

**CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK:**

An analysis of performance evaluation and employee  
feedback systems in a trial court environment

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Jennifer Marlinga  
Court Administrator  
51<sup>st</sup> District Court  
Waterford, Michigan  
[jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us)

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## **ABSTRACT**

In order to develop an appropriate employee evaluation system for the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court in Waterford, Michigan, this paper provides an overview of the relevant literature regarding both employee feedback and satisfaction levels regarding traditional employee performance appraisal systems. In addition to the literature review, a survey was sent to non managerial employees in Michigan courts to gather data regarding feedback and appraisal systems from the perspective of the employees.

The first goal in writing this paper was to determine the preferred types of feedback, those that are the most motivating for employees. Styles of feedback, specifically from a behavioral psychology perspective, were explored in the literature review. Additionally, methods of delivering feedback and the desired frequency of feedback were discussed.

The second objective of this research was to take a close look at traditional performance appraisal systems, predominantly to determine if current methods of employee evaluation are effective. Further, to determine if appraisals are the most appropriate vehicle for providing feedback to employees. Opinions of both the proponents and critics are offered in the literature review.

The survey instrument which was sent to the Michigan court employees called for a Likert scale rating of sixteen items regarding perceived style of feedback: positive reinforcement, contingent punishment, or omission of any reinforcement. Additionally, the survey contained four questions regarding satisfaction with feedback received and understanding of job expectations to be used as measures in comparison to the type of feedback received. Further, employees were asked to state whether or not their court uses an evaluation system. This

response data was also evaluated in comparison to the satisfaction with feedback received and understanding of job expectation questions.

The overwhelming conclusion from both the literature review and the survey was that employees want and need frequent and continuous feedback. Particularly, positive reinforcement was determined to be the most desired and effective form of feedback. Regarding performance evaluation, the results are mixed. Most agree that some type of system is necessary, but there are many valid criticisms of traditional appraisal systems, particularly concerning ratings and rankings. Ultimately, it was determined that a continuous feedback system, emphasizing positive reinforcement, would be created and implemented in the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court in Waterford, Michigan.

## **INTRODUCTION**

“If you don’t hear from me you know you are doing fine (Hinkin, p. 362),” is the title of an article regarding employee feedback and a common mistake made by otherwise good managers. In many private businesses as well as government agencies, some managers are skimping on feedback. Although there are a few bad apples out there, most managers are not intentionally holding back feedback. Many managers are overwhelmed with other management tasks that take up their valuable time. Additionally, many agencies lack formal evaluation systems or the managers do not buy into the systems that are in place.

Without any type of formal system and with many other demands, otherwise good managers often let feedback fall to the wayside. Particularly, as the title of the article quoted above suggests, it’s often the employees who are doing well who receive the least amount of feedback. With so much effort expended in putting out fires and handling the troublesome employees, good employees are often left hanging.

Additionally, if poor performers are not given adequate feedback, how can they be expected to improve their performance? Many managers are uncomfortable giving negative feedback to employees and often fail to do so thinking the problem will be resolved on its own. More times than not, this is not the case and the problems only worsen with the employee being unaware of the magnitude of the problem until it’s reached a crisis point.

Further exacerbating the feedback dilemma is the lack of an organized feedback system in many organizations. Becoming frustrated with traditional performance appraisal systems, many companies have abandoned them altogether and feedback has become a hit or miss proposition.

The 51<sup>st</sup> District Court in Waterford, Michigan (“Court”) is one such organization which has abandoned the use of a formal evaluation system. Under previous management, the Court stopped using any type of evaluation system approximately 6 years ago. In doing so, feedback has become sporadic and unpredictable. Recently, with a new management team in place, the desire for a more formalized feedback system has arisen.

However, before jumping headfirst into a traditional cookie cutter evaluation system, the team at the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court wanted to find answers to a couple of questions. First, what type of feedback is most effective? Second, are employees more satisfied when a formal evaluation system is in place? The purpose of this paper is to provide some insight into the world of employee evaluations and feedback.

