

Developing a Performance Management Framework for a Top Tier Law Firm in Nigeria

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Sincerely,

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ABSTRACT

This PhD thesis presents a comprehensive study on developing a performance management framework designed using a sampled top-tier law firm in Nigeria. This research aims to address the unique challenges and requirements of managing, evaluating, and reporting on employee performance within a law firm, ultimately contributing to improving organizational efficiency and employee growth.

The thesis begins with a description of the issue followed by a thorough analysis of the existing literature on performance management, focusing on its theoretical fundamentals and standard practices in various industries. Special attention is given to the distinctive characteristics of law firms, incorporating their cultural context, strategic preferences, and professional expectations. Combining this knowledge develops a theoretical framework for the subsequent empirical investigation.

The research methodology is a qualitative approach to gathering data from interviews with partners, managers, and employees, providing valuable insights into the current performance management practices, challenges faced, and areas for improvement. The quantitative aspect relates to the collation and computation of performance measures to establish the parameters for relevant reporting.

Based on the findings from the data analysis, a performance management framework tailored precisely for top-tier law firms is proposed. The framework takes into consideration the various methodologies identified in the literature review and empirical research, addressing key concerns such as strategic congruence, context congruence, thoroughness, practicality, meaningfulness, specificity, identification of effective and ineffective performance, reliability, validity, acceptability and fairness, openness, correctability, standardization, and ethicality.

The framework proposed provides law firms with a structured and comprehensive approach to evaluating and managing employee performance, aligning individual objectives with organizational/ team goals, promoting a culture of fairness and accountability, and enabling continuous improvement and development. The framework is expected to enhance law firms' performance outcomes, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness.

This PhD thesis significantly contributes to the field of performance management in the legal industry by offering a tailored framework that addresses law firms' specific challenges and requirements. It provides valuable insights and practical recommendations for law firm leaders, managers, and human resources professionals, aiding them in implementing a performance management system that supports achieving strategic objectives while promoting employee growth and success.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

A. Contextual Data

Every Law Firm wants its workforce to be productive and capable of working seamlessly. The Staff Performance Management framework helps a firm measure and manage the performance of its employees at all levels and across various functions.

Top Tier Law firms' Staff Performance Management framework sets expectations and measures for the staff's performance. The framework aims to build a shared perception of how the team performs based on the Key Result Areas (KSAs). Other objectives for the framework include:

- To provide a structured and direct process for assessing and compensating staff performance, thus, enabling informed judgments on actions needed to strengthen the business and operational performance of the Firm.
- To align employees' knowledge, skills, career goals, and ambitions with the Firm's strategic objectives.
- To provide transparency on performance expectations and an unbiased basis for assessing staff performance across different job roles, grades, and departments.
- To promote a culture of personal and team accountability and liability for performance results.
- To establish a compelling justification that rewards, sanctions, and (or) deploy improvement plans to employees as required.
- To provide a forum for ongoing conversation and feedback that improves staff working relationships.

Our framework for a Tier One Law Firm modeled one with over 25 years of industry experience, consecutive turnover for five years above NGN2,000,000,000.00, and a workforce with over 80 workers (60 lawyers including nine partners and 23 support services staff). What would performance management look like for such an organization?

We directly associated two critical actions in the performance management of a Law firm.

- Identifying all resources and possible reallocation that appropriately drive exceptional results.
- Understanding the reasons behind the performance achieved.

These actions point towards deliberate approaches that exclude unproductive activities like selecting and calculating Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and collecting data that did not originate from a precise corporate purpose and aspirations, with roots in a core value system focused on strategic goals. Therefore, what measures should be of interest?

Peter Drucker said, "What cannot be measured cannot be managed." Meaning "measurement" is an essential process in the Management of Performance. How can we evaluate progress or improvement when no measures compare past, present, or future results? So, tracking and assessing all data required for planning, coordinating, controlling, organizing, and communicating performance is necessary. All of which require particular competencies or a skill set.

We should note that, as these sources of data transcend the entire Firm's business and operations, the reasons behind performance must be provable by relevant competencies (internal or external) able to:

- Read performance results correctly to identify the inputs of various individuals and (or) teams with pivotal contributions.
- Link processes to performance results to establish existing procedures' effectiveness and (or) efficiency.
- Appreciate how the context of an assignment affects performance.
- Establish that business or operations relationships are causal and directly impact expected results.

➤ *Are there any Trends Currently shown in the Industry?*

Yes, there are current trends in the industry regarding performance management in law firms. One trend is using technology to streamline and automate performance management processes, such as using performance management software to track and analyze employee performance data. Another trend is the shift towards continuous performance management, which involves ongoing feedback and coaching rather than annual or bi-annual performance reviews. Additionally, there is an increasing emphasis on measuring not just individual employee performance but also team and organizational performance, as well as the alignment of performance goals with the Firm's overall strategy and mission.

Coaching and mentoring for young professionals form an integral part of performance management in a firm. The benefits of mentoring programs, such as providing guidance, support, and career development opportunities to the mentees, are critical for business sustainability. Additionally, coaching can enhance job satisfaction, engagement, and retention rates for both the mentor and the mentee (Williams, 2016).

B. Background Information

PwC's Annual Law Firm Survey of 2020 indicated income growth for the top 10 firms of 3.6% compared to 6.1% recorded in 2019. However, the average net profit (before total and fixed share equity partner remuneration) fell by 0.9%, compared with 2019's growth of 6.5%. So, how can a Law Firm consistently grow income while maintaining optimal levels of profitability? We need to appreciate that a firm's performance (like any other business) must adequately account for clients, learning & growth, internal business processes, and financial perspectives that many organizations erroneously pay most of their attention to. The Balanced Scorecard provides an organization with a basis for ensuring the appropriate balance is maintained on all four (4) perspectives to allow measures to be developed and cascaded from top management (considering corporate goals) to individual employees in their respective departments. We cannot attest that any performance management process holds perfect accountability for a firm's business, hence the need to inculcate some methodologies that address several challenges that a firm's PM process may typically face.

➤ *The Balanced Scorecard Tool Provides a Foundation for our PM Framework based on Four (4) Key Steps that Include to:*

- Plan performance goals, including developing a corporate scorecard that will be cascaded to departments/ units and individual employees.
- Monitor performance by observance, developing capabilities, and providing informal and continuous feedback.
- Evaluate performance with an appraisal, provide formal and documented feedback, identify development needs, and provide the appropriate support.
- Reward performance by recognizing good performance, penalizing poor performance, and providing performance support as appropriate.

Figures 1 and 2 show the BSC measures and the interconnection between corporate vision, mission, strategic focus, and core values.

➤ *Balance Scorecard (BSC) Measures*

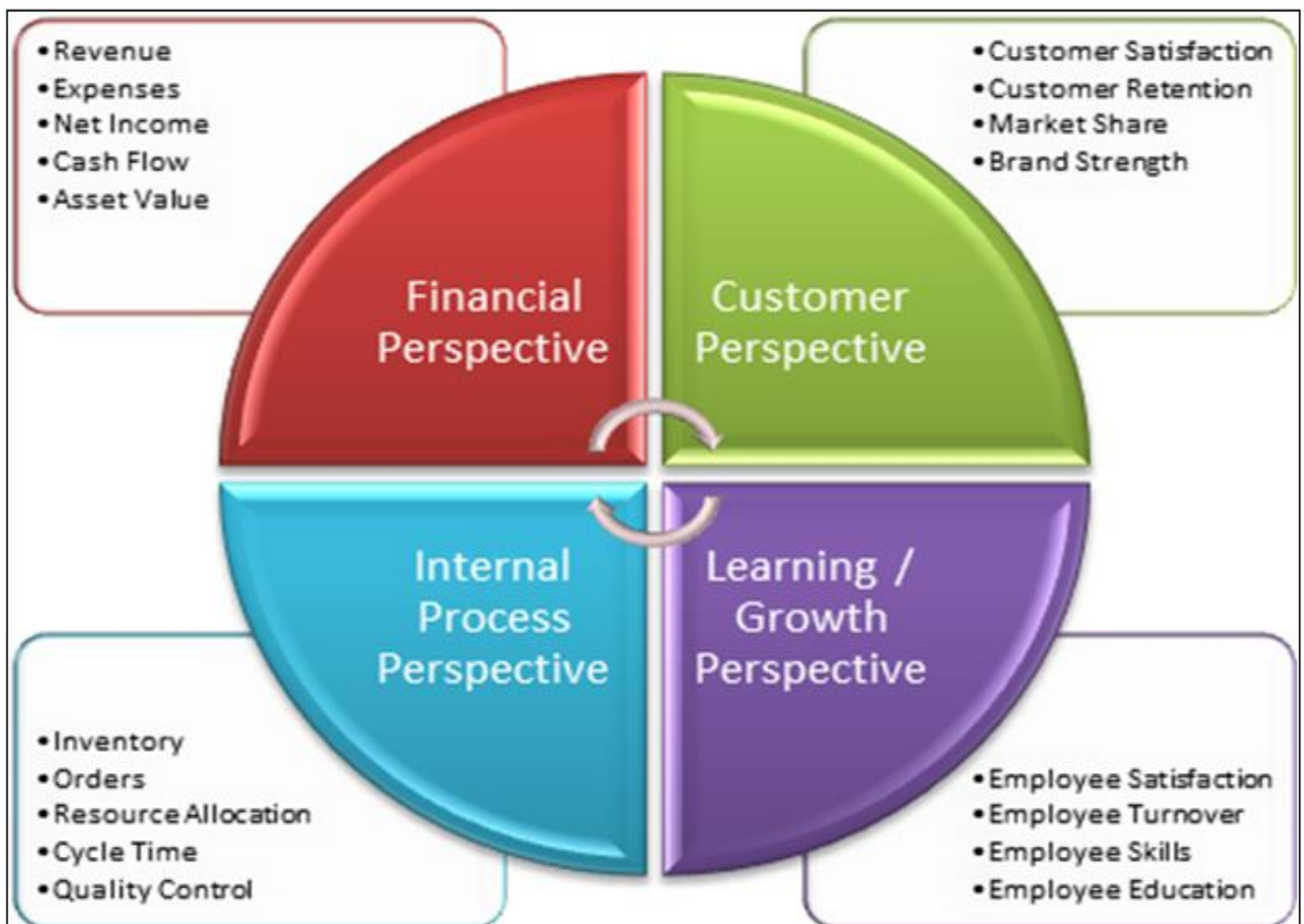


Fig 1 BSC Interactions between Corporate Vision, Mission, Strategic Focus and Core Values

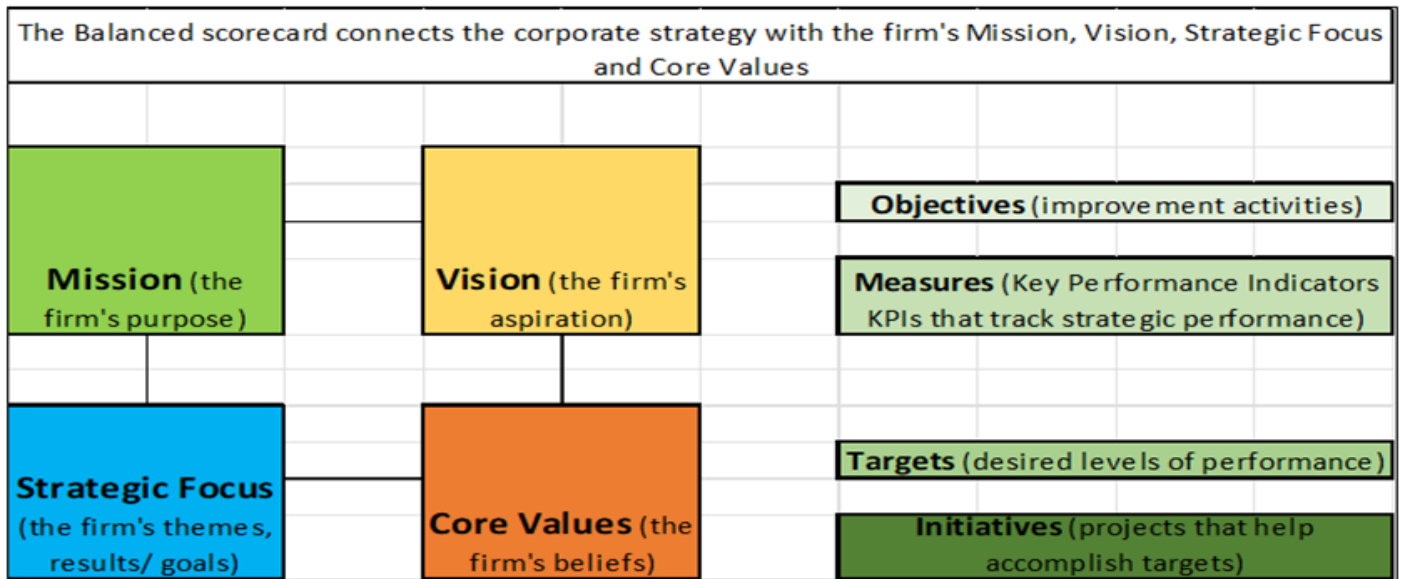


Fig 2 Balance Scorecard (BSC) Measures

➤ *Our Background to the Problem would be Grossly Inadequate if we Failed to Examine the following:*

- The lack of a structured approach to performance management, inadequate performance metrics, unclear performance expectations, and insufficient performance monitoring and feedback mechanisms.
- So, best practices in performance management for law firms globally; include benchmarking against top-performing law firms, examining the performance management strategies of successful law firms, and identifying industry-specific performance metrics.
- The importance of a culture of performance refers to the set of values, beliefs, and behaviors that promote high performance in an organization. It is essential to emphasize the importance of creating a performance culture in law firms to ensure that the performance management framework is effectively implemented and sustained.
- The role technology plays and how it is essential to identify what some technological tools and solutions can deliver to improve performance management in law firms. These may include performance management software, dashboards, and analytics tools.
- The impact of effective performance management on a firm's profitability: Some organizations have articulated their success stories with recorded impacts on profitability. Case studies of law firms that have successfully implemented performance management frameworks and achieved significant financial performance improvements make good learning for other firms.

CHAPTER TWO

FOCUS OF THE INVESTIGATION

A. *Statement of the Issue*

➤ *To Achieve Exceptional Performance, a Firm Must Address the Fundamentals that Include:*

- Developing policies and practices that motivate the workforce to increase or sustain brilliant performance.
- Build "employee engagement" levels that result in employees finding meaning and purpose in the workplace.
- Increase competency levels resulting from efficient deployment of corporate, department/ team, or individual interventions to close skills gaps (Aguinis, 2013).

In reality, there are hardly concerted efforts that address these fundamentals to develop and sustain peak performance; for this reason, it is expedient for law firms and corporate entities alike to deliberately ensure their PM system complies with the standards Aguinis (2013) recommended:

- Strategic congruence - Individual objectives must align with the unit and the Firm's goals.
- Context congruence - The PM process must align with the Firm's culture.
- Thoroughness - All employees should be evaluated, including managers; those responsibilities should be evaluated for the desired results and behaviors.
- Practicality - Convoluting, time-consuming, and expensive processes are avoided, hence the need for technological interphase.
- Meaningfulness - Evaluation standards must be relevant, related to individuals or groups with responsibility, and cover a specific period under review with regularity.
- Specificity - To state expectations and concrete guidance on what is expected of each employee.
- Identification of effective and ineffective performance - The process must allow employees differentiation based on observed and ineffective behaviors and results.
- Reliability - To consist of consistent and error-free measures as it relates to arriving at the exact measures of an employee if two independent supervisors evaluated him/her.
- Validity - That contains all critical performance facets and is non-deficient or outside the employee's control.
- Acceptability and fairness - This must contain a process to ensure the evaluation is perceived as fair and acceptable by the employee appraised.
- Openness - There should be no secrets to the performance of employees done frequently; the communication during the appraisal session is two-way in its exchange and consistent with facts and honesty.
- Correctability - Serves to reduce subjectivity or at least provide a means to correct an error perceived by the employee appraised.
- Standardization - Evaluation is conducted consistently across people and time by deploying to appraisers and appraisees when appropriate.
- Ethicality - Comply with all ethical standards, including subduing all self-interests that compromise set standards or performance dimensions designed for a specific evaluation.

