

The Importance of the Mine Manager and the Appraisal System in the Mining Sector

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Abstract

Mine Managers are responsible for overseeing the overall performance of a mining company. Key duties include monitoring and evaluation of production targets, adherence to health and safety issues of an organization as well review of new and on-going projects. For effective performance measure of the Mine Manager's subordinates regular appraisals must be carried out. The appraisal system results in open communication, improved results and motivated employees when they are rewarded.

Keywords: Appraisals, job description, job specification, Mine Manager

1. Mining Manager Job description

A job description is describes the general tasks and responsibilities of a position (Prien and Hughs, 2004). The job description specifies to whom the position reports to, the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, information about the equipment, tools and work aids used, working conditions, physical demands and the salary range. Job descriptions are usually narrative, but some may comprise a simple list of competencies; for instance, strategic human resource planning methodologies may be used to develop competency architecture for an organization, from which job descriptions are built as a shortlist of competencies.

A job description is developed by conducting a job analysis, which includes examining the tasks and sequences of tasks necessary to perform the job. The analysis considers the areas of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform the job. Job analysis involves the following steps: collecting and recording job information; checking the job information for accuracy; writing job descriptions based on the information; using the information to

determine what skills, abilities, and knowledge are required to perform the job as well as updating the information from time to time (Brannick et al., 2007). The job description might be broadened to specification also known as the terms of reference. The job specification can be presented as a stand-alone document, but in practice it is usually included within the job description. A job description is often used by employers in the recruitment process.

In the job description for the Mine Manager the following are considered important for his/her day to day activities: Maintenance and encouraging a positive safety and environment culture at all times in the organization, Preparing and implementing operational plans for the mine, and monitor and report progress, Proposing capital expenditure projects to expand capacity or improve operations, Leading the mine operations management team and manage all mining personnel and resources, Preparing production and operating budgets, and monitor and report performance and costs, Contributing to business planning and company strategy to improve competitiveness, profitability and growth, Recognizing and anticipating operational, technical and safety challenges, take action to prevent or overcome them, and seek continuous improvement, Engagement with local communities and regulatory authorities to promote company policies, Collaborate with other management colleagues and corporate executives to achieve overall business objectives, Work closely with maintenance department to ensure continuous, safe, efficient operations, Oversee new projects, such as installing new mining equipment or opening a new shaft, Manage relations with trade unions and lastly Oversee the recruitment and development of superintendents, supervisors, and operators, providing support, encouragement, advice and guidance to build an effective workforce.

2. Mine Manager Job specification

A job specification describes the education, experience, skills, knowledge required to perform a job. It is a very important document used by Human Resources professionals to communicate the desired people requirement in the organization. Job seekers generally respond to a particular job advert after reading the job specification. The job specification of a Mine Manager include: Determination, implementation and monitoring of production strategies; activities; plans; reports and schedules, Procurement of external assistance and expert advice to provide assurance for design specifications according to best practice in line with the company strategy, Identification of potential business risks and ensure processes are established to manage appropriately, Ensuring the integrity of underground expansion projects, Managing and ensuring proper people development in the department and to ensure implementation and adherence to the Company's Safety, Health and Environmental management programs and objectives. The other specifications include directing the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure adherence to mining standards, organizational standards and legislative requirements. The minimum requirements for this job are a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent in Mining Engineering, at least 5 years' experience at Section Manager / Mine Overseer Level. Additional requirements include the Mine Manager's Certificate of Competence, valid driver's license, underground mining experience essential, broad technical knowledge of underground mining operations and processes, knowledge of relevant legislation, sound computer skills, mine planning and analysis, financial and project management, Good business acumen and entrepreneurial thinking, ability to create team synergy, manage diversity and promote a high performance culture as well as excellent interpersonal skills with good verbal and written communication skills in English.

3 Importance of Appraisals for the Mine Manager

Strategic Human Resources makes a significant contribution to an organization in the act of implementing a performance appraisal. The critical output of an effective evaluation system is employee motivation and the elimination of behavioral problems (Gruman and Saks, 2011). A good appraisal system appraises an employee by feedbacks received from different quarters including peers and subordinates as well as supervisors and the management. The actual benefit of feedback occurs when an employee takes constructive criticism in the right spirit. The performance appraisal system is critical in ensuring that the Mine Manager meets his/her goals and objectives through performing subordinates. The performance appraisal system used by the Human Resource personal in consultation with the Line Managers which include the Mine Manager is shown in Figure 1.

