

Effective Performance Evaluations

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Why conduct performance evaluations?

- Positive impact on others
- Improve current job performance
- Professional development of employees
- Required by bargaining agreements, MnSCU policy and state law

Steps in the Process

1. Set the expectations
2. Understand what motivates employees
3. Provide ongoing performance feedback
4. The annual performance evaluation
5. Follow up with feedback

Step 1: Setting the Expectations

- Review and update current position description with the employee
- Describe what is expected and when it is due
- Describe not only what, but explain why it is important; explain the consequences to the department or work unit

Step 2: Understand What Motivates Employees

Managers think employees are motivated by the following priorities:

1. Job security
2. Good wages
3. Appreciation and recognition
4. Feeling involved
5. Interesting work
6. Good work conditions
7. Growth opportunities
8. Help on personal problems

Step 2: Understand What Motivates Employees

Employees state they are actually motivated by the following priorities:

1. Interesting work
2. Appreciation and recognition
3. Feeling "in the loop"
4. Opportunity for advancement
5. Job security
6. Personal loyalty
7. Good wages
8. Help with personal problems
9. Tactful discipline
10. Good working conditions

Step 2: Understand What Motivates Employees

Know that what is important is what the employees think, not what you think.

Step 2: Understand What Motivates Employees

Avoid common demotivators:

- Office politics and internal competition
- Unclear expectations
- Unnecessary rules
- Unproductive meetings
- Withholding information
- Too much criticism
- Tolerating poor performance
- Treating employees unfairly
- Underutilizing the abilities of employees

Step 3: Provide Ongoing Performance Feedback

- Reinforce good behavior when it happens
- No surprises at the annual review
- Keep a performance log or background file
- Be honest and direct with employees
- Ask “how can I help the situation?”
- Develop a plan to address poor performance; agree on a time to review progress
- Follow up on plans

Step 4: The Annual Performance Evaluation

- Conduct them in a timely manner; establish the importance of the process
- Prepare for the review; gather necessary information; review and understand the forms
- Invite the employees in advance; tell them what to expect
- Provide a comfortable setting free of interruptions
- Obtain the employee’s perspective

Step 4: The Annual Performance Evaluation

- Review the past performance; start with the positive; address the negative
- Plan for the employee’s growth and development
- Develop goals where necessary
- Build on the employee’s strengths
- Ask the employee “how can I help?”
- Listen. Listen. Listen.

Step 4: The Dreaded Forms

Advantages of the forms:

- Keys issues are targeted and measured
- High degree of structure
- Easy and quick to administer
- Allow ratings to be compared and contrasted
- The ratings are easy to understand
- Everyone can appreciate the logic of the scales
- There are opportunities for free-form comments

Step 4: The Dreaded Forms

Disadvantages of the forms:

- Some traits have greater relevance than others
- Perceived meanings are different for everyone
- Often leads to “halo” or “horns” effect – over-evaluating or under-evaluating
- The scale appears objective but is really subjective
- Forms do not always convey information that truly allows employees to improve

Step 4: Common Pitfalls for Evaluators

Fear of failure – many managers fear that poor performance reflects poorly on them; this is only true if the poor performance is left unaddressed

The “fudge factor” – belief that only good evaluations motivate employees; the opposite is true – it only motivates them to continue the poor performance

Aversion to judging – many people are reluctant to “judge” others; using constructive evaluation techniques helps

Step 4: Common Pitfalls for Evaluators

Inadequate evaluator preparation – don’t play it by ear; stress the importance of the process by taking it seriously

Lack of employee participation – employees who participate in developing expectations, goals and development plans are more committed to those plans

Isolated annual evaluations – performance management is an ongoing process; failure to do so leads to performance spiraling downward

Step 4: Common Pitfalls for Evaluators

Comparing employees – this will create more ill will and morale problems than anything; never say “why can’t you just be like _____”

Focusing on blame – the goal is to improve performance, not lay blame for failure

Believing the rating forms are fair and impartial – all ratings are subjective and subject to rating bias (intentional or not)

Step 4: Common Pitfalls for Evaluators

Measuring trivial things – focus on what really matters

Using the same procedures to assess all employees and all jobs – one size does not fit all; everyone and every job requires a different amount of time and attention

Step 4: Ten Ways to Keep Things Positive

1. Confront in private
2. Assume the employee wants to do a good job
3. Have a plan and don't deliver an ultimatum
4. Use a positive, counseling approach
5. Control your own emotions

Step 4: Ten Ways to Keep Things Positive

6. Criticize the behavior not the person
7. Learn positive terms to use and inflammatory words to avoid
8. Avoid labeling, use nonjudgmental, factual statements
9. Communicate why the behavior must change and the benefit to the employee and others
10. Brainstorm solutions together

Step 5: Follow Up With Feedback

- Follow up is critical
- Feedback is not about forms
- Giving people money is not the same as giving them feedback
- Always get feedback on your feedback
- Reinforce changed behaviors immediately
- Performance management is a process and it must be continual

Conclusion

Questions?