

## Question & Answer Sheet

### *pulsecheckHR takes employee performance management beyond appraisals*

The following Q&A provides a guide through the most common concerns and queries that new users have regarding the prospective purchase of **pulsecheckHR**

**Q** *What makes this so different from normal appraisals?*

**A** **PulsecheckHR** is different for a range of reasons but the key differences are the frequency and the simplicity of marking. By measuring performance each month, the assessment can be made with direct regard to the events in the month and is thus more meaningful and useful to the employee. The simplicity of the marking is deliberately worded to help the manager communicate the right message about the employee's performance in the period. This enables corrective messages to be delivered easily and without emotion. It also allows praise to be given and recorded ensuring the employee knows that their exceptional efforts have been recognised

**Q** *How is the pulsecheck scored?*

**A** Each attribute relevant to the role the employee is being measured against has a simple three-point result for the period in question. It was either Satisfactory, Outstanding or Requires Improvement. By entering Satisfactory, the manager is saying the work was performed in the manner expected of the role. The use of Outstanding signifies that a significant event or result occurred that warrants praise and recognition; it can be as little as a single event, the key point is that the manager noted it and wishes to single it out for praise. Marking an attribute as Requires Improvement clearly sends the message that the attribute needs work to be considered Satisfactory. Remember, this is always about what occurred in the period in question, it is not about the employee's general attitude or ability, making the message easier to deliver. The manager should also then go on to provide guidance for the following period to reinforce the message. Where either Outstanding or Requires Improvement scores are used, the manager must justify the result with a specific incident or output relevant to the period in question. Frequently employees will have attributes in all three categories as managers use the tool to help the employee up their game whilst also recording the areas where they excel

**Q** *Why use only a 3-point scale?*

**A** Multipoint scales are frequently used in annual appraisals because the manager is attempting to summarise their opinion over a long timeframe, hence the need for more granularity. When talking about a single month, there is no need for greater granularity than 3 options. This makes the pulsecheck easy to deliver because there is no argument over hard or soft scoring, it is just about simple statements of attitude and delivery

**Q** *Why do you talk about directive performance management?*



- A The other key aspect of **pulsecheckHR** is the forward view which allows the manager to give specific guidance and update objectives and targets for the next period. This ensures the employee is never in any doubt about what the manager thinks or wishes to happen. This directive nature of the process tightens the manager relationship and improves organisational effectiveness
- Q *How will the managers find time to do monthly appraisals?*
- A **PulsecheckHR** should not be compared with the time and emotion it takes to prepare for and deliver normal appraisals. With a **pulsecheckHR** assessment, the process is little more than the addition of some structure to a 15 minute monthly one-on-one. While managers may initially balk at regular performance meetings, they should have little objection to monthly one-on-one meetings. In addition, the employees often help drive the process as they are looking for this guidance and direction. Finally, the fact that it is a regular process, not an exceptional one, makes it easier to diarise and plan for
- Q *Why do I need all these regular meetings to know who my A or D players are?*
- A This kind of typecasting language is a regular feature of appraisal-based methodologies. With **pulsecheckHR** the performance is measured from what happened, not how generally good or poor the manager believes the person is. Each month is a new opportunity for the employee to excel; there is no inheritance of generalised opinions possible. This means that score inflation is eliminated and poor performance management can be dealt with in a fair and impartial manner
- Q *How will this interact with the company's annual appraisal process?*
- A It could replace it, but ideally, **pulsecheckHR** would operate alongside an annual process. In this way, the monthly meetings do all the measurement and provide performance feedback allowing the annual meeting to be a positive one dealing with long terms goals, career development and learning and development plans. It is this type of interaction that is often overlooked when trying to measure and summarise a year's performance in a single meeting
- Q *Can the employee carry-out a self assessment?*
- A Yes, **pulsecheckHR** allows for self assessment, but only where the manager requests it or feels it necessary. Self-feedback, as it is known, is shown on the monthly report, alongside the manager's comments
- Q *What about getting feedback from others; like 360-degree processes do?*
- A Again, **pulsecheckHR** allows the manager to request targeted feedback from any number of people and on specific measurement attributes. The feedback is textual only, it is not scored, and it is open to the employee to read. The requesting of such feedback is in the control of the manager; it is not centrally administered or imposed. Thus, specific meaningful feedback



can be sought based on circumstances that the manager feels will add to the quality of the pulsecheck

