

## Performance Management Keeping Score Real Time

Continuous performance management is a powerful tool to direct organizational resources towards achieving the strategic objectives. The agility it offers is especially relevant for today's and tomorrow's increasingly dynamic business environment.

### Why continuous performance management?

VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) stands today in a never-before hyper-augmented form. Business demands are changing fast, as are employee expectations. Performance cycles are shrinking, as business goals change within the span of a few months. Also, today's employees are actively participating in steering the organization, be it, helping mould the company's vision and mission, or directly contributing to goal-attainment. Organizational governance is becoming more participative and collaborative, thanks to the digital presence and prominence in this digital age. This new normal calls for a new outlook towards business and people management, with renewed responsibility and new capabilities. It demands employees across hierarchies to be highly responsible and responsive, taking decisions with full ownership and authority. Not only must they define goals, targets, outcomes, and measure achievements, but they must do so on a real-time basis and course-correct as and when the situation demands.

Real-time scorekeeping is a business imperative that employees, managers, and organizations cannot ignore. Organizations must, therefore, quickly adopt continuous performance management processes, to become a high-performance organization.



### What drives continuous performance management?

Continuous performance management is centred on ongoing goal-setting, ongoing feedback and ongoing employee development, to enable entire teams to work in a more involved, collaborative and continued manner. PMS must move away from archaic concepts like top-down decision making, annual performance reviews, one-time feedback etc. New tenets such as ongoing performance scoreboards, meaningful communication and

conversations, continuous feedback, employee development and coaching, etc. are becoming the pillars of organizational success. Real-time performance scoring stems from the values of agility, autonomy, openness, transparency, collaboration, innovation, development-mindset and above all, continuity-mindset. All these elements can be effectively brought together only with the help of an integrated, progressive continuous performance management system, which demands an HR-technology edge.

## How to keep score real-time?

The age-old adage, “what gets measured, gets done”, applies to performance management, thereby making real-time performance measurement and tracking an organizational necessity. However, moving from an annual PMS to a more continuous quarterly, semi-annual or ongoing process is not easy. It is a process change, mindset-change, and workflow change for employees and managers alike. Technology can help build the right tools- intelligent, intuitive and useful to both employees and managers. HR must deep dive and understand the latest cutting-edge technologies to put in place the right systems.

For example, Analytics and Machine Learning can provide insights into performance indicators and performance achievements as well as deviations, in association with external factors. Real-time communication and collaboration platforms such as instant messaging and notification features can help employees come together to co-create goals and monitor achievement. This resonates with the new-age workforce tending towards virtual teams and gig workers. AI-driven chatbots can come to the rescue by addressing employees’ queries and grievances, and thereby engaging them better. HR must employ these and other new-age technologies to build an intuitive, interactive and useful PMS so as to actively involve everyone in driving performance. Here is how to ensure real-time score boarding actually happens at every employee, team, department and organizational level.

**Data dependence:** Real-time performance scoring demands high data-dependence. Organizations must build capability to identify, organize, access, and analyze data to derive useful real-time insights into key performance indicators and key result areas. This means building data systems, processes and hiring data-talent such as data scientists and analysts.

**Real-time goal setting:** The new PMS system must define, monitor and communicate the important leading performance indicators on a frequent basis- i.e. monthly, weekly and some, even daily. These should be agile and flexible i.e. frequent and timely interactions between managers and employee should allow goal revision, as and when the business situations demand. The system design must allow people to record these changes without hassle.

**Real-time feedback:** The process design must incorporate real-time feedback mechanisms, such as weekly check-ins, frequent feedback, and progress recording through one-on-ones, 360 degrees feedback, reverse feedback, etc. Feedback is a strong precursor to align employees’ work and goals to the organizational values and can foster better engagement.

**Learning opportunities:** Real-time PMS is highly development-oriented. As goals change, employees must have the right learning resources at their fingertips formats, to help improvise. This means that the performance gaps must direct the learning strategy, in a real-time manner. Ongoing and multi-type access, fresh and relevant content, and coaching and mentoring opportunities go hand-in-hand with continuous performance management. Build on-demand learning into the learning platforms using mobile learning, multi-device learning, gamified learning, micro-learning, virtual reality and augmented reality, LMS, classroom training, automated coaching tools, and other mechanisms that encourage continuous learning.

**Sync with Recognition and Rewards:** In continuous PMS, the nature of rewards must become more real-time. Personalized rewards, instant recognition, peer recognition, team rewards, learning as rewards, high visibility projects etc. are some of the ways to keep employees motivated.

**Adoption:** The ultimate goal of continuous score-boarding is not just to monitor performance, but to get people to take responsibility for those numbers. HR must train supervisors on how to use the new PMS system, must provide resources for propagating it, and also coach them on how to give continuous feedback. Communication campaigns must revolve around the purpose of keeping score real-time, emphasizing how employees benefit. Only then will real people feel comfortable and enthused about upping their performance consistently.

The new era of performance management derives from a perfect balance between the technological edge and human intervention. While technological changes can be ushered in, equipping and empowering people to ride on the change is a change management effort, which commands huge leadership buy-in and support. HR must harness that buy-in by building the case of how real-time performance management is the only way ahead.

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