

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**Civil Service Branch
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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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FOREWORD

One of the measures of success of our Civil Service is our responsiveness to the changing needs and circumstances of Hong Kong. We are learning how to work with a fully elected legislature and how to deliver new and improved services demanded by a more affluent and sophisticated community. We have become more open and accountable, and have committed ourselves to specific standards of performance against which the public can gauge what they can and should expect from us. Such responsiveness and adaptability call for an enormous amount of resilience, dedication and skill from all of us. We must ensure that our human resource management (HRM) practices develop even further the commitment and performance of civil servants.

Each one of us have a role to play in meeting the challenge of improving our HRM practices and maintaining a dynamic and progressive approach to managing people. This ***Guide to Human Resource Management*** not only encapsulates the vision and guiding principles of how we intend to manage people in the future, but also provides a practical tool to assist us all in realizing that vision.

The Hong Kong Civil Service is one of the best in the world, and people are Hong Kong's most precious assets. I hope colleagues will make the most of this Guide to upgrade the value of our "assets" and uphold the high reputation of our Civil Service.

Michael C. C. SZE
Secretary for the Civil Service

MANAGING PEOPLE BETTER

Management Framework

BEING ACCOUNTABLE

- Answering to the Legislative Council
- Keeping the Community Informed
- Providing Access to Information

LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS

- Applying Fiscal Guidelines
- Assessing Community Needs
- Planning
- Resource Allocation
- Reviewing Performance

MANAGING FOR PERFORMANCE

- Refining Performance Measures
- Managing by Programme
- Improving Efficiency
- Managing Public Finances
- Managing Human Resources
- Managing Support Services
- Developing Departmental Plans
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DEVELOPING OUR CULTURE OF SERVICE

- Making Performance Pledges
- Using Feedback to Improve Services
- Securing Staff Commitment

Human Resource Management is a long-established task within the Government's Management Framework. Through this task the Government meets its obligation to be a good employer; seeks to secure staff commitment; and develops and manages staff to give of their best to help the Government serve the community. The need to respond to changing community expectations means that the task of managing our staff better is more important than ever - it is the staff who deliver the service, and it is through a new emphasis on staff management that a customer service and performance oriented culture will gradually evolve.

The Civil Service Branch carried out a review in 1993 to determine what changes were needed in implementing Human Resource Management so that it could best complement and support the new focus on devolving authority, on customers and on raising service standards.

The outcome of the review has established the direction for Human Resource Management. First the Civil Service Branch is now concentrating more on its strategic role, determining policy, setting guidelines and rules, and advising branches and departments on implementation. Within this, the Branch is delegating as much authority as possible to departments, and simplifying rules and procedures. Second, the emphasis is now more on the management of people rather than the administration of rules. Third, branches and departments are expected to review and develop their own Human Resource Management plans to help them meet their operational requirements.

While the Civil Service Branch encourages the implementation of Human Resource Management initiatives, it appreciates that change cannot happen overnight, and that

many effective staff management practices are already occurring. It is for departments to build upon these and show continuous improvement over time.

This booklet explains how Human Resource Management works in the Hong Kong Civil Service. It describes the core principles and values of the Government; where responsibilities lie; and the key management tasks that must be addressed.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Aims

The Government exists to serve the community : it seeks to provide the services the community needs and the leadership Hong Kong needs to go on succeeding.

Serving the Community is the Government's single most important aim, to which all civil servants should be committed.

It requires the Government to provide the services the community needs, and to provide the leadership Hong Kong needs to go on succeeding. To do so, we act in the public interest to:

- foster stability and prosperity,
- improve the quality of life for the whole community,
- care for those who need help,
- protect the rights and freedoms of the individual,
- maintain the rule of law, and
- encourage people to play their part in the community.

Principles

- **BEING ACCOUNTABLE**
- **LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS**
- **MANAGING FOR PERFORMANCE**
- **DEVELOPING OUR CULTURE OF SERVICE**

AIMS

It is as true for the Government as for any other organization that we depend on our staff at all levels to achieve our aims. It is therefore important that we set these out so that staff have a clear sense of direction for their work, and know how their performance will be judged.

The Government's aim of Serving the Community is a simple concept, readily understood by civil servants. In support of this, departmental missions help staff focus their efforts on performing to their best in their particular area of work.

Human Resource Management is a planned approach to managing people effectively for performance. It aims to establish a more open, flexible and caring management style so that staff will be motivated, developed and managed in a way that they can and will give of their best to support departments' missions.

PRINCIPLES

The Government establishes four main principles which guide us in our work. We have adopted the following additional principles to guide departments in their Human Resource Management work:

- the Government should be a good employer;
- people are our most important asset;
- staff are recruited and their careers managed on the basis of merit;
- staff should take their share of responsibility for developing their potential;
- staff management is the responsibility of all managers; and
- departmental Human Resource Management plans must be guided by departmental plans and objectives.