We elaborate further in our Discussion section.

➤ *Having a "Sponsor" at the Partnership Level can be Critical to the Success of Developing and Implementing a Performance Management Framework in a Law Firm. Here are some Reasons why:*

- Top-level buy-in: When a senior partner sponsors the project, it signals to the rest of the Firm that performance management is a priority. This can help ensure the initiative is taken seriously and everyone is on board with the new system.
- Clear communication: A sponsor can help communicate the goals and objectives of the performance management framework to the rest of the Firm. This can help ensure that everyone understands why the new system is being implemented and what they need to do to make it successful.
- Resource allocation: Developing and implementing a performance management framework can require significant resources, including time, money, and personnel. A senior partner can help ensure the necessary resources are allocated to the project, which can help ensure its success.
- Accountability: Having a sponsor at the partnership level can help ensure that everyone in the Firm is accountable for their performance. This can create a culture of accountability, which can improve overall performance and help the Firm achieve its goals.

Overall, having a "sponsor" at the partnership level can help ensure that the performance management framework is taken seriously and is given the resources and support it needs to be successful. This can help the Firm improve its performance and achieve its goals.

B. Description of the Issue

When a Law firm needs a defined framework, there may be challenges with upgrading and inculcating changes into the performance management process continuously. Occasional reviews caused by business and (or) operational needs may need help addressing. Ideally, modifying the existing framework will require the following:

- Making changes to the Firm's strategic focus or goals.
- Identifying initiatives that can drive corporate, departmental, and (or) individual objectives.
- The need to revisit accountabilities and (or) responsibilities may become relevant due to changes in the distribution of rewards to address recognition of outstanding performance better.
- There may also be a need to drive corporate culture by including or modifying defined competencies that translate to specific performance measures for evaluation.

Developing a PM framework ensures relevant documents—conveying the intended HR strategy that sets the Firm's agenda for staff motivation, employee engagement, and the development of competencies are in place. These strategic documents include:

- A recent copy of the Firm's Corporate Strategy
- The Organization Structure
- The current Grading Structure for lawyers and support services employee
- A Competency Profile
- Job Descriptions for all roles
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Policy Documents/ Handbooks

However, firms without a PM framework seldom have these documents and regularly meet with confrontations that require making policy and (or) strategic changes. These changes stand a likelihood of inconsistency (with the Firm's goals) when reviewed without consideration of other documents with detailed policies and practices.

We must uphold the importance of having a defined PM framework when the lack of a framework can lead to challenges with implementing changes and upgrading the PM process, particularly with occasional reviews. The only modifications that should be made to an existing framework should be based on changes to the Firm's strategic focus or goals, identified initiatives that can drive objectives, the need to revisit accountabilities and responsibilities due to changes in rewards, and the need to drive corporate culture.

The development of a PM framework ensures that relevant documents are in place, so our PM framework proposes to serve as a focal point for delivering the Firm's mission and vision while ensuring consistency with policies and practices and maintaining strategic congruence at all levels in management.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF OTHER WORK DONE

Performance management is a crucial element of organizational success. There has been growing interest in developing effective performance management frameworks for organizations in recent years. This literature review explores the available literature on developing a performance management framework for a top-tier law firm in Nigeria. It provides a framework for setting goals, assessing performance, and giving feedback, which enables the organization to identify areas for improvement and take action to optimize performance (Aguinis, 2013). We draw on various resources, including journal articles and reports, to identify best practices and critical considerations in developing a performance management framework.

➤ *The Firm's Strategy*

According to Sawyer (2019), performance management is a critical aspect of law firm management that can significantly impact the firm's success. In developing a practical performance management framework, the strategy session amongst partners in a firm must include conversations around the following:

- **Setting clear goals and expectations:** Partners should establish clear and measurable goals and expectations for lawyers and support staff. This will ensure that everyone works toward the same objectives to achieve a synergy toward the desired measuring outcomes.
- **Establishing meaningful metrics:** Partners should identify the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be used to measure performance. These include revenue, profitability, client satisfaction, and employee engagement metrics. Sawyer noted that choosing meaningful and relevant metrics to the firm's goals and objectives is essential. Focusing on a number that can easily be managed to avoid complications is advisable.
- **Conducting regular performance reviews:** Partners should establish a process for conducting regular performance reviews, ideally on an annual or biannual basis. Sawyer suggested that these reviews should be structured and formal and provide specific feedback on strengths and areas for improvement. At such review, partners can reinforce core values and strategic intent for the firm.
- **Providing feedback and coaching:** Partners should provide regular feedback and coaching to lawyers and support staff on a timely basis. Sawyer noted that this should be an ongoing process and focus on positive feedback and constructive criticism. One of the reasons for quarterly feedback and appraisals is to promote conversations that are regular enough to impact expectations for the coming quarter.
- **Linking compensation to performance:** Partners should consider linking compensation to performance to incentivize lawyers and support staff to perform at their best. Sawyer recommended several mechanisms, such as performance-based bonuses or salary increases, that were competitive. Attracting and retaining top talents will always be a strategic objective for law firms.

Overall, Sawyer (2019) argues that developing a practical performance management framework requires particular concern of various considerations. By setting clear goals, establishing meaningful metrics, conducting regular performance reviews, offering feedback and coaching, and linking compensation to performance, the partners can fashion a performance management framework that supports the firm's success.

➤ *Performance Management Framework*

A PM framework encompasses what is required to effectively drive the firm's strategic goals through appropriate reward and recognition programs. The framework typically involves various activities, including goal setting, performance appraisal, feedback, and coaching (Mills, 2018). In developing a PM framework, we aim to achieve a systematic process for setting goals, assessing performance, and providing employee feedback (Aguinis, 2013). In developing a PM framework, it is essential to consider the organizational context and the organization's specific needs. For example, a law firm may need to focus on developing competencies related to legal research, communication, and client services. On the other hand, a firm may have effectively nurtured business and operational proficiency but requires a focus on employee retention to foster business continuity.

➤ *The Role of Organizational Learning and Development (L & D)*

Organizational learning and development are critical in developing a performance management framework (Andreatta, 2019). Focusing on learning and development enables employees to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform their roles effectively. Incorporating learning and development into the performance management framework is essential to ensure that employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve their goals.

Consider a scenario where a firm's middle management cadre of lawyers continuously suffers attrition due to an increase in the mobility of labor from developing countries (like Nigeria) to developed countries (like Canada and the UK). The focus of a strategic thinking firm would be to increase L & D, deploy structured coaching and mentoring programs, and reward partners and senior associates who effectively accomplish development goals set for their direct reports. The medium-term objective is to improve the exposure of young lawyers and optimize their development time while ensuring the quality of their capabilities.

➤ *Developing an Equitable Approach to Global Benefits*

Developing an equitable approach to global benefits is essential in a performance management framework (Bixby et al., 2021). Providing equitable benefits ensures that employees are motivated to perform at their best and helps attract and retain talented employees. Developing a global benefits approach requires careful consideration of employees' specific needs in different locations and cultures.

The global market for "talented" employees continues to shrink, with employers competing for the best in a pool of limited supply. How can a firm stay competitive if top talents cannot be retained? The major players in any industry are ready to recruit the best from anywhere on the globe without hesitating. So, a firm's ability to propose and sustain a globally competitive compensation and benefits package is associated with superior business intelligence that ranks side-by-side with its actual capabilities to deliver on the client's expectations.

➤ *Forecasting Skills in Demand*

Forecasting skills in demand are essential for developing a performance management framework (Bonen, 2021). Understanding the skills that will be in demand in the future enables organizations to invest in learning and development programs that prepare employees for future roles. Organizations can optimize their performance and achieve their strategic goals by developing competencies that align with future needs. The option to make (by training) or buy (through recruiting) the required talent is better informed by current or anticipated results from the PM outcomes and L and D interventions.

Firms with a functional competency profile can assess and deliberately address competency gaps and (or) mitigate forecast shortfall in mission-critical roles (like lawyers with experiences in specialized practice sectors/groups) and pivotal roles (like an experienced Business Development Manager, Chief Operation Officer, and Human Resources Director) that directly or indirectly impact client satisfaction.

➤ *Human Resource: Strategic Workforce Planning*

Strategic workforce planning is essential to developing a performance management framework (Cascio, 2018). Strategic workforce planning involves analyzing the organization's current and future workforce needs and developing a plan to address these needs. By aligning the workforce with the organization's strategic goals, the performance management framework can ensure that the organization has the skills and competencies needed to succeed.

• *There are Several Critical Considerations for Performance Management in Strategic Workforce Planning. these Include:*

- ✓ Alignment with the firm's strategy: PM must be aligned with the firm's overall strategy to ensure that employee performance is measured in ways that contribute to the firm's goals and objectives (Mills et al., 2018). The results if there is a misalignment could be catastrophic.
- ✓ Setting clear performance goals: Performance goals should be clearly defined, specific, and measurable to ensure that employees understand what is expected of them and can work towards achieving them (Frolova & Lapina, 2018). This is what makes the goal-setting phase of any PM process imperative.
- ✓ Consistent feedback: This ensures that employees receive timely feedback on their performance, which helps them improve their skills and knowledge (Tong et al., 2017). There is nothing like a regular "pat on the back" from a supervisor to motivate an employee and confirm that his/ her performance is commendable. This is also a great approach to sustaining employee engagement.
- ✓ Employee involvement: Engagement is further supported when employees take ownership of their performance management process and feel they are part of the decision-making process (Choi et al., 2017). The more employees can take ownership of work processes, the higher the levels of innovation and productivity.
- ✓ Continuous Improvement: Performance management should be viewed as a continuous process of improvement rather than a one-time event. The existence of a framework ensures deliberate adjustments to the individual components to address the needed improvement. Law firms should regularly review and update their performance management systems to remain effective (Budhwar et al., 2018).

➤ *Inspirational Leadership Skills*

Inspirational leadership skills are essential for developing a performance management framework (Croft, 2020). Inspirational leaders can motivate employees to perform at their best, inspiring them to achieve their goals and drive. It is unrealistic to expect all employees to demonstrate an equal drive-in accomplishment of set goals. This is why firms embark on leadership strategies inculcated in a firm-wide competency framework and form a part of evaluation criteria for senior associates and partners alike.

Aguinis (2013) provides a comprehensive overview of PM, highlighting its key features, including setting goals, measuring performance, providing feedback, and making decisions. Cascio (2018) emphasized the strategic role of workforce planning in PM, stressing the need for alignment between HRM and organizational goals. Corbridge and Pilbeam (2010) focused on talent planning and acquisition as critical PM components. They argue that identifying and nurturing high-potential employees is crucial in building a competitive advantage.

➤ *Developing Competitive Advantage*

Competitive advantage is described as that critical component of a firm's "value chain" that they excel in compared to other law firms. So, a firm has the potential to develop competitive advantages in some or all aspects of its value chain, including:

- **Inbound logistics:** This includes activities related to sourcing and managing resources such as office supplies, legal research materials, and software.
- **Operations:** This refers to the core activities of the law firm, which include legal research, drafting legal documents, providing legal advice, and representing clients in legal proceedings.
- **Outbound logistics** includes delivering legal services, such as managing case files and billing clients for legal services.
- **Marketing and sales:** This includes attracting and retaining clients, such as publicity, networking, and consultations.
- **Service:** This includes activities related to providing quality legal services to clients, such as effective communication, responsiveness to client needs, and meeting deadlines.
- **Infrastructure:** This includes activities related to the management delivered by the support services department of the law firm, such as managing finances, human resources, and technology.

➤ *Other Methodologies*

- *Management by Objectives (MBO):*

Armstrong and Baron (2021) explained the popularity of MBO as a performance management tool that aims to align various departments and individual employee goals with organizational objectives. MBO is a performance management methodology that involves setting SMART objectives for employees across departments and functions concerning the firm's strategic objectives and goals. MBO is a practical and efficient approach to performance management as it provides clear and identifiable employee goals. Despite its effectiveness, it may lead to a narrow focus on short-term goals at the expense of long-term organizational objectives. This may be one of the reasons why Objectives and Key Results (OKR) have become more popular over the years, with an added focus on the anticipated results and outcomes' specifics.

- *360-Degree Feedback:*

This performance management methodology involves gathering feedback from multiple sources-having, considering the importance of relevant stakeholders in providing critical evaluation of any department or employee's function. Kim et al. (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of 360-degree feedback research and observed that it could improve the quality of an employee's performance and development. 360-degree feedback provides a comprehensive view of an employee's performance, but it may be subject to bias and can lead to a lack of accountability if not effectively deployed. Some challenges with deploying 360-degree feedback performance management may include setting the evaluation criteria for relevant stakeholders for a department/individual and deciding appropriate weights for each evaluation criterion.

- *Balanced Scorecard:*

As introduced earlier, this performance management methodology involves measuring performance across four perspectives: Clients, Customer Service, Internal Learning and Growth, and Financial. Kaplan and Norton (1996) developed the Balanced Scorecard to provide a more comprehensive view of organizational performance different from only financial success. Although helpful in measuring performance across different areas, the Balanced Scorecard needed to have the ability to adequately capture the specific complexities of organizational performance. For this reason, deploying the Balanced Scorecard methodology to performance management required some modifications that inculcate other methods for best results.

- *Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS):*

BARS methodology involves rating employees based on specific behaviors. Some organizations manage their core values using relevant core competencies that form part of employee performance evaluation criteria. Smither and London (2009) explained that BARS provides clear, objective employee feedback. As a standard, organizations should provide defined behavioral criteria that qualify for specific ratings on the scale applied. As effective as BARS as a performance management approach, developing and implementing company-wide can be time-consuming. There will be a need to define the expectations of behavioral competencies and the proficiency levels expected from each job holder.

- *Continuous Performance Management:*

This performance management methodology involves ongoing, real-time feedback and coaching. The usual paper-based PM system may not achieve this methodology due to the high volume of data that must be processed. Miller and Cardy (2017) explained how continuous performance management improves employee engagement and leads to immediate course correction. Continuous performance management is precious for providing ongoing feedback-reinforcing positive behavior correcting performance shortfalls on an ongoing basis. This method is also time-consuming for managers to implement. Nevertheless, it is better than providing performance feedback at the end of a 6-month to 12-month period under review.

- *Critical Incident Method (CIM):*

CIM methodology involves documenting critical incidents of employee performance. Grote (1996) explains that CIM allows managers to provide specific feedback and identify areas for improvement. The approach is forward-looking to adequately prepare an employee for future occurrences of a similar nature. CIM is effective, but it may need to capture the complete picture of employee performance. A proactive approach to defining performance requirements and standards is usually better for employee development.

- *Key Performance Indicators (KPI):*

KPI methodology involves measuring performance against specific, quantifiable metrics. Marr (2019) explains that KPIs provide clear targets for employees to accomplish. KPIs can be a valuable tool for measuring performance, focusing on what is acceptable and at what level of accomplishment. However, it may not consider other relevant factors that contribute to a company's overall performance if not carefully selected. There is also the temptation of selecting more KPIs than a firm's leadership can effectively monitor with objective metrics.

- *Management by Exception (MBE):*

MBE is a performance management methodology that only intervenes when performance falls outside established norms. Armstrong and Baron (2021) explain that MBE allows managers to focus on areas that require improvement. MBE can be an efficient approach to performance management when new projects are deployed with an expectation to be replicated in the future to attain the required learning from experience. A significant drawback for MBE is its likely to neglect exceptional performance resulting from focusing on poor performance.

These performance management methodologies have strengths and weaknesses that can be improved or managed with proper modification and a combination of various methodologies. Therefore, selecting or blending the appropriate methodologies is essential depending on the organizational goals, culture, and objectives.

➤ *Other Notable Contributions*

Some articles have explored the relationship between PM and employee engagement, motivation, and rewards. Fagan-Smith and Rosenblum (2013) stress the value of trust in PM, arguing that it enhances employee engagement and commitment. The key to building the desired level of trust is communication between partners and employees of the firm. Organized training and workshops must be held routinely to ensure confidence in the PM process is sustained and that the reward and recognition programs deliver as promised. Consequently, Ngwa et al. (2019) examined the impact of reward systems on employee performance, highlighting the need for fairness and transparency in reward allocation. Additionally, Llewellyn and Amber (2021) investigated the relationship between work engagement and task performance, emphasizing the importance of job autonomy and social support. Little wonder why companies emphasize the importance of employee engagement for outstanding results.