In order to help answer these questions, the following is a literature review which highlights topics regarding feedback and performance appraisal systems. In the feedback section, the “type” of feedback is explored in detail from a behavioral psychology point of view. The issues of positive reinforcement and contingent punishment are explored to some extent. Following that is a literature review regarding performance appraisal systems which emphasizes the pros and cons of some traditional evaluation systems.

In addition to a review of relevant literature, a survey was sent to multiple courts in Michigan in order to further explore feedback from the point of view of the employees in neighboring courts. The survey instrument was derived from the article noted above, “If You Don’t Hear from Me You Know You Are Doing Fine,” which will be discussed in detail in the literature review immediately following.

The analysis of the literature in addition to the evaluation of the survey results then leads to a summary section regarding feedback and employee appraisal systems. Based on the

findings of this research, the framework for an evaluation model to be used in the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court in Waterford is then proposed.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Feedback:**

As noted above, in an article entitled, “If You Don’t Hear from Me You Know You are Doing Fine: The Effects of Management Nonresponse to Employee Performance,” authors Hinkin and Schriesheim study the effects of management feedback on employee performance from a behavioral psychology perspective. Specifically, they explored the differences between positive reinforcement and contingent punishment in response to both good and poor employee performance as well as the omission of any feedback in response to both good and poor performance.

The authors theorized that their findings would fall in line with traditional behavioral psychology theories in that feedback of any kind, whether positive or negative, would lead to higher levels of satisfaction and performance on behalf of the employees. As has been shown in previous studies noted by the authors, contingent rewards have been correlated to higher levels of employee effectiveness and satisfaction. Additionally, although not as profound, contingent punishment has also shown a small positive correlation to higher levels of employee effectiveness and satisfaction.

In their study, Hinkin and Schriesheim wanted to verify the previous findings regarding positive reinforcement and contingent punishment as noted above, but also wanted to specifically explore the effects of management nonresponse on employee performance. The authors hypothesized based on established behavioral theories, that behaviors that are ignored would eventually be extinguished and were particularly concerned that this would include good performance (Hinkin & Schriesheim, p. 362).

In order to study their hypothesis, the authors designed a survey based on four different types of perceived leader reinforcement: omission in response to good performance, omission in response to poor performance, contingent reward behavior and contingent punishment behavior, which they then correlated to measures of employee performance and satisfaction. The table below shows the actual survey questions. The questions are listed in the following table for two reasons. First, to better understand the meaning of each category and, second, because these same survey questions were incorporated into the survey used for this paper.

<b>Table 1 – Perceived Leader Reinforcement Survey Questions</b> <i>(Hinkin &amp; Schriesheim, p. 371)</i>
<b>Omission in Response to Good Performance</b>
I often perform well in my job and still receive no praise from my supervisor.
When I perform well, my supervisor does nothing.
My good performance often goes unacknowledged by my supervisor.
My supervisor gives me no feedback when I perform well.
<b>Omission in Response to Poor Performance</b>
I don't get criticized by my supervisor when I perform poorly.
My supervisor gives me no feedback when I perform poorly.
My poor performance often goes unacknowledged by my supervisor.
When I perform poorly, my supervisor does nothing.
<b>Contingent Reward Behavior</b>
My supervisor would quickly acknowledge an improvement in the quality of my work.
My supervisor gives me special recognition when my performance is especially good.
My supervisor always gives me positive feedback when I perform well.
My supervisor commends me when I do a better than average job.
<b>Contingent Punishment Behavior</b>
My supervisor would reprimand me if my work was below standard.
When my work is not up to par, my supervisor points it out to me.
My supervisor lets me know when I perform poorly.
My supervisor shows his/her displeasure when my work is below acceptable levels.

The results of Hinkin and Schriesheim's study yielded what they predicted. As theorized above, employees show higher levels of job satisfaction and improved performance when they receive more feedback. Specifically, employees who scored high on the contingent reward behavior questions were the most satisfied followed by those who scored high on the contingent punishment behavior questions. The least satisfied and lowest performing employees were the

ones who scored highest on both the omission in response to good performance and the omission in response to poor performance questions (Hinkin & Schriesheim, p. 370).

