

CONDUCTING THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT MEETING

Although the supervisor should provide ongoing performance feedback throughout the evaluation period, the performance assessment and meeting provide an opportunity to formally review and document performance, define job goals, and formalize a professional development plan. The supervisor should expend effort into this process and prepare well for writing the assessment and conducting the meeting with the employee.

Following are some TIPS to review in preparation for this meeting:

1. Conducting the Meeting:
 - Schedule the interview with employee in advance, agree on date, time, and place
 - Avoid interruptions and distractions
 - Allow adequate time. If time expires, schedule a second meeting
 - Be prepared with paper, pencil, attendance record, completed forms and other documentation
 - Start on a positive note. Establish rapport and explain the process
 - Discuss accomplishments and strengths first
 - Ask for the employee's opinion of how the assessment period has gone
2. Assessing Performance Competencies for the Employee:
 - Base the assessment on performance throughout the evaluation period. Since you should have been providing on-going feedback, there should be no surprises for the employee.
 - Do not use the meeting as a time to punish the employee.
3. Discussing with the employee achievements against targets
 - Set goals to:
 - improve performance in targeted areas
 - build on strengths
 - develop the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities
 - align the employee's work with the needs of the department
 - Make notes to yourself that focus on the achievements and/or areas for improvement for the individual
 - Tell the employee what information you used to determine performance. Stick to *observed* behavior, and data available to both you and the employee
 - Focus on development. Problem solve with the employee on how improvements can be made, and keep the discussion positive and future-oriented to the extent possible. Allow sufficient time to carry out goals.
 - Identify specific areas for improvement in a way that shows the employee where changes should be made to meet expectations or could be made to achieve even better results. Be candid.
 - When suggesting areas for improvement, discuss methods and objectives; do not judge. Make sure the employee understands the problem area.

- Ask the employee for suggestions on what he or she might do differently in the future
 - Stay on track and minimize unrelated topics/people
4. Utilizing Communication and Active Listening Skills
- Practice what you will say and how you will say it
 - Be aware of how you feel and your verbal and nonverbal communication. Maintain a professional, businesslike decorum
 - Present your assessment. Provide positive and corrective feedback. Be specific and use examples.
 - Ask questions to gain understanding
 - Listen to the employee and be open to his or her explanations. Accept his or her feelings but don't get diverted by excuses.
 - Set specific goals. Build on the employee's strengths. Obtain agreement on major appraisal points. Build an action plan for accomplishment
5. End by Expressing the Employee's Value and Contributions
- Summarize the discussion and expectations and end on a positive note.
 - Ask employee for comments/ suggestions
 - Thank the employee for participation during the process
 - If appropriate encourage the employee to take steps to improve job performance
 - Give the employee a day or more to respond and sign the assessment. If the employee refuses to sign the document, state that on the form, sign and date it.
 - If the employee refuses to take a copy, state that on the copy and retain it in the HR file.

Questions that employees have about their performance:

1. How am I doing?
2. What can I do to improve?
3. Do I have a chance for advancement or pay increase?
4. What will be expected of me before the next formal assessment?
5. How will my work be assessed during that time?
6. What kind of help or attention can I expect from my supervisor?
7. What changes are likely in our department or organization in the months ahead, and how will they affect me?