

The Performance Appraisal Process

**Assessing & Improving
Performance**

Participant Materials

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Workshop Objectives

- ❖ To provide structure and standards around the performance appraisal process.
- ❖ To set meaningful, measurable objectives
- ❖ To review the steps for producing a document that objectively and thoroughly assesses the employee's overall performance.
- ❖ To conduct fair and legal performance appraisals. Learn what your legal obligations are during the appraisal discussion.

Human Resources Dictionary

Write down your definition on the left page and 5 components of performance management on the right page.

Performance management

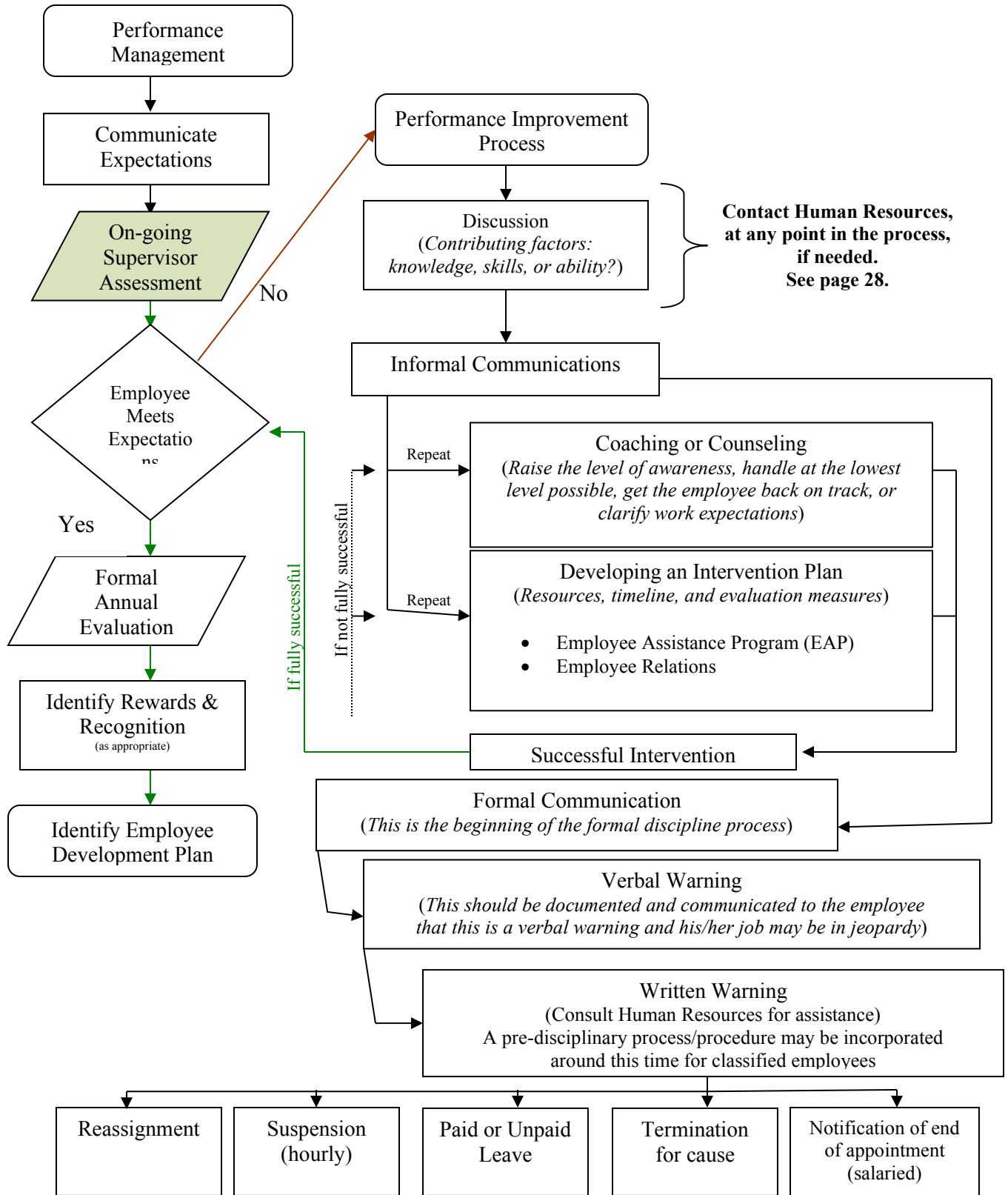
[per-fawr-muh ns man-ij-muh nt]

The act of...

Performance management may include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Performance Management Flowchart



Why Performance Management?

In today's rapidly changing environment, organizations are concerned about competition, the quality of their products, services and operating more efficiently. The same is true of the college environment.

Gaining the cooperation and active involvement of employees is critical to the college's success. Providing them with a clear sense of how their activities and assignments are connected with the college's mission and goals facilitates such involvement. It is your role to provide direction and feedback to accomplish those intentions, and the Performance Appraisal is the mechanism by which it all happens.

