
The Mathis Group's Messenger

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Conducting Effective Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals are a necessary part of any office, but also one of the least enjoyable tasks to complete. However, appraisals are essential for the improvement of employee behavior, work productivity, and overall attitude. There are four main reasons performance appraisals are needed:

1. To encourage great performance or behaviors
2. To confront poor performance or behaviors
3. To inform the worker on how he/she measures up
4. To assist decisions concerning the employee such as raise, transfer, discipline or termination

How long an employee has been with the company, determines how often you should have an appraisal with him/her. When the employee is newly hired, you should meet with him/her 1-3 times (yearly, within the first 6 months?) After that time period, an appraisal is only needed 1-2 times yearly to give feedback. If there is a problem or concern, you will need to meet as needed. Also, always follow guidelines set up by your company's policy and procedures.



There are seven steps that you can take before the performance appraisal begins to help make it go smoothly and without kinks.

Set up individual files on each employee

As each employee begins to work for you, create a file solely for them. This will help you stay organized. You

will not have to worry about misplacing information or having the wrong information when you need it. Keep all the pertinent information (address, phone number, even a photograph of the person if you are in a large office) regarding the employee, as well as the following items we will mention.

Put a current job description in the file

Having an up-to-date job description in the employees file will reduce any confusion regarding the job to be done. If there is any question regarding employee duties, you will have the job description at your finger tips in which to refer. Anytime you file an updated job description be sure to give a copy to the employee.

Keep a current copy of policy and procedures

Always have a current copy of your company's policies and procedures in the file. If any disciplinary action needs to be taken, you will know the exact steps to follow in accordance to your company.

Give each employee your own orientation

In addition to the general company orientation, it is a good idea to give your own orientation to all newcomers. This will familiarize them with your department, what will be expected of them, as well as giving you a chance to get to know them better.

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For every criticism you make of someone's performance, make sure you give the person four compliments.

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Monitor the employee heavily at first

For the first several months, keep a close eye on each new employee. This way, you will be able to assess how they are handling their new position and answer any questions they may have.

Keep yourself approachable

Never make your employees feel like they cannot come to you if they have a problem or question. Communicate to them that they are important to you and that you will make time for them.

Document both good and bad performance

Put in the employee's file both good and bad performance. By adding information about good performance, you will have a record of who deserves a raise, promotion, or other kinds of rewards.

Before the meeting begins you should have a game plan for the conversation. Knowing the direction you will take will help you keep control of the conversation and not let emotions take control. Here are five questions that you should consider before the meeting:

1. How will you approach him/her?
2. What will you say to move into the confrontation?
3. How do you think he/she will respond?
4. What will be his/her rebuttal?
5. What behaviors or performance should I include?

By knowing the answers to these questions, you will be able to anticipate how the conversation will go and can try to keep it positive.

If you know that the appraisal is going to involve a confrontation, you must be prepared. Below are rules to consider regarding the confrontation:

- Have a solid understanding of policy and procedures
- Have a current job description
- Refresh yourself on positives and negatives of worker

- List individual behaviors to be changed
- Examine past documentation
- Get it together emotionally
- Think through the worker's comeback

Most employee performance appraisals are not difficult. However, the few employees that will need behavior changes are enough to make any manager cringe. Following the ideas and steps listed above will help to take some of the pain out of the job.

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