Based on their results, the authors concluded, “Managers need to tell their workers when they have done a good job – and when they have not. In this instance, silence is not golden (Hinkin & Schriesheim, p. 370).” Further, their research revealed three types of managers – those who look for good performance, those who look for poor performance, and those who do very little to reinforce either type of behavior – and concluded that those managers who provide the least feedback will have the least satisfied employees (Hinkin & Schriesheim, p. 370).

As illustrative examples, Hinkin and Schriesheim provided the following two vignette’s in their paper. The first vignette shows a manager’s inappropriate response to poor performance and the second depicts an inappropriate response to good performance.

**Table 2 - Vignette 1: Inappropriate Response to Poor Performance**

John Jones joined the XYZ Hotel Corporation with the intention of doing a good job. He brought with him several years of experience in a similar position. His manager, Bill Knowlton, did not provide John with much direction and left Bill pretty much on his own, as Bill has a hands-off management style. John truly believes he is doing a good job and has not heard otherwise. After several weeks, though, Bill calls John into his office, where he proceeds to severely reprimand John for his performance. He points out that this is the fourth time in the past few weeks that he has made an error with a large account and suggests that if John cannot do the job, he will find someone who can. John leaves the office bitter, muttering to himself, “Why didn’t he tell me in the first place what I was doing wrong?” (Hinkin & Schriesheim, p. 365)

In this example, it’s clear that the manager failed to provide appropriate feedback. If the manager would have provided the necessary feedback when the first error occurred, the employee would have had the opportunity to correct his performance. The manager’s “hands-off” style was a bit too hands-off, which led to increased errors and later, confusion, frustration and anger for the employee.

**Table 3 - Vignette 2: Inappropriate Response to Good Performance**

ABC Corporation is a diversified food service company organized by divisions and product groups. Keith Wilson works in the franchise division, where he is one of nine product managers. Performance across product groups varies considerably. Over the past several months, Keith has worked hard to reduce his group's overall expenses by almost 20 percent while increasing market share. On Monday, Keith is notified that the division manager will be visiting on Friday and wishes to meet with all product managers at lunch. Prior to the meal, the division manager shakes hands and slaps several product managers on the back, thanking them all for their great contribution. Following lunch, he gives a brief speech on the importance of everyone in the organization. He then disappears, not to be seen again for the next two months. Keith leaves the luncheon wondering why he breaks his back when he receives no recognition for his efforts. In fact, he received the same praise as those managers whose operations were doing poorly. He is wondering if it might not be time to look for a new job (Hinkin & Schriesheim, p. 366).

This vignette illustrates the damaging effects of not providing the appropriate feedback to high performers. The authors state,

*. . . The effect of this interaction will not be what was desired. Keith will experience substantial dissatisfaction, role ambiguity, and conflict, as well as a lower opinion of the division manager's ability. Ultimately, he may seek employment in a company that will recognize and reward his efforts. Over time, high performers who are not rewarded for their performance will probably do one of two things, neither of which benefits the organization. The first option is to reduce performance, and the second is to leave the organization. High performers with marketable skills have little difficulty finding alternative employment, while average performers remain and help make an organization average (Hinkin & Schriesheim, p. 366).*

Overall, the Hinkin and Schriesheim study verifies well-established behavioral psychology theories and explores them in an employment setting. The conclusion of the study is that positive reinforcement is the most effective form of feedback to provide employees.

Second, contingent punishment is also helpful in correcting performance. The most significant point, however, is that the omission of any feedback at all is extremely detrimental to employee satisfaction. Particularly, ignoring good behavior could result in the loss of good employees.

Anne Fisher also addresses the issue of providing feedback to high performers in her article, "Turn Star Employees into Superstars." Fisher notes that many managers fail to give

their star players the coaching and encouragement they need. Instead, the high performers are left to their own devices and told to just continue doing what they've been doing (Fisher, p. 70).

