

A photograph of four business professionals sitting around a long, light-colored conference table in a bright, modern office. The man in the foreground on the right is wearing glasses and a dark suit, looking down at a smartphone. The woman next to him is looking towards the left. The man in the center is also looking towards the left. The man on the far left is looking towards the camera. The background features large windows with a grid pattern, letting in bright light. A yellow horizontal bar is positioned below the photograph.

Actionable

Using Data to Improve Employee Performance



INTRODUCTION

Measuring employee performance is harder than it looks. Thankfully, over the years, systems have expanded to provide managers a host of data to analyze quantitatively how employees are performing. This data works especially well in roles that follow a specific process regularly, like sales or customer service. For these teams, employee performance data can be pulled from CRMs, customer service platforms, employee surveys, and more.

Using employee performance data benefits employees, managers, and the organization. Here, we'll take a look at those benefits and provide specific suggestions for how you can start using this data today.

Benefits of Using Employee Performance Data

Employee & Manager Benefits

The impact of employee performance data on employees and managers is vast. Performance data allows managers to see which employees are performing well and which need to improve. This provides assurances for top performers like being rewarded accordingly via compensation, recognition, or by furthering their career opportunities within the organization. Even more importantly, all employees benefit from having a better understanding of what is expected of them and how they are meeting those expectations.

Alternatively, visibility into employee performance data empowers low performers to realize which skills they need to work on. For example, if Jeff is a sales rep and notices he makes 20% less calls than his peers, then he knows that picking up his pace on the phones is key to making improvements to his overall performance.

For managers, this employee visibility into performance data creates alignment on goals. That way, performance review conversations, particularly negative ones, don't have to be a surprise for either party. Managers can also gain insight into each individual's strengths and weaknesses in order to optimally structure subteams, or even build a mentorship program based on skill level. Lastly, managers are armed with the proper data to accurately forecast the performance of their groups and estimate trends over time.

Ultimately, employee performance data gives teams the power to recognize opportunity areas on which they can center goals in order to continuously improve. Because employees will always know where their performance stands, they can make adjustments as they go. This level of transparency frequently leads to higher employee engagement.

PRO TIP: Try using real-time data!

Using real-time data allows employees to see how their output is directly affecting how they are meeting their goals as they happen, so they can quickly course correct if needed, magnifying the overall performance.



Organizational Benefits

Employee performance data garners a number of organizational benefits, as well. With this information, teams can become more agile. The lowest performers can be easily identified, put on a performance improvement plan, and if necessary, weeded out. Data can show you where your team is lacking individually and as a whole. If your organization is working to trim the fat, employee performance data will make that process smoother and more accurate. Data drives objective-based decisions, as opposed to subjective or biased opinions that might have a net negative effect.

Another key organizational benefit of employee performance data is the ability to compare different teams' performances against each other. For example, if you have an inside sales group broken into three teams, you can determine which team is performing best and why. This will give you insight into manager performance, as well. In addition, managers need to frequently assess team and individual performance. Having this data at hand allows performance reviews to be more transparent while decreasing time spent preparing for them.

Employee performance data can enhance recruiting, as it hones in on necessary skills. For instance, if you know that people with exceptional time management skills make great service reps in your organization, you can test for that in CSR interviews. Going one step further, this data can help identify elements that impact retention.

Having accurate information about what leads to higher performance is crucial. Employee performance data can eliminate fundamentally wrong assumptions. And, once you better understand how you're performing, you can improve upon your tactics.

Your spend is a top priority, and employee performance data can help organizations allocate resources accordingly. You can properly budget if, say, you're over-staffed, and better manage human capital. For example, if you get the most support questions via chat, do you have people manning that communication channel? This data will give you the answers you need. Higher performance and engagement also creates better experiences for customers.



Employee Benefits Resulting in Organizational Benefits



Changes You Can Make Today

Every manager strives to make data-driven decisions, but most are intimidated by the idea of actually implementing a program and process for collecting and analyzing data.

This immediately creates a barrier to successfully making data-driven decisions, and thus negatively impacts a manager's ability to measure performance based on real quantitative data, and create a performance culture. This doesn't have to be the case, however, as there are simple steps you can make today that will allow you to utilize data to improve employee performance.

