

Personnel Notes

"Evaluations - Good or Bad" by Linda Gregurek

The overall objective of an employee performance evaluation is to measure and improve job performance. Normally, employee evaluations are done semi-annually or annually. Performance evaluations should be seen as an ongoing process. If a manager or supervisor gives an employee positive or constructive feedback on a regular basis it helps to identify problems at an early stage and gives the employee ample opportunity to make improvements. It also keeps the employee from being "ambushed" at the review or evaluation process. Managers and supervisors should keep notes all year. Do not wait until its time to review to remember everything your employees have accomplished during the year. Evaluation programs try to:

- Set goals and standards to measure performance.
- Determine salary increases based on contributions to the company.
- Develop actions to correct performance problems and set goals for the next evaluation period.
- Identify employees who can be promoted or given more responsibility.

Performance evaluation forms are developed to promote consistency and objectivity in addition to helping management evaluate employees in specific areas. ([VIEW SAMPLE FORMS.](#)) Supervisors and/or managers should be trained on the evaluation form to ensure its consistent use. Terms such as excellent, above average, poor and needs improvement should be used with the same meaning by everyone. Before completing the form, supervisors and managers should review their notes from the past year. Preparing an outline listing all achievements and areas that need improvement will also help. Measure the performance against the standards of the job and the goals set during the previous review.

When writing the evaluation:

- Use precise terms to describe the performance. Be specific. Example: John was late six days in the past two months, instead of John is late all the time.
- Use examples to show both positive and negative accomplishments.
- Be specific on how and what employees can do to improve their negatives.
- List your employees' specific accomplishments and compliment them.
- Do not let one outstanding quality or one mistake be the determining factor in the evaluation process.
- The evaluation meeting is an important part of the process. Coach your employees.
- Allow plenty of time and have a private meeting.
- Have the meeting within a week of the evaluation date.
- Discuss the specifics, both positive and negative.

- Explain to your employees how their role affects the department as well as the company as a whole.
- Let your employees know that you are confident that they can improve on the areas needed.
- Encourage employees to express their opinions. After all, this is their opportunity and the focus should be
- on them.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the manager and the employee should set goals for the next evaluation period. In addition, a plan should be set to improve on problem areas that have been outlined for the employee. The goals should be recorded on the form along with the actions necessary to correct problem areas. The employee should sign the evaluation form and should be given a copy. If an employee disagrees with the evaluation, s/he should be given an opportunity (usually no more than a week) to respond to the supervisor.

Typically, evaluations and raises are considered to be one and the same. Some employers separate the events. They conduct two meetings, one for the evaluation process and the other for pay increases. Sometimes this helps the employee to focus on the goals being set and not as much on the "I hope I get a raise." If you approach evaluations and raises in this manner, let your employees know there will be two meetings prior to the evaluation. An individual's job performance should be a major factor in the decision making process to grant pay increases. There are other factors that should be taken into consideration as well:

- The company's financial situation.
- The department budgets.
- The employee's length of service.
- The employee's qualifications.
- Competitive salaries in your marketplace/industry.
- General economic conditions, cost of living, etc.

Communicate to your employees what you expect of them long before the evaluation process. Job descriptions are great tools for this process. Base your performance evaluations on the specific requirements for their jobs. Train your supervisors and managers about the correct procedures for evaluations (i.e. writing, conducting the meeting). Give your employees the opportunity to note their comments and/or disagreements regarding their evaluations.

Evaluations are important to employees. People, in general, want to know if they are doing a good job and they need to know if they aren't. We as supervisors and managers cannot expect any kind of improvement from employees if they don't know they are doing something wrong or that their performance is not up to company standards. And, on the contrary, if you have a good employee, you certainly want them to know they are doing a good job. They deserve to know!

Linda Gregurek is the HR Director for Trussway, Ltd. She has been with Trussway for 11 years.

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