

COMPETITIVENESS AT WORK: IS IT NECESSARY?

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Humans are not products of factories. They possess different qualities and standards. However, when work is concerned, there are certain keys of performance index (KPI) that workers need to fulfil in order to maintain productivity and standard of an organization. Besides, KPI is also used to evaluate work performance. Rush (2022) defines KPI as a measurable tool of evaluating how well an organization is performing in pursuing its key business goals. According to Louise (2016), KPI is not only important for measuring the employees' targets but also it creates a learning atmosphere where learning takes place to improve performance, stimulates employees to receive important information in order to keep up-to-date information, encourages accountability where vital statistics of performance are revealed, and boosts employees' morale when they receive positive feedback from the superiors.



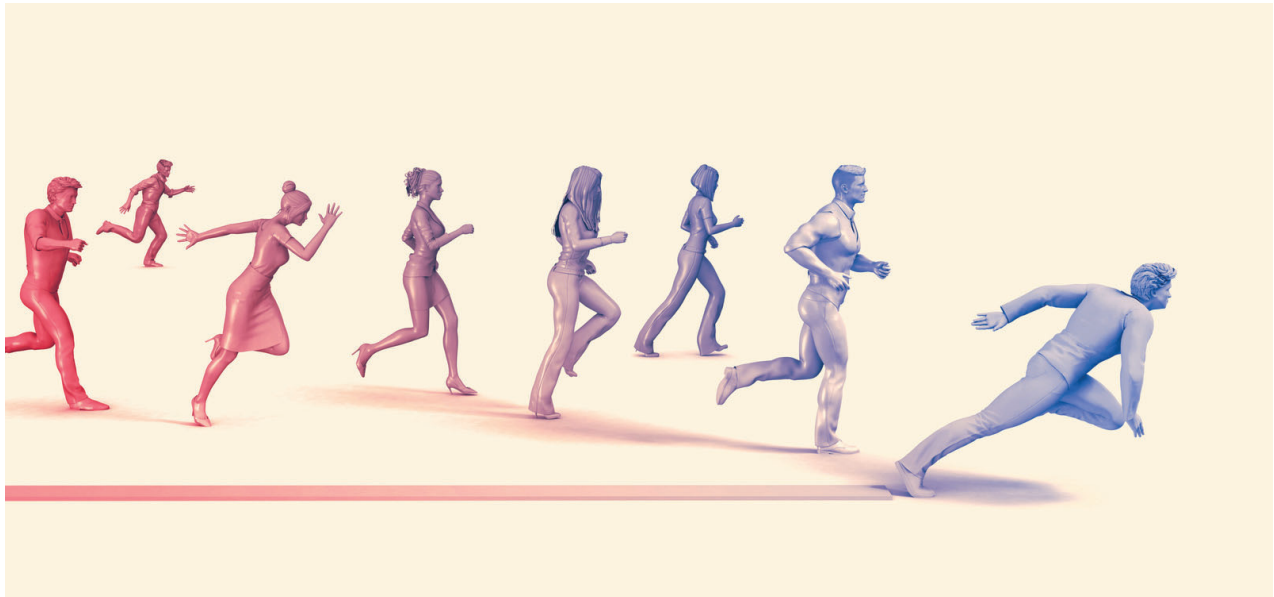
Fulfilling KPI has indirectly called for one to be competitive at work. Not knowing the right way to duel with the 'competition' may lead to stress. Being competitive at work can either increase the quality of work as everyone wants to come out with the best solutions for any problems occurring at the workplace, or anxiety when one cannot compete with the others (Leonard, 2019). Thus, competitiveness at work can be good and bad depending on one's choice and circumstance.

To begin with, competitiveness should be perceived as a driver for one to achieve goals at work. This can be done by competing with yourself first through evaluating your own previous performances. For example, as a novice lecturer with one or two years of experience, you can compete with your appraisal from the previous year. Then, try to increase the volume or quantity and quality of the areas that you are capable of doing but at the same time maintaining at least the minimum requirement of the KPI. This is like nurturing yourself in getting used to the working system. Thus, the focus is on you – it can be less stressed.

In addition, if you are competing with someone else, it is best that you determine your strengths so that you can compete with work circumstances. This version of competition, however, may result positively or negatively. In achieving positive outcomes for yourself, your colleagues and organisation, you need to consider healthy communication, and a cooperative team environment. Healthy communication would require you to observe your colleagues' interaction that motivates them to engage in a competitive situation. Support their ideas and tolerate differences among the team. Besides that, competing in a team can be interpreted as cooperation among its members which requires them to constructively explore their ideas and power to look for a solution to achieve a goal. The goal has to be a win-win goal which must benefit all the individuals involved, and is set through negotiation involving cooperation and compromise (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). Therefore, the shared sense of accomplishment with work colleagues will be a contribution to the organisation. This can be considered as a win-win competition.

As opposed to the positive result of competing with someone else, this version however, can be detrimental if someone is overcompetitive. This type of personality can be found in almost all work spaces as the working world has become rapidly competitive. What matters to such people who are overcompetitive is winning – they want to be the best! Researchers define them as having “a neurotic need to win at all costs” (Houston et al., 2015). They further describe overcompetitive individuals to have a Machiavellian world view who believe “the ends justify the means.” In order to get ahead, a Machiavellian person may threaten rivals, steal resources, or tell lies. These negative traits can disrupt harmony in workplace which indirectly affects productivity. To some extent, overcompetitive individuals can experience burnout and isolation having to cope with the stress in winning the competition which apparently has its limits.

At the end of the day, the necessity to be competitive depends on your trait. For instance, say that you are a person that thrives in besting all of your colleagues to earn top positions, then competition is necessary. However, if you are not someone who has the need to be above everyone else in your department, then it will not be necessary to be competitive unless you are the kind to compete with yourself based on previous achievements.



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