**Q** *What type of companies or teams would most benefit from using this approach?*

**A** The approach is best applied to employees, teams or organisations that are performance driven or undergoing significant organisational or structural change. It is particularly successful for roles where attitude, teamwork and leadership will have a material impact on the company's overall performance or output. This probably includes most medium to large organisations in today's competitive business environment

**Q** *Does the system deliver an overall score?*

**A** Yes, each pulsecheck delivers a % result combining components of performance from results, objectives and behaviour on a weighted basis for each month. This uniform and structured approach allows, for the first time ever, true cross-role performance comparisons and ranking. In addition, because the result is about a period, performance trends develop over time and can be analysed to determine the direction employees and teams are taking. The combination of ranking and trend data gives unparalleled performance visibility to senior management. It also facilitates integration with performance-based pay processes, further underpinning the focus on organisational performance throughout the year

**Q** *What about poor performance management?*

**A** **PulsecheckHR** is unique in enabling poor performance management processes to be run without any additional overhead; disruption to the team's day-to-day operation; claims of discrimination or victimisation and in a genuinely fair and auditable manner. Instead of the manager having to make specific arrangements to operate a poor performance process, **pulsecheckHR** supports the potential for poor performance management as part of business-as-usual. In addition, the deliberate removal of inheritance from the process means that the employee is given a true opportunity to improve and so poor-performance turn-around is more likely

**Q** *What happens to staff that are on long-term sickness or maternity leave?*

**A** Staff records can be temporarily disabled to remove someone from the **pulsecheckHR** population for a period. Once they return, they can be easily re-enabled and their history is maintained

**Q** *What about if I want to make a decision and the pulsechecks have not been completed for the current period?*

**A** **PulsecheckHR** is fully period-based saving the entire state of the organisation for each period. Thus, a manager is able to look-back to any past period at any time and view the data as it was at that time

**Q** *Can I drill down through the organisation on-line?*



- A **PulsecheckHR** has a manager dashboard that allows senior managers to drill-down and view areas of the organisation with a few clicks
- Q *Can I download data and reports into Excel or Word?*
- A **PulsecheckHR** has a powerful multi-selection reporting interface that allows the manager to view and download performance
- Q *How do I make sure my managers complete their pulsechecks?*
- A **PulsecheckHR** has a series of email prompts, with text customisable per client, to remind managers to complete their pulsechecks. The user interface also has a status pane that tells the manager if there are any tasks outstanding. Additionally, pulsecheck completion status is included in the management dashboard
- Q *Do I need hardware and technical support staff to get this going?*
- A **PulsecheckHR** is offered on a fully hosted basis, all you need is a browser. The application is compatible with IE6, IE7, Firefox, Opera and Safari so it will work with whatever company standard browser is operated. All that is needed to go live is a set of spreadsheet staff data files for us to load and you are live
- Q *Can I integrate this with my HR system so that I don't have to maintain staff data in two places?*
- A The hosted edition is stand alone and cannot be integrated with customer's systems. However, the data maintenance screens provided in the application are extremely simple and quick to use. For a licensed edition, it would be straightforward to integrate the database with your in-house systems. These integration services can be provided by our partner organisation, Datalogic Solutions Ltd
- Q *What does it cost?*
- A The hosted version of **pulsecheckHR** is charged on a per user per month basis, payable annually in advance. The monthly fee depends on the size of the organisation but is a remarkably low fee considering the value that can be derived from such powerful on-line staff performance data. For license costs, please contact [sales@pulsecheckhr.com](mailto:sales@pulsecheckhr.com)
- Q *How do I get a demo?*
- A Demo's can be requested from our website [www.pulsecheckhr.com](http://www.pulsecheckhr.com) or by phoning 020 8 545 2680