The Role of Performance Appraisal

The Performance Appraisal process achieves the college's goals to:

- Align employee performance with unit's and college's mission and goals;
- Enable two-way communication regarding job performance and to periodically re-assess goals and opportunities for the unit and the individual;
- Establish mutually understood set of performance expectations;
- Recognize contributions of employees;
- Discuss opportunities for recognition, growth and development
- Provide necessary feedback when performance does not meet expectations.

The Stakeholders in Doing Better Performance Appraisals

College, Performance Appraisals provides the mechanism to cascade college strategies, goals and core values down to each employee. This insures that their efforts are coordinated and their combined effort moves the college in the right direction.

Managers, the Performance Appraisal can be a practical and versatile management tool that helps them to focus their employees' activities, monitor their progress, and encourage their development. Performance Appraisals are an opportunity to build and sustain good relationships with employees, and for managers to provide guidance and direction in a fair, non-threatening way.

Employees, effective Performance Appraisals can have a positive effect on morale. Employees who know what is expected of them and how they will be evaluated will approach their work with a better attitude and a better sense of responsibility. When they have a meaningful Development Plan, they feel more positive about their job and have a sense of influence over their future.

Legal Considerations

The annual appraisal process is a valuable milestone for both employee and supervisor to take stock of the past year and review the needs and expectations for the coming year.

The conduct of performance appraisals can be the basis for legal action by disgruntled employees. Consider the following:

1. All appraisals should be fact-based and non-discriminatory.
2. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act does not require proof of intent to discriminate in order to prove discrimination. Disproportionate numbers of majority or minority members in specific job categories are considered prima facie evidence of discrimination. Any performance appraisal system that results in differential promotion or dismissal of groups of employees may be discriminatory.
3. Employers are solely responsible for validating the performance appraisal system that they use. If an employee shows that evidence of discrimination exists, he or she does not have to prove that the performance appraisal system is invalid.

Reasons Why We Don't Look Forward To The Appraisal Process

Employees are naturally concerned about the appraisal process since it involves judgment of their effectiveness. They may know when a performance review will take place, but often have only a vague understanding of the standards by which they will be evaluated. The Performance Appraisal often has a role in salary increases and promotions, adding to the feeling employees have that it will “make or break” them.

Managers, as well, may not look forward to the process. Few people are comfortable sitting in judgment of others, and when each individual's performance must be separated from the activities of the group, their effectiveness can be difficult to measure. The process can be time consuming, especially if supervisors do only annual reviews that force them to recall and catalogue a year's worth of experiences. This “once-a-year” approach to performance appraisals doesn't work well since it tends to focus the appraisals on extraordinary events or to rehash past problems that should have been addressed already. Additionally, some employees need regular, ongoing evaluations and structured guidance to help them set and achieve both job and career goals. It is a heavy responsibility to evaluate a person's performance for the record.

With these fears and concerns in mind, we have developed a workshop that focuses on providing **specific strategies for managers** that are easy to use, and easy to learn. Managers who have a structured, organized set of strategies approach the process with increased confidence and enthusiasm.

Critical Success Factors to Make Appraisal Effective

For a performance appraisal process to work, the system must be designed to give employees clear goals and rate their progress objectively. The most successful programs typically combine these elements:

- **Regular, informal feedback from supervisors.** Once-a-year evaluations aren't enough. Employees should receive regular input from their supervisors. These discussions typically focus on day-to-day performance objectives rather than concentrating on the employee's past mistakes or failures. This approach requires supervisors to observe and evaluate their employees regularly and to work closely with individual employees as needed.

Notes:

- **Performance goals set by employees and supervisors.** Goals may be both short-term and long-term and can cover a wide variety of objectives, depending on the employee's current job responsibilities and future aspirations. Goals should be specific and quantifiable where possible, such as the completion of a specific project within a set period of time. To help employees meet their goals, supervisors should offer additional training or other necessary support. New performance goals should be recorded, reviewed regularly, and modified as needed.

Notes:

Critical Success Factors to Make Appraisal Effective

- **Action plans to address performance or disciplinary problems.** Action plans can be helpful when an employee is experiencing performance problems that need correction. The supervisor should identify and discuss the problems with the employee as they occur and suggest a course of action that may improve performance. The plan should detail the nature of the problem, the steps that both the employee and the supervisor will take to help solve the problem, and the time within which the plan will be implemented. The employee should have input on the plan and suggest changes. Once a plan has been agreed upon, it should be reviewed regularly to make sure the employee is able to implement it successfully.

Notes:

- **Formal reviews that accurately document the “big picture.”** If informal meetings are conducted regularly, you may be able to get away with an annual or semi-annual review. Generally, they should not be used to deal with ongoing performance problems. The employee should have been alerted to these during the informal discussions and should be following an action plan to correct them. The purpose of the formal review is to assess whether goals and any action plan have been met and to determine if the employee is following the right path for career development.