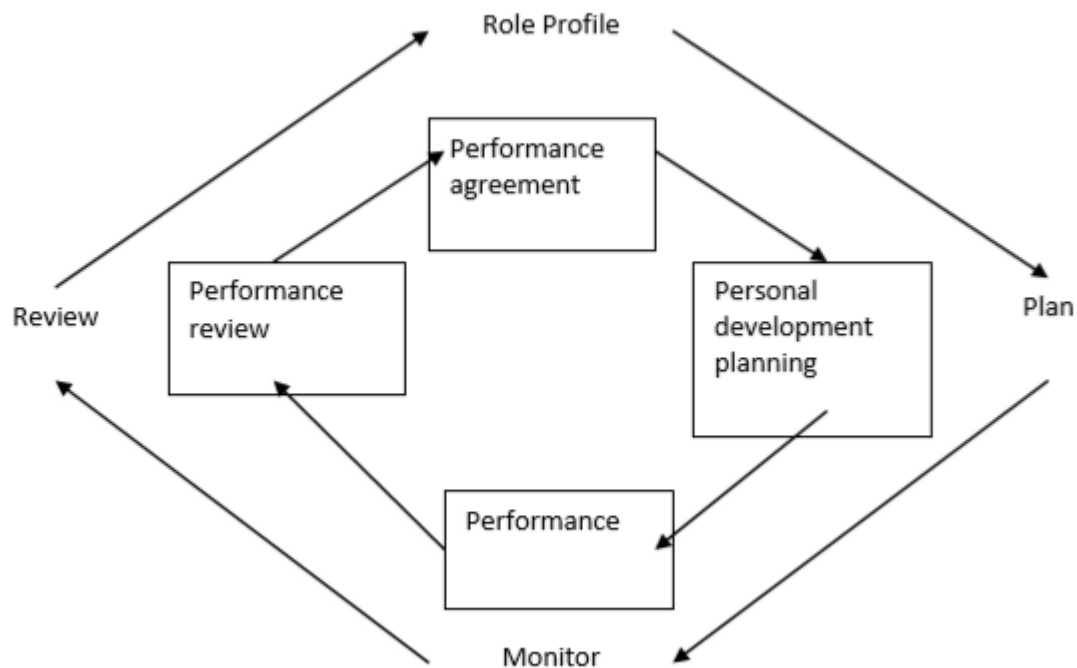


Figure 1: Performance appraisal system flow diagram (Armstrong, 2013)

4. Benefits of the Appraisals to the Mine Manager

The Mine Manager must conduct performance appraisals in order to track performance, compensate, know the strengths and weaknesses of subordinates, improve communication as well as the setting of new goals. The detailed reasons why a Mine Manager must carry out are explained in detail below:

4.1 Tracking exceptional performance and compensation

The Mine Manager should monitor an employee's performance with the idea of rewarding exemplary employee contribution with compensation. Employees who are talented and are high fliers must attract a higher annual increase than those contributing less. Tracking exceptional performance can only happen through an appraisal process which will include regular one-on-one discussions between the employee and his/her supervisor to sort out the key contributors from the rest and compensate all accordingly and fairly (Bush, 2008).

4.2 Improving communication

When the Mine Manager conducts appraisals he also allows the opening up of communication and its improvement. Silence is not an effective form of communication in organizations. When things are not going well between employees and managers, a simple solution like communication can build bridges. An employee performance appraisal system works well as a channel for employee-employer communication (Hugh and Jim, 2009). The Mine Managers should use the appraisal assessment tool as an opportunity to describe the criteria on which the performance is judged. This also helps the employee to understand better how to do his job.

4.3 Checking on subordinates strengths and weaknesses

When the Mine Manager is handing out assignments, it is important to be on top of the situation like knowing whose best fitted for the job or who would mess it up completely if they are given the task. Having a formal personal appraisal system which regularly tracks an individual's strengths and weakness will be crucial in setting up strong teams with members formally assessed for their contributing and noncontributing areas (Arnaboldi and Azzone, 2010)

4.4 Setting of new goals

When the Mine Manager conducts the appraisals to the subordinates it helps the organization setting new goals from the interaction and also identifying where there is need for improvement. Productive employees are goal driven and this is reflected in their performance appraisal. Employees relentlessly pursue their goals to achieve results and rewards. The setting of goals can be the high point of an appraisal when an employee feels charged to perform and achieve the desired goals (Frauenheim, 2009). When an employee an employee meets the set targets during the appraisal system it also increases their confidence levels. The appraisal system also gives an opportunity for the Mine Manager to realign the organization's objectives if market situations are changing and set goals that align to the situation. Formal evaluations through appraisals are also a good time to step away from the pressure of everyday duties and reflect on the direction the team is heading towards.

4.5 To check if the company systems are working well

The carrying out of the appraisals is a valuable way to gain the necessary skills and knowledge for managing human capital in the organization. An efficient human capital is the key competitive advantage for organizations (Thomas et al., 2008). An employee evaluation is a key instrument to evaluate the effectiveness of human resource personnel in the organization.

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5. Conclusion

The Mine Manager's position is a critical technical position in the mining industry covering the production and safety issues of any mining company. The Mine Manager can assist in organizational growth through the performance of appraisals to subordinates. When the appraisals are conducted fairly and efficiently the mining organization can get positive feedback from employees and open communication.

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Biographies

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