being a punitive weapon, rather than a developmental tool. An ideal performance appraisal system is one that focuses more on the job, as well as developmental. Performance management should be viewed as a two-way motivational tool that contributes to employee development and the overall success of the organisation.

What is Performance Management?

Performance management is an organisational approach to improve performance by embracing three important management functions. These functions are planning, monitoring (progress review) and evaluation. Communication, understanding and agreement between manager/supervisor and the officer is critical with respect to:

- What work is to be done;
- How it will be done;
- How work is progressing towards desired results;
- What actions are to be taken when desired results are achieved/not achieved.

These are predicated upon the assumption that there is a sense of mission and purpose within the organisation in which the objectives of the organisation and its various departments are actively linked. Therefore, a number of prerequisites must be in place for pre defined organisational objectives, either in the form of a strategic plan/ estimates document, up-to-date organisational charts and job descriptions.

The Performance Management Process

These are four main steps in the process these involve:

- **Performance Planning:** This involves communication and agreement of the work plan between the manager/supervisor and the officer. The work plan will include the performance targets for the officer, which will set out what is to be done, when and how it is to be done. Critical to this as

mentioned earlier is the need to have your strategic plan, organisational charts and job description.

- **Progress Review:** This is basically involves continuous assessment and feedback by the manager/supervisor of the progress of the officer. This will involve periodic meetings, twice annually to discuss progress and make necessary adjustments. This will also involve the exchange of information and opinions about various issues pertaining to the work plan.
- **Decisions and Actions Based on the Evaluation:** Based on the officer's performance in relation to the goals and the objectives, which were established, the officer will be given recognition, training or counseling to improve unsatisfactory performance.

Conclusion

In order to implement this programme successfully in the public service, much training must be done across the entire public service. In order to achieve this, a training of trainers approach is being formulated. A team of officers drawn from the Office of Public Sector Reform, Personnel Administration Division and the Training Administration Division are developing a comprehensive training programme, which will be implemented across the public service to prepare public officers for the PRDS. The purpose of this training will be to provide officers with the necessary skills to understand and utilize the PRDS process and also to foster the kind of behaviours such as team work, time management, staff development necessary to bring about the "new professionalism" in the public service.

Performance management is critical to all Ministries and Departments as a means of "Making Barbados Work Better". However, it is important to note that performance management alone will not bring this about. Firstly, it requires an overall human resources development policy which tracks the officer's path from entry to exit within the service. It also requires changes in behaviour and culture

Further Information:

1. Performance Review and Development System (PRDS) Your Questions Answered [link to the FAQ section](#)
2. Performance Review and Development System Appraisal Form [opens as a pdf document, already have the form](#)
3. Performance Review and Development System Guidelines [opens as a pdf document, already have the form](#)