

# **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS – THE SIX QUESTIONS**

By Larry Olmstead

Over four decades of managing people has convinced me that, for most non-technical jobs, frequent evaluations based on dozens of criteria generally fail to motivate improved performance. A simple construct allows employees to get their arms around issues and focus on the most important goals. As CEO of United Way of Northern California, I implemented a process based on what we called “The Six Questions.” These questions formed the basis of the formal Annual Review. Informally, each employee would meet with their supervisor quarterly and discuss the questions. By intention, this conversation produced no document; the idea was to encourage an honest and free-flowing sharing of ideas. This process proved highly successful in relieving some of the stress of performance management and keeping employees on track toward their goals. Each staff member received a laminated copy of The Six Questions, and most posted them on their wall or cubicle.

The questions:

- 1. What were my top achievements during the past quarter?**
- 2. What are my most important goals for the upcoming quarter?**
- 3. What support is needed from my supervisor and/or others to achieve these goals?**
- 4. What do I need to learn to achieve those objectives?**
- 5. What have I done to help others in the agency achieve *their* goals?**
- 6. How have I contributed to**