

“Appraising Performance”

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“Appraising Performance” is the single most important task of supervisors everywhere. And it is generally poorly performed. But take heart! That means the process and / or its administration can improve a great deal.

Some have asked, “Why appraise performance at all?”

Good question. Certainly there are some very low-paying jobs requiring repetitive tasks which never vary, take little concentration and less in training, are difficult to screw up and can be performed by almost anyone. Are ‘appraisals of performance’ necessary for persons performing in these positions? Maybe not, since robotics (or out sourced contractors) will soon handle this sort of work thereby eliminating the need for the local human worker altogether. But supervisors appraise the performance of these workers (and all workers) all the time whether they realize it or not. How? By smiling at some and frowning at others; by paying more attention to some vs. others; by giving some an extra day off but not others; and so forth.

In most business enterprises, good workers are essential to the success of the firm. And almost all businesses claim that truly good workers are very hard to find. Since it is generally accepted that all people act to benefit, to improve or protect their security, acceptance, progress or pleasure (or that of their loved ones), it stands to reason that these truths must be taken into account when deciding how to treat the good worker once you have him on board so he chooses to remain employed there. A well thought out and evenly administered career development system with an appraisal of performance at its center will almost always accomplish everything desired in this regard and usually more than is expected.

OK, it’s needed and it’s important. So how is performance best appraised?

It depends upon the position held by the employee. Some require only the objective measurements of results obtained. Others require objective and subjective measurement, plus an overall measurement using pre-defined codes or ratings. For this discussion, the latter will be addressed.

Picture a 2-sided, 8 ½ x 11 inch form containing the following headings.

Front Side Components – OBJECTIVE Measurements

1. Name, position title, location, date appointed, etc.
2. Goals / Objectives mutually agreed upon & actual results obtained (3-4 major items each of which are easy to objectively measure)

3. Overall Accomplishments Rating (Use defined codes printed below. Example: "A", "B", "C"; or whatever makes the most sense)

Back Side Components – SUBJECTIVE Measurements & Overall Rating

Performance Criteria

1. Problem Solving / Decision Making
2. Administration
3. Leadership / Development of Others
4. Work Relationships
5. Communication Skills
6. Knowledge

Overall Appraisal of Performance – Rating (OBJECTIVE & SUBJECTIVE)

Development Plan

1. Main strengths ~ actions to further develop them
2. Action plans: Training courses; developmental experiences; work assignments. Include: OBJECTIVE ~ ACTIONS PLANNED ~ RESPONSIBILITY ~ DATE TO BE INITIATED

Include lines for Incumbent & Supervisor signatures; plus approval signature of next higher level of authority.

How often should each employee's performance be appraised?

Annually, unless it's a new employee who should receive an official appraisal at 6 months. This serves to end the new employee's initial probationary period.

Rules to follow in appraising the employee's performance:

1. Measure everything fairly and accurately. Leave your likes and dislikes out of this process.
2. Include only those goals & objectives mutually agreed upon prior to the onset of the performance period or subsequently mutually discussed and agreed upon when something unanticipated arose.

3. If you lack sufficient knowledge on some aspect of this, leave it unrated (this will occur when the supervisor is newly assigned).
4. If a category does not apply (i.e. leadership), mark it as such.
5. Keep comments brief and to the point. Attach no extra pages.
6. Obtain signed approval from the next higher level of supervision before discussing the appraisal with the employee.
7. Conduct a face-to-face review of the appraisal with the employee, obtain his signature on the original evidencing that the review was held and give him a copy if he so requests.
8. File the original for safekeeping.

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