VALUES

<p><i>Values</i></p> <p>BEING ACCOUNTABLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness - to communicate, consult and provide information <p>LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership - to complement the private sector • Foresight - to plan ahead within available resources <p>MANAGING FOR PERFORMANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership - to set the direction • Expertise - to develop necessary skills and apply them in a professional manner • Effectiveness - to achieve objectives • Efficiency - to achieve value for money • Propriety - to ensure proper use of public money <p>DEVELOPING OUR CULTURE OF SERVICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment - to give our best • Integrity - to be impartial and ethical • Courtesy - to treat others decently • Responsiveness - to react to problems and changing circumstances
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VALUES	
<i>HRM</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Care • Teamwork • Encouragement • Development
<i>SERVING THE COMMUNITY</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness • Commitment • Effectiveness • Foresight • Courtesy • Propriety • Expertise • Partnership • Integrity • Efficiency • Leadership • Responsiveness

Values shape the culture of any organization. They are the key to "the way things are done around here", and let all of us know what is expected of us. The values of the service as a whole should be built upon by departments to develop the particular culture a department is seeking. Well defined values give staff an instinctive feel for decisions expected from them and, therefore, reduce the amount of time spent consulting others before making a decision.

The important thing is for each department to develop its own values in the way which best supports its particular mission, objectives and desired culture, and motivates staff to give of their best. Human Resource Management helps them to do so in a structure way, by linking functions such as performance management and training to departmental aims and values.

Human Resource Management brings out the important values of trust, care, teamwork, encouragement and development which help the Government meet the principle of being a good employer and thereby motivating staff to give their best.

WHERE RESPONSIBILITIES LIE

The responsibilities for Human Resource Management rest with the Civil Service Branch, policy branches, departments, managers and individual civil servants.

- ***Civil Service Branch*** determines and communicates overall Human Resource Management policies and advises departments on the implementation of these policies.
- ***Policy branches and departments*** are responsible for implementing central Human Resource Management policy and developing the HRM plans to meet their own needs.
- ***Managers and individual civil servants*** have personal responsibility for putting policy into practice.

CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH

The **Civil Service Branch** sets the strategic direction according to which civil servants are managed, and performs a number of central functions. To do so it:

Strategic Role :

- ❑ develops and promotes policies, standards and good practices in the management of civil servants; and
- ❑ implements these policies through discussions, explanations, guidelines, regulations and circulars.

Central Functions :

- ❑ determines and communicates overall Human Resource Management policy and standards of best practice;
- ❑ advises departments on the implementation of policies and the development of their Human Resource Management plans;
- ❑ formulates pay and conditions of service, fringe benefits and allowances and also deals with proposals for changes to structures of grades/ranks and for creation of directorate posts in the light of advice from independent standing bodies;
- ❑ deals with appointment, promotion (including succession planning) and discipline relating to senior positions, taking into account the advice from the Public Service Commission. It also processes cases relating to staff complaints, early retirement, legal assistance for civil servants, and benefits for retired civil servants;
- ❑ ensures service-wide comparability between grades and ranks with similar responsibilities;
- ❑ consults with major staff associations; and

- ❑ manages the Administrative and General Grades.

POLICY BRANCHES AND DEPARTMENTS

Policy Branches oversee the effectiveness of all management tasks in departments, including Human Resource Management. To do so they:

- ❑ agree Human Resource Management plans with departments as part of their annual departmental plans;
- ❑ monitor progress on Human Resource Management plans in their departmental progress reviews;
- ❑ review proposals for directorate post creation; and
- ❑ with Civil Service Branch, undertake manpower and succession planning, appointment, promotion and appraisal of senior directorate officers.

Departments are responsible for implementing policies and procedures, and providing opportunities to motivate, develop, and manage staff in a way which maximizes their contribution to departmental objectives. To do so they:

- ❑ ensure that their mission and values are understood by staff;
- ❑ determine the optimum staffing structure and establishment, and negotiate as necessary with such bodies as Civil Service Branch, Finance Branch, and the concerned Policy Branch;
- ❑ prepare an annual Human Resource Management Plan covering the priority issues to be tackled in the five main areas of manpower planning, recruitment, performance management, training and development and staff relations; and
- ❑ administer rules and regulations on managing human resources.

