

AGILE BASED COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT

ABC Management

Output 1 / Activity 4

Article: Dealing with attitudes and threats of assessed people

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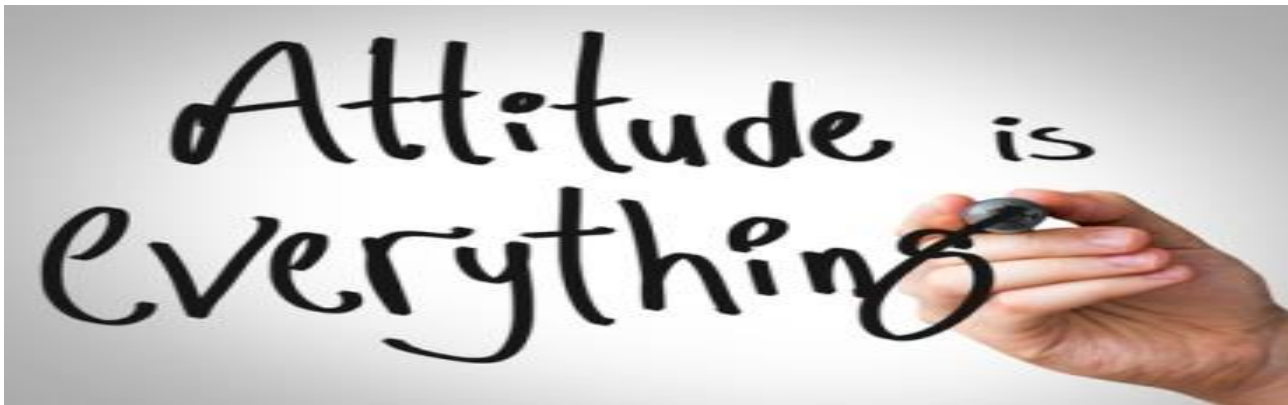
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Very often when employees hear or about to undertake an assessment, especially if it is the first time, their reaction is rather negative. We can think about several reasons to explain this reaction and we will mention the following ones:

- Lack of a clear understanding of what assessment is about and what it intends to achieve. This is generally due to the fact that the company did not explain previously the objectives, structure and did not introduce the tools to be used to perform the assessment.
- Possible bad experiences when they went through an assessment process in the past. This could be during or after the assessment process.
- A deep belief from the employees that the assessments processes are based on subjective criteria, judgments and beliefs (company and evaluator) and therefore are not useful.
- It is understood as a kind of “exam” where the result would be either a pass or a fail, in which case a coercive action would be taken against them by the company.
- A suspicion that the company is preparing some bad actions against them and would like to support the final decision with a kind of “proof”.

Attitudes and behaviors

Attitudes are usually defined in Psychology as a tendency to evaluate things in a defined way. This tendency is learned over time by people and includes evaluating people, issues, objects, or events, positively or negatively. The evaluation can be uncertain at times.

The psychology literature also introduces three components of attitudes, presented in the so-called ABC model. These components are:

- **Affective Component:** How the object, person, issue or event makes the person feel.
- **Behavioral Component:** How the attitude influences the person’s behavior.
- **Cognitive Component:** The person’s thoughts and beliefs about the subject.



In all contexts, including professional ones such as assessment, it is important to bear in mind that attitudes can not only be explicit, where employees are conscious about them and are clearly influenced in their behaviors and beliefs, but also implicit, as employees are unconscious about them. However, even in this case, attitudes still have an influence on beliefs and behaviors.

How the negative attitudes generated by/in assessed people should be dealt with?

Dealing with the negative attitudes

Organizations in general and evaluators in particular need to address the negative attitudes towards the assessments before, during and after the assessment process. Indeed, we can talk about the following action to take:

- If the process is not new and is regularly conducted within the organization, it would be very important to make sure that the process does not become a “boring routine” with no visible result and impact on performance improvements (at both people and organizational levels). It is therefore important to communicate and explain the objectives before and the results after the process.
- It is very crucial to prevent negative attitudes, through a powerful feedback that puts people’s strengths and development opportunities identified during the process, ahead of any weakness. Techniques such as “assertiveness” and “feedback sandwich” help achieving such an objective.
- Any assessment process needs to be followed by a training/coaching/mentoring program that should be explained to the assessed people, in order to make sure they are aware of the “next steps”.
- A continuous communication process between the assessors and the assessed people will clearly help establish a good environment for future assessments, as these will be considered under a different angle: less formal and more “normal”.
- Assessors need to be trained before conducting any assessment process so they can detect any negative attitude and deal with it. If the assessor is trained, he/she will know that negative attitudes can sometimes be there and he/she will therefore never lose the faith that he/she can deal with it.