

Performance Review tips for Supervisors

Overview

If you have followed the process so far, by the time you write the performance review, you will have the information to do an effective job. You will have a clear understanding of the following:

- Standards for goals and duties based on the employee's Job Description.
- Have a supportable basis for making your evaluations.
- Have documented the employee's performance and given clear feedback about the performance over the course of the review period.
- You will have provided the employee with opportunities to improve performance when necessary so there will be no surprises about performance problems.

At the time of the written review, both you and the employee will discuss the process and you will invite the employee's input. If you follow the suggestions in this guide, you will find the process of Performance Review to be constructive and satisfying.

To make the written portion of performance review effective, the supervisor should obtain as much objective information as possible about the employee's performance. Remember, you will be asked to substantiate how the employee has demonstrated a specific area of performance, so you must be prepared. It is a good idea to take notes during the year on both positive and corrective events so you will have concrete examples of behavior to use. Other sources of data about employee performance include performance documentation such as attendance records, letters of complaint or commendation, examples of poor or outstanding work, activity reports and your notes from observing and coaching sessions.

Scheduling the Review Discussion

The first step in the annual written review is to set a time for the discussion and inform the employee of the time and place. Choose a quiet, neutral place where you will not be interrupted during your discussion. Also remind the employee to do a self review so that this can be added to the employee comments section. The Self-evaluation form, EPA-001 is available to all employees. As a supervisor, when you prepare to write the performance review, it is important to review the rating scales and be sure you understand the 5 ratings.

5- Excellent- The employee routinely exceeds the acceptable standards for the position by demonstrating outstanding performance and knowledge to carry out and improve the most complex and demanding portions of the job.

4- Above Average- The employee meets and sometimes exceeds the acceptable standards for the position by demonstrating strong performance and knowledge to carry out and at time, improve on complex and demanding portions of the job.

3- Average- The employee consistently meets the position standards. Performance is fully acceptable and demonstrates a sound balance between quality and quantity.

2- Below Average- Employee's performance is below acceptable standards and requires more than average guidance. Is not able to take on or carry out any complex or demanding aspects of the job.

1- Unsatisfactory- The employee does not perform at an acceptable level to meet the position standards. Requires constant guidance and is still not able to perform the assigned tasks.

Prepare the Written Review:

Collect the Review Data

As you prepare to write reviews for your direct reports, allow enough time to carefully evaluate each employee's performance. Go over the job description and any other pertinent information you have to such as goals, duties and standards you developed earlier. Collect any notes you made during the year, copies of Performance feedback if you have records of this information, the results of coaching sessions, classes they took and any other data you have that bears on performance.

Compare Performance to Standards

Using the Performance Review Forms (Employee Evaluation and Goals & Objectives Forms) begin to develop your supporting comments for goals/duties and the Institutes values for each question in the review. Here you will write your description of how well the employee achieved goals/performed duties and demonstrated the Institutes values based on the standards and expectations you develop. For all functions, consider these questions:

- How does the employee's level of performance compare with the agreed-upon performance standards?
- How was the level of performance confirmed? Did you observe it? Did the employee report it? Are there independent measures or work products?
- What were the consequences, results and impact of the performance?

Make sure you use "specific examples" to describe behavior that did or did not meet agreed-upon standards. Remember, the question you will be asked in the review is "describe how this value has been demonstrated".

Rate each Goal/Duty and Institute Value

After you have written the description, rate each item as Excellent (5), Above Average (4) Average (3), Below Average (2), Unsatisfactory (1). An explanation of each can be found in the Scheduling a Review Session.

A Tip that may help you in doing your evaluations is to evaluate ALL your employees on one performance factor before moving to the next factor.

Leniency or Harshness

When raters see everything as “Good” they are lenient raters. When they see everything as “Bad” they are harsh raters. Examine your ratings for an unjustifiable tendency toward leniency or harshness.

Central Tendency

Central Tendency describes what you do when you tend to put everyone in the middle. This tendency, which produces ratings that do not distinguish between employees, damages morale and makes decisions for pay for performance, promotions or training difficult to justify.

First Impressions

Whether your first impression of an employee was positive or negative, this should not affect the performance review, which is based on OBSERVABLE behavior of the entire period as compared to specific standards of performance.

Recency Effects

When behavior observed just prior to the review unduly affects the rating, this is a recency effect. Ratings should be based on performance that occurred throughout the entire review period. This is why detailed records for the entire rating period are essential.

Personal Bias

Also known as Bias Tendency, this is when a reviewing supervisor gives higher ratings to employees with qualities similar to theirs and lower ratings to employees with dissimilar qualities.

A contrast error occurs when supervisors rate others less skilled in areas where they themselves are highly skilled. If, for example, a supervisor rates himself or herself as being very dependable and rates subordinates as less dependable, this is a contrast error.