Kathy Stickland, owner of a firm that specializes in employee coaching, is quoted in Fisher's article as follows:

*Most companies concentrate all of their coaching efforts on 'problem' employees. The sore thumb always gets the most attention . . . Often bosses think A-plus players don't want feedback or guidance. Our experience shows just the opposite to be true. High achievers want feedback, they want it now, and they want it straight (qtd. in Fisher, p. 70).*

Fisher recommends figuring out what motivates your star employees – a promotion, pay raise, or simply a pat on the back or more challenging assignment – and try to offer more of it (Fisher, p.70).

Further evidence regarding employees' desire for feedback is illustrated in the results of a survey sent to 851 managers in the paper industry. In the survey, the managers were asked to rank items they felt would lead to better performance. They had over thirty items to choose from including involvement, pay for performance, recognition and training. The item that was most frequently chosen first was, "an open and honest job performance feedback" (Beary, p.19).

Based on the above survey results, in an article entitled, "If you really care, tell them like it is," author Rodney Beary cites ineffective or non-existent performance feedback as one of the biggest problems in the workplace today. He further states, "Failing to give accurate and complete performance feedback to a subordinate is not being a nice guy. In fact, if lack of effective, direct feedback is accompanied by whispers and innuendo of shortcomings in their performance or personality, it is equivalent to management malpractice" (Beary, p. 19).

Although Beary believes feedback is essential, he does not think performance evaluation systems are necessarily the vehicle to achieve optimum feedback. He states:

*A professionally developed, state-of-the-art performance evaluation program is not the answer to feedback problems. If it were, this subject would not concern us, because there are many good evaluation programs available. They address issues such as interview technique, timeliness, documentation, legalities, and performance measurement. A person can get good performance feedback where no formal program exists and poor feedback where an excellent program exists (Beary, p.19).*

Whether a formal program is in place or not, the author recommends focusing on increasing and improving feedback (Beary, p. 19).

In order for a feedback system to be successful, Beary asserts that four concerns must be addressed. First and foremost, he stresses that feedback must be honest and tactful and warns managers to not let too much tact get in the way of honesty. Second, managers need to be as objective as possible when giving feedback and not let personal motives such as favoritism, jealousy or vindictiveness interfere. Third, Beary emphasizes communication – don't talk at an employee, let them explain their position as well. Finally, Beary concludes that the manager's competency in giving feedback should be developed and recommends managers learn counseling techniques (Beary, p. 19).

In another article regarding employee feedback entitled "How to Give and Receive Employee Feedback: Tell Staffers Early and Often How They're Performing, and Listen to Their Job-Related Concerns," author Gail Weiss also stresses the importance of providing feedback and suggests techniques for doing so. Weiss cautions against assuming that employees know when they are not performing well. Additionally, her article also stresses that feedback should be given continuously, not just during annual performance reviews (Weiss, p. 78).

Weiss offers the following ten tips to managers regarding how to give feedback:

- Praise publicly, reprimand privately;
- Think before you speak;
- Be specific;
- Avoid giving feedback based on hearsay;

- Comment on the behavior, not the person;
- Put it in writing;
- Watch your body language;
- Don't bother with trivialities;
- Accent the positive; and
- Offer a feasible alternative.

Included in Weiss's article is a quote from Ahlrichs Raichart, the author of *Manager of Choice* (2003). Raichart warns, "If you withhold tough talk when it's needed, you'll demoralize the good employees. So if someone is disruptive, chronically late, performing poorly, or is otherwise forcing co-workers to pick up the slack, and you avoid giving negative feedback because you hate confrontation, you may find yourself working only with that substandard employee because all the first-rate workers have left" (qtd. in Weiss, p. 78).

In a brief article entitled "Better Feedback" in *Sales & Marketing Management* (author unknown), a key point regarding feedback is emphasized. For feedback to be the most effective, it needs to be delivered as soon as possible after the good (or bad) performance has occurred. Waiting until the next meeting, or until the next performance review, lessens the impact (Better, p. 19).

