

Housecalls at Work

Answers from Dr. Insite

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Dr. Insite is an ongoing column to address people-related issues in nonprofit organizations. For answers to your workplace issues, please e-mail your questions to DrInsite@coreinsites.com. All responses will be handled confidentially.

DEAR DR. INSITE:

Because our goal is to effectively serve our constituents, the tremendous growth of our association has demanded a commensurate growth in our staff. While this is a "good" problem, determining that each staff member is truly serving the association's needs is a difficult task. How do I ensure superior staff performance?

DEAR PERFORMANCE PUNDIT:

Managing staff performance is often viewed as a labor rather than a necessary management function. Avoid the temptation to treat performance management as a generic process. Instead, customize objectives and criteria so that all activities are in sync with the culture of your association and what it seeks to accomplish.

Be sure to keep the process simple as you adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Link staff performance to the association's core principles and values.** Evalu-

consistent with the purpose, distinctive philosophy and valued priorities of the association. For example, if ethics and integrity are central to the character of the association, then does each employee also model these standards? Employees will have a variety of personalities and styles, but the few core elements that are essential to your organization must also be valued by those who work there.

- **Link staff performance to tactical activities defined in your strategy.** What are the goals of the association? What is the role of each employee in helping the association achieve those goals? Individuals must understand how their daily actions contribute to the association's success. Defining the right tasks to focus on and then tracking progress in achieving them will not only advance the association, but also motivate employees to accomplish work that is valued.
- **Make performance and strategy part**

Don't wait till one or two prescribed times of the year to discuss performance issues. Regularly discuss progress toward achieving goals and provide timely feedback. Managing performance is a continuous process. With this ongoing dialogue, everyone will more effectively focus on the work that matters most to the membership that you serve. ●

Sheila L. Margolis and Ava S. Wilensky hold doctoral degrees in Human Resource Development. As the principals of CORE InSites® Inc., they are well known organizational development experts specializing in organizational culture, strategy, the strategic use of human resources and program evaluation. Additionally, Margolis and Wilensky are part-time professors at Georgia State University and authors of There Is No Place Like Work: Seven Leadership Insights for Creating a Workplace to Call Home (2006). Call them at (404) 255-4007 or visit online at www.coreinsites.com.