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About This Document

owner	HR
access & use	Restricted to Managers & HR
what it is	<p>A guide that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Outlines the step-by-step process for managing a performance improvement plan ◆ Provides point-and-click access to the documents needed for each step, along with instructions and examples
who uses it	HR and Managers with direct reports
<p>Note: This document includes sensitive information. It should not be shared with staff members who do not have responsibility for direct reports. Use caution and discretion when using or printing.</p>	

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Set up your HR Department

A complete HR Toolkit for small business to create and maintain your HR fundamentals.

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- 260+ premium templates to create contracts, employee manuals, forms, spreadsheets and manager guides
- Download your HR folders
- Identify your HR priorities
- 22 HR topics
- Create HR intranet

Support your HR Function

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



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- Special licensing for use with clients
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Note: The **Doc ID** column contains a unique identifier for all our HR documents. Think of it like a bar code you don't have to pay attention to, unless you want to double-check you have the right document.

Doc ID	Document Name	Description	Doc	Help	Ex.
JE-ALL-3530-M.	Job Description Form	Form template for creating consistently structured job descriptions			
JE-ALL-3500-M.	Job Activity Log	Spreadsheet template used by all staff to record individual job activities and time spent on each activity over a period of time			
PI-MGR-3200-M.	Performance Improvement Plan Form	Form template for managers to document and track the Performance Improvement Plan for a direct report			
PO-MGR-3105-R	Performance Management Overview Guide	Guide for managers with direct reports. Provides overview information and guidelines regarding performance management			

Before Starting a Performance Improvement Plan

There are several steps to take before you put an employee on a Performance Improvement Plan.

Step 1. Review the Position Job Description

It may be stating the obvious, but you can't hold an employee accountable for performance or responsibilities that have not been clearly communicated.

MANAGER

2. If the current job description is old or non-existent, use the *JE-ALL-3530-M. Job Description Form* template to create or update it.

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4. Give the employee an electronic version of the *Job Activity Log* spreadsheet and its accompanying Instructions document, and ask them to begin logging daily work tasks immediately.
5. Check in with the employee regularly. Either review the spreadsheet together, or ask them to send you a copy.
6. When sufficient time has passed (at least 2-4 weeks depending on the position) and clear patterns begin to emerge in the type and quantity of tasks, compare the job activities to the responsibilities in the job description. If the position includes responsibilities that are time-consuming but infrequent (e.g., quarterly or annual tasks), select the best option to meet your timing needs:
 - Continue the job activity log until one instance of the infrequent activity has occurred, or
 - Put the job activity log on hold until the next instance, or
 - Work with the employee to estimate the amount of time required by those responsibilities when they occur.
7. Once the employee concludes the *Job Activity Log* activity, review the results and determine if the current job description is accurate or needs revision.
 - If the job description is accurate and the employee's performance is not meeting expectations, discuss with CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager about starting the employee on a Performance Improvement Plan.
 - If the job description is not accurate and needs revision, work with CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager and the employee to create a revised version. Continue to monitor the employee's performance against the revised job description.

Step 3. Preliminary Discussion and/or Verbal Warning

Once you are confident the following conditions are true, it's time to broach the subject with the employee:

- ◆ The job description accurately reflects the position requirements
- ◆ The employee is aware of the expectations in the job description, and
- ◆ There is a problem with the employee's performance or behavior.

A preliminary discussion brings your concerns to the employee's attention in an informal manner, and gives them opportunity to reflect on performance and what they might do to rectify the situation before a Performance Improvement Plan becomes necessary.

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- Notify CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager that the meeting occurred and summarize the outcome.
5. Assess ongoing progress, consult with CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager and determine the next step to take.
 - If the employee has made effort and improvements are obvious, continue to monitor the situation until performance meets expectations.
 - If progress isn't being made at an acceptable rate, proceed with a Performance Improvement Plan.
 6. Schedule a follow up conversation with the employee.
 - Review what happened in your previous meeting.
 - Discuss progress made and next steps. If you are proceeding with a Performance Improvement Plan, refer to **Step 4. Document a Performance Improvement Plan.**
 7. Document the discussion and update CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager.

Initiate a Performance Improvement Plan

Initiating a Performance Improvement Plan is a serious undertaking. It means the employee will lose their job if they don't meet the goals and standards in it. Be prepared for this outcome before you start, and work closely with HR throughout the process.

Step 4. Document the Plan

The *PI-MGR-3200-M. Performance Improvement Plan Form* is the tool we use to formally document an employee's Performance Improvement Plan. Using it ensures that all steps of the process are fairly executed and documented.

MANAGER

1. Consult with CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager regarding your intention to initiate a Performance Improvement Plan.

TIP: Plan for 3...

Each meeting with an employee regarding their Performance Improvement Plan should be attended by 3 people—the employee, the employee's manager, and someone representing HR to act as a witness.

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- d. At the end of the meeting, provide the employee with **two** copies of the Performance Improvement Plan form and ask them to:
 - Initial each page in the lower-right corner, and sign as indicated with a witness present (both copies).
 - Return one signed copy to you within the timeframe stipulated on the form.
 - Keep the second copy for their records.
3. After the meeting:
 - a. Make notes about the discussion and file them with any other documentation related to the employee's performance.

Keep your notes professional, relevant, and objective. Your notes may be requested as discovery material if an employee ever challenges your decisions in court.
 - b. Scan the form with the employee's signature and email it to the CUSTOMIZER: Insert the title of the contact (not their name). Example: HR Manager.

Step 6. Conduct Follow-Up Meetings

Monitor the employee's performance throughout the period of the Performance Improvement Plan. Continue holding follow-up meetings at regular intervals as long as the employee is progressing and meeting the goals documented in the Action Plan.

Before each follow-up meeting, decide which message will be given:

- ♦ **Successful completion of the Performance Improvement Plan** - The employee has demonstrated satisfactory improvement, and fulfilled the terms committed to in the Performance Improvement Plan form.
- ♦ **Additional performance improvement required** - The employee has demonstrated improvement in one or more areas, but further improvement is required.
- ♦ **Termination** - The employee has not demonstrated satisfactory improvement and employment will be terminated.

If the employee is not meeting the goals and there's little or no evidence of improvement, it's not necessary to continue the Performance Improvement Plan for the entire period specified. For example, if the Performance Improvement Plan duration is 3 months, and after 1 or 2 months there's insufficient progress, a strong case can be made for termination of employment at that point. Progress in the first month is often a strong indicator of the eventual outcome.

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Involuntary Termination

If the employee has not demonstrated adequate improvement throughout the Performance Improvement Plan, and has therefore not fulfilled the terms committed to in the Performance Improvement Plan form, two options remain:

- ◆ Find an alternative employment opportunity within the company that better fits the employee's skills and level of competence
- ◆ Terminate employment.

Before initiating termination of employment, it's critical that managers consult with HR to ensure:

- ◆ The required performance expectations were fully understood by the employee, and have not been met.
- ◆ Adequate resources and support were available to the employee during the performance improvement review period.
- ◆ The employee was provided with sufficient time to meet the performance/behavior expectations laid out in the Performance Improvement Plan form.
- ◆ The employee was informed of and fully understood the consequences of their failure to meet the expectations described in the Performance Improvement Plan form.

For guidelines, instructions and more information on involuntary terminations, refer to:

- ◆ *PO-MGR-3105-R. Performance Management Overview Guide* – see **Involuntary Termination** section
- ◆ *IT-MGR-3210-S. Process Guide for Managers – Involuntary Terminations*