More tips regarding how to provide employee feedback can be found in Ken Blanchard's article, "Giving and Receiving Feedback." Blanchard's first tip is for the person providing the feedback to be more concerned about the receiver than him or herself. The manager should give feedback that is honest, yet still helps the receiver maintain his or her self-esteem. Next, Blanchard also stresses the need for feedback to be timely and specific. Third, he points out that feedback needs to be directed towards behaviors that are changeable. Finally, Blanchard states that managers should be non-evaluative, or non judgmental, when giving feedback (Blanchard, p. 31).

In a study conducted by the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (“FFAS”) Human Resource Department, a question developed by the Gallup polling organization was used to address the topic of feedback. Question 4 from the Gallup poll reads, “In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.” In analyzing the responses to this question, the research revealed that great managers: never fail to say “thank you” for a job well done; applaud the efforts of their employees, even when those efforts are not successful; and always strive to do what is right by their employees (Gallup 4, p. 1).

Further, the FFAS research results show that best practice managers recognize that employees are individuals and that what motivates one employee may not motivate another. Through personal interactions, these managers take the time to figure out what motivates each individual employee. “Best practice managers make recognition a key part of their daily roles, reacting to positive efforts and setting an example of sincere and meaningful encouragement” (Gallup 4, p. 1).

The FFAS research also discussed many different avenues for providing feedback and recognizing employee performance. Awards and recognition lunches were noted, but simple actions, such as saying “thank you” or just taking the time to talk one on one with an employee were noted as being extremely effective. Additionally, sending even a short note in an email was well received by many employees. Further, many employees feel rewarded when they are given additional responsibilities or higher profile projects, provided they are not overburdened (Gallup, p. 2).

It is also noted in the FFAS research that recognition does not just come from management – it can come from coworkers, customers or anyone in the employee’s work

environment. Best practice managers are good at fostering an environment in which feedback flows freely. In summary:

*Managers who excel in providing recognition use forms of recognition that are specific, predictable, frequent, and instantaneous. They are known to promote a recognition-rich environment with praise coming from every direction, and know how their people like to be recognized. Many wonder how often people should be praised, but a good rule of thumb is about once a week. To some this may seem excessive, but the best managers know that timely and appropriate praise and recognition that rewards the individual's actions or behaviors will encourage the associate to repeat those actions or behaviors again and again.*

Some relevant quotes from the FFAS interviews regarding Gallup Question 4 are noted in the box below.

<b>Table 4 – Quotes Regarding Gallup Question 4 from the FFAS Study “In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work” (Gallup 4, p. 2)</b>
<i>If I get an email that's about some kind of positive remark, I archive it and when I'm having a bad day, I hit my archives. I'm like why am I here, you know? Then I go through and I say this is why, you know, and I think of the successes that I've had and that really keeps me going.</i>
<i>It's formal recognition . . . doing a good job or a cash bonus or things like that. But it's also the daily things, someone just saying thank you.</i>
<i>I try to do, you know, at least one really special, some type of appreciation thing each year and we've done it many different ways. One week, and I can't even remember what week it is I found on the Internet that this was employee appreciation week so we planned it and we did something different for every day of that week. We gave teamwork medals, we gave little cards that you can lay on your desk that had inspirational quotes on them, you know, we did something different every day just to remind them how much that we appreciate them and I'm a person that doesn't really count myself successful, I count my people successful, I can't do anything without what, the success comes from them and my role is to provide them with the tools or the inspiration or the listening or whatever needs they might need to get their job done because I'm just like a spoke in the wheel that is there to hold up and I'm not the one that's going to make the final action that makes it happen.</i>
<i>Just some kind of communication from, particularly the bosses, letting you know they appreciate what you've done.</i>
<i>The other thing though is that we did recognize the fact that it's coming from everyone, it's not just the supervisors, managers on down, it's everyone has that responsibility . . . if you go out of your way and you do something special, you do need to be told that and it has to come with some sincerity.</i>
<i>Monetary and time off awards but those, I don't consider those the best or biggest. The biggest recognition I think we receive . . . is one day in a staff meeting [our manager] mentioned that he could count on us to do whatever, you know, when push comes to shove, he knew he could count on us to get the job done. And to be that was the biggest recognition that I've been given here.</i>
<i>Email has brought, I think, a lot of extra thank-you's. Sometimes people might not pick up the telephone, but they'll send an email.</i>
<i>I think anybody coming to ask your opinion on something is recognition for me. If you value my</i>

