

Best Practices for Performance Appraisals - Conducting the Review (Manager)

- Avoid asking questions which can be answered with 1 word (closed questions)
e.g. of a closed question: “Do you find your work challenging?”
e.g. of an open question: “Tell me about the aspects of your work that you find challenging.”
- Try to decide ahead of time how long the review will last (ideally between 45 and 90 minutes) and attempt to stick to that decision
- Do not try to deal with more than 2 or 3 performance problems at the review

For each performance problem:

- State the behaviour in specific terms (e.g. “Your work is not submitted on time.”)
- Give at least 2 specific examples of that behaviour (e.g. “I received the XYZ report 3 days late in January and a week late in May.”)
- State the effect that the behaviour has on quality of work, on customers, on colleagues, etc. (e.g. “When the XYZ report is late, the projections which the CFO needs are late. This may result in poor financial decisions.”)
- Be clear about what the required performance should look like (e.g. “In order to get the projections to the CFO on time, I need the XYZ report on the 5th of every month.”)
- Obtain the employee’s opinion/comments (e.g. “What would you like to say about this matter?”)
- Decide together how the necessary change will occur (e.g. Perhaps the employee needs to rethink his/her work priorities, with the manager’s help)
- Ensure the employee’s commitment to change (e.g. “Do you agree that the XYZ report will be submitted by the 5th of every month from now on?”)
- Agree to follow up on progress (e.g. “Let’s meet in two weeks to see if you’re running up against any obstacles to the plan.”)
- Comment on the performance/behaviour, not the behaviour
e.g. on the person: “You seem a bit distracted lately.”
e.g. on the behaviour: “You are producing less than usual.”
- Give specific examples of what was done well if you’d like to see that performance/behaviour repeated
- Ensure your assessment covers the entire period, not just recent events
- Avoid being unduly influenced (either positively or negatively) by 1 event even if significant
- If the employee reacts in a highly emotional manner during the review, try working through it before deciding to end the meeting. If terminating the meeting seems like the best alternative, be sure to schedule another meeting within several days.

- Be sure to set follow up meetings to monitor the employee's action plan and objectives
- Do not permit any outside interruptions during the meeting
- Do not criticize an employee for something they had no control over e.g. taking a long time to complete an assignment because computers were not functioning properly

Document and Date the review's, issues etc.