The first step is to establish a data culture. A data culture is one where managers and employees value the integrity and volume of data, and understand that data-driven decisions in general lead to a more successful and happier working place. In order for a data culture to work, managers must clearly deliver the value of data, and enforce the data collection and integrity processes that allows for data-driven decisioning making — particularly with regard to performance management. Let's face it, if a sales rep is managed on activity (calls, deals, etc.) but they aren't logging the activity properly in the CRM, then the behavior either needs to be fixed, or the employee needs to be removed. Data cultures do not allow for anyone to jeopardize the ability to make data-driven decisions.

Data culture largely relies on the establishment of mutually agreed upon goals and KPIs. This means that managers and employees work together to set the metrics, and then ensure that the data is readily available and allows for clear goal status tracking.

Once the foundation for the data culture is created, the next step is to make the data work for you — not the other way around. The single biggest contributor to an organization's data struggle is the fear or disdain that every employee has for **data entry**. This is especially true for sales reps, who seemingly go to extreme lengths to do the minimum amount of data entry. Many employees would rather spend an hour talking about how much they hate data entry than spend the handful of minutes each day that the tasks actually take. This can all change, however, if you can get data and the systems that collect and organize it to start working for you, ultimately mitigating the data entry risks that organizations face. To do this, you need to integrate a performance management solution with your current data systems.

Integrating a performance management tool directly with your data collection system, whether it's a CRM



like Salesforce.com, customer service software like Zendesk, or a homegrown solution, will provide real-time performance data right at your fingertips, without having to do any additional data entry or manage analysts or support staff. For example, IActionable is a performance management platform that leverages gamification to help your employees understand and meet your expectations. It integrates directly into tools like Salesforce and Zendesk to automatically track goals, create leaderboards, and conduct team contests. A tool like this not only makes it possible to leverage data for employee management without any additional work, but it also keeps the data culture alive and well. A performance management tool isn't only for managers, as employees will benefit greatly from the transparency they receive from real-time performance data. As part of the data culture, employees will be involved in their goal-setting and KPIs exercises with their manager. This means that they'll have a clear view into their goals and how they're performing against set objectives.

So to recap, the following can be started **today** in order to effectively utilize data to improve employee performance:

1

Start A Data Culture

- Express the value of data quantity and quality
- Establish data-backed, quantitative goals and KPIs

2

Implement A Performance Management Tool

- This makes the data work for you, not the other way around
- Add transparency and accountability to employee performance

Scores - Sales Reps

INTERVAL April 2016

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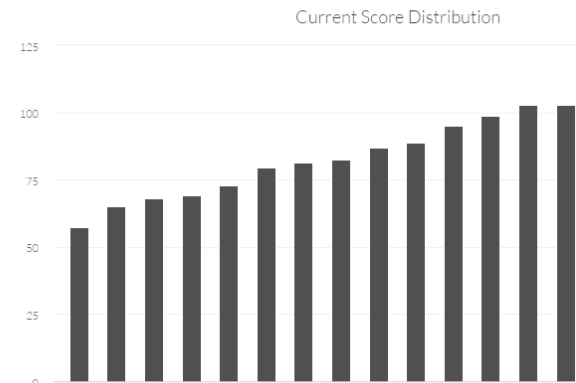
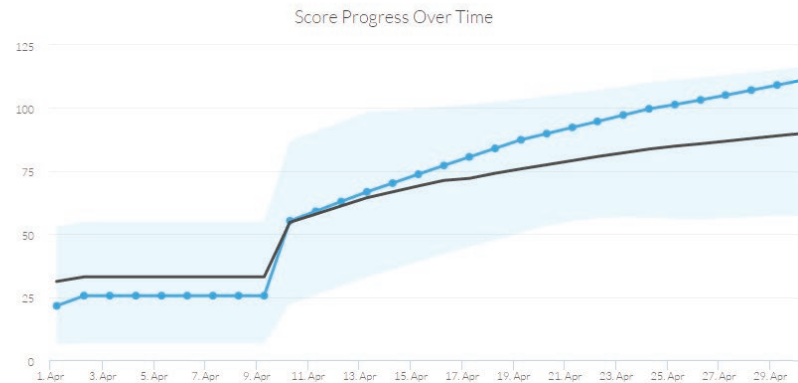
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6	Ashley Haga	106.01
		102.86
		102.72

CONCLUSION

All of the benefits discussed above demonstrate why employees, managers, and organizations as a whole should plan to improve performance by using data. If you want to make more impactful decisions, make them data-driven. You can create a data culture today by leveraging the tools that will give you the data you need in real-time.

Actionable is a performance management solution that employees, managers, and organizations can use to drive better performance across the board. Want to learn how exactly it works? **Request a demo below!**

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)