MANAGERS AND INDIVIDUAL CIVIL SERVANTS

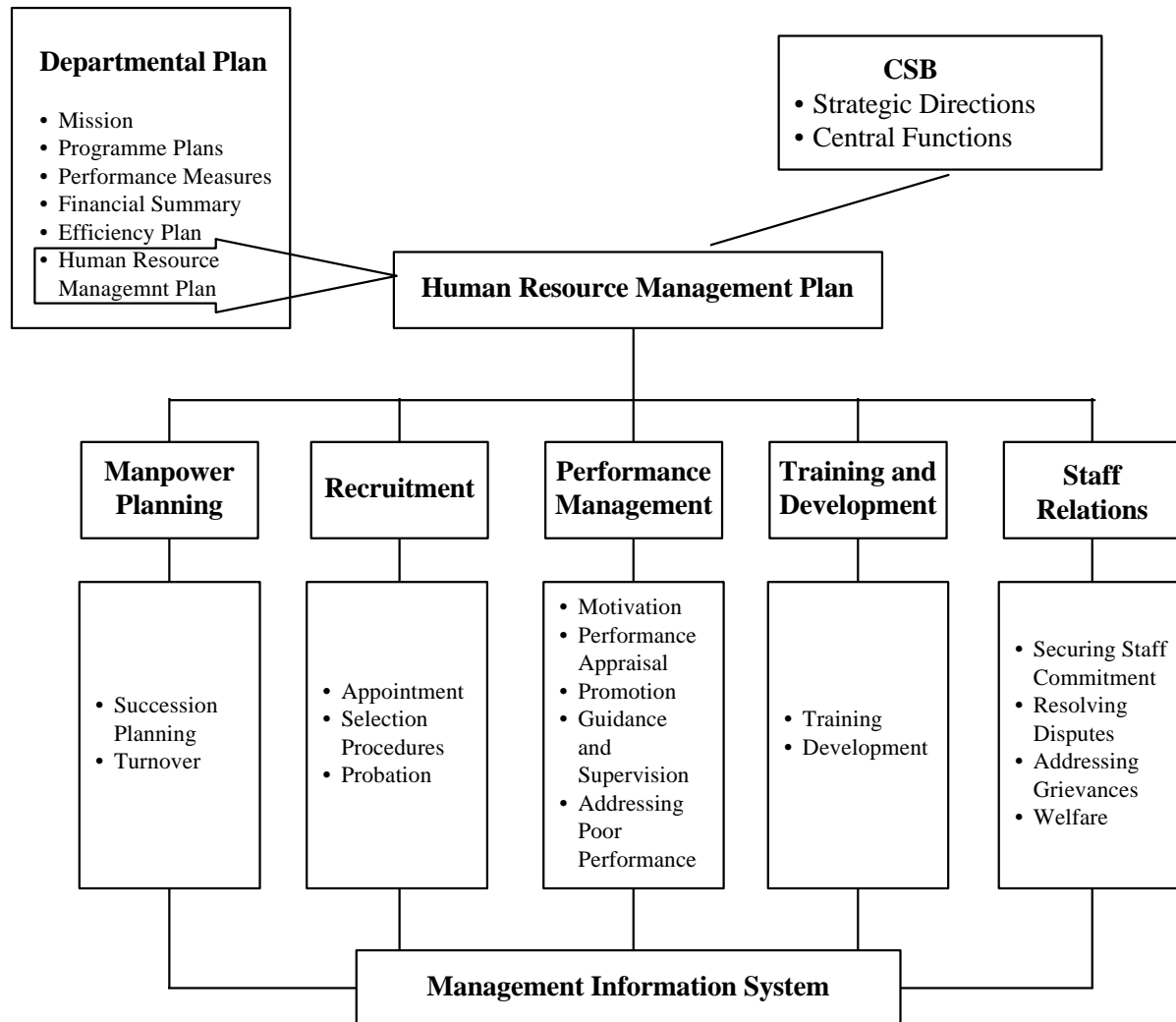
Managers in departments are the implementers of Human Resource Management policy, and as such, vital to successful management practices - they hold the key to performance management. To do so they should :

- ❑ identify individual objectives for staff to work towards, based on those of the department;
- ❑ provide staff with on-going guidance and supervision, including regular performance feedback;
- ❑ conduct appraisals;
- ❑ counsel and initiate appropriate action where necessary to address poor performance or misconduct;
- ❑ identify training and development needs for staff and match these where possible to the opportunities available;
- ❑ communicate regularly with staff on subjects that affect them; and
- ❑ take an interest in the welfare of staff.

Individual civil servants should be committed to the Government's aim to Serve the Community. They should also:

- ❑ be committed to the mission, objectives and values of their departments;
- ❑ understand the duties and responsibilities of their job and to do their best to fulfil what is expected of them;
- ❑ work with their manager to identify their own training and development needs and where possible to take steps to meet these; and
- ❑ abide by Civil Service rules and regulations.

DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS



Departmental human resource management plans are used to link together the overall policies of the Civil Service Branch, the mission, objectives and values of the department, and any specific Human Resource Management activities being undertaken at line management level. The plans thereby provide clear policies and guidelines for staff and managers.

Plans should provide answers to three fundamental questions:

- What staff will be need, and how are we going to acquire and retain the number and quality of people required to meet the forecast needs of the department?
- How are we going to ensure that we have a well motivated workforce?
- What actions will be needed to train, develop and fit people for greater responsibility and responsiveness to change and the resulting demands for different skills and abilities?

In answering these questions, the Human Resource Management plan must refer to and support departmental plans. This ensures the relevance and credibility of Human Resource Management. Thus the Human Resource Management plan should relate to the department's organization structure, mission, values and programme objectives for the planning period.

Before a Human Resource Management plan is drawn up, it should be considered how Human Resource Management will be organized and managed in the department. Due to the importance of the subject, an officer at the directorate level should normally be assigned the responsibility for Human Resource Management in the department. An officer at this level should have the broad understanding of the department's mission, values and objectives. It needs to be considered what the relationship should be between managers and administration staff, and/or officers charged with specific human resource management responsibilities, e.g. training officers.

