

# Focus On Improving Staff Performance

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*"When every physical and mental resource is focused, one's power to solve a problem multiplies tremendously." (Norman Vincent Peale)*

## The Key Question For You To Ask

Why are you on the payroll? This is one of the most important questions you ever ask and answer, over and over again, throughout your career.

As it happens, most people are not sure exactly why they are on the payroll. But if you are not crystal clear about why it is that you are on the payroll and what results you have been hired to accomplish, it is very hard for you to perform at your best and get paid more and promoted faster.

## Determine The Results Expected of You

In its simplest terms, you have been hired to get specific results. A wage or a salary is a payment for a specific quality and quantity of work that can be combined with the work of others to create a product or service that customers are willing to pay for.

## Define Your Key Result Areas

Each job can be broken down into about five to seven key result areas, seldom more. These are the results that you absolutely, positively have to get to fulfill your responsibilities and make your maximum contribution to your organization. Your failure to perform in a critical result area of your work can lead to failure at your job.

There is essential knowledge and skill that you must have for your job. These demands are constantly changing. There are core competencies that you have developed that make it possible for you to do your job in the first place. But there are always key results that are central to your work and which determine your success or failure in your job.

## You Are Responsible

A key result area is defined as something for which you are completely responsible. This means that if you don't do it, it doesn't get done. A key result area is an activity that is under your control. It is an output of your work that becomes an input or a contributing factor to the work of others.

## Give Yourself A Grade

Once you have determined your key result areas, the second step is for you to grade yourself on a scale of 1-10 in each of those areas. Where are you strong and where are you weak? Where are you getting excellent results and where are you underperforming?

Here's the rule: Your weakest key result area sets the height at which you can use all your other skills and abilities.

This rule says that you could be exceptional in six out of seven key result areas but really poor in the seventh. And your poor performance in the seventh area will hold you back and determine how much you achieve with all your other skills. This weakness will act as a drag on your effectiveness and be a constant source of friction and frustration.

## Decide To Become Excellent

The fact is that everybody has both strengths and weaknesses. Refuse to rationalize, justify or defend your areas of weakness. Instead, identify them clearly. Set a goal and make a plan to become very good in each of those areas. Just think! You may be only one critical skill away from top performance at your job.

Here is one of the greatest questions you will ever ask and answer: "What one skill, if I developed and did it in an excellent fashion, would have the greatest positive impact on my career?"

You should use this question to guide your career for the rest of your life. Look into yourself for the answer. You usually know what it is.

### **Action Exercises**

First, identify the key result areas of your work. What are they? Write down the key results you have to get to do your job in an excellent fashion. Give yourself a grade from 1-10 on each one. And then determine the one key skill that, if you did it in an excellent manner, would help you the most in your work.

Second, make a habit of doing this analysis regularly for the rest of your career. Never stop improving. This decision alone can change your life