

Evaluate Job Performance

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In evaluating performance, always compare actual performance to the performance standards as determined at the beginning of the evaluation period.

SOURCES OF FEEDBACK

The most common source of feedback is the supervisor, but plans can include reviews from peers and customers--anyone in contact with the employee. Some plans incorporate upward review, i.e., the employee's review of the supervisor.

POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS ON PERFORMANCE

Before discussing performance, always assess the potential constraints on performance. Some things to look for:

- Lack of proper equipment
- Excessive work load
- Inadequate working conditions
- Inadequate clerical support
- Absenteeism of key personnel
- Slowness of action from internal or external sources
- Inadequate performance of co-workers on whom individual's work depends
- Inadequate performance of subordinates or managers
- Unclear objectives or performance standards
- Policy problems
- Inadequate communication within the organization
- Pressure from co-workers to limit performance
- Lack of authority to get things done

SHOULD RATINGS BE CONSIDERED?

Most departments choose not to include ratings, as it increases the feeling of judgment; threatens to reduce a year's worth of performance to a single rating; and decreases the level of communication by focusing attention on the rating itself rather than the discussion. If ratings are desired, it might be a good idea to roll out the plan for a year or so without them in order to build trust in the plan and then add them to the procedure at a later date. If ratings are included, it is more meaningful to stay to the three levels listed below.

1. Meets performance standards
2. Exceeds performance standards
3. Does not meet performance standards

This is perceived as more objective than having several more narrow categories.

[Placeholder for example or illustration.]

Ratings should never be used to replace a meaningful and detailed performance discussion. Check out the common rating errors below.

COMMON RATING ERRORS

The Leniency Error

Giving everyone high ratings regardless of actual performance, in an attempt to avoid conflict or to make yourself look good.

The Central Tendency Error

Clumping or clustering all employees in the middle performance categories in an attempt to avoid extremes. Usually caused by a desire not to call attention to oneself or by a misapplied sense of "democracy."

The Recency Error

Failing to take into account the entire evaluation period and focusing on a recent performance episode, positively or negatively. Base your evaluation on representative information from the whole evaluation period to avoid this error.

The Halo Effect Error

Letting one favored trait or work factor influence all other areas of performance, resulting in an unduly high overall performance rating.

The Horns Effect Error

Allowing one disfavored trait or work factor to overwhelm other, more positive performance elements, resulting in an unfairly low overall performance rating.

Contrast Error

Evaluating an employee in relation to another. Evaluations should be based on how well the employee performed in relation to his/her duties, goals and stated performance standards – actual performance compared to expected performance.

Past Performance Error

Rating on past performance rather than present performance.

Biased Rating Error

Allowing personal feelings toward employee to influence rating.

High Potential Error

Confusing potential with performance.

Similar to Me Error

Similar to me and therefore feeling of comfort and compatibility

Guilt by Association Error

Evaluation influenced by employee's associations rather than performance.

NOTE ABOUT POOR PERFORMANCE

Consistently poor performance should be addressed with corrective action. For details of the corrective action process, consult the personnel policy manual that covers the employee whose performance is being evaluated.