

Abstract

Title: Performance Measurement of Freelancers

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Freelancers offer skill-intensive services. According to Austrian definition freelancers can be found in all those professions that a) need special examinations before practice and b) do have a chamber which represents them. This categorization is however not internationally accepted. In literature freelancers are often defined as “knowledge-intensive service firms” and “professional service firms”. Apart from these specific definitions freelancers do have a special interest in performing well and find adequate methods to measure their performance. The starting point for performance measurement lies in the development of an organization-specific understanding of the term performance.

The aim of this thesis is a) to find a definition of the term “performance” and b) to illustrate instruments with which the measurement of performance should be possible. Within this paper a meta-analysis was conducted – which means that an analysis of numerous primary studies was executed. The theoretical background of this article is based upon the Principal-Agent-Theory, the Stewardship-Theory, the Resource-based View and the Goalsetting-Theory. Those theories do show the relevance of the research question of this thesis and give at the same time answers to it. The Principal-Agent Theory, for example, has its main focus on defining an understanding of performance that’s also applicable for freelancers, whereas the Stewardship-Theory focuses on the individual satisfaction of freelancers. The Goalsetting-Theory creates a link between the degree of target achievement and the performed service. The Resource-based View on the other side is focusing on the ideal use of resources and thus gaining a competitive advantage which gives freelancers the possibility to optimize their performance.

This thesis revealed the relevance of financial performance, like revenue and profit, for freelancers. Furthermore the analysis illustrates the significance of immaterial resources like “knowledge” and “employees”. Special attention with regards to performance measurement should also be given the fact that the level of target achievement often gets great attention – whereas the basis, namely how to define targets, seems to be ignored.