Notes:

Documentation

The manager of the employee is responsible for documenting the yearly performance. There are several reasons a manager must document the performance management process. The first reason is to document the **facts and evidence** concerning the performance or behavior. The second reason that a manager must document is that the documentation clearly communicates to the employee that the performance or conduct is acceptable or unacceptable.

Purpose of documentation:

- **Evaluating employee performance.** To maintain or improve desired performance is the most critical and productive outcome of documentation.
- **Improving the accuracy of management feedback.** Ideally, feedback should be given immediately; in practice, this is not always possible. When feedback is delayed, documentation provides a useful and necessary reminder of what occurred and when it occurred.
- **Ensuring the completeness of the appraisal.** With transfers, promotions, and/or dual reporting, it is critical to have a record that outlines any one manager's relationship with an employee. This also satisfies the employee's need for knowing that their contributions are on record and recognized.
- **Justifying and verifying actions by management.** Clearly, we live in a litigious society and documentation is one form of protection. It provides proof that a fair procedure was followed and decrease employee relations issues.

Document while the incident is fresh in your mind to keep the facts straight. Do not add to the documentation after the employee signs it. Consult with Human Resources if necessary.

Maintaining concise, complete and current documentation for employee performance is essential for a number of reasons:

When should you document?

The sooner the better is the rule of thumb. The longer a manager waits, the less accurate the documentation is likely to be.

Documentation

How to document?

This is an example of documentation. A formal memo detailing the discussion could also be used.

Types of incidents to be recorded include observed behavior, an informal coaching session that took place with agreed upon action steps, or an oral warning that was given.

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|---|--------------------|---------|---|---|----------|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----------|----|---|----|---------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>15 Monday January 6, 2008 Prioritized Daily Task List</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">Early Morning</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">Evening</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">1</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">Meetings</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">One-on-one meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">2</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">3</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">4</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">Afternoon</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">5</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">Staff Meeting</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;">6</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table> | Early Morning | Evening | 1 | 7 | Meetings | One-on-one meeting | 2 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 10 | Afternoon | 11 | 5 | 12 | Staff Meeting | | 6 | | | | | | | | | | <p style="text-align: right;">15 Monday</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Daily Record of Events</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p>Ex. 1: 9:00 am. Mary was 1 hour late this morning for the 3rd time this week. She said it was because she had child care problems. She told me she hoped to have a new day care center by next week.</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Ex. 2: 11:00 am Received a phone call from Dean Jones. He reiterated his appreciation for Steve's dedication to the project, noting that he was a highly satisfied customer.</p> </div> |
| Early Morning | Evening | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meetings | One-on-one meeting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Afternoon | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Staff Meeting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Discussing and Using Appropriate Documentation

Effective documentation should include:

- Name of employee, name of the manager preparing the report, date prepared.
- The specific behavior or facts of *this* incident:
 - What happened?
 - What is right or wrong?
 - When did it happen?
 - Where did it happen?
 - What must be done to recognize or correct the performance or behavior?
 - How much time is given to correct the situation?
 - What will happen if it is not done correctly?

Effective documentation does not use labels or generalizations (i.e., 'gross misconduct' or 'unresponsive to customer needs'). Instead, describe the specific behavior. Examples of good and bad documentation:

1. Poor: Jane Doe did an excellent job.
Better: Received a letter from Dean Evans 1/03/08 that Jane Doe's quick follow-up and attention to detail regarding his New Hire Orientation questions was very appreciated.
2. Poor: Jane Doe was found sleeping on duty. (too vague)
Better: Jane Doe was observed sitting at her workstation, her head was lowered, and her eyes were closed. I observed her for 5 minutes while standing within 8 feet of her. She did not acknowledge my presence for 5 minutes. (Specific)
3. Poor: John Doe is frequently late for work. (too general)
Better: John Doe arrived to work late the following dates:
January 4-scheduled at 7:00, clocked in at 8:15
January 11-scheduled at 7:00, clocked in at 8:40
January 22-scheduled at 7:00, clocked in at 7:56
January 25-scheduled at 7:00, clocked in at 8:11 (specific)
4. Poor: Used foul and offensive language.
Better: Bob Payne (a customer) reports that Paul Michael told him to "shove his order where the sun don't shine". Shirley Roberts witnessed the incident and heard Paul Michael say that.

Discussing and Using Appropriate Documentation

5. Poor: John Doe was incoherent
Better: When John Doe reported to work at 3:00 p.m. on January 4, 2004, I observed him staggering as he walked down the aisle toward me and he slumped over a pallet of boxes to rest. When I spoke to him, I smelled the strong odor and he spoke to me with slurred speech.

A manager may choose to have a second manager sit in on the meeting if the employee is signing a disciplinary document and it is expected to be a complicated conference.

The employee should sign the discipline form to indicate that they have read and understood the form. If the employee disagrees with discipline, they may attach a written response to the discipline form as part of the record. If the employee refuses to sign the report, write, "Employee refuses to sign" and have a witness sign the report.

