

Conducting Effective Performance Appraisals: Tips For Supervisors

Preparing for the Appraisal

1. Set a calendar date and time in advance that is mutually convenient for both you and the employee, and that will allow enough time for each of you to do preparation. A conference room is a good choice for privacy and no interruptions. Schedule enough time for discussion (1 to 1-1/2 hours), and schedule no more than two appraisals per day.
2. Gather and review:
 - the job/position description and performance standards
 - goals set from the last appraisal
 - your documentation/supervisory notes
 - current disciplinary memos
 - the previous performance appraisal
3. Ensure your employee has the appraisal form and address any questions they may have. Request that they bring a completed copy to the meeting.
4. Before filling out the appraisal form, take a moment to consider:
 - the main areas of responsibility
 - what the employee has done well
 - what the employee needs to improve in
 - what you can do to help the employee do a better job
5. Remember to avoid:
 - Halo Effect - tendency to overrate a favored employee, or an employee who had a prior good rating
 - Horns Effect - tendency to rate an employee lower than circumstances warrant
 - Recency Error- letting outstanding work [or unsatisfactory work] immediately prior to the evaluation offset an entire year of performance
 - Cookie Cutter Effect - not focusing on individual specific performance and rating all your employees, or groups of employees the same
 - Severity Tendency- being overly critical of performance because of unrealistic or unachievable standards.
 - Leniency Tendency- being overly generous in feedback.
 - Central Tendency- reviewing everything as average, not wanting to be candid.

Conducting the Appraisal

1. Welcome the employee; put the employee at ease. Offer to get the employee something to drink.
2. Let the employee start

- Listen and take notes.
 - Maintain good eye contact and attentive posture.
 - Reflect back to the employee your understanding of what the employee said.
 - Don't interrupt, but ask questions only for clarification.
 - Apply the 90/10 Rule: the employee talks 90% of the time and you talk 10% of the time.
 - Be non-judgmental
3. Compare the actual specific performance results and behaviors to the standards. Stay away from an attitude or personality focus.
 4. Keep the appraisal open to employee input.
 5. Ask the employee for ideas about how to resolve problems.
 6. Focus on the future, not on the past.
 7. Emphasize strengths, as well as areas that need improvement.
 8. Be honest and be prepared to discuss questionable items. Support the employee's effort to improve.
 9. Set goals, expectations, and standards together for the next appraisal.
 10. Discuss development/training plans with the employee.
 11. Summarize the session and end on a positive note.

Closing and Follow-up

1. After the appraisal discussion, complete the written appraisal.
2. Both the supervisor and the employee should sign the appraisal. Signing the appraisal does not mean the employee agrees with the appraisal; it means that the appraisal has been shared with the employee. The employee can provide a written response, which is optional.
3. Provide the employee with a copy, keep a copy, and the original should be sent to HR for the employee's personnel file.
4. **You and the employee should exchange ongoing feedback about performance goals and standards throughout the year.**