

# How to make performance management planning work for you

Setting clear performance objectives is still vital, despite the changes being made to many organisations' performance management processes. It ensures that employees focus on work that helps them contribute optimally to both team and business success whilst growing their careers.



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“If done right, goal-setting is still considered key in enabling employees to start any performance period or role with an understanding of their role priorities and what success looks like,” says Lindiwe Sebesho, executive committee member, South African Reward Association (SARA). “It can also direct development efforts as employees can use this as reference for refining their capabilities for the short and long term growth. Most importantly, setting effective objectives reduces the stress associated with performance reviews for those organisations that still hold these formally.”

Whilst performance objectives used to be set annually at the beginning of a performance period, more organisations now encourage shorter objective setting cycles e.g. quarterly, as this helps them adjust their focus in line with changes in their environment.

“It is important that employees optimise the objective setting processes in their companies to align their career goals with those of the organisation,” says Sebesho. “As goal setting discussions usually happen in teams and/or directly with an employee’s line manager, employees can use these goals to understand key business priorities and the contributions they can make. Not only should this ensure that their performance is in line with what the company expects from them, but it also enables them to work proactively towards a common result which benefits all.”

## Clear performance objectives are imperative

There are various ways in which organisations guide the development of objectives to ensure that they are output-focused and drive valued results. The most common of these is the CSMART principle: Challenging, Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. Using this guide, employees can ensure that their objectives are clearly defined and can be used to indicate intent and substantiate achievements.



Lindiwe Sebesho

Sebesho says this is particularly important as many organisations use performance outputs to determine different reward elements. “Salaries, bonuses and incentives are usually tied to the level of achievement against stretched performance objectives and targets. So, to set yourself up for success, not only for reward purposes, but in terms of career progression, it is important to be clear about the contribution you have to make and the standards against which your performance will be assessed. Setting effective objectives is therefore a key part of owning your success as an employee.”

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