On the design and implementation of PM systems, Deshpande et al. (2021) presented a web-based application for employee PM, highlighting the benefits of automation and data integration for more straightforward implementation. The evolution of Human Capital Management to Talent Management can be considered as hinged on the premise that the various aspects of Recruiting and Onboarding, Performance Management, Career Development, Compensation and Benefits, Employee Relations, and Offboarding (i.e., managing the exit of staff) are efficiently managed when there is data integration across activities in HR. The lack of web-based applications may imply a lack of data integration-rendering the PM process needs to be improved in accessing relevant information for sound decision-making.

Irem (2019) proposed a balanced scorecard framework for measuring PM, emphasizing the need for a holistic and combined approach to performance measurement that accounted for financial, customer service, business process, and learning/ growth perspectives. Moreover, Ohemeng et al. (2018) examined the impact of employee perception on the institutionalization and implementation of PM systems, emphasizing the role of communication, training, and change management. Again, this emphasizes the need for the PM system to operate in a firm with high trust levels between partners and employees.

Prescott (2020) discussed pay strategy, emphasizing the importance of designing an effective pay strategy that aligns with organizational goals and values. The article suggests that law firms should develop a pay strategy that incentivizes high performance, promotes fairness and equity, and provides opportunities for growth and development. However, implementing a competitive pay strategy in a firm also requires the presence of a dynamic work culture that attracts and retains the desired workforce. This is why a firm's retention strategy must encompass all the elements that address the likes of the desired employees.

PwC (2021) published an annual law firms survey that examined the financial results and trends of law firms in the past year. The survey revealed that law firms must embrace change to succeed, highlighting the need for effective PM systems that promote agility and adaptability. The pandemic is a lesson for most firms that were ill-equipped for remote work. If there is one take-home, it would be to emphasize deliverables over physical presence at work. Other requirements like mental well-being and team effectiveness are secondary requirements for successful remote work.

Richards et al. (2017) conducted an empirical analysis of the effectiveness of business intelligence on corporate performance management. The study found practical business intelligence can significantly improve organizational performance, suggesting that law firms should invest in technology and data analysis tools to inform their PM decisions. As mentioned earlier, technology holds the potential for law firms to develop and sustain competitive advantage.

Siwale et al. (2020) conducted a case study of Brentwood Suppliers Limited in Lusaka, Zambia, to examine the impact of reward systems on organizational performance. The study found that efficient reward systems positively enhanced organizational performance, emphasizing the importance of designing an effective reward system in law firms and, again, emphasizing our equating a firm's ability to deploy globally competitive compensation and benefits programs as exceptional business intelligence.

Socket (2019) discussed strategic workforce planning, highlighting the importance of aligning workforce planning with organizational strategy to ensure that law firms have the right people, with the right skills, in the correct positions, at the right time. The firm-wide competency profile provides a consistent foundation for deploying strategic workforce planning and career development.

Spadafore (2019) emphasizes the importance of creating a coaching culture to promote employee development and performance. The leadership of law firms should provide employees with regular feedback, coaching, and mentoring opportunities to support their growth and development as a law firm tackles the challenge of high mobility of lawyers, coaching and mentoring serve to promote engagement, retention, and reasonably shorter and focused development time for young lawyers.

Tate et al. (2021) examined the impact of performance goals, development initiatives, regular feedback, recognition of exceptional performance, and an environment where trust between employees and supervisors promotes engagement in small businesses. The study found that these elements positively influence higher levels of employee engagement, highlighting the value of incorporating them into the PM framework of law firms. On the other hand, firms that cannot evaluate the composition of their partnership mix to allow diversity will need help developing and implementing contemporary methods to drive effective rewards and recognition.

Tomczak et al. (2018) provided evidence-based recommendations for employee performance monitoring, emphasizing the importance of clear and measurable performance goals, regular feedback, and ongoing performance evaluation to ensure that employees meet organizational expectations. Critical evaluations should be tied to as many objective sources as possible. For example, what better source to evaluate the financial performance of a Marketer than the sales figure? Likewise, evaluating a Receivable Account Manager is considered objective when monitoring receivables and debtors' days on invoices. The fewer subjective evaluations and feedback sources, the more credible the performance management process.

**CHAPTER FOUR
GENERAL ANALYSIS**

A. Goals and Objectives of the Investigation

Having established a goal to develop a focal document that serves to deliver a firm's mission and vision while ensuring consistency with policies and practices and maintaining strategic congruence at all levels of management, we must meet the following objectives to actualize these goals of the framework:

- To develop a framework that evaluates staff performance and establishes a basis to reward exceptional performance or penalize poor results.
- To align a firm's strategic objectives with departmental and individual goals.
- To provide transparency on performance expectations and an unbiased basis for assessing staff performance across different job roles, grades, and departments.
- To promote a culture of individual and team accountability and liability for performance results.
- To establish a means to identify competency gaps and deploy improvement plans to employees as needed.
- To provide a forum for ongoing conversation and feedback that enables improved working relationships and results amongst staff.

B. Methodology

Our methodology comprises four (4) phases, namely:

- Assessment
- Design/ Construct
- Implementation and Operation
- Reporting

For effective project management, Fig. 3 shows each phase and the activities we can undertake simultaneously during each phase. We recommend completing a phase before the next, considering the effect each exercise of one phase can have on the next.

➤ *Design Methodology of the Performance Management Framework*

ASSESSMENT	
Review the firm's operating model, structure and functions	
Review the firm's strategic priorities and objectives	
Review the current PM practices, tools and systems	
Review the employee job descriptions and person specifications (qualifications, experience and competencies)	
Interview Partners of the firm and key stakeholders to understand formal/ informal PM practices.	
Document competencies and key performance indicators	
	Design/ Construct
	Define key performance metrics per employee grade.
	Validate the key metrics/ success measures per employment cadre for appropriateness.
	Design templates for PM which include calendar, appraisal forms, goal setting forms and development plan forms.
	Review with stakeholders for feedback.
Implementation & Operations	
Review appropriate software to drive automation of PM process.	
Run a pilot test to confirm suitability with the requirements.	
Conduct training sessions for the HR Team and Managers/ Team Leads on Performance Evaluation.	
Conduct training sessions for staff on the use of the PM tools.	
Conduct training sessions for the HR Team on the use of the PM framework for implementing performance outcomes.	
	Reporting
	Streamline the contents of what needs to be reported for decision making.

Fig 3 Design Methodology of the Performance Management Framework

➤ *Assessment*

All the assessment exercises are undertaken to the extent permitted by the firm's community. The analysis of all documents (strategic and operational); interactive sessions with partners, managers/ team lead, and individual employees are executed carefully to address all the qualities of our intended PM system (listed in 2.1 above). Organizational peculiarities and practical constraints also served as worthy considerations for our analysis.

Performance Management as a strategic objective for improving a firm's efficiency and effectiveness takes several ramifications depending on the corporate strategy, specific challenges peculiar to the industry, management structure, and culture. When consideration for the various implications is lacking, the results could be counterproductive, with dire consequences. So, our framework was tailored-giving adequate consideration to relevant implications while reviewing documents listed in 2.2 above. For this reason, the framework for one industry may be unsuitable for another. Likewise, Law firms with variations in all or some ramifications may not successfully deploy the same PM framework. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all PM framework. A firm is advised to engage an expert in performance management where the requisite competencies are unavailable.

We held sessions to develop a corporate scorecard using the Balanced Scorecard model with the Partners (see Tab. 1). We cascaded the corporate scorecard developed at separate sessions with managers/ team leads to create department/ unit scorecards where every employee had their performance targets drawn. There was a need to conduct individual interview sessions with some jobholders to assess peculiarities with performance measures, which were also a means to evaluate them when deployed.

➤ *Corporate Scorecard using BSC Measures*

Table 1 Corporate Scorecard using BSC Measures

Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial					
Client					
Internal Business Process					
Learning & Growth					

The four perspectives of the scorecard must have SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) objectives. Specific measures with key performance indicators (KPIs) are identified along with set targets within a particular period. It may not be workable to complete all sections of the scorecard (in one or two sessions with the partners) since the required initiatives, and sometimes the accountable individual or group(s) with weighted responsibilities, could be debatable. Since all employees across various departments in the firm have accountabilities for all four perspectives of the scorecard, the logical approach is to assign specific weights of each perspective to different grades in each department (see Tabs. 12 and 13). The assigned weights form the basis for evaluating each employee in various departments.

Before corporate objectives are cascaded to departments, the review of individual job profiles (which include job descriptions, reporting line, person specifications, key competencies, and key result areas/ indicators) for each department (for support services)/ practice group (for lawyers) should ensure there are no gaps in the workflow with every process/ deliverable duly accounted for a specific employee. Any weak link, in the form of process gaps, will have dire consequences for all levels in the respective department/ practice group and the firm's entire performance.

➤ *Design/ Construct*

Fig. 4 illustrates how the output of the corporate scorecard developed from interactive sessions with the partners translates to inputs for the departments/ practice group as:

- Initiatives agreed to facilitate corporate objectives through plans, goals, and programs.
- Approved budget to execute planned activities.
- Individual accountabilities with objectives, measures, and targets.
- Dashboard to monitor performance on the go and (or) at specified period intervals.

Carefully cascaded goals, objectives, and measures are critical for strategic congruence between corporate, departmental/ practice group, and individual employees. There is a need to revisit the entire process of cascading corporate goals (to departments/ practice groups and individuals) when there is a change in the firm's strategic focus. To ensure we do not assign accountability greater than what an employee handles, we must review the matrix that allocates a specific weight to all employees in various departments and cadres, as stated in Tab. 12 and 13.

➤ *Cascading Corporate Objectives to Departmental Measures*

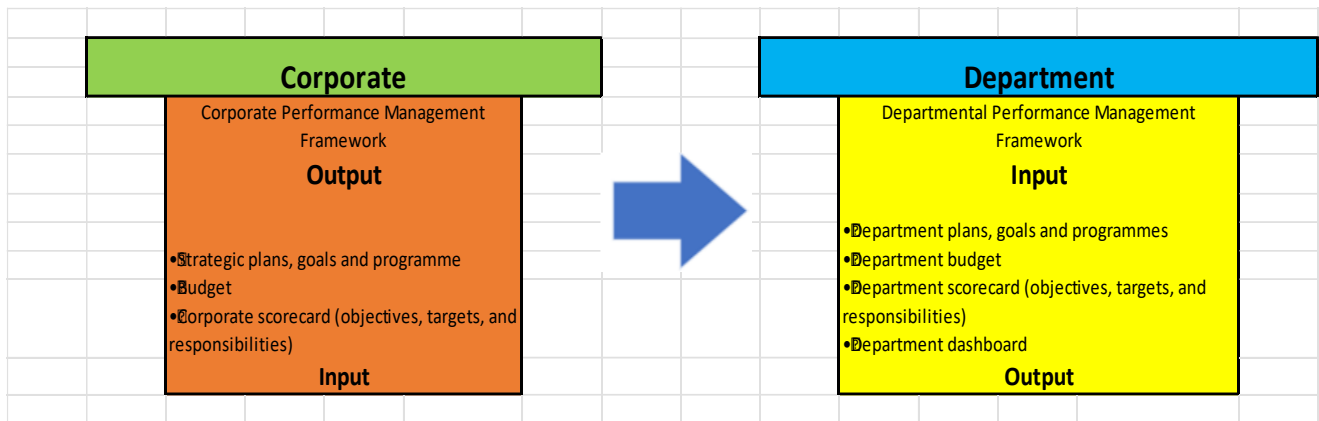


Fig 4 Cascading Corporate Objectives to Departmental Measures

➤ *Implementation and Operations*

Critical points must be addressed to achieve a seamless implementation and operations of a PM process. These include:

A Competency Framework - A firm must own or develop a Competency Framework that incorporates the relevant technical skills (i.e., subject knowledge or applied know-how) and the generic competencies (behavioral characteristics or capabilities) required to perform designated tasks and duties effectively (Smith & Smith, 2019). The framework aims to ensure a process that continuously identifies and updates the capability requirements (including skills, knowledge, and expertise) expected in the firm's workforce across grades, job roles, and departments.

Technical know-how (skill) in the framework refers to what a job holder has gained through education/training and experience in each area of expertise (occupation or profession) required to meet the requirements of a job role. These are specific to a function or subject matter, such as the Energy practice group, Intellectual Property practice group, Logistics, HR, Finance, and others.

The Generic Competencies are the personal qualities, personality, and (or) characteristics which support and underpin effectiveness in role performance, i.e., attention to detail, integrity, commitment, focus, change orientation, and competencies related to identified core values of the firm (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013). These also encompass leadership and management competencies, such as influence, strategic thinking, business acumen, and others.

Performance Management Process Tools - PM management processes require us to conduct critical activities during the performance management cycle at certain specific times. The tools deployed and the responsibilities of respective functions vary across the firm's departments and cadre (i.e., IT Department, Heads of Departments and Units, Team Leads, etc.). Performance management tools are forms used for recording and evidencing established performance capabilities by staff across functions (Huselid, 2019). These tools include:

- Performance objective and target setting form.
- Performance Appraisal forms for all career levels at the firm, i.e., Support Staff and Lawyers.
- **Web-enabled Support** - We must consider the potential of a PM process to become ineffective because of the cumbersome requirement to generate and store lots of information. Our implementation must deliberately reduce the human interface and make the framework technology-enabled with web support (Bamford & Bruton, 2018). A web-enabled or online PM system can capture performance assessments, including an interface showing performance requirements and rating information. Advanced features include user prompts (for managers and employees) about PM tasks pending execution, routing documents between appraiser and appraisee, providing access to forms, and automated reports.

Web-enabled PM framework ensures across-the-board access and provides a standard structure for collecting and storing performance data details explained in the reporting section of our methodology.

Coaching and mentorship initiatives have solid foundations for successfully monitoring progress against action plans. Web-based PM software can make it easy for supervisors and direct reports to record role profiles, performance objectives, and targets (including performance improvement and personal development plans). The structured manner access to performance documents is available online, and the gathering of multi-source feedback from 360-degree appraisals is administered.

- Performance Rating Scale - A rating scale that captures the degree of an employee's PM measures demonstrated is critical to establishing performance capabilities and quality against agreed targets. So, we select the point on a scale that most closely compares with the assessor's view of how well the person has been doing based on the observed performance demonstrated (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017).
- Performance Management Policies - The firm should adopt established instructions and principles of action in planning, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on staff and corporate performance. Specific details will also include the time scheduled for activities during the performance cycle.
- Job Description - A Job description (JD) outlining the role objectives, the scope of responsibilities, internal and external interfaces, competencies, job specifications, and working requirements should exist for every role within the firm (Jackson, Schuler, & Jiang, 2014). The JD documents all departmental goals to be cascaded to individual objectives with specific accountabilities.
- Framework for Career Management and Planning – Having a Competency Framework is an excellent start to establishing a sound career management and planning framework. It allows staff to move from one position to another, taking on new roles and responsibilities (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006). The firm must possess a definition of career paths, i.e., the courses different staff can take to progress their careers within the firm. The career path should establish:
 - ✓ Experience and education requirements.
 - ✓ Representative levels of competencies and standards of performance through each cadre (see Appendix II). The represented competency levels allow staff to know the levels they must attain to fulfill the requirements to progress in their careers. The essence is to set standards for workable development plans.

Career Planning provides clear steps and guidelines for movement through defined career paths of the promotion process, as informed by the firm's PM framework. Advancement will be based on merit, available vacancies, and demonstrated performance sufficient for the next level or cadre for the period under review. Individuals must have shown they have the skills and competencies required for the higher position to be considered for promotion.

We note that the dynamics of "competencies" allow a set of competencies A, B, and C to deliver results for X and Y. In contrast, another set of competencies, M, N, and O, will also deliver the same results for X and Y. So, firms will achieve better results if the performance evaluation of staff that they operate is a mix of rating competencies demonstrated as well as actual results accomplished (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 2019).

