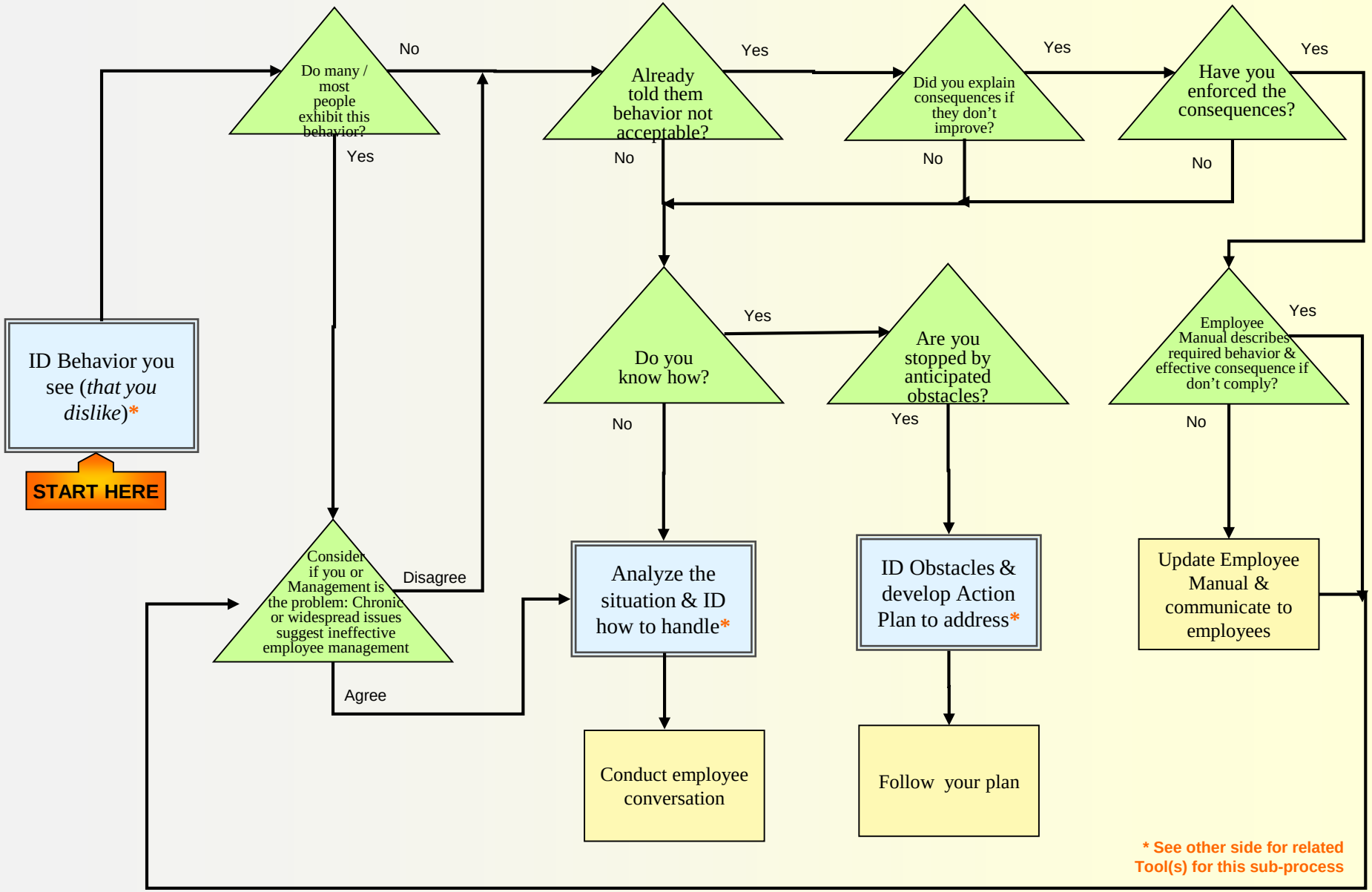
How to Effectively Handle Employee Performance Issues



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How to Effectively Handle Employee Performance Issues: Focal Points [Tools] for Sub-Processes

"General Guidelines for Handling Employee Issues" Tool

A. Back every verbal employee warning with a written document: Example series:

- 1st verbal warning – Send an e-mail follow-up including date & contents of discussion>
- 2nd verbal warning – Bring a related written warning and hand to employee; follow-up with same in e-mail.
- 3rd verbal warning – Depends on issue & consequences; could be actual 'fire' conversation, or, clear statement "will fire you by xx/xx/xx unless a,b,c"; bring related written notice; follow-up same with e-mail.

