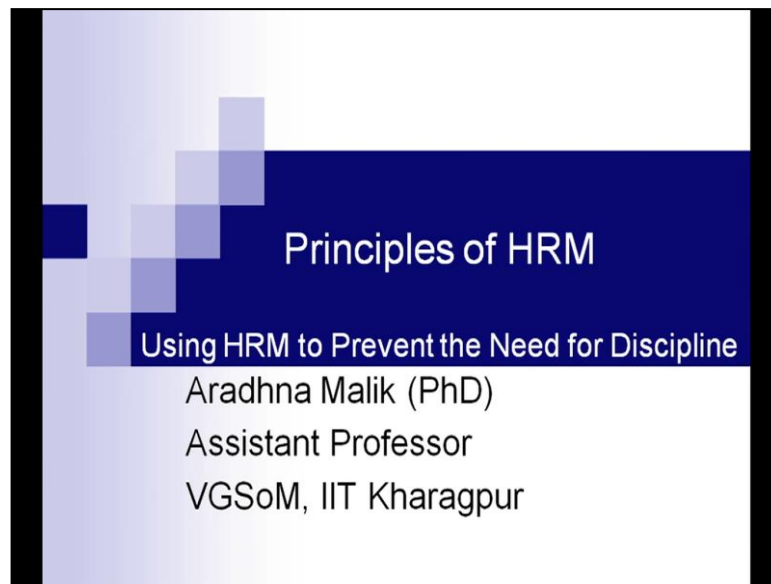


Principles of Human Resource Management
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Module No. #08
Lecture No. #32
Using HRM to Prevent the Need for Discipline

Welcome back, to the class on, Human Resources Management. My name is Aradhna Malik. I have been helping you, with this course.

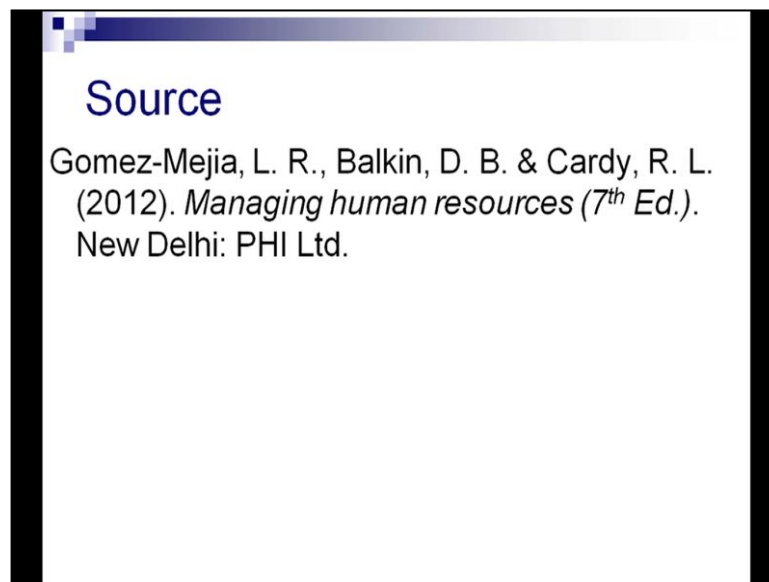


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We were dealing with, the topic of dealing with, difficult employees. We were talking about, how you can deal with different employees, who present, different situation to you, in your capacity as a human resources manager. This particular lecture is going to be focused on, what you can do. The HR strategies, that you can implement, in order to prevent, the need for discipline

We talked about, what discipline is. We talked about, how to administer discipline. We talked about, what you should do to manage situations, that may warrant disciplinary behaviors. And now, i am going to discuss, something very, very, important, which is, why should you even needs to implement, any kind of disciplining techniques. If we take the measures, that are required to be taken, in order to, you know, deal with these situations.