Once these aspects of the planning process have been established, then the key areas of Human Resource Management can be addressed and initiatives mapped out.

Key components

The plan needs only be as detailed as the department determines is appropriate, and may not necessarily show specific activities in all areas of Human Resource Management. However, the component areas are:

- ❑ **MANPOWER PLANNING**
- ❑ **RECRUITMENT**
- ❑ **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**
- ❑ **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**
- ❑ **STAFF RELATIONS**
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

MANPOWER PLANNING

Introduction

Manpower planning enables a department to project its short to long term needs on the basis of its departmental plans so that it can adjust its manpower requirements to meet changing priorities. The more changing the environment the department is in, the more the department needs manpower planning to show:

- ❑ the number of recruits required in a specified timeframe and the availability of talent
- ❑ early indications of potential recruitment or retention difficulties
- ❑ surpluses or deficiencies in certain ranks or grades
- ❑ availability of suitable qualified and experienced successors

Key components

Manpower planning comprises two key components:

- ❑ *succession planning*
- ❑ *turnover*

Succession Planning

Succession planning assesses the likely turnover in key posts, identifies suitable candidates to fill these posts in future, and ensures that they have the right training and exposure for their future work. Given the effort and support required for undertaking succession planning, it is normally confined to the directorate and those ranks immediately below, plus any grades with high turnover or anticipated expansion.

Succession planning is a very important exercise because it minimizes the impact of turnover in these key ranks and gives a branch or department early warning of any skill shortages or likely difficulties in finding suitable candidates. Ideally a succession plan should cover 3 to 5 years. The succession plan should identify

- ❑ key posts and possible successors
- ❑ causes of turnover
- ❑ competencies of successors and the training required for them
- ❑ posts for which no apparent successor exists and the remedial action planned

The information derived from the succession plan should feed into the training and development of the individuals concerned by ensuring that they attend the necessary training and are posted to jobs that will provide them with the experience for their intended role.

Turnover

Turnover refers to retirement, resignation and redundancy. While a department cannot plan turnover because there are factors, such as resignation, which are beyond its control, it can monitor turnover carefully to ensure the department will have minimal difficulties in retaining staff. If such difficulties are envisaged or experienced, the department will find out the causes for them and take early steps to address them by improving, for example, motivation or training and development opportunities.

When addressing the aspects of succession and turnover, the department also needs to consider other manpower planning factors:

- external factors
- internal factors

External Factors:

A number of factors may affect whether talent is available in the market to fill posts in a department. These include the availability of the required personnel with the necessary qualifications, skills and experience at a specified time, the relative job opportunities in the private sector and the general outlook of the economy.

Internal Factors:

Departmental Plan: A department assesses the number of staff it requires at different levels, at specified timeframes, in the light of its present and planned future work commitments. This may lead to an increase or decrease of the current manpower.

RECRUITMENT

Introduction

Before a department takes steps to employ staff, it should work out the type of staff it needs in terms of grade and rank, and the time scale in which the staff are required.

The general principles underpinning recruitment within the civil service are that recruitment should:

- ❑ use procedures which are clearly understood by candidates and which are open to public scrutiny;
- ❑ be fair, giving candidates who meet the stipulated minimum requirements equal opportunity for selection; and
- ❑ select candidates on the basis of merit and ability.

Recruitment of overseas officers is undertaken only when no or insufficient local candidates are available.

Key components

There are three key components to the recruitment process:

- ❑ *deciding on terms of appointment*
- ❑ *selection of candidates*
- ❑ *probation*

Deciding on Terms of Appointment

Terms of Appointment : Having decided on the grade and rank of the staff required, and the timing concerned, the department should consider what the most appropriate terms of appointment would be. This should take into account the nature of the duties to

be performed and the overall manpower deployment of the department. The different terms of appointment that can be offered are -

- permanent and personable terms;
- agreement terms;
- temporary terms (month-to-month or day-to-day);
- part-time;
- non-civil service appointment; and
- consultancy

Guides to Appointment : Entry requirements of staff in each rank and grade are agreed between the Head of Grade/Department concerned and the Civil Service Branch, taking into account the advice of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service or other relevant advisory bodies. These requirements are periodically reviewed and laid down in Guides to Appointments.

Selection of Candidates

Advertising : Vacancies in the civil service are normally advertised in newspapers and through circulars.

Screening and Selection : Departments screen applications to see if the applicants meet the specified qualifications and other requirements of the post. Suitable candidates are then shortlisted for subsequent examination and/or interviews. Not all grades/departments would require candidates to undergo examination, but candidates would normally be required to be interviewed by a recruitment board or an officer from the recruitment team.

Roles and Responsibilities : The Civil Service Branch recruits staff of some General Grades while Heads of Grades/Departments recruit staff of their own grade/department. For recruitment to middle and senior ranks, the advice of the Public Service Commission has to be sought before appointment is offered.

Flexibility : To minimize recruitment difficulties as well as attract and retain the best people, there are flexibilities which include recruitment overseas, offer of agreement terms, lowering entry qualifications and granting incremental credit for experience.