*opinion enough to ask, you know, what I think about something, I feel great.*

*. . . [My manager] stuck a little sticky on my computer and [it said], I appreciate all your help, it really helped me a lot. I saved that sticky. That meant a lot to me. It brightened my day when I came back in the next morning and saw that sticky on my computer. He didn't come to me face to face, he just left a little sticky on my computer because he acknowledged what I did and he acknowledged that what I did made a difference in his finished product . . .*

*For me it was being selected to the current position that I occupy. That was the ultimate recognition for me because I think it validated my career decisions and validated confidence that the organization has in me.*

*An award that an old boss of mine got was the best award for me because he got up in front of everybody and said that he didn't deserve it, I did.*

## **Performance Evaluation:**

Next, since performance evaluations are often viewed as the traditional vehicle for providing employee feedback, a review of the current literature regarding evaluations is explored. In an article found on the Business and Legal Reports website entitled, "Uses of Performance Evaluation" (author unknown), motivating employee performance is cited as one of the two main purposes for evaluation. The author states,

*Employees want to know what is expected of them and how well they are performing their work. Performance appraisal clearly serves this purpose, as well as demonstrating that the employer is interested in their accomplishments, is willing to give praise when it is deserved, and cares enough about their survival in the organization to point out shortcomings and help them overcome obstacles to improving their performance. In companies where the performance appraisal is linked to the salary administration program, there is the obvious motivational value of merit pay. These objectives are so basic that most companies take them for granted. But this doesn't make them any less important. If a performance evaluation program fails to meet either one of these goals, it is because management is not utilizing it properly or because it has serious defects in design (Uses, p. 1).*

The second main goal of performance evaluation noted in the article is that it serves as an inventory of the firm's human resources. By evaluating employees on an annual basis, managers gain a better understanding of their employees' level of satisfaction, career goals and training

needs. Evaluation creates a “mutual understanding of both corporate and individual objectives” (Uses, p.1).

In addition to the two main goals, the article lists five secondary goals of performance evaluation. Improving communication between superiors and subordinates is the first secondary goal listed. The author views the annual evaluation as a time to clear the air regarding any possible misunderstandings or personality differences. Particularly, the review gives the manager the opportunity to try to understand how employees view their work situations and to understand the employees’ concerns (Uses, p.2).

Second, the author asserts that performance appraisal can be used as a counseling tool. “Coaching or counseling is a necessary factor in enabling employees to improve their performance, and the annual appraisal provides the perfect opportunity” (Uses, p. 2). The author further notes that two types of counseling occur during reviews. The first is reactive, where the employee is praised for a job well done and where discussions or solutions regarding past failures are outlined. The second type of counseling is geared toward improving future performance (Uses, p. 2).

Third, the author states that performance appraisal helps supervisors rate themselves:

*Many managers and supervisors find year-end performance reviews a trying task, and one of the most prevalent reasons for feeling this way is that they haven’t spent enough time coaching, discussing performance problems, and giving their employees feedback throughout the year. Employees’ reactions to the appraisal interview are another tip-off that supervisory skills could be tuned up: If the general reaction is angry and defensive, it may be an indication that employees resent the sudden interest in their performance (Uses, p. 2).*

Basically, the author is suggesting that if performance evaluations are uncomfortable it is because the supervisor has not been doing his or her job correctly throughout the year leading up to the evaluation.

Fourth, the author suggests that performance evaluations can be used as a way to assess the status of the organization's staffing needs. Specifically, the information found in performance evaluations may be useful in making decisions regarding transfers, promotions and terminations (Uses, p.2).

Last, but not least, performance appraisal supplies vital documentation for legal purposes.

The author states:

*Recent legislative actions and court decisions have made it clear that decisions affecting women and members of minority groups, particularly in compensation and human resource planning, must be based on something more solid than intuition, hunches, and "gut feelings" about the individuals involved. These decisions must be supported by documented evidence – evidence provided by a carefully planned and administered performance evaluation program (Uses, p. 2-3).*

Overall, the author views performance evaluation as a necessary function of the organization for the purpose of providing feedback and also for a variety of human resource and legal purposes.