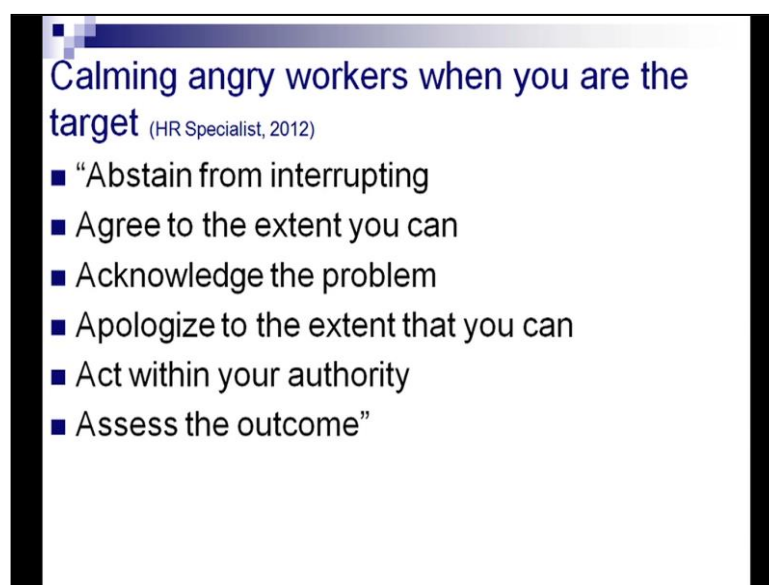
Or, if we can anticipate, you know, the problems, that we can encounter in our, within the scope of our work, as human resources managers, we may be able to prevent, the need to discipline our employees. So, it can be a win-win situation, for both the employees, and the supervisors, or the managers, or the superiors, the people in charge, as custodians of the operations and processes of the organization. So, let us get on, with it.



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I have taken all of the material, that i have used for this, particular lecture, from the book that we have been referring to, which is the book, by Gomez Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy.

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Okay. We are human. People will feel, upset. People will get, angry. People can get into, conflicts. People could come to you with, different types of grievances, different types of situations. They will come. They may end up, shouting at you. They may end up, wending their anger on you. Then, will come. They could come to you, in your capacity as human resources managers.

And say, why was i not treated, in such a manner. Why did the situation, turn out to be like this? And, it is your job, as the human resources manager, to understand, what is going on, and to come up with a strategy, to deal with this, situation. So, let us assume, that in your capacity as human resources manager, somebody comes to you, Somebody, who is very angry.

How do you deal, with that situation? If you deal with that situation, properly, if you deal with that situation, with the level ahead, if you deal with that situation, logically, the need to discipline, anyone, could be removed. So, what do you do. If a person comes to you, who is very, very, angry. The first thing, you should do is, let the person, went.

Do not interrupt. Refrain from interrupting. Let the person, get the steam out, of his or her system. Somebody comes to you, very, very, angry. Let them say, whatever they are saying. Let him, get it out. Then, agree, to their situation, to the extent possible. I am not saying, agree to whatever they are saying. But, it helps, to at least, try and see things, from the perspective of this person, who is obviously, very, very, uncomfortable.

So, say, yes. I see, where you are coming from. What can, i help you with. The minute, you say this, the person concerned, will feel that, he or she is in a safe zone, will feel that, he or she is being supported. And, any further need for, any kind of discipline, or any further need for, any more negative out pour, could go down, you know.

So, if you are genuinely concerned, if you are genuinely interested, in hearing the person's side, if you are genuinely interested in helping the person, in your capacity as the human resources manager, which is a big chunk of, what you do as an HR manager, then it will help the employee, to calm down. Acknowledge the problem.

Obviously, if a person, has put everything, on a backburner. If the person has taken the trouble, to come to your office, to talk to you, about certain things. Obviously, this means, a lot to the concerned person. Please, do not dismiss the problem. Acknowledge, that a problem exists. You may or may not, understand it. But, you can always, try to understand it. When you acknowledge, that a problem exists, the person will feel comfortable, talking to you about it. And, both of you could come to a solution, that can be acceptable, to most of the stakeholders, if not all.

Apologize to the extent, that you can. Do not make excuses. Do not say, i am sorry, for the way, the organization has treated you. But, you can say things like, i am sorry, that you are feeling, so uncomfortable. I am sorry, i was not able to see your point of view, earlier. I am sorry, i was not aware of the situation, till now, and i could not help you.

And, the situation got to a point, where you felt the need, to come and speak to me. So, till that point, is okay. But, beyond that, of course, you do not know, you know, depending on the situation, you can take a call. But, if you say, i am sorry, you know, the thing got, so much out of hand, that you had to take the need, sorry, you had to take the time and effort to come to me, and speak to me about it.

