

## Managing Employee Performance

**P**erformance management is a broad concept that encompasses all communication between a manager and an employee intended to foster a high level of work performance. It must include exchanges about what to do, how to do it, how well it was done, and how to improve on the performance next time.

Most people want to do a good job. Poor performance usually can be traced to past experiences or current conditions fraught with inequity, fatigue, failure, or mixed messages. Growers, packinghouse managers, and other agricultural employers can see better employee performance through control of organizational structure, supervisory processes, and other work conditions.

Effective adjustments in personnel management are aided by understanding how the job content, immediate job context, and overall work environment are affecting workers. When performance falls short, consider the following questions before concluding that a worker is unfit or lazy:

*Did anyone ever tell the employee what he is expected, or even allowed, to do?*

*Does she understand enough of the “big picture” on a job to contribute as much as she can?*

*Does he have the skill, physical energy, and time to handle his workload?*

*In general, what difference does she think it will ultimately make to her if she does what is expected and refrains from what is prohibited?*

*Do management’s policies or past practices indicate that good work would improve job security? Current pay? Next year’s pay? Future work assignments? Chances for layoff, rehire, or promotion?*

*Does work performance affect whether immediate supervisors treat him with more or less respect?*

*Do coworkers appreciate or resent her working well and according to management’s standard?*

*Will he be expected by either a supervisor or coworkers to compensate for others’ inadequacies?*