Probation

During probation staff are introduced to the mission, objectives and values of the civil service and their departments. Probation is a serious process which provides regular feedback on performance and assesses suitability for employment in the civil service. It includes:

- **on-the-job training** : staff should be exposed to the different duties required for their rank. In this way they can learn the skills expected of them and managers can verify their long-term suitability;
- **supervision and guidance** : staff should receive close and sympathetic supervision and guidance to enable problems and difficulties to be identified early and timely counseling or other action to be taken.

Newly joined staff must be told the length of their probationary period, which varies with the requirements of each grade. If there are indications that staff are not suitable for confirmation, they must be counseled and then warned in writing if the problem persists. Confirmation is the step whereby a member of staff on probation is found suitable for the job and employed on permanent and personable terms.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Performance management is a very important Human Resource Management function. Its objective is to improve overall productivity and effectiveness by maximizing individual performance and potential. Performance management is concerned with –

- ❑ improving individual and collective performance;
- ❑ communicating management's expectations to supervisors and staff;
- ❑ improving communication between senior management, supervisors and staff;
- ❑ assisting staff to enhance their career prospects through recognizing and rewarding effective performance;
- ❑ identifying and resolving cases of underperformance; and
- ❑ providing important links to other Human Resource Management functions, such as training.

Key Components

Performance management therefore consists of several key components -

- ❑ *motivation*
- ❑ *performance appraisal*
- ❑ *promotion*
- ❑ *guidance and supervision*
- ❑ *addressing poor performance*

Motivation

Motivation is in many ways the key to the success of Human Resource Management development. Managers should aim to increase performance through self-motivation, rather than having to use external motivation (i.e. the imposition of rules and continual improvements to conditions of service) to bring about higher standards of performance. The civil service has many formal programmes to enhance motivation, and these are discussed in the "staff relations" section of this booklet. However, even more important is the motivational impact that supervisors have on their staff.

Principle : The basic principle underpinning motivation is that if staff are managed effectively, they will seek to give of their best voluntarily without the need for control through rules and sanctions - they will eventually be self-managing.

Procedures : Some of the most effective ways for managers to motivate staff include giving praise; recognition; and positive feedback; passing on feedback from more senior managers; and letting other staff know which staff have been responsible for praiseworthy work and/or effort. Too often staff experience 'management by mistake', where most of the feedback received is corrective or punitive for mistakes they are perceived to have made.

If staff feel that their decisions are generally supported, and when genuine mistakes are made they will be guided in the right direction, they will be more positive, confident and prepared to take on responsibility and decision-making.

When staff are shown clear expectations, valued, trusted, encouraged and motivated, then they will be more likely to give of their best.

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal assesses an individual's performance against previously agreed work objectives. It serves two functions. First, it enables management to evaluate an individual's performance in the current job to identify strengths and overcome weaknesses. Second, it provides information to assist management plan postings, transfers and promotions. In so doing, management is able to compare performance and potential between officers of the same rank.

Principles : The basic principles governing performance appraisal are -

- Heads of Department/Heads of Grade have the flexibility to design their own appraisal system within the framework of these principles;
- performance appraisal should be regarded as a multi-purpose management tool. Outcomes from staff appraisal should guide other Human Resource Management functions;
- it is a joint responsibility of the individual and the supervisor;
- it is a continuous and ongoing process;
- it should relate individual performance to departmental objectives;

- checks and balances should be built into the system to ensure fairness and objectivity; and
- outstanding performance at one rank does not necessarily indicate suitability for promotion to a higher rank.

Procedure : Except for officers on probation, performance appraisal is normally carried out once a year. Different grades/departments may have their own performance appraisal form which enshrines the principles set out in the preceding paragraph.

At the beginning of the reporting cycle, the appraisee should agree with the appraising officer on the main objectives or responsibilities over the reporting period. The list of objectives or responsibilities should be reviewed between the appraisee and the appraising officer during the reporting cycle to see if changes are necessary. At the end of the reporting cycle, the appraising officer will write his assessment. He will pass his assessment to the countersigning officer for the latter's views.

To provide feedback to the appraisee, the appraising officer and the countersigning officer decide between them who should interview the appraisee to discuss with him/her the performance during the reporting period. The interviewing officer should show the entire report to the appraisee before the interview. A summary of the discussion at the interview and the points made by the appraisee should be recorded in the appraisal form. After the interview, the appraisal form is passed to the grade manager for his assessment.

Promotion

Promotion denotes that an individual has the competencies, i.e. the skills, abilities, knowledge and attitudes, required to perform effectively at the next higher rank. The competencies reflect the knowledge and skills exhibited in observable behaviour in the relevant areas of work. Promotion provides motivation to perform well and is an important part of performance management.

Principles : The principle of merit, or the best person for the job is key to promotion. Ability, potential and experience are taken into account in the assessment. The process of assessment should be fair and transparent. It is kept separate from the day to day management of performance and from the annual performance appraisal. The former should be a continuous process, while the latter can be used to assist in determining suitability for promotion.

Promotion Procedures : Heads of Department/Heads of Grade have flexibility to invite certain officers to apply for promotion, or allow officers to opt out of promotion.

