

PART ONE

Questions 1 - 8

- Look at the statements below and at the five extracts from a book about staff appraisal and feedback on the opposite page.
- Which extract (**A, B, C, D or E**) does each statement (1 - 8) refer to ?
- For each statement (1 - 8), mark one letter (**A, B, C, D or E**) on your Answer Sheet.
- You will need to use some of these letters more than once.

- 1 Genuine feedback would release resources to be used elsewhere.
- 2 Managers are expected to enable their staff to work effectively.
- 3 Experts are unlikely to facilitate a move to genuine feedback.
- 4 There are benefits when methods of evaluating performance have been negotiated.
- 5 Appraisals tend to focus on the nature of the face-to-face relationship between employees and their managers.
- 6 The idea that employees are responsible for what they do seems reasonable.
- 7 Despite experts' assertions, management structures prevent genuine feedback.
- 8 An increasing amount of effort is being dedicated to the appraisal process.

A

Performance appraisal is on the up and up. It used to represent the one time of year when getting on with the work was put on hold while enormous quantities of management hours were spent in the earnest ritual of rating and ranking performance. Now the practice is even more frequent. This of course makes it all the more important how appraisal is conducted. Human resources professionals claim that managers should strive for objectivity and thus for feedback rather than judgement. But the simple fact of the matter is that the nature of hierarchy distorts the concept of feedback because performance measures are conceived hierarchically. Unfortunately, all too many workers suffer from the injustices that this generates.

B

The notion behind performance appraisal - that workers should be held accountable for their performance - is plausible. However, the evidence suggests that the premises is wrong. Contrary to assumptions, appraisal is not an effective means of performance improvement - it is judgement imposed rather than feedback; a judgement imposed by the hierarchy. Useful feedback, on the other hand, would be information that told both the manager and worker how well the work system functioned, and suggested ways to make it better.

C

Within the production system at the car manufacturer Toyota, there is nothing that is recognisable as performance appraisal. Every operation in the system has an associated measure. The measure has been worked out between the operators and their manager. In every case, the measure is related to the purpose of the work. That measure is the basis of feedback to the manager and worker alike. Toyota's basic idea is expressed in the axiom 'bad news first'. Both managers and workers are psychologically safe in the knowledge that it is the system - not the worker - that is the primary influence on performance. It is management's responsibility to ensure that the workers operate in a system that facilitates their performance.

D

In many companies, performance appraisal springs from misguided assumptions. To judge achievement, managers use data about each worker's activity, not an evaluation of the process or system's achievement of purpose. The result is that performance appraisal involves managers' judgement overruling their staff's, ignoring the true influences on performance. Thus the appraisal experience becomes a question of pleasing the boss, particularly in meetings, which is psychologically unsafe and socially driven, determining who is 'in' and who is 'out'.

E

When judgement is replaced by feedback in the true sense, organisations will have a lot more time to devote to their customers and their business. No time will be wasted in appraisal. This requires a fundamental shift in the way we think about the organisation of performance appraisals, which almost certainly will not be forthcoming from the human resources profession.

PART TWO

Questions 9 - 14

- read this text from an article about the development of international managers.
- Choose the best sentence from the opposite page to fill each of the gaps.
- For each gap (9 - 14), mark one letter (**A - H**) on your Answer Sheet.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- There is an example at the beginning, (0).

SEARCH FOR THE 'WORLDLY-WISE' COMPANY EXECUTIVES

The quest for international managers is underway in virtually every industrialised economy. The search has been made urgent by the globalisation of world markets and the growth in cross-border mergers and acquisitions. (0) ...H... Many firms report being so stretched that they simply do not have enough of the high-quality people they require to lead their global expansion.

Other companies are having difficulties releasing experienced people from existing operations in order to lead new international ventures. There are indications that a shortage of internationally skilled people may be an important constraint on firms' international ambitions. (9) However, identifying the need for international managers is easier than developing them.

So what makes an international manager? Paul Evans, a professor at INSEAD, the European business school, does not believe that any particular nationality produces a more international manager. Neither does he believe that it's a matter of having the ability to cope with a lifestyle that involves working in Madrid one day, London the next and Berlin the day after. (10) Rather, he believes that the secret of being a good international manager is being comfortable with managing diversity.

