

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Competency Development Guide

Performance Appraisals Defined:

A performance appraisal, also referred to as a performance review, performance evaluation, career development discussion, or employee appraisal is a method by which the job performance of an employee is documented and evaluated. Performance appraisals are a part of career development and consist of regular reviews of employee performance within organizations. SOURCE: Wikipedia

Think back to the last time your work was formally reviewed. Did your manager make it clear what the purpose of the performance evaluation was? Did you appreciate how the process benefited you, your manager, and the organization as a whole? Did you understand the key aspects of an effective performance appraisal system? Don't worry if you answered "no" to one or more of these questions. The fact is that many managers fail to have a clear understanding of what performance reviews are intended to accomplish.

The most effective performance-appraisal programs are those that are beneficial to managers, employees, and the organization as a whole.

Consider these two primary objectives of performance appraisals:

To ensure the maximum utilization of every employee's skills, knowledge, and interests.

To enhance employer-employee relations; permitting human resources to perform key tasks more effectively; and motivating employees to pursue goals that are compatible with organizational goals.

SOURCE: The First-Time Manager's Guide to Performance Appraisals
by Diane Arthur

As a manager, you have significant influence on the behavior and actions of your employees. When you're reviewing and assessing employee performance, it's important for you to consider the effect you may have had on the employee's performance.

Consider how you may have interfered or contributed to employee performance by asking yourself the following questions.

- Did I clearly communicate my expectations?
- Did I give the employee clear direction?
- Did I provide the employee with the necessary resources and assistance?
- Did I provide the training or job assignments to enable this employee to acquire the knowledge or skills needed to do the job?
- Did I use the right approaches to motivate the person to excel in the role?
- Is it possible I may have inadvertently eroded the employee's self-confidence for example, by failing to praise good performance often enough or by delivering overly harsh criticism?



Golden rule 1:
Nothing that is said during a performance appraisal should ever come as a surprise to an employee.

Golden rule 2:
Always strive to include both praise and constructive criticism when conducting performance appraisals.

Golden rule 3:
Document every incident that is referenced in a performance appraisal.

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Supporting Behaviors

Giving feedback continuously. An important characteristic of effective performance appraisals is that the information being reviewed isn't a surprise. An employee may respond negatively if this is the first time that he/she is hearing negative feedback. Provide feedback throughout the year, and at the time when it is relevant.

Good preparation. Good preparation involves reviewing the employee's job description and prior year's review to use as your benchmark. Additional relevant sources include speaking to other managers or team leaders who've worked with the individual to find out if they have anything to contribute.

Coaching. Coaching is the day-to-day interaction between you and your employees. Its purpose is to provide regular assistance, support, praise, and constructive criticism. To be an effective coach, you should strive to be approachable, consistent, dependable, empathetic, honest, knowledgeable, and respectful.

Communication. Would you be surprised to learn that management studies indicate that 50% to 80% of a manager's time is dedicated to communicating in some way? Clearly, the ability to communicate effectively is an integral part of being a manager.

Consistent use of four communication strategies will promote effective communication and help you do a better job directing others: being positive, seeking and providing feedback, keeping employees in the loop, and listening actively.

Development Activities and Suggestions

Seeking and Providing Feedback

The better a team's ability to communicate, the better its chances of success. An environment supportive of open communication can help and will ultimately improve your ability to direct your team.

Improving communication is your responsibility. So a logical place to start is with your own ability. Seek feedback from your employees and colleagues about your ability to communicate.

Ask them questions like, "Am I clear?", "How could I improve?", and "Do you have any suggestions?" Extend your questions to include the team and organization, and you'll solicit feedback that can be used to improve communication throughout the organization.

Listening Actively

Active listening provides two very useful benefits – you'll gather more information and build a positive rapport with the other person. Active listening involves giving your full attention, checking for understanding, listening for feelings, and summarizing what you hear.

SUPPORTING BEHAVIOR STATEMENTS

To identify competency skill gaps consider outlining key supporting behaviors that are important in your organization.

You can assign a basic Likert scale to each behavior statement (examples outlined below) and have the employee and the employee's manager rate proficiency.

CARING ABOUT DIRECT REPORTS:

Monitors workloads and shows appreciation for extra effort.

Treats direct reports equitably.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

Initiates and participates in casual conversation.

Develops rapport with a variety of people.

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Development Activities and Suggestions

Identify and Support Employees Strengths

Identify employee strengths, supported by specific examples. Try to highlight examples that reflect a variety of assignments performed under varying circumstances throughout the year. Also try to reflect different strengths, especially those reflecting growth and development since the time of hire or the last review.

Setting Goals

Identify mutually agreed-upon goals for the employee. Goals should be clear, measurable, time-tied, and focus on results. For example, "Launch four new testing programs in the coming fiscal year" meets the criteria of being clear, measurable, and time-tied, and it also focuses on results.

Develop a time line with interim meetings set to review progress, and identify any problems encountered by the employee as they strive to meet these goals.

Recommended Resources from The BizLibrary Collection

Performance Management: Setting Goals

Coaching Your Team to Higher Performance (5 Course Series)

Conduct an Effective, Legal Performance Review

To watch these courses and more within the BizLibrary collection, [request a demo today!](#)

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SUPPORTING BEHAVIOR STATEMENTS

EMPOWERING OTHERS:

Allows others to make mistakes and take risks to learn and grow.

Gives others the freedom to have control of their tasks and duties.

Provides guidance and support for others as they take on new challenges.

MANAGING PERFORMANCE:

Adjusts work activity and desired outcomes based on changes in business strategy.

Establishes means of measuring performance and objectives.

RESULTS ORIENTED:

Seeks and gives performance feedback to others.

Pays attention to quality and quantity of performance.