B. Have Facts / Specifics:

"I observed you do / say 'x' yesterday in 'y' situation."

C. Stay objective. Speak of roles and behaviors and business needs (not: 'you do 'x' which aggravates me') e.g.:

"I require this behavior from this role…"

"the business needs this behavior from this role to be / grow (more) successful"

"the work environment I'm committed to have here, requires everyone to behave in these ways to each other, our clients, vendors, etc."

D. Avoid Tangents:

"Whether Bob or Ann or I are doing these things or not isn't relevant to this conversation. This conversation is about you and your behaviors…"

"This is not a conversation about your compensation; this is a conversation about these specific behaviors which must change…"

ID Behavior you see (*that you dislike*)

"Identify Behavior" Tool

List employee problems that need to be addressed:

- ❑ Does only minimum work expected
- ❑ Tests & criticizes office policies
- ❑ Gossips persistently
- ❑ Backstabs fellow employees / managers
- ❑ Has a bad attitude
- ❑ Consistently makes negative remarks
- ❑ Complains but takes no leadership to resolve
- ❑ Does not accept management decisions once made
- ❑ Other

_____

Analyze the situation & ID how to handle

"Situation Analysis" Tool

- ❑ **Analyze Situation as follows:**

1. List recent incidents where you should have confronted an employee re: substandard job performance or inappropriate but did not (or did not handle well i.e. get desired results).
2. For each situation, describe what you actually did – the old behavior you want to improve.
3. Describe what will you will do when similar situation occurs – future new behavior. [Often requires Discussion Script Template]

Example *- Situation analysis & plan using Script Writing Method*:

1. Situation: Saw Bob tease Ann in the break room in front of other employees.
2. My old behavior (what I did): I laughed along with Bob and gang; didn't want to confront Bob, hoped he wouldn't do it again.
3. My new behavior (what I'll do when this – or similar – recurs): I'll take Bob aside immediately and discuss per my script: "Bob, that's not appropriate around here. It's important to treat each other with respect. I want you to apologize to Ann. You're creative, so I'm sure you can think of lots of ways to be funny, but not at someone else's expense."

- ❑ **Consider training in specific desired behavior**
- ❑ **Consider appropriate coach, mentor, consultant for ad-hoc, real-time help**

Discussion Template/Script [Tool] for Confronting Inappropriate Employee Behavior:

- ❑ Set the employee at ease.
- ❑ Describe the problem behavior. Use specific examples and explain clearly why behavior is not acceptable.
- ❑ Ask the employee for cause of problem behavior.
- ❑ Ask the employee for solutions. "What suggestions do you have to correct the situation OR to make improvements?"
- ❑ Discuss solutions. Have one ready to impose if employee does not offer any.
- ❑ Decide on workable solution. Get the employee to make the decision, if possible, and get employee's commitment to make it work.
- ❑ Set follow-up.
- ❑ Thank the employee and let employee know I am confident in their ability to improve.

ID Obstacles & develop Action Plan to address

"Identify Obstacle" Tool

Identify the obstacles which are keeping you from addressing the issue:

- ❑ Afraid they will leave
- ❑ Expect unpleasant response
- ❑ Family member
- ❑ Loyal friend / partner
- ❑ May be legal issues
- ❑ May be public relations issues
- ❑ Other employees' reactions
- ❑ I won't have guts to confront employee
- ❑ Employees will resent me "changing the rules"
- ❑ Other _____
- ❑ Other _____
- ❑ Other _____

"Obstacle Analysis & Planning" Tool

Obstacle Analysis & Planning			
Obstacle	How Likely? (H-M-L)	How Serious? (H-M-L)	Action
I can't attend training for another month or two	H	M	Take an online course instead
I won't have the guts to confront employees	M	H	Use Situation Analysis process to figure out what to say
Employees will resent "changing the rules"	H	H	Introduce 'new rules' at staff meeting

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