Supervisors Guide For Completing

Performance Reviews

The following guide is meant to provide Supervisors with a general overview of the performance review process and to educate Supervisors about best practices. Feel free to modify or use this guide as a free service from Tributary Staffing.

**SUPERVISOR’S GUIDE FOR COMPLETING PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

This guide is meant to assist supervisors through the performance review process. Please feel free to contact Human Resources with any questions or for additional assistance.

Employees expect to be kept informed about their performance on a routine basis. Feedback should be regularly provided in both formal and informal settings. Formal feedback is an integral part of the Company’s performance review process.

**Purpose of the Performance Review Process**

* Provides an opportunity to share with the employee your assessment of performance
* Provides documentation on which to base any change or adjustment to compensation
* Provides a clear understanding of development needs and opportunities available for change
* Creates a planning process between supervisor and employee
* Provides specific expectations, goals, and objectives for the coming review period

**Conducting a Successful and Comfortable One-On-One Performance Discussion**

Your attitude is critical! Make it clear to your employees that you regard the performance appraisal session as important and a process with value. The best way to conduct a successful performance evaluation discussion is to be thoughtfully prepared and to present examples that illustrate performance issues as they are discussed.

1. Establish a time to meet with each staff member individually.
2. Create a relaxed atmosphere for these meetings.
3. The ideal time is mid-morning…and early in the week….leaving the remainder of the day or week to check back and follow-up, as necessary.
4. Close your office door to ensure privacy and avoid interruptions (or schedule a conference room). Do not take phone calls or check email. Your focus should be that employee.
5. Even the seating arrangement in a review session can be important. Often the image of a manager sitting behind a desk is uncomfortably close to that of a judge presiding in court. Instead, arrange two comfortable chairs at a table or sit side by side.
6. You may wish to begin with a small amount of “chit-chat” and then move quickly to some positive feedback. Research indicates this tends to reduce defensiveness and the employee may be more open for constructive change later in the discussion.
7. Make sure the employee understands your concerns with his or her performance. Give examples. Do not quote hearsay; stick to observed behavior. Be sure to discuss the performance evaluation form by printing two copies or writing down notes. However, the form itself should not dominate the meeting.
8. When giving examples of poor performance, make sure the examples reflect performance only during the current review period. Do not evaluate performance for this review period based on examples of poor performance from a prior period.
9. The supervisor and employee should both sign the performance evaluation form.
10. Remember, this initial meeting doesn’t involve compensation or bonus information. That will be shared with the employee in a separate meeting.

**If You Need to Offer Negative Feedback**

Negative feedback should always be specific. Instead of a generalization such as “You’ve got an attitude problem” point out specific examples such as rudeness to coworkers or situations involving excessive complaining. Rather than a generalization such as “You’re not careful” point out specific errors in a report.

1. Do not make a joke of criticism. Negative feedback given humorously loses its impact, may not be heard at all and may negate the importance of the feedback.
2. Make sure the act or behavior is criticized, not the person. Avoid judgmental words or statements such as “that was a stupid idea”.
3. Criticism should be given without comparison. People work harder if competing with themselves. Do not discuss one employee’s work with another employee.
4. Don’t expect popularity. A supervisor’s job is not to make friends. It is to be consistent, fair, to facilitate good work and to assist in the progress and development of each staff member and the department. Respect usually follows.
5. Recognize your own power. Even if you don’t think of yourself as a person with a great deal of power, if you are in a position to evaluate another, you are the most influential person in their eyes at that moment.
6. Be consistent. If you criticize a performance problem of one employee, make sure you address that same behavior with all employees.
7. Never criticize in front of others and never criticize a supervisor in front of his or her staff.
8. Never say “never”. Never say “always”. Use of the word “never” or “always” can disrupt a performance discussion. A staff member may become defensive and want to use valuable discussion time to disprove the “never” or “always”.

The performance appraisal conversation should not become an argument about words. It should focus on the employee and their past performance for the given review period.

**Tendencies That May Undermine a Performance Evaluation**

As humans we all have our own idiosyncrasies and tendencies. It is important for supervisors to recognize these tendencies and correct them as appropriate.

1. *Distorted Evaluation*. Giving the employee a more favorable description of performance than deserved simply to avoid conflict.
2. *Negating Praise*. Remember that most employees appreciate praise. Individuals want to be told they’ve done well without a warning to “keep it up” or a sarcastic tag line added such as “what a surprise”.
3. *Sandwiching*. A supervisor does not need to precede or end every negative comment with a compliment.
4. *The Halo Effect*. Giving a favorable rating to all job duties and job responsibilities based on an impressive performance in just one job function area. For instance, identifying one good aspect of the employee’s performance and glossing over poor aspects of an employee’s performance because of it.
5. *The Pitchfork Effect*. Conversely, the tendency to take one negative or mediocre aspect of an employee's performance and letting it downplay all other items in the evaluation. Don’t label all job tasks mediocre and label an employee mediocre because one aspect of performance needs improvement.
6. *The Gentleman “C”.* A tendency to rate all staff as average in all areas.
7. *The Recency Effect*. Judging performance for the entire review period based on one recent occurrence….regardless if good or bad. If a staff member has done a good job during the review period yet made a recent mistake, or, has been an average employee with a recent burst of excellence, be careful that the entire review is not influenced by either recent event.
8. *Length of Service Bias*. Assuming that an individual employed for many years must automatically be doing good work; or, conversely, long service automatically means that one has not “kept up.”
9. *The Tight Rater*. The tendency to establish unrealistic, unobtainable standards or objectives for an employee based on the supervisor’s personal self- expectations.
10. *The Prejudiced Rater*. Allowing any prejudice against a protected class such as age or race to creep into an assessment.
11. *Day-to-Day Variation*. Doing evaluations for your staff at the end of a very bad day is not a good idea.
12. *Selective Perception*. Seeing and hearing what we want to see and hear in an employee’s performance…. seeing only good performance because you like the employee or seeing or hearing only bad performance because you may dislike the individual.

**Closing the One-On-One Review Session**

The entire performance appraisal meeting is important. But it is particularly important to close strong. Employees tend to remember the last several minutes of the performance appraisal the best. Therefore, use this time to summarize your discussion and finish with an overview of the following:

1. Summarize your assessment of the employee’s performance.
2. Point out areas of excellent performance and reinforce those behaviors.
3. Make certain the employee understands areas in need of improvement.
4. Indicate clearly how you intend to help. If necessary, get commitment for change.
5. Close the discussion in a positive, supportive way.
6. Let the employee know you are available for questions or assistance.

**After This Performance Review, Then What?**

Specific and continuous feedback should be given “in real time”. Feedback is most effective “while it’s hot” as employees do not want surprises during their performance appraisal. Additionally, mark your calendar for dates to periodically meet with each employee throughout the review period for up-to-date performance assessments. Don’t forget to monitor goals and objectives throughout the review period. Another important component is to provide coaching and make sure employees continually know what is expected of them in their job. Remember to provide your time and the appropriate budget for training, education, equipment, and other resources employees need to do their jobs. Learn what motivates each of your employees because what works for one may not motivate another. Lastly, say “Thank You” and “Job Well Done” whenever appropriate.

The information above will enable you to develop and maintain a best practices approach to Talent Management. We can obtain “Remarkable Performance” through our combined efforts.