Common documentation mistakes:

There are several mistakes that managers make in the documentation process. They include:

- Failure to document behavior that meets or exceeds expectations
- Failure to address and/or to document **early** in the process of decreasing performance.
- Failure to sign and date the documents when written.
- Not issuing written notice to the employee or not including the documentation in the personnel file.
- Failure to accurately, specifically, and concisely describe the employee's performance in writing.
- Reliance on conclusions without identifying the facts of the situation.
- Failure to document fact-finding discussions.
- Failure to include any statements made by the employee during any performance or disciplinary meetings (especially the reasons given for under-performance or improper behavior)
- Failure to include the consequences of continued behavior or performance problems.
- Failure to preserve physical or documentary evidence that may be needed later (work schedules, calendars, memorandums, reports, logs, witness statements, etc.)

Pre-Appraisal

Before attending an annual performance appraisal meeting, the employee needs to know:

- Why he or she is being evaluated.
- What the evaluation is based on.
- How the results of the evaluation will be used.

The supervisor must:

- prepare for the formal performance appraisal meeting;
- write the performance appraisal;
- deliver and discuss the performance appraisal with the employee in the formal performance review meeting; and
- produce the completed performance appraisal form.

Gathering the necessary data

Preparation involves the following:

- data gathering,
- review, and
- a preliminary meeting with the employee. The employee may complete the employee self-appraisal form and provide it to the supervisor in advance of the supervisor writing the final performance appraisal.

- **If the employee has had different supervisors** during the appraisal period, the supervisor should contact them for their appraisal input on the employee's performance.

- **If the employee supports more than one supervisor or manager** in the same area, the supervisor of record should contact the other management staff for their appraisal input on the employee's performance.

- **The supervisor should convene a preliminary meeting with the employee** to encourage and explain the importance of the employee's participation in the performance appraisal process and the intent of the college standards. During the preliminary meeting, the supervisor should give the employee a copy of the employee self-appraisal form, explain the significance of self-appraisal and encourage the employee to complete the form, and identify or propose possible professional or career development needs.

Refer to Appendices: Checklist for Preparing For the Performance Appraisal Discussion.

Avoid the eight “deadly sins” of evaluations

Refrain from the following eight common errors that can distort and even invalidate the evaluation process:

1. Basing the evaluation on the employee's most recent behavior, instead of evaluating the whole performance period;
2. Allowing irrelevant factors, such as excused time off for leaves of absence, social standing, or participation in employee assistance programs, or factors that may or may not be job related, such as physical appearance, to influence the evaluation,
3. Failing to include unfavorable comments on the evaluation, even when justified;
4. Rating all subordinates at about the same point on a ranking scale, usually in the middle;
5. Allowing one characteristic of the employee or aspect of the job performance to distort the rest of the rating process;
6. Judging all employees too leniently or too strictly;
7. Allowing one very good or very bad event to affect all the other ratings of the employee (the "halo effect"); and
8. Permitting personal feelings to bias the evaluation process.

Refer to Appendices: Halos, Horns, Pitfalls, and Biases.

Examining circumstances in which performance suffers

- When it’s through no fault of the employee, such as changing conditions in the work environment
- The difference between will do and can do

Choosing the right setting & creating the right environment

- **Decide on the best time for the review to take place.** This means a time when both parties can spend time together without interruption.
- **Decide on the best place for the review.** This may even be a neutral private office.
- **Prepare the facilities.** Seating the employee on the other side of the supervisor's desk puts the employee at an immediate disadvantage. Instead, try placing the chairs side by side and have coffee or water available.
- **Gather information and materials.** Have the prepared appraisal forms ready, along with any backup information that may be needed.
- **Guarantee no interruptions.** This requires coordination and careful location choice.

Following your strategy

- **Plan the opening.** A friendly approach will assure the employee that he or she has not walked on to a target field. Remember, however, that the opening needs to be something the supervisor is comfortable with. If the supervisor has never discussed personal matters, this is probably not the time to inquire about family members.
- **Plan the approach.** There is no right or wrong approach to a performance review. For example, the supervisor could list job strengths first or use the performance appraisal form as a discussion guide.
- **Plan the conclusion.** Know when and how to conclude the review, including what agreements are required from the employee. Remember that the objectives the review needs to accomplish may require more than one meeting.

Steering the discussion to achieve objectives

- **Cover one thing at a time.**
- **Be honest and be prepared to discuss questionable items.**
- **Be brave enough to tell the truth,** and rest your case on specific examples when you do. Avoid surprises. And if you want to be heard, don't just talk – listen, too.

Effective use of verbal and non-verbal communication

- **Communication is the key to an effective performance review.** How the results of the review are presented may override the results themselves. Supervisors should take a non-evaluative stance; their job is to improve performance, not comment on personality or lifestyle.
- **Avoid comments** on age, race, sex, or national origin that may violate discrimination laws. This includes avoiding comments on sexual orientation, which is included in the college's non-discrimination policy.
- **Ask; don't assume.** Instead of using "you" language, use "I" statements, taking on ownership of your own feelings and observations.
- **Practice the art of inquiry.**

Strategies for improved questioning and active listening

- Keep the appraisal open to employee input.
- Workshop: "Interpersonal Skills for Supervisors"

Motivating for Improvement

- Identify areas for improvement and specify remedial actions.
- Support the employee's effort to improve.
- Give the employee feedback about improvement and performance needs.

