

## How accountable are supervisors for the performance of their staff?

Many supervisors have split roles – part functional and part management/leadership. The evidence is that they are generally more at home with their functional tasks than with their people related roles.

This functional / task preference can have a strong negative impact on the performance of staff reporting to the supervisor.

Contemporary approaches to performance management replace the “master – servant” relationship between supervisor and staff member with a more mutually accountable model. This model recognises that the staff member may seriously struggle to achieve their performance objectives without the support of their supervisor – and the provision of this support needs to be easily monitored and accurately measured.

Specifically, staff should rate the generic and customised support they receive from their supervisor.

Generic (for example), my supervisor:

- *Holds regular, constructive discussions with me about my work.*
- *Gives me appropriate recognition when I perform well*
- *Deals with workplace conflict effectively*
- *Cares about my general wellbeing*
- *Seeks feedback about their performance – upward feedback*
- *Gives me the authority and autonomy I need to do my job properly.*

Customised (varies depending on each staff member, but for example), my supervisor will:

- *Meet with me every fortnight to review progress with Project X*
- *Coach me on improving my negotiation skills (required to achieve Business Priority A).*

At every performance review, the supervisor’s performance should also be on the table for discussion. The ratings provided by the staff member are reported to senior line managers and HR executives who can target development needs in performance management at those supervisors who need it most.

Many businesses are now beginning to take advantage of reporting tools attached to the performance management process to make a more rigorous assessment of supervisors support for the performance of their staff.

Are you?