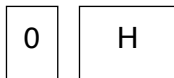
Ford of Europe, which has encouraged the development of international managers for more than 20 years, says that its managers are globally-minded before they become global operators. (11) A car you buy in the UK, for example, is going to be the same car that sells in Germany, Finland and Poland, so the people who are involved in the car's development have to be aware of the market requirements in all those different countries.

Generally, it seems that the only effective way to develop international skills and perspectives is through direct international experience. (12) Such experiences open people's minds to the fact that things are done differently elsewhere and encourages them to think in a wider context.

Formulating effective strategies for developing a company's management resource is a demanding exercise, with conflicting issues to be solved. (13) Another dilemma is whether to use local managers or expatriates.

The recruitment and development of effective international managers requires considerable financial resources and can be hard to justify at budget meetings. (14) However, without them, companies will continue to find their expansion plans frustrated by a lack of internationally effective managers.

Example



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | From the moment they join the company, employees are faced with having to think internationally. | E | Language training, overseas visits and in-house management courses are all expensive to implement. |
| B | This can be through involvement in international task forces or through living and working abroad. | F | Jet-setting between international operations merely creates a business equivalent of the over-packaged tourist. |
| C | Should, for example, only an elite few receive international experience in preparation for top jobs or should it be offered to a wider group? | G | Companies are now emphasising the human skills involved in managing other people. |
| D | These problems mean that developing managers who think and operate globally is absolutely vital for companies operating in foreign markets. | H | These trends are pushing companies' existing management resources to the limit. |

From Cambridge University Press - BEC Higher 2 Exam Book

PART THREE

Questions 15 - 20

- Read the following extract from an article about incompetent employees, and the questions on the opposite page.
- For each question 15 - 20, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet for the answer you choose.

Every organisation has its share of employees-from-hell: the lazy, deluded, hypochondriac under performers. They are difficult to manage and miserable to work with. Their productivity is low and their ability to poison staff morale high. They are, alas, always well-entrenched and management-resistant. Interestingly, their numbers in any organisation have more to do with management's refusal to deal with the situation than with poor selection. That is, their existence in the organisation is nearly always due to a long line of weak managers who have declined to tackle the problem.

Traditionally, there are three classic ineffective ways of dealing with the incompetent. The first is to ignore the problem, hoping that it will go away. Rather than confront laziness or serious absenteeism, the manager gives the employees less work to do. This inevitably leads to frustration on the part of the good hardworking staff who see the problem employee getting away with it.

The second approach, which has traditionally been the most favoured, is to pass them on. There is usually a part of any business where people believe the poor performer can do no damage. Alternatively, poor performers can

be moved to another branch in the dreariest part of town, or to another town, or even to another country. A clever variant of this tactic is to herd all the incompetent employees into one part of the company that is then sold off or privatised.

There is a third approach which is to promote the incompetent. This sounds bizarre and exceedingly stupid but is not infrequently adopted. The idea is that, although these posts are quite senior and well-paid, the actual jobs are fairly pointless ones in which incompetent people can hide without doing any serious damage. The employee is thus confirmed in his or her delusions of competence.

All three of these strategies are the result of not dealing with the problem early on. Many managers find dealing with incompetence very difficult. The scenario that all managers hate is as follows: show a subordinate a low mark on their appraisal form. The employee first wants the behaviour defined; then wants an example of when this behaviour occurred; then argues about how this incident occurred and how typical it was. The net result is a row about the past and frustration on the part of both.

A different and more successful method is the problem-solving

approach. This insists that one still shows the low score but, rather than attempting to explain it, one describes what needs to be done differently to achieve a higher score. The emphasis is on the future not the past; on a clear description of the desirable behaviour, not the incompetent behaviour. The touchy or sensitive employee normally responds to this reasonably well. Nevertheless, there are those who cannot, or will not, respond to good management. They may be unable to do the job due to not having the ability to learn ever-changing tasks fast enough. They may be distracted by problems at home or more likely they have been managed very poorly in the past.

There is really only a very limited number of things that can be done with the really incompetent. Buy them out, which may be the best solution for all concerned; raise the game by making sure they are given ever higher but reachable targets. A final strategy is to insist that they have an annual psychological test where a disinterested outside consultant does a motivational analysis and has the power to recommend that they be let go - not encouraged to go to another part of the organisation, but into the bracing waters of the job market.