Dealing with differing views

- One way to avoid evoking defensive behavior from employees is to take an open, nonjudgmental or non-blaming stance. Many confrontations can be avoided by describing a problem in an impersonal way and encouraging the employee to work with the supervisor toward a solution.
- For example, telling an employee that he or she is tactless and undiplomatic is tactless and undiplomatic. A kinder, gentler, and more effective way of stating the same thing is, "Some people interpret your candor as hostility."
- Another way to sidestep defensive behavior is to show the worker that the supervisor has some empathy for the person's situation, rather than being

disinterested about the evaluation’s effect on the employee. A comment like “That’s one way to look at it” does not indicate that the supervisor is open to any discussion. A statement such as “I get the feeling you didn’t feel confident about the original plan” will lead the way to discussion.

Setting SMART objectives & goal-setting

- Performance standards are more than just job descriptions. While job descriptions detail the components of a task or job, performance standards define how well it must be done (an ideal measure), or when a task is performed in an acceptable manner (a satisfactory measure).
- Each performance appraisal cycle begins with goal setting. During this step, the supervisor and the employee set goals for the upcoming performance cycle. Both should bring some draft possibilities to the goal setting meeting, which is usually the same as the appraisal meeting.
- As you develop your goals be sure that they meet the criteria of a **SMART** goal.
 - S** specific to the job or role in the college
 - M** measurable in some concrete way
 - A** attainable & appropriate – within one’s sphere of influence and authority
 - R** reasonable and realistic expectations, yet involving a stretch beyond the everyday execution of the job.
 - T** time-limited, not open-ended.
- Do not feel compelled to have goals that take a full year to accomplish – some may take longer or shorter. There is no magic number. The number of goals depends on the job and the activities associated with the position.

| PERFORMANCE GOAL COMPONENTS | | |
|--|--|--|
| Performance goals should contain the following elements: | | |
| A Verb | A Result | A Measure (Quality, Quantity, Time) |
| To increase | ...the number of audits administered in the [division name]. | ...from X to Y by no later than [date]. |
| To continue | ...to provide the same level of customer service, despite a reduction in resources | ...as indicated by meeting the published standards. |
| To investigate | ...the feasibility of installing a new XXX system. | ...at a cost not to exceed \$[amount]. Complete by [date]. |

EXERCISE:

SMART Goals

Directions: Read the sample goal and for each letter of SMART indicate in the Y/N column if you think that SMART component is present in the goal. Then write that portion of the goal in the example space.

Sample goal for an administrative assistant: By December 15, 2016, create, then export various Banner reports for our department, edit for accuracy and format them to be suitable for a presentation.

| SMART | Y or N? | Example |
|-------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| S | | Is it specific? |
| M | | How would you measure it? |
| A | | What is the actionable component? |
| R | | Is it realistic? |
| T | | Is it timely? |

SMART Goals

Directions: The goal below is too vague. Use the SMART approach to improve it. Then write that portion of the goal in the example space

Sample goal for an administrative assistant: Improve skills in Banner.

| SMART | Example |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| S | Is it specific? |
| M | How would you measure it? |
| A | What is the actionable component? |
| R | Is it realistic? |
| T | Is it timely? |

Types of development activities & identifying the most appropriate

- Training workshop, shadowing, cross-training, coaching, counseling, mentoring, conference, readings, etc.

Reaching agreement – achieving compromise

- Have employees acknowledge the evaluation. They may not agree with it, but they should understand it and what it was based on.

How to monitor progress after the meeting

Once you've completed the "homework" of establishing goals and objectives for the coming year, be sure that the employee is clear on each.

During the defined time period, the supervisor should periodically review actual performance against the measurements. This review allows for adjusting measurements – if they were set too high or too low – as well as keeping employees posted about how they are doing.

Keeping employees informed during the year eases much of the anxiety of an annual performance appraisal.

