Performance Management

Office of Human Resources
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DEVELOPING EMPLOYEES

The conventional definition of management is getting work done through people, but real management is developing people through work.

- Agha Hasan Abedi
Close to Home by John McPherson

4-26

“I take it you read your performance review.”
Overview

• Why prepare performance appraisals?
• The process
  – Goal setting
  – Writing the appraisal
    • Use for pinpointing performance problems and improvement and for recognizing exemplary performance
  – Delivery of the appraisal
• Use of the appraisal when determining raises or promotions.
APPRAISALS - WHY THE LACK OF ENTHUSIASM?

– fear of a confrontation;
– not wanting to sit in judgment of another;
– fear the employee may no longer ‘like’ you;
– many feel they are a waste of time;
– in the majority of organizations, the supervisor has no say in the form or format that is selected for the appraisal process.
BE ENTHUSED!

• The real purpose of a performance appraisal is to help your employee do better, accomplish more, and get motivated to work toward making our Institute more successful.

• It also can be used to acknowledge a job well done, a way of showing that you actually notice and appreciate the personal commitments many of your employees make.
WHY DO APPRAISALS?

• To set goals for employees, the department and organizational improvement.
• To encourage and facilitate employee success.
• To give formal feedback to the employee concerning where they stand in terms of job expectations.
• To clarify job responsibilities and job standards.
WHY DO APPRAISALS?

• To reinforce good performance in an official way, so that others will know about it and to improve substandard performance and have documentation that it has been addressed.
• For career development.
• To document overall performance so there is a written record.
• To justify merit increases and promotions.
Think about your last performance appraisal:

- What thoughts come to mind?
- What went right, what went wrong?
EVALUATE ALL YEAR LONG

• If you evaluate employees informally all year long, you will accomplish two objectives:
  – There will be no unpleasant surprises when you evaluate them formally later on.
  – Their performance will improve because they will know exactly what to keep doing and what to stop doing.
FORMAL TIME REQUIREMENTS

• For new employees at the end of the 90 day review period.

• Annually, sometime during the anniversary month of the employee. If an employee transfers from one department to another, their anniversary date is still their original hire date.
STARTING THE PROCESS - GOALS

• During the appraisal process you will be evaluating against goals established at the last review.
• Prior to establishing new employee goals, assess:
  – What are my (supervisor’s) goals?
  – What are the department’s goals?
  – What are the Institute’s goals?
STARTING THE PROCESS - GOALS

• One of the biggest mistakes of performance management: unclear or non-existent expectations, goals and standards because we fail to clearly communicate with the employee.

• The start of the performance period is the time to set goals, discussing them with the employee and gaining their input and commitment.
STARTING THE PROCESS - GOALS

• Getting your employee to actively participate in goal setting is important, as they have a good idea of what they need to be accomplishing in light of their specific job responsibilities.
SMART GOALS

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Agreed upon**
- **Realistic**
- **Timed**
HAVE A METHOD FOR TRACKING

• Most supervisors remember only the most recent performance of their employees --- perhaps the last six weeks.

• Unfortunately, many employees mysteriously improve their performance a few weeks before their evaluations, thereby influencing their supervisor to forget several months of past performance.
HAVE A METHOD FOR TRACKING

• Rely on your personal observations, observations of other department supervisors or managers, complaint or praise comments or other methods you may have.
• You will need a way to measure and document performance as it occurs.
• Review sample performance log sheet.
EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

• Let your employee know several weeks in advance that they will be having their appraisal. Set the date and time.

• Have the employee complete a self-appraisal and bring it with them to the performance appraisal discussion.
  – The reason for the self-appraisal is to begin a dialogue which will produce a fair and honest evaluation.
PRIOR TO WRITING

• Go through the Performance Appraisal Organizer checklist and answer the questions.
• Prior to writing the Performance Appraisal be sure to review the employee’s job description; use it as a guide. If there are revisions to the job description, please return it to HR with the appraisal.
STAY OBJECTIVE

• Evaluate behavior and performance, **not** employee personality.
  – Measure what the employee does, not who s/he is, in terms of personality or other factors.
  – The only fair way to evaluate performance is to write what happened during the review period, after discussing what happened, at the time it happened, throughout the year.
STAYING OBJECTIVE

• Don’t evaluate:
  – Attitude
    • Attitude cannot be measured; it is intangible, and is an assumption by the supervisor.
    • Evaluate the behaviors you observed that led you to the conclusion that someone had a good or bad attitude.
  – Career
    • Personal development is a separate issue. Some people are advancing rapidly in their careers – and want to; others are content to stay in the same job at the same level of performance or pay. Either way, it should not be evaluated.
STAY OBJECTIVE

– Potential
  • When you evaluate potential you make an educated guess about what someone might do in the future. Therefore, it is a subjective judgment, not a report about what happened. Deal with potential by setting goals and objectives, and planning assignments and new behaviors that will be necessary to tackle jobs in the future.

