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Differing Views: Are You on the Same Page as Your Employees?

Data has shown that:

- Over 40% of the employee population of any organization believe that they are in the top 10% of performers.
- 70% of employees believe that they should be paid in the top 25% of a pay range.

Matching perceptions of fairness ... is it possible? How do we close the gap between perception and reality?

Responsible leaders are continuously seeking to close the gap between perception and reality. This starts with an awareness of how our own perceptions affect the individual, the workgroup and the organization. Do we, as leaders, take responsibility to truly understand all the needed job functions in each role? Have we made sure the job descriptions meet the current duties and expectations for the role? Do we have regular conversations, not just during formal evaluations, to make sure we are on the same page with our employees?

Leaders need the awareness, education and the willingness to have the “tough love” constructive conversations. How clear are we as leaders describing what is involved to attain top performance? This includes the entire lifecycle of an employee, from the time of hire, to reorganization, or shifting of duties. Do we explain and understand that an increased workload at the same level of work does not justify a reclassification?

If we use the current Classification and Compensation Study as an example, here are a few things to ponder as leaders' responsibility:

- Leaders' responsibility at all levels is to be as informed as possible, seeking to do so through an unbiased lens.

- Prepare employees for ambiguous outcomes. (We don't know what the results will be in a third party study, so do not lead people to believe otherwise.)
- Communicate to prepare for results of this nature which will produce varied outcomes: some increases, some decreases and some unchanged.
- Have the difficult conversations all along the way. Don't wait until a study like this one to talk about what it takes to achieve the “market rate” (midpoint) of a pay range. This is the rate that full performance of all responsibilities from the position description are being performed independently.

Suggestions:

- Compare expectations/performance with employees throughout the year. Discuss any gaps.
- Match priorities – aligned with overall organizational, divisional and workgroup goals.
- Have a willingness to admit your part in misperceptions. Own responsibility for tough news versus projecting responsibility for unfavorable decisions onto other areas of the organization when they are made collaboratively.
- Seek to be educated instead of allowing ourselves to be influenced by third party dialog.
- View ourselves as leaders that are in this together.

This view of one large undertaking can be applied overall to establishing a healthy organizational culture by stepping forward together in leadership.