- 15 What criticism does the writer make of managers in the last paragraph?
- A They lose interest in the issue of incompetent employers.
 - B They fail to take a firm line with inefficient employees.
 - C They have little idea of what is really required of their staff.
 - D They often make bad decisions when choosing new staff.
- 16 What is the effect of the first of the methods suggested for dealing with incompetent staff?
- A It has only a short-term effect on the problem.
 - B It means that better workers will not have to work so hard.
 - C It makes good workers aware that problems are being dealt with.
 - D It sends a negative message to those who do their job well.
- 17 In both the second and third ineffective methods of dealing with incompetent employees, the managers' aim is to
- A have all of the incompetent staff working in the same part of the company.
 - B improve the attitude of the incompetent staff to work by giving them promotion.
 - C put the incompetent staff in a situation where they can do as little harm as possible.
 - D make the work so unattractive that the incompetent staff want to leave.
- 18 The writer says in the fifth paragraph that employees who are given a low mark on their appraisal form will
- A demand a detailed explanation of what they have done wrong.
 - B claim that special circumstances have had an effect on their work.
 - C deny that their work has been in any way unsatisfactory.
 - D argue that they find the work they have had to do frustrating.
- 19 In the sixth paragraph the writer says that when talking to an incompetent employee a manager should
- A make no reference to the most recent appraisal mark.
 - B compare the work of the employee with that of more efficient workers.
 - C make clear what will happen if performance does not improve.
 - D explain to the employee how he or she can gain a better mark.
- 20 What does the writer suggest as a way to deal with incompetent employees who fail to respond even to a problem-solving approach?
- A Set them targets which it would be impossible to attain.
 - B Give them a test designed to identify their strengths.
 - C Pay them a sum of money to leave the company.
 - D Get an outside consultant to find them another job.

Find a word or phrase that has a similar meaning to the word or phrase in column 1

genuine feedback	
enable	
unlikely to	
negotiated	
face-to-face	
responsible	
notion is reasonable	
experts' assertions	
increasing effort	

BEC H Reading Pt 2 Answers

Identify the links between the sentences in GREEN and the text.

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Many firms report being so stretched that they simply do not have enough of the high-quality people they require to lead their global expansion.

Other companies are having difficulties releasing experienced people from existing operations in order to lead new international ventures. There are indications that a shortage of internationally skilled people may be an important constraint on firms' international ambitions. **These problems mean that developing managers who think and operate globally is absolutely vital for companies operating in foreign markets.** However, identifying the need for international managers is easier than developing them.

So what makes an international manager? Paul Evans, a professor at INSEAD, the European business school, does not believe that any particular nationality produces a more international manager. Neither does he believe that it's a matter of having the ability to cope with a lifestyle that involves working in Madrid one day, London the next and Berlin the day after. **Jet-setting between international operations merely creates a business equivalent of the over-packaged tourist.** Rather, he believes that the secret of being a good international manager is being comfortable with managing diversity.

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Generally, it seems that the only effective way to develop international skills and perspectives is through direct international experience. **This can be through involvement in international task forces or through living and working abroad.** Such experiences open people's minds to the fact that things are done differently elsewhere and encourages them to think in a wider context.

Formulating effective strategies for developing a company's management resource is a demanding exercise, with conflicting issues to be solved. **Should, for example, only an elite few receive international experience in preparation for top jobs or should it be offered to a wider group?** Another dilemma is whether to use local managers or expatriates.

The recruitment and development of effective international managers requires considerable financial resources and can be hard to justify at budget meetings. **Language training, overseas visits and in-house management courses are all expensive to implement.** However, without them, companies will continue to find their expansion plans frustrated by a lack of internationally effective managers.

Read each question and write a suitable answer in the text. Work with a partner and compare your answers.

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- 16 What is the effect of the first of the methods suggested for dealing with incompetent staff?
- 17 In both the second and third ineffective methods of dealing with incompetent employees, the managers' aim is to
- 18 The writer says in the fifth paragraph that employees who are given a low mark on their appraisal form will
- 19 In the sixth paragraph the writer says that when talking to an incompetent employee a manager should
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