



World Class Performance Management BTS Capabilities that Accelerate Strategy Execution

Written by:



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More and more CEOs recognize that performance management plays a critical role in superior strategy execution. In fact, the Conference Board CEO Challenge 2012 survey reported that *improving performance management processes and accountability* is a top-10 priority for CEOs globally.¹

Performance management – when done well – has the power to accelerate strategy implementation by building alignment, creating the right mindset and promoting the capabilities needed to execute. Nevertheless, companies have struggled for years to effectively build performance management capability in their organizations. Performance management is often viewed as a process that takes place once or twice a year. Now, there is a better way.



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Performance Management Learning & Execution Journeys Ensure Success

Performance management must be viewed as a holistic process that touches every part of the organization, taking place every minute of every day throughout the year. The involvement of the leader is the key to unlocking critical behaviors that drive execution and, therefore, is critical to successful performance management.

Based on more than 25 years of delivering high-impact learning initiatives at leading global corporations, as well as the findings of top authorities, BTS has established a framework to ensure highly effective and impactful performance management that drives results. Our approach features comprehensive curricula that engage participants over time. The approach integrates with and leverages the investment of tools and processes already in place and adapts to evolving strategic initiatives.



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While each BTS program is unique, the flow generally involves a series of engaging, blended learning experiences with leader involvement throughout the program. The following is a high-impact, multi-phase process that will accelerate performance management in your organization:

1. **Leader Learner Engagement** – To kick off the learning journey, managers meet with participating employees to discuss the purpose, goals and expected outcomes of the experience, as well as specific on-the-job skills and behaviors that will be influenced by the learning journey.
2. **Installing Rigor Around Performance Management** – In our work with clients, we've found a great emphasis has been placed on the system and tools of performance management, yet managers generally lack understanding of the true impact for their role and their responsibility for owning the performance management process in day-to-day application. Consequently, the learning journey instills the ability to create a common language and consistent process for performance management that is practical and easy to translate back on the job, and aligns with achievement of business results.
3. **Driving Performance Management Throughout the Organization** – Performance management must be actively incorporated in daily, on-the-job actions in order to drive results. BTS delivers this message clearly through experiences that enhance the manager's ability to establish performance partnerships and then recognize, shape and redirect performance on an ongoing basis throughout the year.
4. **Coaching for Execution** – BTS recognizes that exceptional coaching increases employee engagement, improves productivity and accelerates the achievement of business results. High-performing companies make coaching that is frequent, specific and timely a priority for their leaders, managers and supervisors.
5. **Focus on Results** – Finally, to bring the learning journey full circle, the manager and employee meet once again to discuss the experience, review an action plan and set a process for regular follow-up.

Laying the Foundation for Successful Performance Management

Successful performance management begins with setting a strong foundation. Before implementing a performance management program, the following elements are essential:

- **Recruitment & Onboarding Programs:** Finding and hiring employees who possess the critical competencies and skills, have the internal motivation, and match with the organization and environment is an essential part of the performance equation. Once hired, successful onboarding is critical. Done effectively, these components lead to accelerated productivity, improved retention and deeper bench strength, higher employee satisfaction, and engaged employees who execute on the organization's strategic objectives and deliver results.
- **Business Acumen:** Core to the BTS approach to performance management is business acumen. Leaders need to have know-how and business knowledge in order to make key performance management decisions that ultimately contribute to the overall business goals. The appropriate business acumen allows leaders to understand their role and what they can do to impact results. This is essential to drive alignment and shift organizational and individual mindsets.

This combination of steps delivers a powerful message that participants can take back with them to their jobs and begin using immediately. Online tools and modules provide real-time advice and support to help build and sustain the journey toward becoming a high-performance culture. The alignment with management and peers, the specific skills learned from the programs, and the sharing of ideas with colleagues combine to accelerate execution around performance management.

In measuring the impact of a client's recent Learning and Execution Journey, an independent third-party evaluator determined that nearly 70 percent of 161 participants had either already achieved results or expected to achieve results in the near term. Relative to the impact of a traditional learning approach, the Learning and Execution Journey achieved a 350 percent increase in training effectiveness, maximizing the potential of performance management systems.

A BTS Success Story

Facing the reality of change in the marketplace, a large pharmaceutical company was challenged to find new ways to adapt and remain competitive. To achieve sustainable growth going forward, the CEO envisioned the company as not just a pharmaceutical company, but as a comprehensive global healthcare leader. This required an organizational transformation if employees were to execute upon the new strategy.

A high-performance culture would be a critical enabler of successful strategy execution. To effectively transform the company into a high-performing organization, a competitive advantage around human resources would be critical, starting with front-line leaders. Leadership recognized front-line leaders, the largest population in the organization, and their ability to manage people, as central drivers of performance culture across the entire organization.

To effectively engage this population and drive organizational priorities, the company strived to formalize a performance management approach that would be a strategic lever, driving a "culture of high performance" rather than just a "performance review event." As a result, performance management would improve employee engagement and create cohesive, motivated and high-performing individuals and teams. It would also increase organizational effectiveness through operational excellence as well as productivity. To implement the new performance management process, the client partnered with BTS on an experiential learning program that provided value in several critical areas:

- Strategic alignment with the senior leadership's strategy to ensure the front line understood the desired business results and was equipped to execute on the strategy
- In-depth customization that simulated the client's performance management process and ensured the highest level of relevancy for participants
- A discovery-based solution that transformed a highly complex and detailed system into a simple and engaging learning experience
- Measurable results using follow-through learning tools, such as an Impact Map, Business Action and Results (BAR) map and Manager's Guide, that maximized the return on their learning investment
- Multiple learning platforms (online and classroom) that reached a wide and dispersed audience

- The capability to translate the program to multiple languages
- Speed of implementation that allowed BTS to create a relevant and strategically aligned program in less than three months

Participants returned to their jobs with an understanding of the performance management process and a new mindset, one that no longer saw a “yearly performance review” but rather a “performance management system that develops employees into a competitive advantage.” The client is confident that the implementation of BTS programs and its investment in its front-line leaders will create the high-performance culture that outperforms industry peers and will ultimately improve bottom-line results.

Performance Management: A Strategic Investment

Effective performance management involves a holistic approach that drives clarity of expectations and facilitates the delivery of strategic priorities, bringing measurable results. Organizations that invest in performance management are making an investment in their greatest asset – their employees. Done successfully, the return on investment is profound, illustrated in everything from revenue growth to employee engagement to improved efficiencies and organizational alignment.

BTS has created successful performance management journeys for dozens of leading corporations across a variety of industries.

About BTS

BTS focuses on the people side of strategy, working with leaders at all levels to help them make better decisions, convert those decisions to actions and deliver results. At our core, we believe people learn best by doing. For 30 years, we’ve been designing fun, powerful experiences™ that have profound and lasting impact on people and their careers. We inspire new ways of thinking, build critical capabilities and unleash business success. It’s strategy made personal.

For more information, please visit www.bts.com.

1 The Conference Board, The Conference Board CEO Challenge 2012, April 2012