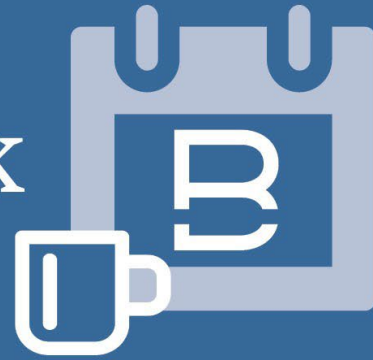


The Work Week

Bassford Remele Employment Practice Group



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Welcome to another edition of *The Work Week with Bassford Remele*. Each Monday morning, we will publish and send a new article to your inbox to hopefully assist you in jumpstarting your work week.

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It's Time to Give the PIP Its Own PIP

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We all know the dreaded Performance Improvement Plan (“PIP”). Across industries, PIPs carry a reputation as a last-ditch effort before termination. However, when approached with genuine intent to support employee development, a PIP can be a powerful tool for retention, growth, and morale. Transforming a PIP from a precursor to dismissal into an instrument for improvement requires intentional design and execution. Below are some tips employers can use to repurpose the PIP into an effective retention and development tool.

1. Shift the Mindset Around PIPs

The first step in improving a PIP is redefining its purpose within the organization. Employers must emphasize that a PIP is not a punitive measure but an opportunity for employees to succeed with structured support. This shift can foster trust and open dialogue between managers and employees, creating a foundation for more collaboration.

2. Set Clear, Attainable Goals

A PIP should outline specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives. Overly broad or unrealistic expectations can demotivate employees, making failure seem inevitable. Clear goals, coupled with a realistic timeline, allow employees to focus their efforts effectively.

3. Provide Resources and Support

For a PIP to succeed, employees need access to tools, training, and mentorship tailored to their development needs. This could include additional coaching, peer support, or skill development programs.

4. Ensure Two-Way Communication

PIPs should be a collaborative effort, not a one-sided directive. Encourage employees to share their perspectives on the challenges they face and actively involve them in creating the PIP.

5. Focus on Future Potential

Instead of focusing solely on past shortcomings, a PIP should highlight the employee's strengths and how they can be leveraged for improvement. Frame the plan as an investment in their potential, reinforcing their value to the organization.

6. Regularly Review and Adjust

A rigid PIP can fail to address evolving circumstances. Regular reviews allow both parties to adjust objectives or strategies as needed but be careful not to move the goal posts too much. Flexibility demonstrates the organization's commitment to the employee's success.

7. Specifically Tailor the PIP to the Employee

What may work for one employee may not work for another. Likewise, what may work for an employee in Human Resources may not work for an employee in the IT department. A tailored PIP addresses unique challenges, leverages individual or team strengths, and aligns with role-specific objectives, making it more effective than a one-size-fits-all approach.

8. Evaluate Organizational Contribution

Sometimes, performance issues stem from systemic problems, not individual shortcomings. Consider whether factors such as unclear expectations, insufficient resources, or poor team dynamics may be contributing to performance challenges. Addressing these root causes can create a more supportive environment for all employees and possibly reduce the organization's reliance on PIPs.

Conclusion

A well-designed PIP can be an investment rather than a liability or a "check the box" function. By focusing on growth, offering meaningful support, and fostering collaboration, organizations can use PIPs to retain and empower employees, transforming potential termination cases into success stories that benefit both the individual and the company.

The Bassford Remele Employment Group can guide employers through the complexities of developing tailored strategies that address employee performance or organizational challenges while mitigating risk. Please reach out with any questions.

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