**Performance Management Research Project**

**HRM 423 A**

HR is best learned not just in a theoretical, classroom setting, but how it actually works in the real world. To this end you and a teammate will be doing live research with an HR professional to learn about the performance management process in his/her company. While you can determine what company you use, there are some guidelines:

* You must speak with a representative from the Human Resources department as your primary contact. You may also speak to a member of the management team if you want to (in fact I would give you bonus points for that since their view of the process could be different) but that would be in addition to the HR interviews.
* At a minimum, your interview must be over the phone, ideally in person. No email research.
* The company must be large enough to have a formal, documented performance management process with written performance appraisals.
* The company must be US based – while they may have international operations, the thrust of this class is performance management as practiced in the United States.
* If you work in HR, I would prefer you to find another company to use. That being said if you are not involved in the performance management process for your organization and this would truly be a learning experience for you, just let me know.
* Ditto for those of you who work – use your own company only if this would be new information to you and let me know you are doing so.
* If you are stuck looking for a company to use – try reaching out to one of the local companies/branches on Fortune’s list of 100 Best Companies to Work For: <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/best-companies/>Most companies, especially those on this list, when you identify yourself as a university student working on a research project for class are willing to help. Another idea is to use a company with which you would like to intern/get a job – good foot in the door.
* If you really get stuck let me know and I will see if one of my friends will be willing to help you, but don’t wait until the last minute.

**To complete this assignment, with your teammate (or alone if you desire) research the following and describe your findings in a paper.**

**Describe the company’s performance management process.** (Include documents as available – remember: the performance appraisal is only a part of the performance management process.)

Consider:

* What kind of performance management system do they use?
* What kind of performance appraisal format (MBO, BARS, traits, etc.)
* Do they use any type of software/automated performance management system?
* Do they evaluate anything other than performance? (such as values, behaviors, etc.)
* How often do they appraise employees’ performance? (written and verbal)
* How do they set performance goals? (as applicable)
* How do employees participate in the process?
* How do they arrive at performance ratings for employees? Do they do anything to insure consistency across departments/the organization?
* Describe performance management training for managers
* Describe performance management training for employees
* What forms are used? Are there any other documents/manuals describing the process?
* Is this process any different for:
* Sales employees?
* Executive employees?
* Newly hired employees?
* Non-exempt vs exempt employees?
* Top talent employees? (generally the top 10% of performers, if identified)
* Unionized employees?
* Any other special employee group?

How does the performance appraisal relate to compensation?

* Merit pay
* Incentive pay
* Other forms of compensation (stock, etc.)

Does the organization use any type of 360 reviews?

* On what types of employees?
* How is it (if it is) coordinated with the performance review?

How does the company determine employee developmental needs?

* Are they tied into the performance management plan?
* Into compensation?
* What happens to employees who are not rated at an acceptable level?

What do they think are the benefits of their performance management system?

How do they think employees/managers perceive the performance management process?

What is not working well with their performance management system? How could they improve it?

**How does the performance management process for your selected company relate to what you have learned in class/read in your text book?**

* What elements are the same as we have been discussing/included in the text?
* What things are different and how?

**After reviewing the information from the company you evaluated as well as the information in from class and your textbook:**

* In your opinion, do you believe the company’s performance management process is effective? Why or why not? Would you want to be evaluated under this system? Why?
* What suggestions/recommendations would you make for the company to improve its performance management process?

**Grading for this project will be as follows:**

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| --- | --- |
| Introduction/background information on the company. (If you can find and include information on their competitive strategy and/or HR strategy that would be great – bonus points.) | 15 points |
| Description of the company’s performance management process. (Answer all of the questions listed as appropriate – if a company can’t answer your question or it doesn’t apply, simply state that fact.)  | 100 points |
| Inclusion of supporting documents (forms, manuals, etc.) | 10 points |
| How does the performance management process relate to what you have learned in class/read in your text book? | 50 points |
| * In your opinion, do you believe the company’s performance management process is effective? Would you want to be evaluated under this system?
* What suggestions/recommendations would you make for the company to improve its performance management process?

**REMEMBER: not just what, but also WHY** | 25 points |

So I would think your paper would be 8-10 pages and look something like this: index, short background information on the company (in place of an executive summary), a complete description of their performance management process – thoroughly answering the questions above, a section comparing the company’s process to what you have been learning and your suggestions for improvement. (Basically the same as outlined above – see the grading scale for amount of the paper that should be devoted to each section.) If I have to hunt for the key parts of your paper because you jump back and forth, I have a hard time grading it – use headings to make things clear.

Turn in a printed report in the class. The due date is Friday, April 22nd, late papers will have a 10 point per class deduction. **Printed copies only.**

**Other Expectations**: I would expect you to be on your best business behavior with the person you interview, being punctual to the meeting with the person you are interviewing and sending him/her a thank you note after the interview.