Additionally, in an article entitled, "Survey Finds Workers Starved for Information," author Jon Anton cites support for the use of employee appraisal systems. Randstad North America and RoperASW conducted a telephone survey of 1,105 employees and 882 employers which revealed that businesses that "regularly give employees performance reviews and share information about how the company is doing enjoy a happier, more loyal workforce" (Anton, p. 18).

Further, the results indicated that 84 percent of workers and 82 percent of bosses stated that employee performance reviews are important. Further, 88 percent of the workers who receive performance appraisals reported that they expected to be at the same company for the next year. In comparison, only 79 percent of those interviewed who do not receive evaluations expected to be at the same company for the next year (Anton, p. 18).

However, on the flip side, there are many critics of traditional performance evaluation systems. One of the main critics is author Fred Nickols who wrote several articles for *Corporate University Review* including, “Don’t Redesign Your Company’s Performance Appraisal System, Scrap It! A Look at the Costs and Benefits.” Nickols cites many criticisms of performance appraisal systems and states that a company’s performance appraisal system, “. . . devours staggering amounts of time and energy, it depresses and demotivates people, it destroys trust and teamwork and, adding insult to injury, it delivers little demonstrable value at great cost” (Nickols, p. 1).

Nickols cites at least twelve criticisms of evaluation systems, the first of which is the subjective nature of appraisals. He argues that the primary input for an appraisal is the perceptions of the manager and states that the only way this system can be effective is if the manager’s perceptions are objective, accurate and completely free of any bias. Additionally, he states that this type of system makes managers who write the appraisals the targets of efforts aimed at influencing and manipulating their behavior. Basically, it encourages “brown nosing” on behalf of the employees (Nickols, p. 4).

Next, Nickols cites reductions in productivity and erosion of performance following performance evaluations. It’s estimated that in some cases, reduced productivity following a review may last from three to six months, resulting in real costs to the organization. Further, Tauro Jokinen, a product development manager with Nokia Corporation, “conjectured that performance appraisal systems actually erode performance over time as a result of people endeavoring to set goals that are achievable, thus ensuring themselves a decent appraisal” (qtd. in Nickols, p. 5).

Continuing, Nickols argues that performance appraisals create emotional anguish and are damaging to morale and motivation. Worry, depression, stress and anguish were noted by both those giving and receiving evaluations in the time spent anticipating and preparing for reviews. Additionally, particularly when appraisal systems are viewed as unfair, the effects on morale are devastating. Nickols notes that this often occurs when individuals are punished or held accountable for things that are out of their control and which are really “natural variations in system or process performance” (Nickols, p. 6).

Next, Nickols raises an interesting point that performance appraisals emphasize individual versus team and task versus process. He states:

*... The classic performance appraisal system emphasizes individual or task-level performance instead of team or process performance. Appraising individual performance can be a divisive factor in an environment where genuine teamwork is required. Consequently, in times of change, retaining an appraisal system that focuses on individual task performance sends at best a mixed message when management calls for teams or wants to focus on business process performance instead of individual task performance (Nickols, p. 6).*

Further, he argues that performance appraisals foster a short-term view and that they institutionalize existing values and biases. Since many evaluation systems only focus on the employee contributions within the past year or last six months, contributions over time get overlooked. Also, appraisal systems tend to “institutionalize the values and prejudices of those in power – and to protect these values and prejudices from challenge” (Nickols, p. 6-7).