Offering help and support

- **Follow the guidelines** of good performance feedback:
 - Timely** – given as soon as possible after the performance takes place
 - Individualized** – tailored to the feedback receiver
 - Productive** – focuses on the performance rather than the performer
 - Specific** – pinpoints observable action and behavior

Where you go for advice and assistance

Contact Human Resources, at any point, in the performance appraisal process, if needed.

| Assistance needed with . . . | Contact Information |
|---|--|
| Enhancing or developing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job skills (management or Desktop computing)• Job knowledge• Job ability | <i>Human Resources at (5-8430)</i> |
| Work-related consulting, coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closing the gap between existing and desired behavior change• Discussing and resolving, in a confidential manner, work-related issues | <i>Employee/Labor Relations at (5-5570)</i> Kim Wiggerly: kwiggerl@oberlin.edu |
| Disciplinary process <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classified employee discipline process• Understanding contract terms and language• Appeals and grievance procedure | <i>Employee/Labor Relations at (5-5570)</i> Kim Wiggerly: kwiggerl@oberlin.edu |
| Creating or qualifying job specifications | <i>HR Recruitment at (5-5576)</i> Beth Gonzales: bgonzale@oberlin.edu OR <i>HR Compensation & Benefits at (5-5574)</i> Mark McLeod: mmcleod@oberlin.edu |
| Short-term counseling and referral services on family and personal issues | Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 1-800-989-3277 -OR- Marion Burnworth at mburnwor@oberlin.edu |

Summary

Performance appraisals do not have to be an unpleasant exercise, if approached systematically. In fact, when done properly, they can be effective planning tools for managers and provide important feedback to employees.

The first step is to show the college's commitment to conducting appraisals by providing training to supervisors.

Next, supervisors should be held accountable for their ability to provide ongoing guidance to their employees.

And finally, supervisors should involve employees directly in the formulation of goals and action plans.

This disciplined, interactive approach can help eliminate the natural barriers to effective appraisals.

Appendices:

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CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING FOR THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL DISCUSSION

- Notify employees of purpose, date, time and locations for interview session**
 - Give employees 5-10 days lead-time.
 - Give employees a copy of the Performance Appraisal form(s) and ask him/her to evaluate their work and complete the forms prior to the discussion.
 - Request that the employee review his/her job description and previously set goals/objectives to use as a basis of their self-examination.
 - Request that the employee come prepared to discuss their:
 - Accomplishments
 - Concerns of problems possible causes and solutions
 - Developmental goals things they would like to learn and do in the future.

- Review the employee's performance data**
 - Review previously set goals and objectives.
 - Assemble quantity/quality/time measure of results related to employee's goals and objectives.
 - Focus on the overall picture by identifying key strengths and root skills to be developed.
 - Summarize the data and fill out the evaluation form
 - Determine "rating" of each criteria and overall rating.
 - Prepare written comments that summarize accomplishments and areas of development cite specific examples.

- Plan the Performance Appraisal discussion**
 - Decide how you will get the employee involved in the discussion.
 - Prepare notes for the discussion which include:
 - Key strengths and accomplishments.
 - Problems, causes, solutions, areas for improvement.
 - Action steps and developmental goals.

- Prepare suggested follow-up plans for future goal setting, etc.

CHECKLIST DURING THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Did the employee have the opportunity to complete a "self appraisal?" | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you discuss each goal or objective established for this employee? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you and the employee clear on the areas of agreement? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you and the employee clear on the areas of disagreement, if any? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you and the employee cover all positive skills, traits, accomplishments, areas of growth, etc.? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you reinforce the employee's accomplishments? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you give the employee an honest appraisal on his or her potential or ability? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you both clear on areas where improvement is required? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| What training or development recommendations did you agree on? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you set time frames for training or development activities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you indicate consequences for noncompliance, if appropriate? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you set good objectives for the next appraisal period? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| S specific? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| M measurable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A attainable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| R realistic/reasonable? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| T time-limited? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you set a date and time for the next interim evaluation (s) or progress check(s)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you thank the employee for his or her efforts? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION SUMMARY
(Post-Meeting)**

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|------|
| | | Date |
| Name | Job Title | |
| Department | Division | |
| Performance Category | Action | |

- Attendance
- Conduct
- Performance

- Positive Recognition
- Coaching / Counseling
- Oral Reminder
- Written Reminder
- Request for Hearing

Summary of Positive Performance or Problem

Summary of Supervisor's Discussion with Employee
(Attach relevant documents, if appropriate)

Summary of Employee's Comments (including commitments to improve, if applicable)

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Follow-up Date | Supervisor |
|----------------|------------|

HALOS, HORNS, PITFALLS, AND BIASES

As you read through these descriptions, think of specific discussions you have had with staff members for which that description might be accurate. This analysis will help you be more aware of some areas where you need to be more objective.

Halo Effect

This is the tendency of a supervisor to overrate a favored employee. It can happen for the following reasons:

Effect of past record. Good work in a previous rating period tends to carry over to the current period.

Compatibility. People who please are sometimes rates more highly than they deserve.

Effect of recency. A person who does outstanding work immediately prior to the evaluation may be able to offset an entire year of poor performance.

The one-asset person. An employee with certain characteristics – an advanced degree, a glib talker, or an impressive appearance – may be ranked higher than an excellent worker without these attributes.

The blind spot. In this case, the supervisor is blind to certain defects because he or she also possesses them.

The no-complaints bias. “No news is good news” may account for too much.

The high-potential person. The supervisor considers the future possibilities for the staff member rather than what that person has actually accomplished.