➤ *Reporting*

We can support the challenging task of pulling performance data for all employees in the firm across functions and presenting it in a manner that aids continuous improvement by bearing in mind the framework's objectives. Although there may be variations in the needs of a particular firm, we expect the basics to contain the following:

- Individual performance scores for each employee - overall and individual scores for each performance measure.
- Comparative performance measures between self-assessment scores and assessments of supervisors.
- Group competency assessments for the firm, each department, unit, and practice group.
- Analysis of planned versus executed learning/ development interventions.
- Observations and concerns related to the execution of the performance appraisal exercise and compliance with implementation standards.
- Recommendations on all aspects worthy of upgrade and corrective action to deliver on PM objectives.
- We explained the details of our reporting requirements in our analysis in paragraph 5.5.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS OF RESEARCH ANALYSIS

A. Strategy and Techniques

➤ *The Strategy Session-Corporate Scorecard*

In the strategy session of our sampled top-tier law firm, the following considerations were critical to successfully articulate the firm's strategic goals, objectives, and key performance indicators - forming the basis of their PM framework:

- Review the firm's mission and vision: At this stage, the mission and vision statement will provide a clear guide as to what the firm's purpose and direction is or should be (where indications are pointing towards a shift in the firm's strategic direction). A good mission statement should clearly define the firm's value proposition, while the vision statement should provide a long-term outlook for the firm. If a firm has a clear mission and vision statement, proceeding with this phase may be easy.

A critical look at the firm's business portfolio and the projected growth prospects is assessed vis-a-vis the observed values and predominant culture. Even when there is no apparent need for a change in the firm's strategic direction, there may be a need to reiterate the value proposed and (or) reinforce existing culture or build an appropriate culture.

- Review the firm's current performance: Reviewing the firm's ongoing performance is critical to determine its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Some firms may have a SWOT analysis that is a "sitting document" and never reviewed. Firms have to review strategic documents periodically. When this is done, documents like a SWOT analysis allow them to assess current situations and make relevant changes. This review will help classify opportunities and threats in light of the present strengths and weaknesses, identifying areas of improvement and setting realistic goals and objectives for the firm.
- Identify new target market: The firm should identify and determine the clients it wants to serve. This will help modify their goals and objectives for the coming business year to meet the target market's specific needs. The growth of some firms may be hindered when they fail to act on new markets despite proximity to opportunities accessible due to existing relationships.
- Define the objectives under each performance perspective: Objectives should be defined with the firm's mission, vision, and target market under each performance perspective of the balanced scorecard. Financial, Client, Internal Business Process, and Learning and (or) Growth goals should be broad statements that define what the firm wants to achieve. At the same time, objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. The corporate scorecard will focus on objectives, measures (KPIs), targets, initiatives, and accountability, as represented in Tab 1.
- Determine the measures (KPIs): Key performance indicators (KPIs) should be defined to measure the firm's progress towards its objectives. KPIs should be quantifiable, relevant, and easy to track. So, if the partners set objectives to increase Net Average Partners' Drawings and achieve a percentage increase in Net Revenue, the KPIs could be a 50% increase in Partners' Drawings in the coming year and a 100% increase in Net Revenue in the coming year, respectively.
- Allocate resources: Resources, including finances, human capital, and technology, should be allocated to achieve the objectives and the relevant measures. The strategy session should determine the resources required to achieve targets applicable to planned initiatives. For example, an objective to increase average net partners drawing and specific KPIs to achieve a 50% increase in partner's drawings, we believe adequate resources must be deployed for the initiatives, which include:

- ✓ Explore Public Sector Clientele.
 - ✓ Explore businesses with big tech companies like Google and Microsoft.
 - ✓ Assign Public Sector and Technology Business Development to a Partner with growth KPIs
- Develop an action plan: Action plans must outline the steps required to achieve the objectives, targets, and agreed-upon initiatives. The action plan is developed at the point of cascading details from the corporate scorecard to individual departments. Examples are shown in departmental scorecards that assign accountabilities for objectives in specific departments. These should also include timelines, responsibilities, and milestones and may be considered as the foundation for "goal setting" for individuals in each department.

• Corporate Scorecard

Table 2 Corporate Scorecard

Corporate Scorecard Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	Increase Profit per Partner	Net Average Partner drawings	50% Increase in Partner Drawings by the coming year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Public Sector Clientele. Explore businesses with the Big tech companies like Google and Microsoft. Assign Public Sector and Technology Business Development to a Partner with growth KPIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Development Manager All Partners Senior Associates
	Increase Revenue	% increase of Net Revenue	Increase Net Revenue by 100% in the coming year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade/ review Billing Value. Accounts Receivable function to be assigned to a member of the Finance Team. Centivize a referral programme where employees can earn performance bonuses (or rewards) for introducing new clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners Financial teams
	Increase Profit per Lawyer	Net Average Lawyer Billings	150% Increase in Lawyer Billings by next year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court and increase Public Sector Clientele. Explore businesses with the big tech companies like Google and Microsoft Cascade revenue targets to all lawyers to increase utilization rate. Ensure individual productivity and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Development Manager (BDM) Partners Associates Senior Associates
	Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	% reduction of Cost/ Revenue Ratio	Reduce Current Cost/ Revenue Ratio to 50% by coming year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly review of expenses with Partners, COO and the finance team Implement cost savings drives per department for cost optimization Ensure training and retraining for Finance staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Mgr. COO Partners
Client	Increase Client Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention rate of existing clients Client Satisfaction Index 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% retention of existing clients 70% client Satisfaction Index 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send periodic industry related legal updates to clients. Deploy Client Satisfaction survey at the end of every transaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners Senior Associates Associates
	Increase Client Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of New Multinational Clients (MNC) Number of New Public Sector Clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% Increase in the number of multinational clients (>10bn turnover) by 2022 and 20% in number of MNCs (<10bn turnover) 5% Increase in the number of public sector clients by 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the relationship with MNC's by attending/sponsoring specific industry/sector events and offering quality services. Expand and court new relationships with state and Federal Government agencies and officials Recruit a Business Development Manager Assign MNCs business development to a Partner with growth KPIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BDMs, All Partners Senior Associates
Internal Business Process	Reduce the use of paper and increase the use of digital tools	% reduction of expenditure on stationaries	Reduce expenditure on stationaries by 50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure digital photocopy and printing machines with employee unique identification. Sensitize employees on need to reduce wastages and reward employee initiatives aimed at reducing wastages Assign print codes to various projects and setup printing cost on printers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COO
	Increase access to transport services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % increase of transportation access to all lawyers % improvement of access to transport services 	Uninterrupted access to Uber for Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Uber for Business for all employees Communicate available transportation options to all staff Monitor usage of the Uber service; ensure compliance with applicable guidelines and apply appropriate sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COO Finance Mgr.
	Improve & monitor service level processes	% compliance with Service Level Agreements (SLAs)	80% compliance with service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct quarterly audits Conduct operational excellence survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Manager COO
Learning & Growth	Increase staff motivation	% of engaged employees	80% employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure 100% of staff utilize annual leave as at when due Conduct annual staff engagement survey Develop and implement a career management programme Implement team bonding activities/retreat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Manager COO All Partners
	Retain motivated and talented staff	% reduction of regrettable exit	Reduce regrettable exits by 70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrench a robust Grievance Process. Entrench and implement other relevant HR policies Implement a "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition Entrench and implement a Leadership Development Programme (LDP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Manager All Partners COO
	Invest in continuous people development	% of staff that attend at least one relevant training	100% of staff to attend at least one relevant training in a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a skills-gap/training needs analysis Ensure articulation of a training/development plan for every staff Ensure execution of annual training/development plan Implement & standardize monthly internal knowledge sharing sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Manager Partners COO

➤ *Departmental Scorecard-Cascading*

Cascading corporate goals and objectives to individual departmental objectives is crucial for aligning the efforts of different departments with the overall strategic objective of the firm, promoting coordination and collaboration among departments, facilitating accountability, strengthening communication, and allowing for customization to meet the unique needs of each department. It ensures that all departments work towards the same strategic objectives, defines each department's expectations, and fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among departments and within teams. This promotes planning, synergy, and efficiency across the firm, leading to better performance monitoring and, eventually, better performance results. Cascading corporate goals to individual departments allows for flexibility and customization, enabling departments to set goals and measures that apply to their specific functions.

Effective corporate strategy management requires the development of departmental scorecards, which should be customized to meet the specific requirements of each department. This approach allows for creating scorecards that reflect the overall corporate objectives while aligning with each department's unique goals. Such an approach is outlined in the works of Kaplan & Norton (2017), who argue that departmental scorecards should include specific objectives, measures, targets, and initiatives aligned with the departmental goals. In this context, the precise cascading of performance measures from the corporate scorecard to the departmental level is crucial for success. This involves selecting relevant measures from the corporate scorecard that apply to each department and linking them to departmental objectives, as Ittner & Larcker (2018) advocate. Moreover, the development of initiatives at the departmental level is also essential for supporting the achievement of departmental objectives through the individual job holders in the department.

As Kaplan & Norton (2017) assert, initiatives should be designed to address performance gaps and should be aligned with the overall corporate strategy. Even so, regular monitoring and review of departmental scorecards is necessary to ensure that performance is on track. This review process should promptly address any deviations from the plan, with corrective action taken to realign performance, as Bourne et al. (2018) suggested. A business plan review is recommended to be held quarterly to discuss expected versus actual results. If properly organized, opportunities for new engagements with existing clients can be promptly identified. The need to reallocate resources is easily identified during the business plan review for enhanced efficiency.

As law firms' practice groups and sectors can vary widely, a more customized approach is necessary for effective performance measures. In order to achieve a more tailored approach to performance measures, it is recommended to develop departmental scorecards that reflect the unique objectives and goals of each practice group within the Legal department. While the Legal department scorecard proposed provides a general framework for measures, a scorecard specific to each practice group is ideal for ensuring that diverse specifics are accounted for, such as targets, initiatives, and accountability cascaded from the corporate scorecard. Therefore, the Legal department scorecard proposed serves as a guide in developing individual scorecards for each practice group, enabling a more comprehensive and accurate performance evaluation.

Below are the scorecards for the Legal and Support Services department, as cascaded from the firm's corporate scorecard:

• Legal Department Scorecard

Table 3 Legal Department Scorecard

LEGAL DEPARTMENT Scorecard					
Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	1. Increase Revenue 2. Increase Profit per Partner 3. Increase Profit per Lawyer 4. Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase in net Revenue Partner Drawings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% increase in net Revenue 50% Partner Drawings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register Firm in various international directories Identify and participate in relevant project related events for networking and business development Identify cross selling opportunities Increase partner hourly charge out rate per project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Associates COO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawyer Billings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 150% increase in Lawyer Billings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure mobilization fees are received before commencement of work Ensure lumpsum fees accurately represent the number of hours required for the job Strictly adhere to the scope of work and invoice for additional work Develop a formularized excel template for costing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Associates Finance Team COO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% increase in cost per revenue ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance team to provide quarterly reports to better understand the profitability of the practice Identify cost reduction opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Associates Finance Team COO
Client	1. Increase Client Retention 2. Increase Client Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client Retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% retention of existing clients 70% client Satisfaction Index 100% adherence to project workplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule monthly check in calls/meetings with existing clients. Ensure prompt delivery on client deadlines. Commence Client appreciation dinners Leverage personal network to increase client base Introduce client awareness campaigns Develop client feedback platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners Senior Associates Associates Finance Team
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % increase in client base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% Increase in Client Base Weekly review of client feedback platforms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Development Manager Partners Senior Associates
Internal Business Process	1. Reduce the use of paper and increase the use of digital tools 2. Improve & monitor service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on stationaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% decrease of expenditure on stationaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate the use of paper Ensure reviews are done digitally as opposed to print outs Set-up processes for cross functional engagements where all practice groups have access to information on ongoing engagement Conduct monthly quality review on engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with SLAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% compliance with service level processes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associates Senior Associates COO
Learning & Growth	1. Increase employee motivation and retention 2. Invest in continuous people development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of engaged employees in the Practice Group % completion of allocated training in the Practice Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% increase in employee engagement 100% completion of allocated training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement team bonding activities Implement the "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition Technical training for all first year associates on technical contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Associates
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KSS at least once a month 100% of staff with personal development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Knowledge Sharing Sessions within the practice group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Associates

• *Business Development Scorecard*

Table 4 Business Development Scorecard

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Scorecard					
Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	1. Increase Profit per Partner 2. Increase Revenue 3. Increase Profit per Lawyer 4. Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of marketing target achieved • % of cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% increase in marketing target achieved • 5% reduction in cost by coming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage relationships with departmental vendors & personal networks and referrals • Cost optimization e.g. reduce the number of outsourced projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media & Communications Manager • Media & Communications Manager
Client	1. Increase Client Retention 2. Increase Client Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase in social media traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% online customer support • 50% increase in number of online request for proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate at least two brand engagement initiatives every month • Implement a web customer support service • Promote Firm's seminars, conferences and events on media pages to expand client reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media & Communications Manager
Internal Business Process	1. Improve & monitor service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct survey to identify process bottlenecks • Monitor process time and apply rewards and sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media & Communications Manager
Learning & Growth	1. Increase employee motivation and retention 2. Invest in continuous people development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of engaged employees in the Media & Communications Department • % completion of allocated training in the Media & Communication Department • Number of knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% increase in employee engagement • 100% completion of allocated training to the Media & Communications Department • KSS at least once a month • 100% of staff with personal development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement team bonding activities • Implement the "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition • Technical training for Media & Communications staff • Implement Knowledge Sharing Sessions within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media & Communications Manager • HR Manager • Media & Communications Manager • HR Manager • Media & Communications Manager • HR Manager

• *Production Scorecard*

Table 5 Production Scorecard

PRODUCTION Scorecard					
Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	1. Increase Profit per Partner 2. Increase Revenue 3. Increase Profit per Lawyer 4. Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of marketing target achieved % of cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% increase in marketing target achieved 5% reduction in cost by the coming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage relationships with departmental vendors & personal networks and referrals Cost optimization e.g. reduce the number of outsourced projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Manager
	1. Increase Client Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of New Clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% Increase in Market Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage existing client/vendor for business development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Manager
Internal Business Process	1. Reduce the use of paper and increase the use of digital tools 2. Improve & monitor service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on stationaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% Decrease on expenditure on stationaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a digital archive for digital materials and incorporate the digital library into the knowledge management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Manager IT Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct survey to identify process bottlenecks Monitor process time and apply rewards and sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Manager
Learning & Growth	1. Increase employee motivation and retention 2. Invest in continuous people development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage relationships with departmental vendors & personal networks and referrals Cost optimization e.g. reduce the number of outsourced projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% increase in employee engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement team bonding activities Implement the "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Manager HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % completion of allocated training in the Production Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% completion of allocated training to the Production Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical training for Production staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Manager HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KSS at least once a month 100% of staff with personal development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Knowledge Sharing Sessions within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Manager HR Manager

• Protocol & Logistics Scorecards

Table 6 Protocol & Logistics Scorecards

PROTOCOL & LOGISTICS Scorecard					
Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	1. Increase Profit per Partner 2. Increase Revenue 3. Increase Profit per Lawyer 4. Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of marketing target achieved % of cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% increase in marketing target achieved by coming year 5% reduction in cost by coming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive partnerships with vendors Review existing vendors to identify cost optimisation opportunities Explore alternative courier providers to reduce the cost of out of state deliveries Collate all the letters due for the day and plan delivery to reduce cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics Manager COO
Client	1. Increase Client Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of New Clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% Increase in Market Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage existing client/vendor for business development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics Manager
Internal Business Process	1. Improve & monitor service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the process of claims and vouchers to ensure they are checked by the head of logistics before payment Create a standard reimbursement rate for deliveries to various locations within Lagos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics Manager
Learning & Growth	1. Increase employee motivation and retention 2. Invest in continuous people development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of engaged employees in the Logistics Department % completion of allocated training in the Logistics Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% increase in employee engagement 100% completion of allocated training to the Logistics Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement team bonding activities Implement the "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics Manager HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KSS at least once a month 100% of staff with personal development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical training for Logistics staff Implement Knowledge Sharing Sessions within the department 	

