

Accelerating performance and development through mentoring

Copyright © January 2008, People Assured Group, Inc. Contact: info@peopleassured.com

Situation

Resulting from a series of structural changes and promotions in the Americas IT organization of a Fortune 500 corporation, the client service team leaders for commercial and supply chain IT and the regional IT infrastructure manager were given new IT leadership roles. In parallel, a new Americas IT Director was appointed to lead this team and drive the IT Group's strategy and delivery capabilities. This presented new challenges and opportunities for the managers to grow, take-on additional responsibilities, deliver objectives and achieve performance targets.

People Assured was engaged on a 6 month pilot program to provide confidential mentoring, action planning and feedback to the line managers, to help accelerate their performance and development.

Action and approach

Working with the HR Group and IT Director and building from the Company's Global performance management system, departmental goals and annual objectives were reviewed during half-year reviews with each team leader (at which People Assured was an observer). These were translated into individual results goals, leadership behaviors and development goals for Q3 / Q4.

People Assured then met with each manager to discuss these goals, review personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as competencies, and agree priority areas for development that would enable goals to be met. Personal development (action) plans were produced with each manager that were measureable and included a list of the goals, key development areas (e.g. effective communication, people development, stakeholder management), actions, target dates and measures to demonstrate that progress had been made.

The company also triggered a 360 degree feedback, so that development plans were informed by the views of managers outside the department, as well as peers and direct reports.

Following sign-off of the plans, the individual mentoring process was initiated, comprising:

- Confidential (weekly) phone-based mentoring, action planning and feedback
- Monthly face-to-face review of progress against plan
- Periodic review and update of progress with the IT Director

In addition, managers were encouraged to communicate with the mentor between scheduled calls to work on 'live' issues.

Where the managers were facing common challenges (e.g. succession planning) the group held a 'team' discussion to facilitate learning, sharing of ideas and ensure consistent delivery.

Results and Benefits

The Company performance management system establishes individuals' goals and performance targets ("What") - this program is focused on helping to deliver them ("How"). In addition to improving performance and achievement of goals, benefits from the mentoring program include:

- Increased team leader confidence and competence
- Improved relationships with peers, direct reports and business/ IT leaders
- An action-oriented, measurable approach to performance improvement
- Introduction to industry peers to enhance networking and information exchange.

Quotes

"I was looking for a practical program to help 3 of my line managers with their personal and leadership development. This was not to replace 'direct coaching' from me – more to supplement by dedicating additional time to their development needs as well as offering an outside mentoring service for them to utilize. People Assured brought a wealth of IT Management and Leadership Development experience to the program which was very beneficial to the associates –they certainly got a lot out of the experience."

Senior IT Director, Fortune 500 CPG Company.