Horns Effect

This is the tendency to rate an employee lower than circumstances warrant. Some causes of this are as follows:

The boss is a perfectionist. High boss expectations lead to an employee rating lower than might be warranted.

The employee is contrary. Some bosses find it difficult not to become irritated with employees who disagree often with them.

The oddball effect. The maverick or nonconformist may get low ratings just because he or she is different.

Membership in a weak team. Sometimes a good player on a weak team ends up with lower ratings than if that employee were on a high-performing team.

Guilt by association. A person who is friends with someone who is perceived as a troublemaker may also be perceived as a troublemaker.

The dramatic effect. This is the opposite of the recency effect, whereby one recent goof offsets an entire year of good work.

Personality traits.

Self-comparison. The employee does not do the job the same way the supervisor did when he or she held that same job.

Other Pitfalls

Some other inaccurate reviews may be a result of the following elements:

Stereotypes: This pitfall involves basing appraisals on fixed conceptions of performance rather than on actual performance. Requiring supervisors to apply objective criteria to performance will discourage stereotyping.

Subjective standards: These “standards” have different meanings for different people. This confuses the definition of standards with goals and objectives.

Central tendency. This ignores individual performance differences and rates all employees the same.

Leniency bias. Supervisors, who give employees the benefit of the doubt, exaggerating positives and eliminating negatives, are guilty of leniency.

Opportunity bias. This bias exists when an employee or group of employees are rated higher or lower than warranted because of outside circumstances.

Controlling Biases

The following guidelines will help you reduce error rates and bias in performance appraisal plans:

Develop and use goals and standards throughout the performance period.

Be aware of your own potential biases and remain objective.

Keep notes on specific performance throughout the year and reference this information during the discussion.

Keep forms simple. Complex forms that attempt a “complete” evaluation only serve to frustrate managers and allow their biases to overpower their objectivity.

Use other raters. Design in the use of raters other than direct supervisors to increase the number of inputs to the performance appraisal system.

Build in subjective ratings. Leave some space for the evaluation of traits such as creativity and integrity or other traits that are especially valued by the college.

Don’t pretend it is easy. It takes a certain amount of time and effort to perform a fair and accurate employee evaluation, more time than you may anticipate.

Suggested Phrases For Employee Evaluations (a sampling)

Source: *Effective Phrases for Performance Appraisals: A Guide to Successful Evaluations* by James E. Neal, Jr.; Neal Publications; 13th edition (March, 2014).

Effective Phrases

Accuracy

- keeps accurate records
- strives for perfection
- holds people accountable for accuracy
- continuously strives to reduce errors

Administration

- develops policies and procedures to improve department
- supplies necessary support services
- displays excellent skills in organization, filing and retrieving records
- maintains current records
- effectively handles information overload
- respects confidential information

Analytical Skills

- applies sound analytical thinking
- effectively analyzes relevant information

Coaching and Counseling

- shows a sincere interest in employees and the solution to their problems
- gives sound practical advice
- effectively coaches toward achievement

Communication Skills

- effectively communicates with co-workers
- develops and maintains two-way communications
- promptly responds to requests
- excels in dealing with the public
- demonstrates and conveys a favorable image of the organization

Competency

- demonstrates a high level of expertise
- is very confident of abilities
- uses abilities to the fullest

Computer Skills

- makes effective use of computer equipment and facilities
- excels in creating user-friendly programs
- is a valuable resource for assisting other computer users

Cooperation

- promotes cooperative behavior and team efforts
- shares ideas and techniques
- works effectively with others
- receives and carries out tasks in a cooperative manner

| Helpful Adjectives | Helpful Verbs |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate • confident • conscientious • courteous • dependable • factual • flexible • good-natured • knowledgeable • loyal • meticulous • neat • optimistic • organized • patient • pleasant • productive • reliable • self-confident • strong • superb • superior • thorough • trustworthy • unique • well-liked | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accomplishes • achieves • adapts • adopts • analyzes • avoids • broadens • builds • calculates • conforms • continues • cooperates • coordinates • creates • dedicates • determines • displays • earns • effects • enables • formulates • improves • influences • informs • investigates • knows • meets • minimizes • neutralizes • observes • orders • participates • plans • prevents • prioritizes • produces • promotes • provides • recognizes • reduces • reinforces • relies • shows |
| <p data-bbox="235 1430 451 1461">Time Frequency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • always • frequently • often • continuously • sometimes • occasionally • rarely • seldom • never | |

Checklist: Conducting a Performance Review

Here are the steps to follow when conducting a successful performance review.

1. Open the meeting:
 - Establish rapport.
 - Explain the purpose of the review.
2. Create dialogue:
 - Encourage the person to talk.
 - Listen; don't interrupt.
3. Review the goals and standards: All feedback should refer to these goals and standards.
4. Keep feedback objective: Feedback should focus on behaviors, actions, and performance, not personality.
5. Discuss accomplishments:
 - Solicit person's view first.
 - Supplement person's self-feedback with your view.
6. Discuss areas for improvement:
 - Solicit person's view first.
 - Supplement person's self-feedback with your view.
7. Discuss performance rating.
8. Discuss future performance cycle in light of strengths and areas for improvement.
9. Develop a plan for training or professional development for the next year.
10. Summarize meeting.
11. Agree on follow-up or progress checks, as appropriate.