• *Library & Information Management Scorecard*

Table 7 Library & Information Management Scorecard

LIBRARY & INFORMATION Scorecard					
Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	1. Increase Profit per Partner 2. Increase Revenue 3. Increase Profit per Lawyer 4. Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of marketing target achieved % of cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% increase in marketing target achieved 5% reduction in cost by the coming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage relationships with departmental vendors & personal networks and referrals Cost optimization e.g. reduce the number of outsourced projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Info. Manager
	1. Increase Client Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of New Clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% Increase in Market Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage existing client/vendor for business development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Info. Manager
	1. Reduce the use of paper and increase the use of digital tools 2. Improve & monitor service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on stationaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% Decrease on expenditure on stationaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a digital archive for digital materials and incorporate the digital library into the knowledge management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Info. Manager
Internal Business Process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a survey to identify process bottlenecks Monitor process time and apply rewards and sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Info. Manager
	1. Increase employee motivation and retention 2. Invest in continuous people development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of engaged employees in the Library & Info. Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% increase in employee engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement team bonding activities Implement the "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Info. Manager HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % completion of allocated training in the Library & Info. Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% completion of allocated training to the Library & Info. Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical training for Library & Info. Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Info. Manager HR Manager
Learning & Growth		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KSS at least once a month 100% of staff with personal development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Knowledge Sharing Sessions within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Info. Manager HR Manager

• Finance Scorecard

Table 8 Finance Scorecard

FINANCE Scorecard					
Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	1. Increase Profit per Partner 2. Increase Revenue 3. Increase Profit per Lawyer 4. Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of Account Receivables New Clients from Referral Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% reduction in outstanding invoices 100% payment per referral programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send regular reminders to partners to follow up with unsettled invoices Deploy an automated billing/ invoicing system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager Partners
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of billable hours Utilization rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% compliance with time charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement a bonus structure for employee referral programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager HR Manager Chief Operating Officer (COO)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% decrease in operating cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare profitability reports of projects based on timesheet entries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager Senior Associates
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review statutory payments for cost saving opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% reduction in cost by the coming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing vendors to identify cost optimisation opportunities Ensure re-evaluation of suppliers once every year Quarterly meeting with departmental managers to review budgets for cost containment/ reduction initiatives
Client	1. Increase Client Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of New Clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% Increase in Market Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage existing client/vendor for business development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager Business Development Manager
Internal Business Process	1. Reduce the use of paper and increase the use of digital tools 2. Improve & monitor service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on paper Procurement of digital tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% decrease in the expenditure on paper 100% procurement of digital tools by December of the coming year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and report the expenditure on paper across the firm monthly Commence electronic requests for payments Support with Implementation of the print code initiative and purchase of digital tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager Procurement Manager COO
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % reduction in processing time from initiation to completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review cash management process Monitor processing time and apply rewards and sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager
Learning & Growth	1. Increase employee motivation and retention 2. Invest in continuous people development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of engaged employees in the Finance Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% increase in employee engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement team bonding activities Implement the "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of engaged employees in the Finance Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% completion of allocated training to the Finance Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical training for Finance staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Manager HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KSS at least once a month 100% of staff with personal development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Knowledge Sharing Sessions within the department 	

• Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Scorecard

Table 9 Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Scorecard

ICT Scorecard					
Perspective	Objectives	Measures/ KPIs	Targets	Initiatives	Accountability
Financial	1. Increase Profit per Partner 2. Increase Revenue 3. Increase Profit per Lawyer 4. Reduce Cost/Revenue Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of marketing target achieved • % of cost savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% increase in marketing target achieved • 5% reduction in cost by 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage relationships with departmental vendors & personal networks and referrals • Cost optimization e.g. reduce the number of outsourced projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager • COO
Client	1. Increase Client Retention 2. Increase Client Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase mobile traffic • % increase in organic search • % increase in click through rates • Key word search for Law Firms in Nigeria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% Increase in website traffic by coming year • 20% increase in the coming year. • 20% increase in the coming year. • Top 5 in Nigeria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve search engine optimization • Improve external website 	IT Manager
Internal Business Process	1. Reduce the use of paper and increase the use of digital tools 2. Improve & monitor service level processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rate of printing management solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% completion by Dec of the coming year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy printing management solution and assign unique print ID to each staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % uptime of all applications • % reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99% uptime of all applications • 5% reduction in processing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduce the support ticket system to resolve IT related issues promptly • Conduct surveys to identify process bottlenecks • Monitor process time and apply rewards and sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager
Learning & Growth	1. Increase employee motivation and retention 2. Invest in continuous people development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of engaged employees in the IT Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% completion of allocated training to the IT Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement team bonding activities • Implement the "Thank you card" initiative to encourage the culture of reward and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager • HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % completion of allocated training in the IT Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KSS at least once a month • 100% of staff with personal development plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical training for IT staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager • HR Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of knowledge Sharing Sessions (KSS) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Knowledge Sharing Sessions within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Manager • HR Manager

➤ *Individual Scorecard*

Cascading a departmental scorecard to individual job holders' performance measures is essential for performance management in any firm. This process ensures that the individual job holders' objectives align with the departmental objectives, which, in turn, align with the firm's.

In cascading a department's scorecard to an individual job holder, it is necessary to have a well-defined corporate goal, as we mentioned earlier. These goals should be SMART and aligned with the firm's vision and mission statements, as indicated when developing the corporate scorecard. Once the firm's goals and objectives are defined, the departmental goals and objectives cascaded form the basis for individual goals and objectives for job holders in each department.

Departmental scorecards were developed with specific goals, measures, targets, and initiatives that align with the firm's performance measures (KPIs). The departmental scorecards are then cascaded to individual job holders by defining roles and responsibilities. Caution must be exercised at this stage; hence we recommend using a role capture form (see Appendix II) that shows specific tasks relating to departmental goals, targets, and initiatives, the likely frequency of execution, and the required competencies to undertake the task.

Below is a sample score sheet to evaluate individual job holders:

• *Sample Employee Evaluation Sheet*

Table 10 Sample Employee Evaluation Sheet

Parameters	Highest Obtainable Score	Employees Actual Score	Rating Scale
Financial Perspective	45%		(0% - 24.99%) Exits Support (1) – Consistently falls short of performance standards.
Customer Perspective	25%		(25% - 49.99%) Below Expectations (2) - Sometimes meets the performance standards but often falls short of desired results. Does not have the required skills/ shown sustained adequate improvement, as required.
Internal Business Process	10%		(50% - 74.99%) Meets Expectations (3) – Meets performance standards.
Learning and Growth Perspective	20%		(75% - 90%) Exceeds Expectations (4) - Consistently meets and often exceeds performance standards. Shows initiative and versatility, works collaboratively with strong technical & interpersonal skills and demonstrates a high level of professionalism.
Total	100%	= SECTIONS (A+B+C+D)	(>90%) Outstanding (5) – Consistently exceeds performance standards. Provides leadership while fostering teamwork; highly productive, innovative, and responsive to delivering top quality work.
OVERALL SCORE: SECTIONS (A+B+C+D)		Type in total score and rating scale	

➤ *Performance Rating Scale*

Performance rating standards are critical elements in implementing a firm's PM framework. Performance standards defined and agreed upon provide employees with specific expectations for their performance in each role. Performance standards aim to ensure a shared understanding (supervisor and direct reports) of the level and quality of performance expected of the job holder, which must be clearly communicated to the staff. Performance standards are:

- *Related to the job role, not the individual*
- *Measurable, evident, specific indicators of success*
- *Meaningful, reasonable, and attainable*
- *Classified in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness, cost, or outcome*

The clarity and understanding of the rating scale used to evaluate demonstrated skills and competencies is very important. The evaluation of the demonstrated performance of staff will be centered on the degree of attainment of agreed targets using the defined competencies and performance rating scale.

The performance rating serves as the ranking scale for distinguishing staff performance levels for individual performance measures or group evaluation across the firm. The given performance rating must objectively represent the extent to which a staff member's outputs and contributions during the period under review meet or exceed agreed targets. These targets may be at the individual, team, department, partner, or Firm-wide levels (depending on the role and grade).

We recommend a Five Point performance rating scale from A to E (outstanding performance to unsatisfactory performance). This translates into ratings 1 – 5 when assessing staff using the performance evaluation form. The rating scale is described in Table 11 below:

- *Performance Rating Scale*

Table 11 Performance Rating Scale

Performance Ratings Scale	
Rating Score	Definition
5	Outstanding
	<i>Consistently exceeds performance standards. Provides leadership while fostering teamwork; highly productive, innovative, and responsive to delivering top quality work.</i>
4 – 4.9	Exceeds Expectations
	<i>Consistently meets and often exceeds performance standards. Shows initiative and versatility, works collaboratively with strong technical & interpersonal skills and demonstrates a high level of professionalism.</i>
3 – 3.9	Meets Expectations
	<i>Employee meets defined performance standards/expectations</i>
2 – 2.9	Below Expectations
	<i>Sometimes meets the performance standards but often falls short of desired results. Does not have the required skills/ show n sustained adequate improvement, as required.</i>
1 – 1.9	Exit Support
	<i>Consistently falls short of performance standards.</i>

B. Accountabilities

Assigning suitable weights to performance measures is crucial in evaluating a job holder's performance through performance appraisal. This process helps determine each measure's comparative importance and impact on the overall performance assessment. The principles that guide the distribution of weights to performance measures include the following:

- *Relevance:*

The assigned weights must reflect the job's relevance and align with the firm's objectives. Performance measures relating to job accountabilities and objectives should be assigned higher weights, while those less applicable should receive lower weights.

- *Objectivity:*

The allotted weights should be objective and based on representative information, free from personal prejudices or subjective views. Objective measures like client satisfaction scores, case outcomes, and billable hours are easier to measure and evaluate than subjective measures like interpersonal skills and teamwork.

- *Consistency:*

The quantified weights for performance measures should be consistent across all job holders in the law firm to ensure fairness and equity in the appraisal process. This principle helps prevent any perception of discrimination or bias in the evaluation process.

- *Transparency:*

It is essential to clearly communicate the assigned weights for performance measures to all job holders and justify their assignment. This transparency encourages trust and confidence in the performance appraisal process, enabling job holders to appreciate how their performance is evaluated.

• *Flexibility:*

The assigned weights for performance measures should be flexible enough to accommodate job responsibilities and objectives variations. And targets. As job roles advance, the allocated weights for each performance measure should be appraised and adjusted accordingly to reflect new expectations and priorities.

Chen & Hsieh (2011) and Davenport, Harris, & Shapiro (2010) opined that adhering to the above-stated principles when assigning weights to performance measures can significantly impact the appraisal process's effectiveness and fairness. Therefore, it is vital for law firms to prudently consider these principles while allotting weight to various measures in the performance appraisal of each job holder.

The reality of assigning weights to various performance measures for job holders is that each has responsibility for all perspectives of the balanced scorecard. Variations exist based on specific accountabilities and the particular cadre the job holder falls within the department. Below is a hypothetical breakdown for support services and the legal team:

• *Sample Weights Assigned to Performance Measures for Job Holders - Support Services*

Table 12 Sample Weights Assigned to Performance Measures for Job Holders - Support Services

Support Services	Grade Category	Financial	Client	Internal Business Process	Learning & Growth	Total
	Senior Management	15%	10%	40%	35%	100%
Human Resources	Middle Management	10%	10%	40%	40%	100%
	Junior Staff	5%	5%	40%	50%	100%
	Senior Management	15%	25%	40%	20%	100%
Protocol & Logistics	Middle Management	10%	20%	40%	30%	100%
	Junior Staff	10%	10%	40%	40%	100%
	Senior Management	20%	30%	30%	20%	100%
Media & Communications	Middle Management	20%	25%	30%	25%	100%
	Junior Staff	15%	20%	30%	35%	100%
	Senior Management	40%	15%	20%	25%	100%
Finance	Middle Management	35%	10%	20%	35%	100%
	Junior Staff	30%	5%	20%	45%	100%
	Senior Management	30%	10%	40%	20%	100%
Information Technology	Middle Management	20%	10%	40%	30%	100%
	Junior Staff	10%	10%	40%	40%	100%
	Senior Management	10%	20%	30%	40%	100%
Library & Information	Middle Management	10%	15%	30%	45%	100%
	Junior Staff	10%	10%	30%	50%	100%
	Senior Management	20%	20%	40%	20%	100%
Production	Middle Management	10%	20%	40%	30%	100%
	Junior Staff	5%	15%	40%	40%	100%
	Senior Management	40%	40%	10%	10%	100%
Business Development	Middle Management	30%	40%	10%	20%	100%
	Junior Staff	20%	40%	10%	30%	100%

- *Sample Weights Assigned to Performance Measures per Grade – Lawyers*

Table 13 Sample Weights Assigned to Performance Measures per Grade – Lawyers

Grade	Financial	Client	Internal Business Process	Learning/ Growth	Total
Senior Associate III	25%	15%	15%	45%	100 %
Senior Associate II	20%	20%	15%	45%	100%
Senior Associate I	15%	20%	15%	50%	100%
Associate III	10%	20%	15%	55%	100%
Associate II	10%	20%	15%	55%	100%
Associate I	10%	20%	10%	60%	100%

C. Responsibilities

The success of performance management in a firm depends on the distinct roles and responsibilities of various individuals and departments. The Partners are in charge of determining the strategic path, corporate objectives, and performance measures in line with the firm's mandate with individual departmental heads. They review and approve the implementation of the PM framework and establish performance-based compensation to recognize and reward employees' performance fairly and consistently.

The Managing Partner (MP), in conjunction with the other Partners, sets the strategic direction and firm's objectives. They develop and decide on annual business strategy and performance objectives with the Heads of Department (HOD). The MP evaluates the performance of all Heads of Departments and provides feedback. He/ She also recommends recognizing, rewarding, or sanctioning individual performances while working with respective supervisors where required. The MP drives the process as a "sponsor" and approves the performance management procedure in line with relevant policies.

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) works with the MP to interpret the strategic plans into actionable initiatives to be executed by the respective departments. They also develop and agree on yearly performance targets derived from planned initiatives across functions, ensuring the agreed performance plans have allocated and efficiently utilized budgeted resources. They maintain alignment between the performance management process and the firm's expected outcomes by monitoring deliverables and providing supportive working relationships between the staff and management.

Human Resources outlines the performance management process and policy and manages the outcomes, ensuring all participants conform to agreed quality standards and timelines. They assess procedures and tools to recognize improvement opportunities and implement improvements. Human Resources sets and monitors deadlines for concluding each step in the process (by various process owners) and provides periodic training to all staff on their responsibilities and avenues for redress when expectations fall short. They act as a "caretaker" of the framework and process and communicate the entire firm's strategic results and any follow-up programs.

HODs/ Supervisors set clear performance objectives and targets for department staff. They monitor and provide regular feedback to develop and maintain performance. They hold structured conversations with staff about their performance, development needs, and career aspirations. They address underperformance and provide personal guidance and support to staff. They work with HR to ensure development plans are executed to achieve the desired outcomes for the workforce.

D. Administration

➤ Performance Planning

The performance planning stage in the PM administration involves the agreement between a supervisor and employee on the performance goals, objectives (KPIs), and relevant expectations. Therefore, employees are expected to set and agree on performance goals and objectives with their supervisors and Heads of Department at the beginning of each appraisal cycle using the performance appraisal form that contains objectives and target Set on the form in Table 15.

The agreed performance goals and targets should align with the departmental goals and targets. The signed agreement is the basis for managing yearly performance and guiding progress and development activities. The signed agreement serves as a reference when reviewing performance and the achievement of progress and development plans.

The firm's goals, departmental goals, competencies, and job descriptions (including KPIs) must align in defining performance objectives. In addition, for existing staff (i.e., those who have taken part in a previous appraisal cycle), action points identified in the feedback from previous performance evaluations should be incorporated to form the basis for the conversation when setting and agreeing with new performance objectives and targets.

Supervisors and/or Heads of departments must ensure that the performance objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).

Employees, Supervisors, and Heads of the department must sign off on agreed performance objectives or target documents. The employee's personal development plan incorporates these signed-off performance objectives or targets. Copies of documented performance goals are given to the staff, Head of department and/or Supervisor, and Human Resources.

➤ *Performance Monitoring*

Employees are expected to carry out given tasks, as set out in their job descriptions, to reach the set performance objectives and targets.

