

Poor performers eat their manager's lunch!

With ever increasing working hours and few managers able to take a break for lunch many people are asking 'Where did all my time go?' Well, research from SHL has highlighted that the average manager spends nearly an hour and a quarter every day just managing the under-performers in their teams.

This is time that could be spent on more productive work, on working with high performers to improve overall results, or in actually taking a lunch break or leaving the office on time!

The serious issues behind these statistics is that the productivity of these experienced and well paid managers is being compromised because of the time they spend re-doing work, or correcting the mistakes made by less competent colleagues. Over the course of a year these wasted hours add up to over seven weeks a year on average.

SHL commissioned the Future Foundation to interview 100 managers in each of seven key economies (UK, USA, Hong Kong, Australia, Sweden, The Netherlands and India). Managers were asked the percentage of their time that they spent managing poor performers. The averages of responses varied across the different countries, but all showed significant time 'wasted' in this area.

	Percentage of time spent managing poor performers	Working days per year wasted
UK	11%	26
USA	14%	34
Australia	14%	34
Hong Kong	24%	58
Sweden	8%	19
Netherlands	15%	36
India	20%	48

"Imagine what could be achieved by these key managers if they could regain those seven weeks! The impact on the overall performance of the organization would be dramatic," commented Lynne Gillon Group Product and Marketing Director at SHL.

The first step in winning back these 'lost weeks' is to invest in more stringent and robust selection techniques. Many causes of underperformance in the workplace stem from a poor match between person and job. This may be due to ability – the 'can do' elements of an individual's capability, or the 'will do', their personality and motivation.

Creation of detailed role descriptions, including a model of the competencies required for success, followed by objective assessment of candidates against these requirements will help to reduce the numbers of underperformers in a team.

"Many organizations are seeking to save money by reducing the cost of selecting employees," continued Gillon. "Whilst this is a valid goal in itself, if it means a reduction in the rigour of selection it will lead to a greater proportion of poor performers being appointed and so reduce the overall productivity of the team. In essence short-term savings create medium term costs of an order of magnitude higher!"

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