Performance System Drift Self-Check

A structured reflection on whether your performance model still matches how work actually happens

Performance systems rarely fail all at once.
They drift, gradually, quietly, and often invisibly, as work, roles, and expectations evolve faster than the structures meant to govern them.

This self-check is designed to help leaders reflect on whether their performance system still reflects reality, or whether it has become a legacy construct operating out of alignment with modern work.

1. Work Reality vs. Measurement

- Does your performance framework measure outcomes that still matter, or behaviors that once did?
- Are employees evaluated on work they actually perform, or on proxy indicators that are easier to track?
- Do performance metrics reflect collaboration, judgment, and adaptability, or primarily task completion?
- When performance is questioned, can leaders explain *why* someone is considered effective or ineffective?

Consider: What you measure signals what you value, even when unintended.

2. Role Evolution vs. Static Expectations

- Have roles meaningfully evolved while performance expectations remained fixed?
- Are employees expected to adapt to new tools, complexity, or ambiguity without corresponding changes in evaluation?
- Do performance standards account for learning curves and transition states?
- Are expectations clear when roles shift, or assumed?

Consider: Static performance criteria applied to dynamic roles create silent failure.

3. Feedback Integrity

- Is feedback timely, specific, and grounded in observed work?
- Do feedback mechanisms surface insight, or reinforce hierarchy and compliance?
- Is feedback used to adjust systems, or only to judge individuals?
- Are employees surprised by formal evaluations?

Consider: Feedback that arrives late is rarely corrective, it is often justificatory.

4. System Signals & Behavior Shaping

- What behaviors does your performance system implicitly reward?
- Does it encourage risk awareness and learning, or risk avoidance and compliance?
- Are people optimizing for scores rather than outcomes?
- Has performance management become an administrative exercise rather than a developmental one?

Consider: Systems shape behavior even when no one is watching.

Closing Reflection

Performance systems should evolve alongside work.
When they do not, organizations often experience disengagement, misalignment, and defensiveness, not because people are failing, but because systems no longer reflect reality.

Prairie Business Evolutions works with organizations to identify, explain, and correct performance system drift, preserving accountability while enabling adaptation.

Intent & Use Notice

This self-check is provided for informational and reflective purposes only. It is not an evaluation, diagnostic, or compliance instrument and should not be used as a substitute for professional judgment or organizational due diligence. Organizations retain responsibility for decisions made based on their unique context and requirements.