During each performance period, continuous performance feedback from immediate supervisors or department heads is required to strengthen acceptable behaviors. Continuous performance feedback also ensures employees stay on track with assigned tasks.

• *Guidelines for Providing Effective Informal Feedback Include the following:*

- ✓ Always provide negative feedback with development plans privately to direct reports.
- ✓ Feedback should focus on the activities and courses of action to achieve goals/objectives rather than the person.
- ✓ Feedback should reference specific examples as evidence of unacceptable performance.
- ✓ Engage the staff to see what could have been done differently or better to improve performance.
- ✓ Be specific about what behaviors were effective or those that were ineffective
- ✓ Supervisors should work with direct reports to plan steps to address the development of the skills gaps identified.
- ✓ Supervisors should help address development needs and provide the needed resources.

Table 14 is a sample Performance Monitoring Plan:

➤ *Performance Monitoring*

Employees are expected to carry out given tasks, as set out in their job descriptions, with the intention of reaching the set performance objectives and targets.

During each performance period, continuous performance feedback from immediate supervisors or department heads is required to strengthen acceptable behaviors. Continuous performance feedback also ensures that the employees stay on track with assigned tasks.

• *Guidelines for Providing Effective Informal Feedback Include the following:*

- ✓ Always provide negative feedback with development plans privately to direct reports.
- ✓ Feedback should focus on the activities courses of actions to achieve goals / objectives rather than the person.
- ✓ Feedback should reference specific examples, as evidence to unacceptable performance.
- ✓ Engage the staff for their view on what could have been done differently or better in order to improve performance.
- ✓ Be specific about what behaviors were effective or those that were ineffective
- ✓ Supervisors should work with direct reports to plan steps to address development on skills gap identified.
- ✓ Supervisors should offer help in addressing development needs and providing the needed resources.

• *Performance Monitoring Plan*

Table 14 Performance Monitoring Plan

PERFORMANCE MONITORING			
Activities	Timelines	Responsibility	Output
Perform assigned job function or tasks in line with the job specifications	Ongoing	Employee	Accomplished tasks
Motivate and guide employees in carrying out assigned tasks	Ongoing	Supervisor and Heads of department	Demonstrated behaviour in task accomplishment
Monitor and discuss employee's progress towards achieving set performance objectives, targets and standards	Ongoing	Supervisor and Heads of department	Demonstrated improvement in staff performance
Provide informal feedback on staff performance	Ongoing	Supervisor and Heads of department	Feedback on staff performance

➤ *Performance Evaluation*

We recommend the following guidelines for an employee's self-evaluation/ assessment and evaluation by a supervisor:

• *Employee Self-Evaluation Guidelines*

Employee self-evaluation is an integral part of the performance appraisal process. The employee completes the self-evaluation part of the Performance Appraisal Form, necessitating the staff to record significant achievements in the period under review and grade their performance using the rating scale provided. The following are the guidelines for completing the self-evaluation section:

- ✓ Itemize performance objectives agreed upon at the start of the performance cycle
- ✓ Indicate each perspective of the BSC and highlight the most significant accomplishments and apply a rating using the rating scale
- ✓ Focus on the results accomplished, not the efforts. This reinforces a culture that is result oriented.
- ✓ Avoid the use of acronyms that others may not understand.

• *Supervisor's Evaluation/ Assessment Guidelines*

A supervisor's evaluation involves reviewing an employee's self-evaluation and assessing the employee's performance (using the rating scale) for the period under review. The supervisor will meet, discuss, and agree on the performance ratings for each measure assessed. The following guidelines are recommended for assessing an employee's performance:

- ✓ Assess the employee's performance against agreed objectives only.
- ✓ Provide meaningful and actionable feedback to the individual on their performance, highlighting the progress made and areas of improvement.
- ✓ Make only constructive criticism about what needs to be improved.
- ✓ Maintain a high level of objectivity in rating the employee's performance. Ensure an applicable rating meets the criteria as it was defined.
- ✓ Set realistic timelines for closing identified skills gaps. The following appraisal exercise is usually recommended to ensure development goals are not lost in timelines that are far into the future.
- ✓ Begin every appraisal exercise with a review of the development goals from the previous session. Doing so helps to promote meaning in the exercise.

➤ *The Performance Appraisal Form*

Table 15 shows a sample PM appraisal form. As complicated as it looks, the form is merely a layout of objectives for each perspective (with weights assigned) of the balanced scorecard, an employee's self-evaluation, and feedback (comments and ratings) from the employee's supervisors. Other sections (not included) are the instructions for the development and a signed statement from the appraisee to confirm that the appraisal session was meaningful and considered fair.

All appraisee's that did not attest to the meaningfulness and fairness of the appraisal exercise are immediately scheduled for discussions and investigations by the Moderation Committee. See details in 5.4.5. The challenges envisaged with accurately computing performance scores of individual employees with weighted elements and evaluating teams and groups for specific measures is a critical consideration for using web-enabled software. Although the standard deployment of MS Excel is adequate, it may be prone to errors depending on the proficiency level of the person who does the computation. Details of the computation are explained in 5.5.

• Sample Performance Evaluation Form

Table 15 Sample Performance Evaluation Form

Staff Name							
Department		Grade					
Job Title		Appraisal Period					
Appraiser:		Date:					
GUIDANCE & INSTRUCTION							
This form is to be used to document the goals, objectives/targets and plans of the employee within the given financial year and period under review.							
The employee should agree these goals with the Supervisor to ensure alignment with the departmental goals for the year. The agreed objectives will form the basis for evaluating the staff performance during the period under review. All agreed goals and objectives must be SMART i.e., S pecific, M easurable, A chievable, R ealistic and T ime bound.							
The goals set should align with the firm's strategic objectives as indicated in the four perspectives of the Balance Scorecard methodology.							
EMPLOYEE'S GOALS							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weighting for each objective is to be determined and agreed by both the Supervisor and Employee Cumulative weight for the 4 perspectives must equal 100% (e.g., Financial perspective = 45%, Customer Perspective= 25%, Internal Business Process Perspective =10%, Learning and Growth =20%) 							
Performance Objectives	Measure/KPIs	Measure weight (total 100%)	Targets	Actual	Weighted Score	Appraiser's Comment	Supervisor's Comment
A. Financial Perspective				Weight allocated = 45%			
					Actual/Targets* % measured weight for the performance objective		
Total Financial Perspective: *sum of measured weight for each performance objective must be equal to weighted score for each perspective					Total sum of weighted score		
B. Client Perspective				Weight allocated = 25%			
					Actual/Targets* % measured weight for the performance objective		
Total Customer Perspective: *sum of measured weight for each performance objective must be equal to weighted score for each perspective					Total sum of weighted score		
C. Internal Business Process Perspective				Weight allocated = 10%			
					=Actual/Targets* % measured weight for the performance objective		
Total Business Process Perspective: *sum of measured weight for each performance objective must be equal to weighted score for each perspective					Total sum of weighted score		
D. Learning and Growth Perspective				Weight allocated = 20%			
Core competencies	Competency assessment rating		Refer to section D.1 & D.2		= supervisor rating/sum of agreed proficiency level* % measured weight for grow competencies		
Other learning and growth objectives that apply					=Actual/Targets* % measured weight for the performance objective		
Total Learning and Growth Perspective: *sum of measured weight for each performance objective must be equal to weighted score for each perspective					Total sum of weighted score		
D.1 Core Competencies (derived from core values of the firm) (these are competencies that must be displayed by all employees regardless of business function)							
Competencies	Agreed Proficiency Level	Self-rating	Supervisor's rating	Appraiser's Comment	Supervisor's comments		
Teamwork							
Responsiveness							
Accountability							
Creativity							
Ethics							
Scholarship							
D.2 Technical Competencies (These are the knowledge, skills and abilities required for optimum performance on a job role. It includes the hard-technical skills e.g., Reconciliation of bank statements for an Accounts Receivable Manager)							
Competencies	Agreed Proficiency Level	Self-rating	Supervisor rating	Appraiser's Comment	Supervisor's Comments		
Risk assessment							
Compliance monitoring							
Technical operations management							
Operational risk management							
Market risk management							
Controls design and testing							
Reinsurance risk management							
Financial accounting analysis							
Risk Management							
Total	Total sum of agreed proficiency levels (Core + technical)	Total to sum of self-ratings	Total sum of supervisor ratings				

➤ *Performance Moderation*

An Appraisal Moderation Committee will be set up to comprise representatives from Human Resources, Heads of Departments, and Partners. The committee will be responsible for approving the bases for promotion, implementing promotion exercises (with external consultants when required), and evaluating the outcomes of the Performance Appraisal exercise in order to safeguard objectivity.

This evaluation will involve discussions around employees' performance, the self-assessment documented, the promotion exercise conducted, outcomes of staff appraisal, and Supervisor or HODs comments and recommendations made on each employee. This moderation session shall be held at the end of each appraisal period (half-year and year-end) when the Performance Appraisal forms of all employees have been submitted to Human Resources Manager.

To ensure consistency across the firm, we recommend that the moderation process takes place step-by-step as described below:

- *Setup of the Moderation Committee:*

A Moderation Committee shall comprise representatives from the Human Resources department and Unit Heads. The committee shall be responsible for agreeing on the basis for promotion, conducting the promotion interviews (where relevant), and reviewing the outcomes of the Staff Performance Appraisal exercise to safeguard objectivity.

- *Moderation:*

The moderation will involve conversations around employees' performance and Team Lead or HOD's comments/recommendations made on each employee. This moderation exercise shall be held at the end of each appraisal period when the Performance Appraisal forms of all employees have been submitted to the HR department.

- *Outcome of Moderation:*

The review's outcome will propose relevant recommendations on promotion, compensation reviews, bonus payments, training and development interventions, workforce planning in the form of job rotations, job enrichment and enlargement, coaching and mentoring needs, and succession planning. The recommendations were presented by the Moderation Committee and ratified by the Partners.

- *Investigations:*

The moderation committee also has responsibilities to investigate any feedback from an appraisee that claims the exercise was not meaningful or fair. The committee's ability to investigate and satisfactorily close allegations of a lack of meaningfulness and fairness in the appraisal exercise is crucial to reinforce credibility in the performance appraisal process. The closure of all open investigations must occur within the given time frame. See the timeline recommended for closure of appraisal-related investigations in table 16.

• *Performance Management Cycle and Timelines*

Table 16 Performance Management Cycle and Timelines

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE AND TIMELINES				
Activity	Responsibility	Timeline		Output(s)
		Year-End	Mid-Year	
Set Firm goal and annual corporate performance objectives	Executive Management (Partners and Heads of Unit/ Department)	January (1 st week)	Not Applicable	Annual Corporate objectives and targets
Notify all employees of performance appraisal guidelines	Human Resources	January (2 nd week)	July (1 st week)	Performance appraisal guidelines & timetable
Set career development and performance goals by completing the career development planning form and performance objectives form, discuss and agree with HOD and /or supervisor	Employees & Supervisors/ Head of Departments (HOD)	January (2 nd - 4 th week)	July (1 st - 2 nd week)	Signed-off performance objectives and career development goals
Continuous informal feedback from supervisor. Give coaching and guidance to employee to aid career growth and ensure performance objectives are met.	HOD/ Supervisor	February – June	August – November	Verbal or informal feedback from supervisor Documented coaching sessions
Conduct self assessment of performance during the period	Employees	June (3 rd week)	November (4 th week)	Completed appraisal form (Appraisee's section)
Evaluate performance, assign performance ratings, discuss and agree with employee	Supervisor	July (1 st week)	Nov (4 th week) – December (1 st week)	Completed and signed-off performance appraisal forms
Signs off on the completed performance forms based on the agreement reached by the employee and the supervisor or returns for a re-appraisal if there is a conflict	Head of Department	July (1 st week)	December (1 st week)	Completed and signed-off performance appraisal forms
Investigate all reports from appraisee's that claim the exercise was not meaningful or unfair.	Moderation Committee	July (2 nd week)	December (2 nd week)	Close all allegation before the commencement of committees deliberations
Meets and agree on the promotion criteria for the year	Moderation Committee	Not Applicable	December (1 st week)	Criteria for promotion exercise eligibility
Collate performance appraisals, prepare and publish the list of employees eligible for the promotion exercise based on promotion criteria set by the committee	Human Resources	July (1 st – 2 nd week): Collation of performance appraisal	December (2 nd week)	Promotion exercise eligibility list
Conduct promotion exercise	Human Resources and Moderation Committee	Not Applicable	January (2 nd – 3 rd week)	Deploy relevant assessment, Oral presentations and Interviews
Make recommendations to Management based on the overall performance appraisal, test, oral presentation and interviews	Moderation Committee	Not Applicable	January (3 rd week)	Assessment recommendation report and promotion list
Review performance from Moderation Committee for approval	Executive Management	Not Applicable	January (4 th week)	Approved/unapproved recommendations
Implementation of all approved performance recommendations	Human Resources	January (4 th week)		Promotion and Performance Improvement Plans

E. Results/ Reports

➤ *Requisite*

We can draw insightful conclusions from a firm's PM and resulting Performance Appraisal exercise with the quality of reports generated periodically. The periodic reviews could be yearly, twice yearly (as recommended), and quarterly. We will use the data generated from an Interim Performance Appraisal report from our sampled law firm to illustrate what constitutes the critical components to be reported.

Maturity in a PM and appraisal system comes through tweaking to address what the firm considers most important. Please pay attention to the computation and reporting components that will vary from one firm to another depending on their strategic focus and the maturity of their PM system. Again, we emphasize the need for an in-house expert or consultant to support the development of the system, implementation of the framework, and the regular review of the process to address the needed adjustments over about 24 months.

➤ *The Process*

This section of the report must provide details of the exercise, e.g., how the appraisal workshops were conducted, to explain the entire process and the procedures for each session between the Appraiser and Appraisee. It will also state the mode to deploy the appraisal forms, like how physical forms were distributed, or an online form was provided with a link for all staff to conduct a self-evaluation prior to the appraisal session by their supervisor. The "process" should also explain how Individual one-on-one sessions were held between the supervisor and appraisee. For example, how sessions were conducted via the Microsoft Teams platform in compliance with Social Distancing during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The process should also state how all staff was mandated to comment if the appraisal session was fair and that the feedback from their supervisor was meaningful.

The average duration for each session should be documented; say, for example, each session lasted about 55 minutes.

The importance of reporting the process deployed plays a critical role when there is a need to investigate a claim of unfairness from staff by the Moderation Committee. Suppose a staff claimed their appraisal session lasted 15 minutes when the documented average duration per appraisal session was 55 minutes. In that case, the disparity indicates that the session was hurried compared to others.

➤ *Staff Appraised*

The total number of staff appraised must be reported with the various categories the employees fall within. See Table 17 below.

• *Breakdown of Staff Appraised*

Table 17 Breakdown of Staff Appraised

Associates	Senior Associates	Support Staff (Managers)	Support (Non-Managers)	TOTAL
33	9	8	13	63

Any staff excluded from the exercise must be mentioned, and the reason for exclusion stated, e.g., an employee under six months would be expected to undergo a confirmation appraisal, not an interim appraisal.

➤ *Group Competency Assessments*

Reporting on Group competencies focuses on the firm's status on all competencies shared across units, departments, practice groups, and the firm in some cases. It is easier to establish the need for training and development interventions for groups (or smaller teams) when group competency assessments are reported, and they show ratings below the desired proficiency levels. A firm's core values - translated to competencies evaluated during the appraisal exercise provides an opportunity to measure the extent these values are demonstrated from the report on group competency assessment. Tab. 18 - 22 and Fig 5 - 9 show how the group competencies should be reported. Note that if the firm's core values on "Accountability" reveal a rating of, say, 2.4 (below average), this also reflects the culture of accountability in the firm. So, group competency assessments provide insight into a firm's culture. To this end, the evaluation process leading to that rating (like for all other ratings) for group competency assessments must be as objective as possible.