– Job Knowledge
  • What someone knows is not the issue; the issue is what the person does with their knowledge. A person could know a lot, and still not be able or willing to perform the job in question. Job knowledge should cause or enable the behaviors and results that the job requires. So, measure and evaluate those — a person who has a great amount of job knowledge should perform better.
STAY OBJECTIVE

– Effort

• How hard someone tries should be one of the factors that help produce results on the job. However, we’ve all seen examples of people who try hard, and still can’t get the job done. If the effort is there and success is not, then look for impediments to performance; do they need to be better organized? Thank, and reinforce in writing, employees who are trying and work with them to find out what is impeding their progress or success. Separate trying from doing, and evaluate whether the employee exhibits the behavior and results that the job requires.
RATER ERRORS

• Halo/ Horn
  • Allowing perceptions of performance on one rating dimension to affect the rating of all performance dimensions. An employee who has difficulty working with others may rate very high in dependability or job knowledge.

• Leniency/strictness
  • Rating easy or harsh regardless of performance. This is usually done with employees we especially like or employees we may not like so much. Be sure to rate the performance, not how you feel personally about the employee.
RATER ERRORS

• Central Tendency
  • Rating everyone average regardless of performance. This takes a lot of responsibility off the supervisor’s shoulders as it is difficult for anyone to complain since no one received either a very good or a very bad rating. It could also mean rating the same employee average in all behaviors or job elements.

• Contrast Effect
  • Comparing employees with one another. Remember that you rate each employee’s performance against the job description—not how they compare with other employees, or how they compare with the last employee in that job.
• Primacy/Recency
  • First impression and memory errors. We remember best what we see either first or last. This is a good reason to keep a performance log. Using this method should eliminate this error along with several others mentioned above.
When you write the appraisal use specific examples that substantiate your ratings.

- If you write critical comments, it is important to include the behavior you want the employee to exhibit.

  “Continuing to argue with coworkers takes time away from productive work, interferes with others’ work and erodes a positive environment. Tara must refrain from arguing, or bring any serious disputes with coworkers to the attention of management.”
WRITING THE APPRAISAL

• To be most positive, you may want to use phrases such as “Here are some ways to maximize your effectiveness…” or, “In the future, you might try…” Balance your criticisms with accurate, positive comments and specific suggestions for improvements.

• Determine the appropriate overall rating for a category by looking at patterns across the entire performance rating period.
WRITING THE APPRAISAL

• Documentation is crucial. Fair and impartial performance appraisals that document the intent to help rectify problem areas help defend companies against wrongful discharge claims and similar charges.

• Explicit documentation of honest appraisals is especially important in the case of employees who are protected by major antidiscrimination laws dealing with disability, age, race, religion, national origin or gender.
A good tool to use when writing performance appraisals:

Effective Phrases for Performance Appraisals
A Guide to Successful Evaluations
Written by: James E. Neal, Jr.
CONDUCTING THE MEETING

- Confirm the time with the employee.
- Be prepared – have your performance appraisal, the employee’s self appraisal, the job description, and any other documentation that substantiates the ratings given.
- Ensure privacy.
- Eliminate distractions and interruptions.
CONDUCTING THE MEETING

• Be upbeat and positive during the course of the performance appraisal (even bad news can be delivered in a positive manner).

• Let the employee do the majority of the talking, however, be willing to engage in the conversation.

• Listen carefully! Keep the employee’s focus on his/her performance – don’t get off track.

• Above all, be honest!
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

• For employees with ratings of Needs Improvement the Performance Improvement Plan is designed to facilitate constructive discussion between the employee and his or her supervisor and to clarify the work performance to be improved.

• The supervisor, with input from the affected employee, develops the improvement plan.
PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

• Review the following six items with your employee when using the PIP:
  – State performance to be improved; be specific and cite examples.
  – State the level of work performance expectation and that it must be performed on a consistent basis.
  – Identify and specify the support and resources you will provide to assist the employee.
- Communicate your plan for providing feedback to the employee. Specify meeting times, with whom and how often. Specify the measurements you will consider in evaluating progress.
- Specify possible consequences if performance standards are not met.
- Provide sources of additional information such as the Employee Handbook.
BEING IMPARTIAL & HONEST

- Employees who have been demoted, discharged, disciplined or denied promotions and pay increases increasingly turn to the courts and regulatory agencies for relief from what they see as arbitrary actions by their employers.
BEING IMPARTIAL & HONEST

• The judgment often goes against the employer because the employee is able to:
  – Produce records of consistently favorable appraisals showing that there had been no real warning of trouble.
  – Show that no formal appraisals criticizing performance were received.
  – Prove that the employer's appraisal system is inherently biased against members of a protected class.
BEING IMPARTIAL & HONEST

- In the courtroom, the dismissed employee doesn't have the burden to prove s/he would have succeeded; but rather, simply that s/he wasn't given an equal opportunity to succeed.
Role Play

• Break into separate groups of two. One will take the role of the supervisor and one the employee. The supervisor will start conducting the annual performance appraisal. Those role playing the supervisor will give praise and constructive criticism on certain aspects of the employee’s performance (be creative) and the employee will respond accordingly. Use situations that you may have encountered during a performance review, either as a supervisor or subordinate.
Questions
Other Resources

- Intervention Resource Guide: 50 Performance Improvement Tools
  Cunningham Memorial Library
  ISBN 0787944017

- Keeping Employees Accountable for Results: Quick Tips for Busy Managers
  Cunningham Memorial Library
  ISBN 0814473202
Other Resources

• Manager’s Guide to Performance Reviews
  Cunningham Memorial Library
  ISBN 0071421734

• Performance Evaluation, Goal Setting, and Feedback
  Cunningham Memorial Library
  ISBN 1559382309