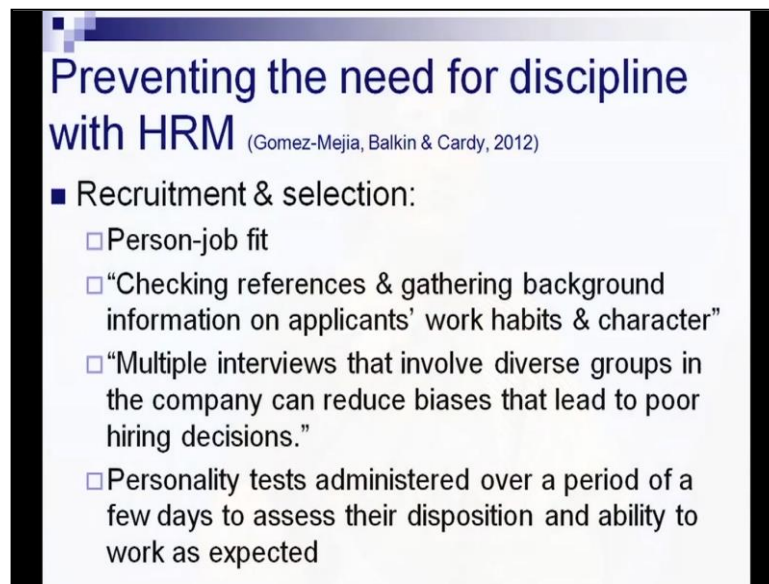
If you say this, the person concerned will feel, safe. The person concerned will feel, empathized with. And, the person's anger is, likely to come down. And, any further negative behavior, can be prevented. The person will not indulge in, sabotage, or whatever. If the person knows, that the person's grievances are being heard at, within your authority.

All of us, have a jurisdiction. Again, like i said, in the previous lecture, my nose ends, where yours begins. We all have our limits. We should not overstep, those boundaries. We can refer the matters, to the concerned people. We should always act, within the purview of our jurisdiction. And, not overstep our boundaries, in our attempts to help the concerned person.

But, we must do, whatever we can, in order to help the person, who is coming to us, for help. The minute, the person realizes that, we are doing this, where anger is likely to come down, and the need for further discipline, can be removed. Assess the outcome. Whatever you do, please find out, how, whatever you are saying, or doing, is likely to impact the situation, from

then on. And then, take a call, as to what acts, what measures, you should take, in your capacity as the, human resources person.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:25)



Preventing the need for discipline with HRM (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Recruitment & selection:
 - Person-job fit
 - “Checking references & gathering background information on applicants’ work habits & character”
 - “Multiple interviews that involve diverse groups in the company can reduce biases that lead to poor hiring decisions.”
 - Personality tests administered over a period of a few days to assess their disposition and ability to work as expected

So, and a character. Again, this goes without saying. You know, what the person's, past record has been. Does the person have, any cases pending against him or her, in the court of law? Some cases like, motor vehicle or road violations, may not be, that serious. They are serious, but they are not very serious, as far as, your organization is concerned. On the other hand, if a person has been accused, of stealing from the organization, of misappropriating funds. And, that is a very serious problem.

Or, the person has been accused, of harassment, that becomes, a very serious issue. And, that needs to be taken into account, in order to, you know, before you can, take an employee. So, those things, should be checked, to the extent possible. It is not possible to find out, how a person will behave, in future. Multiple interviews, that involve diverse groups in the company, that can reduce bias is that, lead to poor hiring decisions.

So, as far as possible, have several people on your interview panel. And, have the person concerned go through, more than one rounds of interviews with, diverse range of personnel. Could be, a mix of men and women. You could have, differently abled people, in the organization, sitting in on interviews. You could have people from, different departments, sitting in on interviews.

So, it just depends on the extent to which, you consider this person, important. And, you know, how significant, this position is for you. Sometimes, your organization may not have the resources, to conduct several layers of interviews. But, as far as possible, have your interview panel, you know, populate your interview panel, with as diverse employees, or as diverse interviewers, as possible. So, that biases, do not creep in.

Everybody, should not be from the same community, or same geographical region, for example. So, that you are not accused of favoring, only one particular region. I mean, it is human nature, to like people, from the geographical region, one belongs to. So, you know, but then, if the entire panel, consists of those people. Then, the people, who do not get hired, will say, well, these people are from a different community.

So, i did not get hired. These people, belong to different geographical regions. So, they are just preferred, people, from their own region. And, that is why, i did not get hired. And, you do not want that. Personality tests administered, over a period of a few days, to assess the disposition of candidates, and ability to work, as expected. This is done, in the civil services examinations. This is done, in the Indian armed forces.

So, it is very important. And that, this is taken care of. It really helps people, see. It helps the interview board see, whether the candidate is capable of performing, under stress. Whether the candidate is physically, able to do certain things. There are personality tests. There are physical tests. There are interviews. The person's behavior is observed, over a period of time. I believe, this also happens in beauty pageants, where the beauty queens are put together, in one location.