- *Comparative Appraisal Scores Between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Associates*

Table 18 Comparative Appraisal Scores between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Associates

	TEAM WORK	RESPONSIVENESS	ADVANCEMENT	CREATIVITY	ETHICS	SCHOLARSHIP	L & D	INTERNAL PROCESS	FINANCIALS
GROUP ASSESSMENT	3.36	3.22	3.12	2.22	3.94	3.76	3.12	3.05	3.24
GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT	3.65	3.68	3.55	2.73	4.52	3.30	3.39	3.65	3.67

- *Comparative Bar Chart between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Associates*

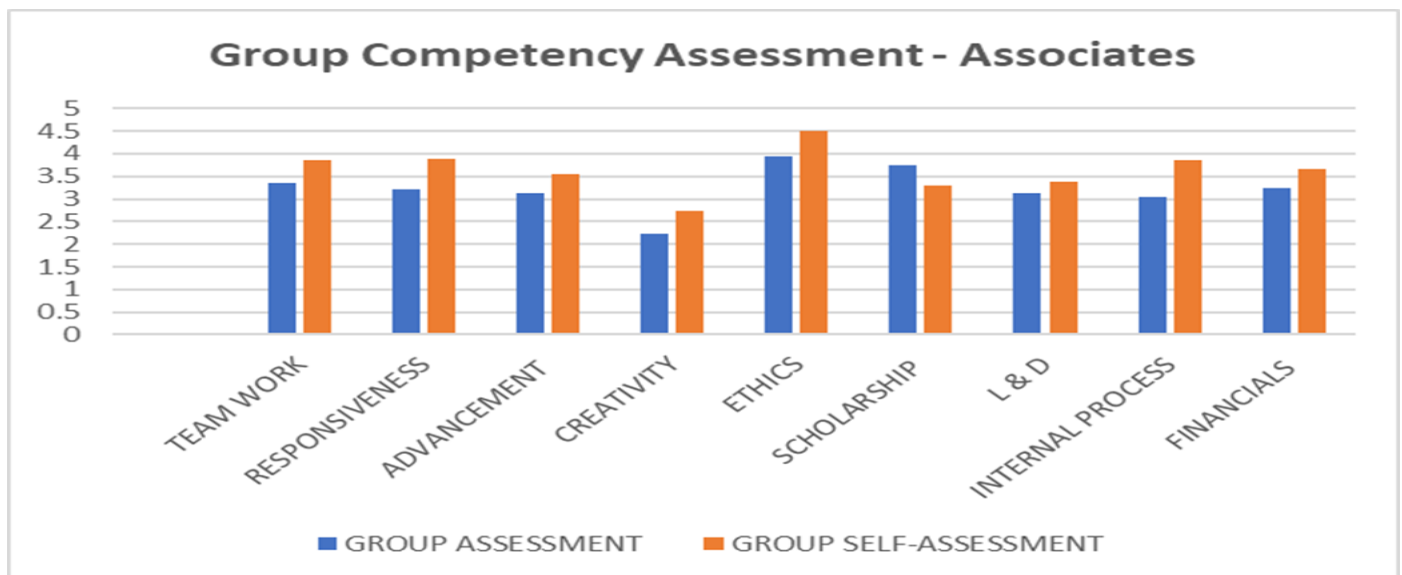


Fig 5 Comparative Bar Chart between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Associates

- *Appraisal Scores for Senior Associates*

Table 19 Appraisal Scores for Senior Associates

	TEAM WORK	RESPONSIVENESS	ADVANCEMENT	CREATIVITY	ETHICS	SCHOLARSHIP	L & D	INTERNAL PROCESS	FINANCIALS
GROUP ASSESSMENT	4.89	4.78	4.78	4.14	5.00	3.89	5.00	4.78	4.39

- *Bar Chart Showing Appraisal Scores for Senior Associates on Various Performance Measures*

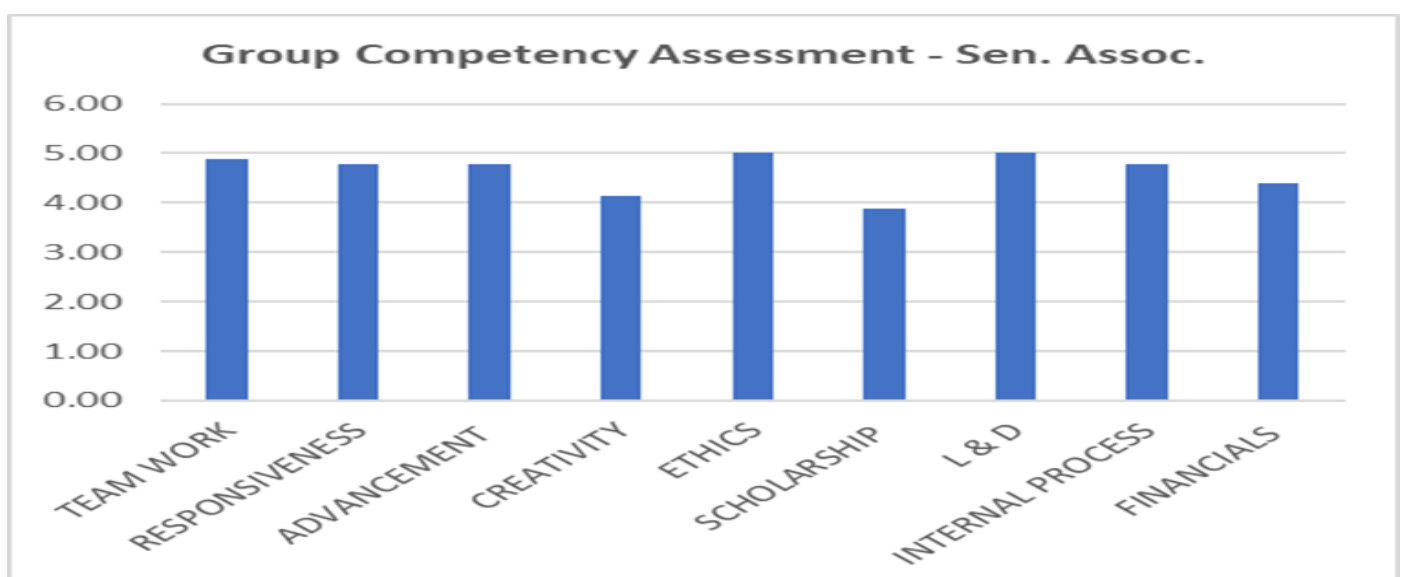


Fig 6 Bar Chart Showing Appraisal Scores for Senior Associates on Various Performance Measures

- *Comparative Appraisal Scores Between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Non-Managers)*

Table 20 Comparative Appraisal Scores between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Non-Managers)

	TEAM WORK	RESPONSIVENESS	ADVANCEMENT	CREATIVITY	ETHICS	SCHOLARSHIP	L & D	INTERNAL PROCESS	FINANCIALS
GROUP ASSESSMENT	4.25	4.17	4.17	2.31	4.08	3.13	2.55	3.77	3.17
GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT	4.08	4.31	4.00	2.64	4.31	3.37	3.08	3.77	3.31

- *Comparative Bar Chart Between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Non-Managers)*

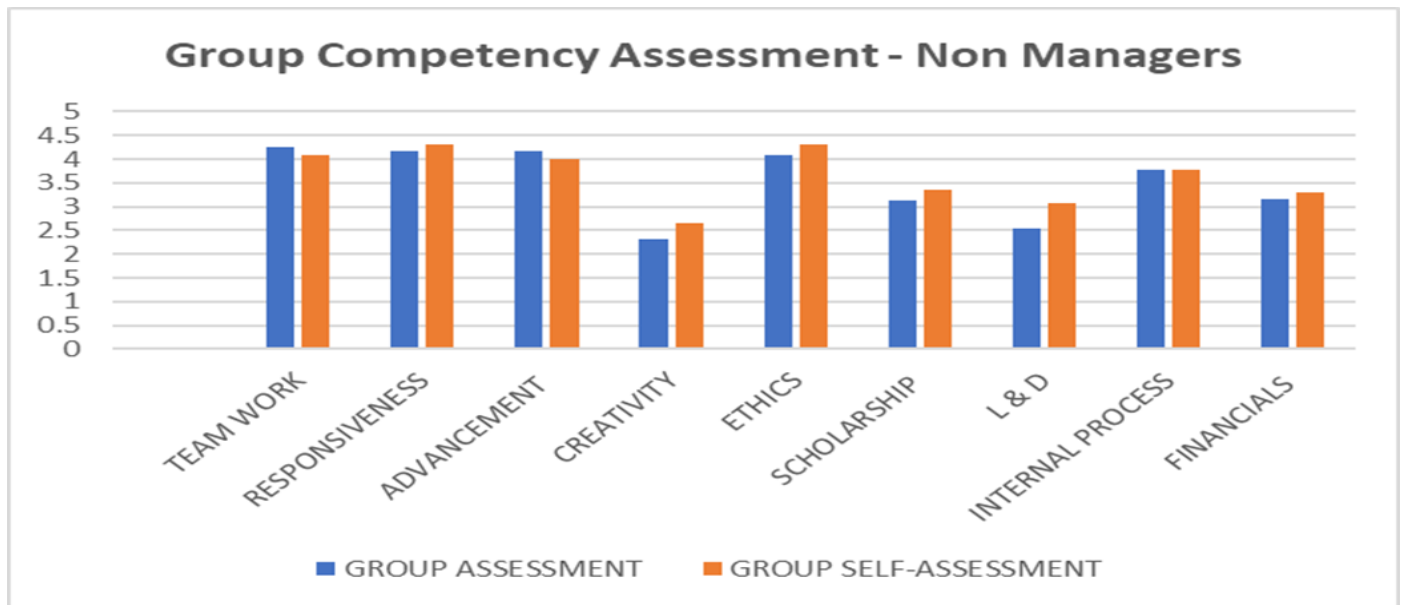


Fig 7 Comparative Bar Chart between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Non-Managers)

- *Comparative Appraisal Scores between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Managers)*

Table 21 Comparative Appraisal Scores between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Managers)

	TEAM WORK	RESPONSIVENESS	ADVANCEMENT	CREATIVITY	ETHICS	SCHOLARSHIP	L & D	INTERNAL PROCESS	FINANCIALS
GROUP ASSESSMENT	4.38	4.63	4.13	3.07	4.38	5.00	3.60	4.31	3.90
GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT	4.50	4.50	4.13	3.29	4.25	4.84	3.60	4.44	3.98

- *Comparative Bar Chart between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Managers)*

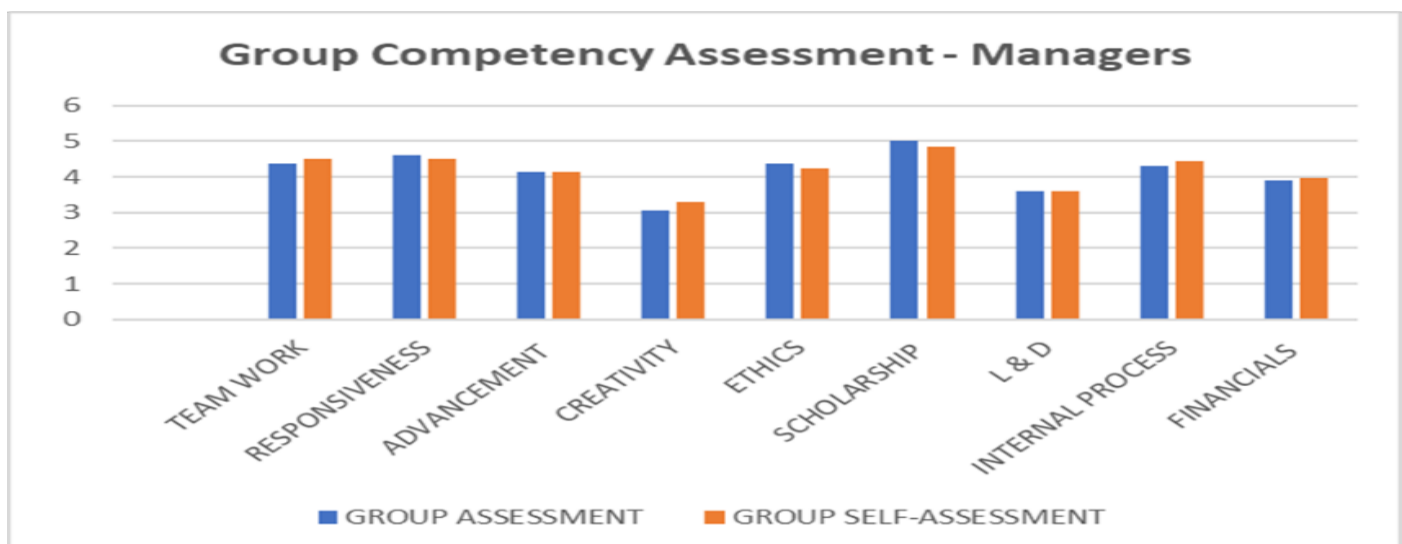


Fig 8 Comparative Bar Chart between Group Assessments and Group Self-Assessments for Support Staff (Managers)

- *Computation of Weighted Averages of Performance Measures for All Appraised Staff*

Table 22 Computation of Weighted Averages of Performance Measures for All Appraised Staff

	Associates	Sen. Associates	Non-Managers	Managers	Weighted Average
No. Appraised	33	9	13	8	
TEAM WORK	3.36	4.89	4.25	4.38	3.89
RESPONSIVENESS	3.21	4.78	4.17	4.63	3.50
ADVANCEMENT	3.12	4.78	4.17	4.13	3.38
CREATIVITY	2.22	4.14	2.31	3.07	2.35
ETHICS	3.94	5.00	4.08	4.38	3.79
SCHOLARSHIP	3.76	3.89	3.13	5.00	3.56
L & D	3.12	5.00	2.55	3.60	2.93
INTERNAL PROCESS	3.05	4.78	3.77	4.31	3.30
FINANCIALS	3.24	4.39	3.17	3.90	3.18

- *Bar Chart of Group Competency Assessments for All Appraised Staff*

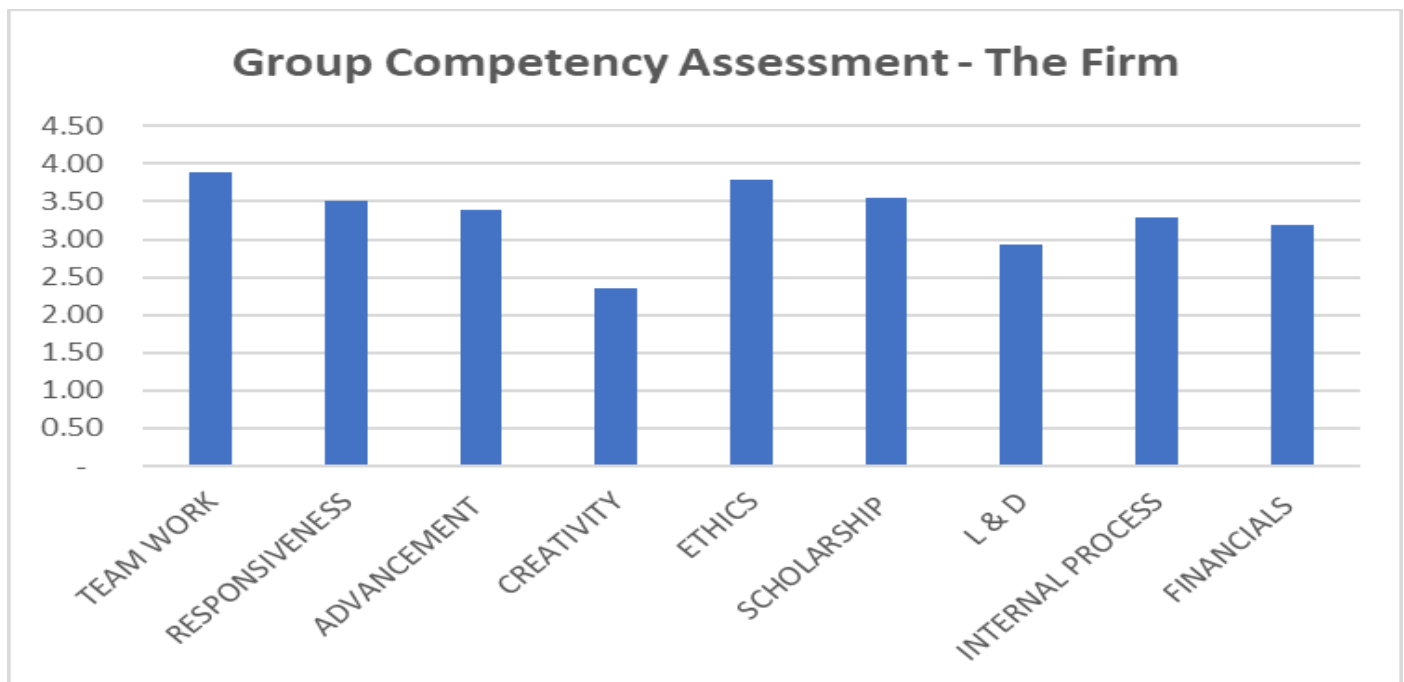


Fig 9 Bar Chart of Group Competency Assessments for All Appraised Staff

- *It is Pertinent to Note the following:*

- ✓ The first six measures represent objectives under the Customer perspective on the balanced scorecard methodology we adopted. Therefore, the total scores for any staff on these six measures cannot exceed the weight assigned to that job holder.
- ✓ A comparison of self-evaluation and supervisors' evaluation was shown to assess similarity or disparity in both evaluations only when they are available with complete and accurate details. Reports with incomplete or inaccurate details must be avoided to prevent misrepresentation. The self-evaluation was deliberately omitted for the senior associates due to incomplete details.
- ✓ The use of weighted averages to compute the group competency assessment helped preserve the accuracy of scores based on the number of employees in each group. It is important to note that weighted averages were applied in computing performance scores for each staff member – based on the assigned weights for each performance measure for individual job holders. The many errors that the various computations are prone to are a case for adopting web-based performance appraisal software. Like most automated processes, software applications deliver better results when the procedures and processes are perfected.