As a general rule promotion boards are convened to -

- increase transparency and impartiality; and

- provide an opportunity to consider eligible officers' potential and organizational succession planning.

Where necessary and appropriate, promotion interviews are held to assist in assessment to supplement information provided in staff reports. This will apply to situations where staff reports are insufficient and questionable in terms of fairness or consistency. The promotion boards should be aware of potential unfairness if some staff are interviewed and others are not.

It is good management practice to provide promotion feedback to the staff who were considered but were not selected after a promotion exercise, to enhance communication. Departments respond to enquiries from staff arising from promotion exercises. They are encouraged to take a proactive approach in giving promotion feedback to staff after the relevant exercise has taken place.

Guidance and Supervision

Day-to-day guidance and supervision is necessary to provide direction and feedback to staff. It reinforces the annual performance appraisal, helps groom officers for promotion, and assists staff who are not performing well.

Principles : Guidance and supervision reinforces behaviour that contributes to good performance and discourages behaviour that blocks progress. Feedback should be -

- frequent - staff should not have to wait until formal performance review or appraisal for feedback;
- balanced - it should focus on good and bad performance;
- immediate - immediate feedback has much more impact than feedback given several weeks or months later;
- specific - staff should be in no doubt what actions feedback covers; and
- constructive - feedback should focus on overcoming difficulties or reinforcing successful behaviour.

Procedure : Guidance and supervision is offered on a day-to-day basis as needed.

Addressing Poor Performance

Poor performers need to be appropriately handled to ensure they will not persist in their adverse performance, and will give of their best to the civil service. Management must take action to tackle such performers, otherwise there may be an adverse effect on the morale of staff who are performing satisfactorily.

Principle : When staff are not performing at the level appropriate for their rank and experience, they should be told so, and be helped to overcome the poor performance

through close supervision and counseling. When it is clear that these are to no avail, retirement in the public interest would need to be resorted to. The whole procedure needs to be handled in a sensitive, objective and fair manner.

Procedure : Each instance needs to be handled in the light of circumstances. The normal sequence of action is as follows –

- counseling - staff should be told the areas where they need to improve and how this should be achieved; and
- appraisal - if staff do not respond to counseling their poor performance will be indicated in their annual appraisal.

If no improvement is shown after counseling and appraisal, there is a formal process of dealing with non-performance involving written warning, stoppage of increment and retirement in the public interest.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The objective of training and development is to enable civil servants to acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes necessary to enable them to improve their performance.

Staff training and development should focus on the department's objectives and goals and staff's competencies in achieving them. A strategic approach has the following characteristics :

- ❑ commitment to training and developing people;
- ❑ regular analysis of operational requirements and staff competencies;
- ❑ linking training and development to departmental goals and objectives;
- ❑ skilled training personnel;
- ❑ regular evaluation;
- ❑ a continuous learning culture;
- ❑ joint responsibility between managers and staff for identifying and meeting training needs; and
- ❑ a variety of training and development methods for different circumstances and learning styles.

Key components

Training and Development consists of two main aspects :

- ❑ *training*
- ❑ *development*

Training

Departments manage their own training function and have varying levels of responsibility to do this effectively :

- Management formulates departmental training policies and draws up training and development plans to support departmental missions, objectives and values.
- Managers identify competencies and training needs, implement training activities and provide coaching and supervision to ensure staff development occurs.
- Staff take responsibility to make the most of the opportunities provided to maximize their potential.

Various types of training are provided in the civil service –

- **induction** : to familiarize new recruits with job requirements and procedures, departmental objectives and performance standards; and the values and norms of the department.
- **management development** : to equip managers with the knowledge and skills required and to widen their perspective.
- **vocational** : to provide staff with the professional or technical knowledge and skills required for work.
- **language and communication** : to meet operational needs (e.g. Thai, Vietnamese) and to prepare for the future (Putonghua and written Chinese).
- **computer** : to provide staff with basic computers skills.

Development

The purpose of career development is to identify and develop the potential within staff, to build existing skill levels, and to prepare staff to take on greater responsibility during their career.

Career development has to balance the needs and aspirations of the individual with the needs of the service - where these conflict, the needs of the service should prevail.

Posting

Postings for staff should take account of the previous experience of the individual and his future needs and potential. Staff can either be developed to have a broad experience across a number of areas or they can focus on a particular area and develop in-depth experience. Determining the most appropriate way to develop staff is a balance between

the needs of the organization and the aspirations of the individual. Future posting aspirations should be discussed with staff on the understanding that in the final analysis the needs of the civil service are paramount.

Acting Appointment

There are three kinds of acting appointments :

- acting "with a view" - whereby staff are posted to the acting rank to assess their suitability for substantive promotion
- acting "with a singling out effect" - whereby staff who do not merit immediate promotion or an acting appointment with a view to substantive promotion but who are nevertheless assessed to have better potential than other officers to undertake the more demanding duties in the higher rank, are placed in the higher rank to assess their suitability for substantive promotion.
- acting for administrative convenience - whereby staff are placed in a higher rank to cover the absence of the normal post holder, e.g. through sickness, long holiday or maternity leave. Staff acting for administrative convenience revert to their substantive rank on the return of the substantive post holder.