And, their behavior is observed, day in, and day out. So, in many cases, this does happen. But, it depends on, what your organization is looking for. And, how you plan to take in, people. And, whether your organization, has the resources, to conduct, these kinds of tests. So, the more time and resources, you spend on the hiring decisions, the lesser the chances of employees, engaging in misconduct, later. The person job fit, needs to be assessed, as far as possible. And, that will help you prevent, a lot of problems, in future.

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Preventing the need for discipline with HRM

(Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

■ Training & Development:

- Effective orientation program – “...communicates to new employees the values important to the organization”; orients them towards the expectations of the organization; and helps them “... manage their own behavior better”
- Reduction of skill gaps & improvement of competencies through initial training & periodic re-training programs
- “Training supervisors to coach & provide feedback to their subordinates encourages supervisors to intervene early in problem situations with counselling rather than discipline”
- Development of career ladders or clear and achievable career progression programs and provision of support for career progression

The next category is, training and development. In training and development, we look for, you know, we must have, once the employees are taken in, then we are looking at, effective orientation programs. Effective orientation programs, communicate to the new employees, the values, important to the organization. The employees must know, what they are getting themselves, into.

For example, in the teaching profession, especially in institutes of higher education like, IIT, Kharagpur, we expect our faculty, to devote as much time, as is necessary, to their research and teaching. Nobody tells us that, we need to sit on our offices, till, 8, 9, 10, at night. But, it is a given. We are provided, all kinds of support, to do that.

So, you know, the culture of the organization is such that, we want to come to work. All of us love, coming to work. We all love, going to our offices. We are passionate, about our students, about our teaching, about our research. And, we are given, all the resources. So, there is no really well-defined line, between office hours and home hours.

And so, you know, everybody's family knows, everybody's family. And, it is like, this one big happy family. So, the culture is such. Now, if you do not like that culture, then you should not come to a place like, IIT, Kharagpur, if you do not enjoy that. If you like to have, clear compartments, between your work life, and your personal life, and your family life, then these kinds of institutes, or maybe, even industry townships, are not for you.

I do not know, what industry townships are. I do not have, firsthand experience. I have just heard, that even industry townships, are like that. So, you know, everybody is accommodating, as far as work is concerned. And, everybody loves going to work. And, you hang out with the same people, in the evening, and you do things together.

And so, that is how, the camaraderie builds, and the organization. It is a win-win situation. Because, people feel committed, to the organization. The employees feel committed, to the organization. And the organization feels that, it is taking good care, of its employees. Effective orientation programs orient, employees towards, the expectations of the organization. You are told, what the organization expects of you. What the values are. What the culture is like.

And, all of this helps the employees, manage their own behavior, better. If you know, what is expected of you, you will do everything in your capacity, to give the organization, what it expects of you. So, the organization can treat you, as well as, you want to be treated. Reduction of skill gaps, and improvement of competencies, through initial training, and periodic re-training programs.

So, employees like to grow. Employees like to know, how they can grow. Employees like to polish, their skills. We all want to use, whatever we have. And, we all want to stay, updated. If the organization facilitates, our updation, of our skills, of the new things, that we need to learn, in order to do our work, well. We feel, happy about it.

We want to go to work. And, all of this helps reduce the problems, the organization has in the end. So, it is a win-win situation. It is a worthwhile investment to, for the organization to have, very good orientation programs, and very good re-training programs. The employees are trained properly. They are taught, whatever they need to use, in the organization, later.

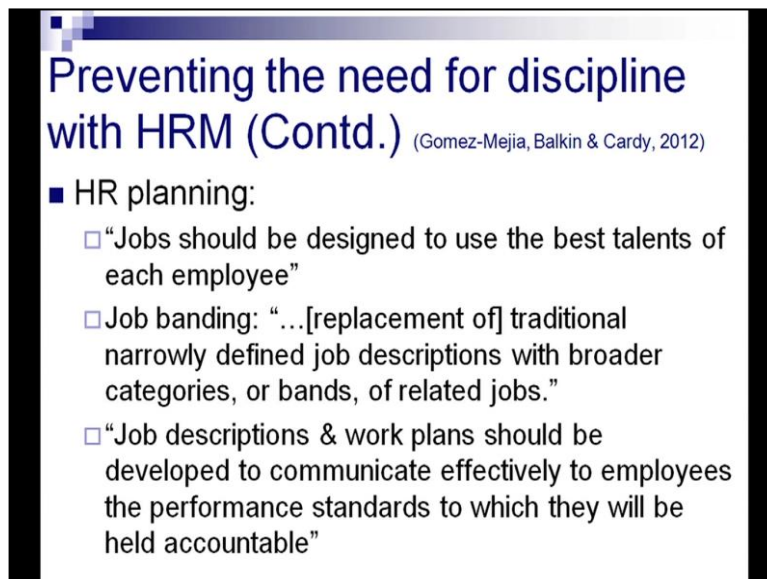
And, they are re-trained in things, that have become rusty. And, that helps them stay productive, as employees. Training supervisors, to coach and provide feedback, to their subordinates, encourages supervisors, to intervene early in problem situations, with counselling, rather than discipline. I told you, in the previous lecture, also.