➤ *Observations/ Concerns*

In this section of the report, all challenges encountered and participant feedback during the exercise must be presented.

Below are some possible challenges or concerns to look out for:

- The need to develop rubrics for some measures to reduce subjectivity. For example, suppose a senior associate has the objective of facilitating a training session under the Learning and (or) Growth perspective. In that case, we can assign ratings of 3, 4, or 5, respectively, if they demonstrate any of the following:
 - ✓ Shared relevant materials or write-ups with members of their practice group.
 - ✓ Facilitated a topic for the Learning of other Associates.
 - ✓ Structured and (or) developed content for learning sessions of other Associates.

Rubrics provide a guide on specific expectations that earn a particular rating when evaluating performance measures.

- With rubrics, associates who meet defined criteria will be rated appropriately. Staff is better engaged when rating standards are easy to understand.
- For behavioral-related measures like integrity or ethical conduct, we can introduce a requirement to formally document exposure(s) to situations potentially leading to unethical conduct. A mere mention of instances of such exposure during the appraisal exercise may be inadequate because the Partners should have been formally notified. Over time, employees will have better knowledge of as many possible ramifications of unethical conduct as possible.
- Where issues with chain-of-command are observed with Associates challenged with prioritizing work assigned by Partners and (or) Senior Associates, there may be problems with setting priorities and meeting deadlines. We recommend operating practice groups that have one team lead that could either be a partner or senior associate. An individual will assign tasks (the team lead), who will also be responsible for receiving feedback and follow-up with ongoing transactions.
- The need for a Mentorship program might become evident and should be facilitated by the firm. Caution must be taken to discourage any association promoting unhealthy workplace politics and the formation of factions.
- The need for Associates to undertake certification courses may become evident. We recommend learning interventions that promote expertise for associates who wish to be professionally grounded in specific practice areas. Then again, our ideal mode of Learning should predominately come from engagements and participation in transactions. In addition to Taxation, Arbitration, and Stockbroking certifications, a firm should welcome Associates to partake in professional certifications relevant to certain practice groups.
- A situation where Senior Associates hide behind the poor commitment of younger colleagues as an excuse for poor performance is unacceptable. A sound performance management system must ensure there are avenues for redress to poor performance through the appropriate disciplinary and grievance procedure like queries and escalating work-related complaints. As much as a firm strives to promote a friendly work environment, there is no place for "cozy" relationships that accommodate unacceptable conduct.
- The absence of relevant records to validate some performance measures must be quarried. Consider a scenario where the Protocol and Logistics department needs a register to track the daily tasks of each clerk. How does one validate measures relating to exceptional work delivery?

➤ *Recommendations*

In this section of the report, all observations and (or) concerns raised during the appraisal exercise must be backed with corresponding recommendations, including action plans for corrective measures. Implementation should be immediate, medium-, or long-term. A firm that commits to addressing recommendations presented after each appraisal exercise will mature faster in its PM process. The firm's maturity will at least deliver one or all of the following:

- *Help Employees Learn and Grow.*
- *Boost Communication between Employees and their Managers.*
- *Help Improve Overall Corporate Performance.*
- *Let us Consider Three Scenarios and Relevant Recommendations:*
 - ✓ Except for Group Competency Assessments for Senior Associates and Managers and Non-Managers that showed lower self-assessment scores in some competencies, self-assessment scores higher than actual appraisal scores indicate discrepancies between self-view and the supervisor's views. A system that ensures regular feedback (either negative or positive) must be in place to clear divergent views ahead of the performance appraisal exercise. To avoid giving negative feedback (in a formal setting) is to convey that mediocrity is acceptable.
 - ✓ We must set competency levels acceptable for individuals and groups. If we agree on our minimum competency level for Creativity at 4.0, it becomes clear that our Group Competency score of 2.35 for the firm requires immediate intervention.

✓ Develop planned interventions for group competency scores below acceptable standards. In so doing, we are better at sustaining and improving performance standards for the firm.

Depending on the specific rating an employee falls within, the following recommendations may also apply:

- *Recommended Action Plans for Performances at Various Levels*

Table 23 Recommended Action Plans for Performances at Various Levels

1	2	3	4	5
Exit Support	Below Expectation	Meets Expectation	Exceeds Expectation	Outstanding Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance watch list • Performance improvement plan • A chance to change current department or unit • Out-counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance watch list • Training and development interventions • Counselling and coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and development interventions • Counselling and coaching • Monitor progress • Promotion (if eligible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and development interventions • Coaching and career Counselling • Mentor and provide opportunities for higher responsibilities • Job enlargement and enrichment • Map for fast track development • Promotion (if eligible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion (if eligible) • Training and development interventions for higher responsibilities • Mentor and provide opportunities for higher responsibilities • Coaching and career Counselling • Job enlargement and enrichment • Map for fast track development

CHAPTER SIX DISCUSSIONS

It is significant to distinguish Performance Management from Performance Appraisals to appreciate the inherent values proposed by correctly deploying both processes in a Law firm. Notwithstanding the way, both terms are often wrongly used interchangeably. It is, however, proper to consider performance appraisal as a critical exercise in the performance management system.

Aguinis (2013) stated several key characteristics that must be addressed to ensure a PM system's effectiveness. This discussion will explore these characteristics, focusing on strategic congruence, context congruence, thoroughness, practicality, meaningfulness, specificity, identification of effective and ineffective performance, reliability, validity, acceptability and fairness, openness, correctability, standardization, and ethicality.

Strategic congruence is an essential characteristic of a sound performance management system within a law firm. By setting performance objectives that directly contribute to the firm's strategic priorities, the performance management system ensures that employees' efforts are directed toward achieving the firm's mission and vision. This means that individual objectives must align with the unit and the firm's overall goals.

Context congruence is another essential aspect to consider. The performance management process should align with the firm's culture, values, and practices. When we consider the law firm's unique cultural context, the system becomes more relevant and meaningful to employees, enhancing their engagement and commitment to achieving desired performance outcomes.

Thoroughness is crucial in a performance management system. It is essential that all employees, including supervisors and their direct reports, are evaluated. The evaluation should cover the desired results and behaviors expected from each role within the firm. By assessing the performance of all staff, the firm can identify areas of strength and improvement at all levels, enabling targeted development interventions and facilitating overall firm effectiveness.

Practicality is a crucial consideration. The performance management system should avoid complicated, time-consuming, and expensive processes. Emphasizing the need for a technological interface will help streamline the evaluation process, making it more efficient and user-friendly. Leveraging technology helps automate data collection, analysis, and accurate reporting, reducing administrative burdens and allowing for more effective utilization of resources.

Meaningfulness is an essential characteristic of an effective performance management system. Meaningful evaluations provide employees with clear feedback on their performance, enabling them to understand their strengths and areas of weakness requiring improvement. Evaluation standards must be relevant and related to individuals or groups with responsibility. Moreover, the system should regularly cover a specific period under review (say every three months or every 6 six months), ensuring that performance evaluations occur consistently and promptly.

Specificity plays a vital role in performance management. Expectations and concrete guidance on what each employee requires should be clearly stated. By providing employees with specific performance expectations (like using rubrics for performance measures that may be considered subjective), the system sets a foundation for goal setting, performance improvement, and career development. Clear expectations help align individual efforts with the firm's goals and enhance overall performance outcomes.

Identifying effective and ineffective performance is another critical aspect of a performance management system. By distinguishing between high performers and those needing development, the firm can allocate resources more effectively, recognize and reward top performers, and implement appropriate performance improvement interventions to address identified gaps. The process should allow for the differentiation of employees based on observed and ineffective behaviors and results.

Reliability is a crucial characteristic that ensures consistency in the evaluation process. Reliability establishes credibility and trust in the performance management system, enabling fair and accurate employee performance assessments. The performance measures should be consistent and error-free, providing the same results for an employee if evaluated by two independent supervisors.

Validity is another crucial consideration. The performance management system should encompass all critical performance facets and be non-deficient, meaning it should not exclude essential dimensions of performance that are within the employee's control. Remember what we said about every job holder having accountabilities for the four balanced scorecard perspectives – with different weights? The system provides a comprehensive and accurate representation of employee performance by ensuring validity, allowing for informed decision-making regarding performance improvement and development programs.

Acceptability and fairness are paramount in a performance management system. Transparency, consistency, and equitable treatment contribute to the system's acceptability, fostering a positive perception and trust in the evaluation outcomes. The evaluation process should include mechanisms to ensure that the evaluation is perceived as fair and acceptable by the employees being appraised. As a standard, the appraisal exercise must request a statement confirming fairness and meaningfulness in our proposed framework.

Openness is an essential characteristic for consideration in a performance management system. Openness enables employees to engage in the PM process actively and facilitates mutual understanding between supervisors and employees. Communication should be consistent with facts and honesty, promoting open conversations and constructive feedback. Frequent communication regarding employee performance should occur, and the appraisal session should facilitate a two-way exchange of information.

Correctability reduces subjectivity and provides a means to correct perceived errors in the evaluation process. Employees should be able to voice concerns, provide additional insights, or request reviews if they believe their performance evaluation is inaccurate or unfair. The Moderation committee represents a fair and transparent mechanism for addressing and rectifying errors and strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of the performance management system.

Standardization is a critical element of a performance management system. Standardization promotes objectivity and enables the firm to identify trends, patterns, and areas for improvement in performance across different roles and functions. Evaluations should be conducted consistently across individuals and over time. This ensures fairness, eliminates bias, and facilitates meaningful comparisons between employees.

Ethicality is of utmost importance in a performance management system. Ethicality ensures that the performance management system aligns with legal and ethical guidelines, fostering trust and integrity within the law firm. The system should comply with all ethical standards, subduing self-interests that compromise established standards or performance dimensions. The evaluation process should be designed to be fair, respectful, and considerate of employees' rights and dignity.

In conclusion, a firm can implement a performance management system that aligns employee performance with organizational goals, supports development and growth, and fosters a culture of fairness and accountability.

CHAPTER SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *Performance Management Remains an Indispensable tool in Managing Corporate Goals and Objectives. As Highlighted, this Framework will Serve as a Guide to Developing a Similar tool in Law Firms with Special Considerations to:*

- The organizational structure.
- The Firm's strategic focus or goals.
- Identified initiatives that can drive corporate and individual objectives.
- Designated accountabilities and (or) responsibilities due to the planned distribution of rewards to effectively address recognition of outstanding performance.
- The Firm's initiatives, designed to drive culture by adopting or modifying competencies that translate to specific performance measures to be evaluated.

We must pay special attention to enablers that address the effectiveness and efficiency of the framework to depict the ideals of a standard PM system and support the seamless deployment of the process.

We must also emphasize the need to develop supporting documents (when not available) for the PM framework that is critical to success. In addition to strategic and procedural documents, company-wide competency profiles and a career management structure are imperatives.

Based on this research, we summarize our recommendations with the following as crucial for enhancing organizational effectiveness and employee performance:

- **Development and implementation of the Proposed Framework:** The study's findings support developing and implementing the performance management framework within the law firm. This framework incorporates all the critical characteristics discussed in 6.0. By implementing this framework, a law firm can align individual performance with organizational goals and foster a culture of fairness, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- **Training and Development Programs:** In order to ensure the successful implementation of the performance management framework, it is recommended that a law firm invests in training and development programs for both supervisors and their direct reports. These programs should equip supervisors with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively evaluate and provide feedback on employee performance. Likewise, the direct reports should receive training on understanding the performance management process, setting relevant objectives, and utilizing feedback for their growth and development.
- **Regular Performance Feedback and Coaching:** The performance management framework should emphasize the importance of regular feedback and coaching sessions. Supervisors should be encouraged to have frequent and meaningful conversations with their team members, discussing performance expectations, progress, and areas for development. Supervisors can help employees reach their full capability and enhance their performance by providing ongoing guidance and support.
- **Technology Integration:** The thesis highlights the significance of leveraging technology in the performance management process. A law firm should explore using performance management software or platforms to automate data collection, analysis, and reporting. Technology integration can streamline the evaluation process, reduce administrative burdens, and provide real-time access to performance-related information for supervisors and their direct reports. At the very least, experimenting with platforms like Google Forms will help develop a standard for deploying and collating performance feedback with minimum errors during the exercise.
- **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** It is recommended that a law firm establishes a system for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the performance management framework. Regular assessments and feedback from supervisors and direct reports can identify gaps or improvement areas when suggesting recommendations during reporting after each PM appraisal exercise. Implementing the recommendations made also leads to maturity in the PM system. A law firm should be open to refining and adapting the framework based on feedback and changing organizational needs.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Open and transparent communication regarding the performance management framework is crucial. The law firm should ensure that employees understand the objectives, processes, and expectations associated with the framework. Communication should be ongoing, with regular updates and opportunities for employees to provide input or seek clarification. Transparent communication fosters trust and engagement among employees and enhances the acceptance and effectiveness of the performance management system.
- **By implementing these recommendations,** a top-tier law firm can establish a robust performance management framework that aligns employee performance with organizational goals, nurtures a culture of continuous improvement, and contributes to the firm's overall success.

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APPENDIX I

- Letter of Consent from the sampled Law Firm.

APPENDIX II

➤ *Extract from Competency Framework for Lawyers:*

Partner	Being known as a 'leader in the field'.	Shaping client expectations about services.	Cross- supporting partners	Building succession strength	Leading internal or external investment time responsibilities	Delivering profitable chargeable and effective investment time for teams	Securing work from top quality clients.	Building GECO's reputation.
Senior Associate	Achieving reputation as an expert.	Managing and delivering high quality client services.	Cross-referring work	Leading and managing others.	Using investment time productively.	Balancing chargeable and investment time.	Selling GECO. services to clients	Building the profile of the practice area.
Associate III	Developing expertise in a specific field.	Developing and being accountable for the quality of client services.	Consulting other practice areas.	Supervising and coaching others	Learning to apply investment time	Applying time and financial management.	Scoping fees with existing clients.	Establishing own network and profile
Associate I & II	Learning about the practical application of the law and developing a commercial understanding.	Learning about expectations of GECO. clients and sectors and delivering high quality services.	Building good working and internal relationships.	Developing self and supporting and coaching others.	Learning the distinction between chargeable and investment time looking for investment time opportunities	Learning the value of time and time recording and demonstrating efficient working practices and time recording	Understanding how work is priced and scoped, and learning scope and price work.	Learning about how GECO. is positioned in the marketplace and participating in marketing activities.
	DELIVERING TOP QUALITY SERVICE		BUILDING THE CULTURE		FINANCIALS/VALUE ADDED		GROWING THE FIRM	

