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Re-Inventing PMS: Are We Ready To Rock The Boat?

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There was a time when I thought that one of the most important areas in the HR function was designing of a Performance Management System (PMS) and successful implementation of the same. What was underlying this thought process was the fact that this was one HR process that touched all parts of the organization - starting from organization business goals to individual KRAs to incentives paid on achievement of goals, increments based on ratings, coaching for individual development and career progression based on overall performance and capability development.

But now I am not sure. In fact for me, the pendulum has swung to the other side. I ask myself and challenge all of you in the HR fraternity to question if we really need a PMS in today's age and time? The points of arguments are based on two questions usually towards which we tend to close our eyes to, are (a) Can PMS march with modern organizational demands in ever changing, challenging and competitive environment? The answer may be that the modern flexible and agile organizations coupled with participative style of leadership create a different ball game and require structures, systems and processes designed to deliver sustainable excellence in VUCA environment where propositions change almost daily and a static PMS once, twice or thrice a year can't be the yard stick for highly stressful demands of performance. (b) Has PMS achieved the goal for which it was created? The answer is may be partially only, as the goodness of PMS could not be churned out for development path of individuals due to many inadvertent business compulsions.

With all its pitfalls why do we still love (or love to hate) the Performance Management System but are unwilling to do away with it? Are there not better ways of aligning to the organization, developing as an individual, being coached to be a master craftsman and getting feedback? Is it not high time HR looked at more humane ways of achieving these myriad objectives and buries the age old performance management system?

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