Our job, as human resources personnel, is not to prevent, people from doing, what they are doing. It is not to discipline them. It is not to tell them, you are wrong, this is the punishment, we will give you. No. Our job, as human resources personnel, is to facilitate the growth and development of our employees, in such a way, that they become as productive as possible, and remain committed to the organization, as far as possible.

Okay. So, the supervisors can be trained, to coach and provide feedback, to the employees. So, the employees feel, that the supervisors, their supervisor are taking, good care of them. Development of career ladders, are clear and achievable. Career progression programs, and provision of support for career progression. Show people, how they can rise, in the organization.

Tell them, how they can go ahead in the organization, how they can get their promotions, etcetera. And, they will remain, committed. So, the career progression path, should be clear. You make that clear. People will be dedicated. That will, keep them motivated, to move further, in their careers. And, there will be lesser problems, for the organization. Okay.

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Preventing the need for discipline with HRM (Contd.) (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- HR planning:
 - “Jobs should be designed to use the best talents of each employee”
 - Job banding: “...[replacement of] traditional narrowly defined job descriptions with broader categories, or bands, of related jobs.”
 - “Job descriptions & work plans should be developed to communicate effectively to employees the performance standards to which they will be held accountable”

HR planning. We are talking about, development. Let us talk a little bit about, planning. When we talk about planning, we are talking about, designing jobs. We have already

discussed, HR planning, in a variety of ways. So, the job should be designed, to use the best talents, of each employee. Jobs, can also be banded.

Which means that, jobs with the same kind of characteristics, can be put together, in a category. And, the progression, within that category, can be made clear, to the employees. Job descriptions and work plans, should be developed, to communicate effectively to employees, the performance standards to which, they will be held accountable.

So, when we talk about HR planning, we communicate the expectations, to the employee. We tell them, what, their job entails. We help them, develop their work plans. Or, give them, work plans. Tell them, what is expected, when. Give them deadlines. And, we hold them, accountable. We tell them, what is expected. By when, it is expected.

Give them, a reasonable period of time, in which, they can perform. And then, we revisited, review it, after a while. So, if people know, what is coming, people have a reasonable goal. Then, their chances of engaging in undesirable behavior, are reduced, significantly. And, the jobs, i am sorry, i have missed, the first point. The jobs should be designed, to use the best talents, of each employee

So, if the jobs are designed, in such a manner, that the employees are able to use, whatever they already have. Then, it helps them, stay engaged with their jobs. It enhances, employee engagement. It keeps their interest alive, in whatever, they are doing. And, that in turn, helps the organization, get the maximum output, from the employees. And, it also helps the employees, stay committed, stay interested, in working for the organization.

Preventing the need for discipline with HRM (Contd.) (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

■ Performance appraisal:

- Reasonable standards of performance appraisal criteria
- Provision of continuous feedback to subordinates with interventions as often and as promptly as required
- Proper documentation of employee appraisals to “... protect employees against wrongful discharge or discrimination suits”
- Ability of performance appraisals to “... measure employee behaviors in addition to performance outcomes so that employees receive feedback on the methods they use to achieve their expected performance goals”

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Performance appraisal. Employees have, done their work. Now, it is time for you, to assess the quality of the output, of the employee. So, how do you, do that. Reasonable standards of performance appraisal criteria, should be made. One should set, the performance appraisal criteria, at a level, that can be achieved. It has to be sufficiently, difficult and challenging. But, it has to be achievable. It should be reasonable.

Provision of continuous feedback to subordinates, with interventions as often, and as promptly as required. Which means, that the employees, should be given, continuous feedback, should be routinely told, what they need to do. And, interventions can be, or should be made, in order to help them perform, to the best of their ability, as far as possible. So, the feedback, routinely, their work should be visited, by their supervisors.