Apart from acting for administrative convenience which is more ad hoc, the other two types of acting provide opportunities for staff to be exposed to more onerous duties and responsibilities, thereby testing their ability.

Secondment

Secondment from departments for attachments in policy branches in the Government Secretariat are good ways to expose staff to a different working environment which places greater emphasis on policy formulation and resource control. Apart from secretariat attachments, secondments and exchange schemes with overseas and private sector counterparts can be arranged to broaden staff's exposure.

STAFF RELATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of staff relations is to ensure effective communication between management and staff, to secure maximum cooperation from staff, and to motivate staff to give their best by ensuring that they feel fairly treated, understand the overall direction and values of the Civil Service and those of their departments, and how decisions that affect them have been reached.

The principles that govern staff relations are that, where possible:

- ❑ management should communicate regularly and openly with staff;
- ❑ staff should be consulted on matters that affect them;
- ❑ problems and disputes should be resolved through discussion and consultation;
- ❑ the Government should uphold the resolutions of the International Labour Organization conventions; and
- ❑ management should devise and encourage activities that contribute to staff's well being.

Key components

Staff relations cover :

- ❑ *securing staff commitment*
- ❑ *dispute resolution*
- ❑ *addressing grievances*
- ❑ *welfare*

Securing staff commitment

The public judges service by personal experience. This is largely determined by the staff who handle individual cases - often front-line staff. Staff commitment is thus crucial to providing the quality of service that the public expects.

Front-line staff have difficult jobs to do and should be fully trained to answer questions, to know the rules they must administer, and to be taught how to deal with unusual cases as well as the inevitable difficult customer. In short they need to know how to be positive, helpful and courteous - everyday.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that programmes are in place for this purpose. They must also lead by example, so that the principles of good service cascade through all levels of the department.

Consultation

At the central level, there are four staff consultative councils : the Senior Civil Service Council, the Model Scale I Staff Consultative Council, the Police Force Council and the Disciplined Services Consultative Council. It is Government's policy that staff should be consulted on all significant changes to terms and conditions of service.

At the departmental level, Departmental Consultative Committees provide a consultative channel between management and staff representatives, mainly on departmental matters.

Managers should listen to their staff, and encourage them to air their views or make suggestions. In addition to formal channels, this can be achieved through opinion surveys, suggestion schemes, working groups, and other informal discussions.

Communication

Communication is a two-way process, for releasing staff's ideas, energy and ambitions. Through communication, management helps staff understand the mission, objectives and values of the department, and staff can let management know their ideas and aspirations for giving their best. To achieve effective communication, managers normally consider the following -

- the message they intend to send
- who they need to communicate with
- the most effective form of communicating this particular message
- how the audience would be likely to receive the message.

Formal communication channels include the consultative machinery, meetings, briefings, newsletters and circulars. Informal channels include recreational and sports activities, and day-to-day contact.

Recognition

Recognition of individual or group achievements and efforts will help promote the right attitude to work, and bring out the best in staff. Apart from pay increase, promotion and job extension, recognition is a good way to motivate staff. The following formal schemes help to motivate staff -

- Commendation/Appreciation Letters
- Long Service Travel Awards
- Long and Meritorious Service Award
- Retirement Souvenirs
- Honours and Awards
- Staff Suggestions Scheme
- Staff Motivation Scheme

Informal schemes include competitions, prizes, and articles in newsletters.

Resolving Disputes

Disputes between management and staff should be avoided if possible by prompt and constructive discussion between the two sides. Disputes are resolved at the departmental level as far as possible. Where they cannot be resolved by the department,

or where they relate to issues of service-wide implications such as pay and conditions of service, the relevant policy branch and the Civil Service Branch would be involved.

Addressing Grievances

The Government operates an open and fair system to deal with complaints and appeals from staff. Departments normally designate senior officers to handle staff complaints. Procedures for staff to lodge complaints are widely published and made known to staff on their first reporting for duty and are re-circulated at regular intervals.

Complaints should be expeditiously dealt with. In particular, the Government is committed to providing a working environment which is free from sexual harassment for its staff. Detailed guidelines on the handling of complaints of this nature have been promulgated.

Welfare

As a good employer, the Government considers it important to provide welfare and recreational facilities to staff in maintaining staff morale, enhancing their loyalty and esprit de corps. The following are schemes/facilities that help to achieve this –

- ❑ Staff Welfare Fund
- ❑ Staff Relief Fund
- ❑ Staff Recreation Room
- ❑ Staff Recreation Club
- ❑ Holiday Bungalows

There are also rules and guidelines to help staff in distress. In the unfortunate event that staff encounter misfortune, they can approach their supervisor or departmental secretary to see what help can be given.