Non-Exempt Staff Form and Procedural Steps

NOTE: After discussing this evaluation with your supervisor, if you wish, you may prepare a written response. Provide a copy of this response to your supervisor and to the Human Resource Services Department with a signed request that your response be placed in your personnel file.

PROCEDURAL STEPS FOR EVALUATION PROGRAM

- (1) Human Resources distributes evaluation forms to department heads.
- (2) Supervisor reviews data pertinent to evaluation process.
- (3) Supervisor completes Section I of evaluation form and drafts comments for Section II, consulting next level of management prior to meeting with employee, as appropriate.
- (4) Supervisor schedules evaluation meeting with employee giving at least one week's notice.
- (5) Employee prepares for meeting and drafts comments.
- (6) Supervisor and employee review appraisal.
- (7) Make any necessary changes before signing.
- (8) Supervisor signs the form, closes out of process and the employee signs signature.
- (9) Once the employee signs, the process is complete and the document is ready to be scanned and emailed to Human Resources.
- (10) Supervisor prints copy of **finalized** form for employee.

Exempt Staff Forms and

Procedural Steps

Employees are ready to set their own performance objectives once they understand:

- (1) the duties and standards of their jobs
- (2) how their job fits into the needs of the college

To be effective and meaningful, performance objectives must be:

- Observable
Can you describe objectives in terms of quality, quantity, time, and/or visible results?
- Measurable
How will you know when objectives are met? How will you know that progress is being made? What is the target date for measuring results?
- Doable
Does the employee have the ability, the training, the time, the resources, the support to achieve the objectives?
- Job-related
Are objectives related to the overall duties and responsibilities of the employee's job? Do they serve the interests of the college? Do they advance the individual's knowledge, skills, and value as an employee?
- Prioritized
Which objectives are most important in meeting the needs of the college?
- Mutually agreed upon
Has the employee played a role in setting objectives? Does the employee share in the commitment to achievement of objectives?
- Flexible
Have you and the employee considered the possibility of changing conditions that would make adjustment of objectives appropriate?
- Written
Have signed copies been given to both the employee and supervisor/manager? Are these copies kept where they can be readily used and referred to?

Worksheet for Involving Employees in Setting Performance Objectives

DIRECTIONS: In completing this worksheet, keep a few of the specific individuals you supervise in mind. Try to begin with general questions in each category (e.g., what would you like to accomplish here?) and get more specific (e.g., what can you do as a first step? how will you know you've made it? how will I know you've made it? etc.) The idea is not to TELL the employee what to do, but to get the employee to help set the performance objectives in *his* or *her* own personal way. In this way, the employee has a greater personal stake in the outcome.

- I. To involve employees in setting performance objectives, you first need to get them thinking about the future, their hopes, ambitions, aspirations. What are some questions you can ask to get that thought process going?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- II. What are some questions you can use to steer answers closer, if necessary, to your department or area of supervision?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- III. What questions can you ask the employee to draw out objectives that are:
 - (a) Observable
 - (b) Measurable
 - (c) Doable
 - (d) Job-related
 - (e) Prioritized
 - (f) Mutually agreed upon
 - (g) Flexible

Exercises

Case Studies:

What questions do you have? What will you – the manager – do now?

Mary is a _____ and typically works from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. She's been in her position for 10 months. The annual performance appraisal process is set to begin next month. Her boss schedules a performance review meeting for this Friday afternoon at 4 pm.

Barbara's job description is clear on the importance of technical skills. She has become quite proficient and is frequently called upon (both within and outside her department) for her expertise. Lately, you – her manager – have received complaints about her interpersonal skills. You just completed her annual performance appraisal two months ago where she was rated as consistently meets standards of performance.

Mark is a star employee who always goes above and beyond what's required. His performance appraisals reflect that but they are not tied to merit increases. He came to you – the manager – with a request to change his work schedule (for personal reasons) from 9 am to 5 pm to 7 am to 3 pm for the next couple of weeks. This will impact the work schedule.

You – the manager – attended the performance management training offered in 2015. It's a month prior to the annual performance appraisal so you provide your staff with a copy of the form, with instructions to self-evaluate and consider 5 goals (department and personal). You also told them to see you if they have any questions.

The employee, a supervisor, has performed exceedingly well over the past 12 months. However, for the last 3 months, you – the manager – have observed frequent unexplained tardiness to key meetings and a lack of attention to detail.

The employee, a manager, agreed during the last performance appraisal to take specific computer training to upgrade skills. To-date, the employee has made several excuses for missing the last four scheduled workshops. This lack of knowledge / skillset is now hampering the employee's work performance.

Exercises

Practice Scenarios:

The Best Praise

The Genuine Critique