They should check, whether the employee is performing, to his or her maximum capacity, or expected level, or not. And, the supervisors should intervene, whenever possible. And, help the employee, or steer the employee, in the right direction. And, that way, the need for disciplining the employee, for poor performance, will go down. Proper documentation of employee appraisals, to protect employees against, wrongful discharge, or discrimination suits.

So, documentation regarding, an employee's performance, should be maintained, at all times. And, later on, for whatever reason, the employee is found to be doing, something unreasonable, previous records of the employee's good performance, can come up, and can be used as support, for the employee. So, that the employee, is not fired, at the drop of a hat.

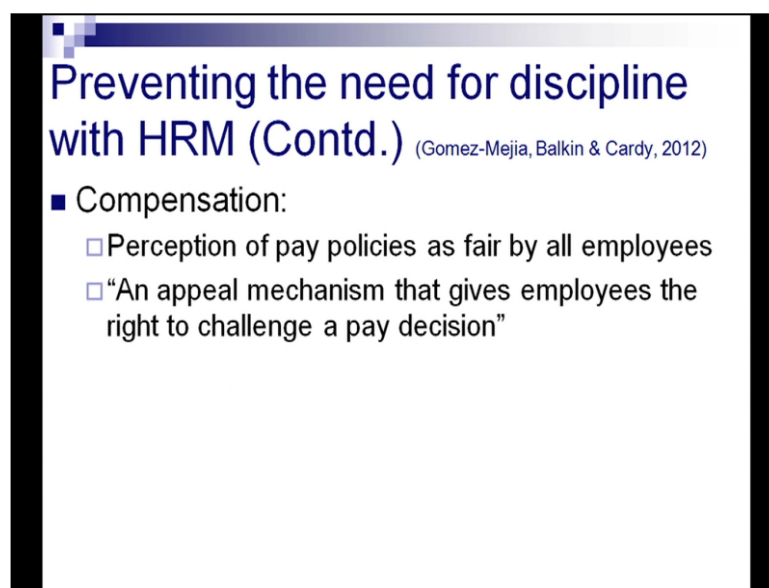
On the other hand, if an employee has been, routinely engaging in, undesirable behavior. At that time, these records, can also be very detrimental, to the employee's case. So, it works, both ways. But, documentation always helps. In most cases, it helps, save the employees, from problems in, you know, problems regarding, records of poor performance, that can ultimately become a reason, for the organization, to fire them.

Ability of performance appraisals, to measure employee behaviors, in addition to performance outcomes. So, that employees receive feedback, on the methods, they use to

achieve their, expected performance goals. So, we have discussed this, in some of the previous lectures, that performance appraisals are not really considered, as very accurate measures, of somebody's performance.

But still, these performance appraisals, need to be able to measure, the behavior of employees. So that, in some ways, so that, they can be used, for the purpose of feedback, that can help the employee improve, his or her behavior, his or her product. By behavior, i mean, professional behavior, work-related behavior, as far as possible

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Preventing the need for discipline with HRM (Contd.) (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2012)

- Compensation:
 - Perception of pay policies as fair by all employees
 - “An appeal mechanism that gives employees the right to challenge a pay decision”

And, the last point here is, compensation. We can intervene, at the point of compensation. Compensation is, the perception of pay policies, as fair, as by, all employees. So, as far as compensation is concerned, the human resources manager, can take active steps to ensure that the, money, that the person receives, the salary, the benefits, the perks, that the employee receives, are considered to be fair, by the employee, in every way, possible.

And, that can help prevent, further problems to the, regarding perceived injustice, as far as compensation is concerned. An appeal mechanism, that gives employees, the right to challenge, a pay decision. So, in addition to, having a fair system of compensation, the employees should also have, a way, a comfortable, safe, harmless way, of asking the organization, why they are being paid X, and not Y, for their services.

This helps the employees, remain committed. If they feel, that they are being treated fairly, they are less likely to engage in behaviors, that can be detrimental, to the organization. And, these are some of the strategies, that we can use, in order to, or as HR managers and professionals, we can intervene, at every stage, in an employee's work life.

And, we can do, whatever is in our capacity, to ensure that, the chances of employees, engaging in unreasonable behavior, are minimized. And, the needs to discipline them, is reduced, as far as possible. Now, that is all, i have for you, in this lecture. And, we will try and wrap up, whatever we have done, in human resources management, in the upcoming session. So, thank you very much, for listening to me.