Management Information System

EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES	
<i>MANPOWER PLANNING</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turnover by rank/grade & reason • growth of ranks • existence of a manpower plan • existence of a succession plan • staff leaving during probation
<i>TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training need analysis • number of training days per staff per year • existence of a training plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of career development interviews conducted
<i>STAFF RELATIONS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • days lost through industrial action • number of staff complaints • number of suggestions by staff • number of meetings held

Introduction

An effective management information system enables various levels of information to be systematically collected about human resource matters so that departments, policy branches and Civil Service Branch can monitor and predict the effectiveness of Human Resource Management practices.

Accurate management information enables forward looking Human Resource Management by providing the means to :

- monitor and improve on-going Human Resource Management performance
- provide up-to-date information on which to base policy development
- verify and demonstrate departmental effectiveness in Human Resource Management
- create service-wide checks and balances to safeguard delegation and provide true accountability for Human Resource Management

Management information falls into two categories, i.e. information collected by Civil Service Branch for service-wide management, and that gathered by departments for Human Resource Management at the point of service delivery.

Key components

Therefore the key components in a staff management information system are :

- Civil Service Branch*
- Departments*
- Human Resource Management performance measures*
- Targets and indicators*

Civil Service Branch

Civil Service Branch sets high level strategic Human Resource Management objectives which are reviewed and amended in the light of changing service-wide operational needs.

Civil Service Branch's objectives are not likely to change greatly from year to year and will take a medium to long term view of the management of the civil service. The Branch defines the information needed to review departmental effectiveness in Human

Resource Management, and assesses administrative efficiency and consistency (where required).

The Civil Service Branch determines the minimum requirements for information needed to be collated centrally so as to minimize the burden upon departments. Also to this end, central Government is moving towards service-wide computerization to make the capture and analysis of data much simpler.

Departments

Human Resource Management information at the departmental level assists effective monitoring and management of human resources. Identifying and gathering such information enables departments to gain early warning of potential problems (e.g. recruitment difficulties) and develop possible solutions before crisis response is required.

One of the means to obtain information is to conduct staff opinion surveys. These surveys, which consult and involve, are a fast and effective means of finding out what the staff think and are well worth doing. Climate surveys, for example, help managers understand staff's day-to-day experience of work. Attitude surveys help us audit the extent to which the department's values have been accepted. Some of the data will be useful to Civil Service Branch to assist in monitoring Human Resource Management across the civil service, and ensure accountability for effective and efficient Human Resource Management.

Monitoring over time enables departments to fine-tune Human Resource Management plans based on accurate information rather than guesswork and memory.

Human Resource Management Performance Measures

Effective monitoring depends on having the right performance measures in place. Human Resource Management performance measures should therefore relate to all aspects of Human Resource Management.

Management information will not always be statistically quantifiable and measurable data, but it should be as objective as possible and based on observable quantifiable measures wherever possible.

Targets and Indicators

Departments can set targets for Human Resource Management performance. This would normally be done in consultation with the policy branch, and likely to be only for

a few selected aspects. Departments should also monitor developments in other areas of interest to them, using such measures as indicators.

Civil Service Branch is consulting departments in preparing a list of Human Resource Management performance measures which can be used by departments to help them monitor and improve their own Human Resource Management practices. Some of the information collected will be required by Civil Service Branch to assist in fulfilling its responsibility to monitor Human Resource Management across the civil service and develop appropriate policy which is based on accurate, up-to-date information.

THE WAY AHEAD

Human Resource Management is a long established task. However there is a new emphasis emerging and greater importance being placed on finding ways of managing staff better, so that they can and will continue to give of their best in these times of changing community needs and expectations.

The challenge ahead in Human Resource Management is not to effect cultural change overnight, but rather to take initiatives which will lead to continuous improvement and show a more planned approach to managing people. It is our collective responsibility to motivate, develop and manage staff in such a way that their contributions to the service are maximized.

Civil Service Branch sets the strategic direction and formulates the overall Human Resource Management development policy to encourage and support departments to achieve continuous improvement in their areas. It has reviewed Human Resource Management policies and practices and identified four main priorities:

- emphasis on more open, flexible and caring management of people, rather than the administration of rules
- delegation of authority and accountability for Human Resource Management to those responsible for service delivery
- simplification of rules and procedures to encourage efficiency and effectiveness
- increasing Civil Service Branch's strategic Human Resource Management role in policy formulation, setting guidelines and rules, and advising departments on Human Resource Management implementation.

To address these priorities, Civil Service Branch is encouraging departments to review their Human Resource Management policies and practices, and to plan how Human Resource Management initiatives can help address the operational needs of the department.

Policy Branches will need to give more emphasis to their role, to agree and monitor departmental Human Resource Management plans with their departments.

Departments have the challenge to take stock of the existing culture and Human Resource Management practices with a view to finding better ways to enable and encourage the self-motivation, development and management of staff. Departments should form their own Human Resource Management plans to bring about more effective and efficient performance to meet their objectives.

Individual Civil Servants should be committed to the Government's aim to serve the community, continue to give of their very best, and take every opportunity to keep building the new culture. They should understand the changing values and expectations,

and work with management to identify opportunities for personal and departmental performance improvement, and culture change.

The way ahead, therefore, is to build on current strengths and successes in the most relevant areas of Human Resource Management, and plan a realistic approach to continuous improvement over time.

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