

# Preparing for a Performance Appraisal as a Manager

1st January 2021

Whether it's your own performance that's being appraised or you're the one responsible for the appraising, performance appraisals aren't usually eagerly anticipated—perhaps because appraisals are generally thought of as one-time events that take place every year or so. Trying to summarise all that's been accomplished in a one-hour discussion—or completing a form by a specified deadline—is daunting.

To be most effective, performance appraisals should be seen as an ongoing process. Frequent communication provides both employee and manager with opportunities for building a rapport and for managing issues and priority changes as they arise.

As a manager, some key objectives in the performance appraisal process are:

- creating conditions that generate employee motivation
- observing and documenting performance
- updating and revising objectives and standards as conditions change
- providing performance feedback and coaching as problems or opportunities arise
- providing opportunities for professional development
- reinforcing progress toward goals

## Preparing for a performance appraisal

As a manager, you'll need to make sure you understand your organisation's appraisal process—your human resources team can provide guidance for this. Since goal-setting is a part of the process, you'll also need to know your company's priorities as well as how they translate to your team's objectives. Consult with your manager or leadership team to ensure you're on the right track.

Expect your employee to have comments and questions. If you don't have the answers, acknowledge it and let them know that you'll research and work with them to find the resolution.

Here are some key points a manager may want to discuss:

- Review your employee's role within the organisation, duties, and responsibilities.

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- Note the agreed-upon goals from a previous discussion and ask to what extent they were achieved.
- Has your employee taken on any additional responsibilities or been involved in extra projects?
- How have they dealt with any changes or unexpected problems?
- How do they handle communications with colleagues?
- How effectively have they applied problem-solving and teamwork?
- Are there any ways in which the employee can increase their value to the organisation?
- Are there obstacles to meeting any of the employee's objectives?

## Performance review conversations

Schedule your meeting. Don't leave it to chance. See to it that a meeting time—or, better yet, a series of scheduled appointments—is set, allowing ample time for a meaningful discussion with your employee.

Keep a record of your discussions. Make note of the date of your conversation. Include any contributions and achievements, difficulties, and frustrations. Note the upcoming goals to plan for as well as those that were met. List training courses, conferences, and seminars that were attended.

Create a safe environment for open discussion. Being receptive to your employee's feedback, concerns, and suggestions allows for a more comfortable and informative experience that you'll both benefit from.

Be prepared when there is a performance issue. If a situation necessitates giving difficult feedback, planning ahead is key. Ensure that your feedback is objective, and allow your employee to provide their point of view.

Remember that the performance appraisal is an ongoing process, and it's a critical tool for you as a manager. It's one of the ways you can establish clear expectations for your team's goals and facilitate your employees' career management, development, and progression.