All these biases can be avoided by having clearly defined agreed-upon standards in place and regularly collected documentation of observable performance covering the entire review period.

In addition to rating errors, it is important to ask yourself some critical questions such as,

“Did I expect too much?” and “Has my leadership contributed in any way to this deficiency?” “Did the employee have the proper training to do the job?” And most important, “Did the employee understand my instructions?”

The Performance Review Discussion

1. Give the employee sufficient notice of the time and place of the meeting. Allow at least one hour for discussion. Hold the review in a private place where you will not be disturbed.
2. Bring with you the Performance Rating Sheet, Goals and Objectives form, Job Description and any other relevant information.
3. Open the discussion by stating the purpose of the meeting and summarizing the points you will be covering.
 - Review, discuss and confirm your understanding of the accomplishment of the goals/ duties and Institute Values listed on the Performance Review Form.
 - Recognize strengths and achievements.
 - Confirm previously identified areas needing improvement and agree about how improvement is to be accomplished.
 - Review the employees career development goals
 - Set new goals/standards for the next review period.
 - Agree upon the support and training that you will provide the employee in the coming year.
4. During your discussion, be open to information the employee presents that may shed new light on your assessment and be prepared to modify your review if it seems appropriate.
5. If performance needs improvement, identify specific areas for development and jointly develop a path of action.
6. Ask the employee why he/she is not meeting expected standards. You can offer your own input on possible causes. The goal of this discussion is for both of you to understand the reason why standards are not being met. Ask the employee for potential solutions and brainstorm together until both of you are satisfied with the practical solutions.
7. Discuss (if applicable), previously identified areas for improvement. Ask the employee for their input as to possible solutions. Remember, NO problems should be raised or discussed that have not been previously identified and discussed. In other words, NO SURPRISES. Also, remember to criticize the WORK, not the PERSON.
8. Be open to employee questions and concerns. Listen carefully to be sure you understand the issues and avoid responding defensively. If you need more information, meet with the employee again at a later date. DO NOT let yourself be caught up in a debate or argument over an issue. When employees require corrective action, give it to them straight. If they warrant praise, give it to them.
9. Attempt to resolve differences, misunderstandings and disagreements that surface during the review. Be sure that both of you are satisfied that all important points have been covered.

10. If the employee participated in a self-evaluation assessment, be sure and attach it to the Evaluation Package.
11. Under the section on Employee's improvement needs, be sure and include what support you will provide to help the employee in improving performance and developing skills.
12. Set Goals and update standards for the review period.
13. Finish the discussion on a positive note by summarizing what was discussed and reinforcing work that was well done.

Tips for giving employee performance feedback

- Address performance problems as an opportunity for professional development. Listen to the other person.
- Remember and acknowledge that negative feedback is hard to give and hard to receive.
- Identify and ask for specific behaviors or training needs to correct performance difficulties.
- Work to communicate assertively rather than aggressively or submissively.
- Don't discount emotional responses that are bound to occur. Take a break to relieve tensions if emotions run too high and if necessary, reschedule the meeting.
- Work together on one performance issue at a time. If there are several, schedule a second meeting.
- Problem solving solutions... Identify a course of action and agree on completion dates. Set a date when you will meet to evaluate the outcome.

Finalize the Performance Review

If, during the discussion, you decide to change any of the ratings, note the change on the form and inform the employee that you will give them a new copy of the changes to the form in a few days. Schedule a session to review your revised ratings.

The last task is to agree on a set of goals and objectives for the upcoming year. Discuss these with the employee and note them on the Performance Evaluation form. Provide a copy of all documents to the employee before they leave the review session.

Have the employee sign all evaluation forms before they leave. If they refuse to sign the form, have them write a note as to their reason for refusal. If the employee does not sign the form within 3 days of the review, the supervisor should note this and sign the form yourself.

Give the employee a copy of the completed review package.

The original copy of the Performance Review package is to be sent to the Human Resources Department as soon as the review is complete.

Conduct appropriate follow up discussions on training and goal setting that will be used to evaluate the employee at the next review session.

Disagreements

Note that an employee's signature does not indicate acceptance or agreement with the review; merely that he/she has read and understands the content of the forms.

If an employee disagrees with his/her performance evaluation, the employee has several options.

The Employee may:

- Attach a written response to the performance review
- Ask for a reconsideration of the written review by the next level supervisor
- Contact Human Resources for dispute resolution.

In all cases, the supervisor or HR Department should work with the employee to find a solution to the problem. In many instances, disputes can be avoided if the supervisor presents a clear and concise evaluation that is based on documented or adhered to performance standards and that the performance rating is not clouded by bias of favoritism of any kind. If you stick to the facts, present an accurate picture of performance and work with the employee to correct deficiencies and build performance through training, there should be no reason for an employee to disagree with your evaluation.

If you have any questions or desire additional information, contact the Human Resources Director at (505) 786-4110.