Continuing, Nickols proclaims that traditional performance evaluation systems foster fear and lack of trust due to a “carrot-and-stick” management approach. He states:

*Directly related to the factors cited above is the degree of fear associated with the appraisal system. This ties to a lack of trust in one’s boss, and management in general, and leads to a phenomenon known as “malicious compliance,” that is, a passive-aggressive stance of “tell me what you want me to do and I’ll do it” on the part of an employee (Nickols, p. 7).*

Regarding the carrot-and-stick management approach, he states:

*The source of the fear cited above owes to the fact that the carrot-and-stick nature of appraisal systems is mostly stick. Performance appraisals become a permanent part of the employees' personnel folders . . . Past appraisals exert a significant influence over status and standing, future assignments, and promotions. Thus, although performance appraisal systems do not distribute much in the way of rewards, they can inflict great damage . . . Savvy employees know that success hinges in large part on "psyching out the boss" (Nickols, p. 7).*

Nickols argues that evaluations may be used as a method to get employee compliance based on fear.

Finally, Nickols asserts that the actual time and financial costs incurred for performance appraisal systems are excessive. Specifically, the time and money spent preparing, writing, reviewing, copying, filing, distributing, and conducting appraisals in addition to the time training staff regarding the performance appraisal system and in defending post-appraisal appeals, grievances and lawsuits is not worth any possible benefits – of which he does not see any. He concludes, "Performance-related discussions between bosses and subordinates do not require a formal, full-blown performance appraisal system" (Nickols, p. 9).

In line with Nickol's way of thinking, in an article in *Personnel Today* from July, 2005, entitled "Performance Management: HR questions the value of appraisals" (author unknown), it is noted that two-thirds of human resource professionals "have little or no confidence in their organizations' performance appraisal systems" (Performance, p.4). One fifth of the 154 human resource professionals surveyed indicated that the process failed in some way and 40 percent said the process did not achieve what it set out to do. Thirty percent reported incidents where performance appraisal systems had a negative impact on an individual and 42% responded that appraisals were often badly conducted.

Further, disagreements with how negative feedback was handled was cited as one of the most common problems. "The most common failing identified among line managers is that they store up an unfavorable opinion and then spring it on an unsuspecting individual at the appraisal

interview” (Performance, p. 4). However, despite the concerns, almost all of the human resource professionals surveyed still believe performance reviews are an essential management tool (Performance, p.4).

On the same note, it was reported in an article from *HR Focus* entitled “Why HR Professionals are Worried about Forced Rankings” (author unknown) that human resource professionals are concerned about forced rankings which have recently become popular in performance management systems. In a forced ranking system, employees are ranked from best to worst in comparison of one to another rather than being judged based on independent standards. Human resource professionals have expressed concern that this practice leads to reduced productivity and mistrust of management. Additionally, forty-three percent of those professionals surveyed said forced rankings reduces collaboration and teamwork and one-third stated forced rankings resulted in high turnover costs (Why, p.8).

Further concerns regarding performance appraisal systems are noted in an article by Tom Davis and Michael Landa entitled, “Pat or Slap? Do Appraisals Work?” In this article, the authors note that although performance appraisal is commonplace and almost universally accepted as a necessity in most organizations, the use of evaluation systems has been questioned for decades. Davis and Landa point out that in a July 1959 issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, Rensis Likert offered the following comments regarding performance appraisal:

*The aim of reviewing the subordinate’s performance is to increase effectiveness, not to punish him. But apart from those few employees who receive the highest possible ratings, performance review interviews, as a rule, are seriously deflating to the employee’s sense of worth. Not only is the conventional performance review failing to make a positive contribution, but in many executives’ opinions it can do irreparable harm (qtd. in Davis, p. 24).*

Despite such concerns, evaluations are frequently used as the basis for compensation and promotion decisions (Davis, p. 24).

Davis and Landa note that in many organizations, appraisals have become an accepted routine despite the fact that both supervisors and employees frequently consider the process to be “painful and demotivating.” Further, the authors reviewed a 1997 study which was performed by Watson Wyatt Worldwide, a Canadian consulting firm. The study revealed some unsettling statistics, which are noted in the following table, regarding confidence in evaluation systems.

<b>Table 5 – “Watson Wyatt Work” Summary of Survey Findings Regarding Performance Evaluation (Davis, p. 25)</b>
Less than two-thirds of the sampled employees (60%) said that they understood the measures used to evaluate their performance.
Even fewer sampled employees (57%) thought that their performance was rated fairly.
Less than half (47%) said that their managers clearly expressed goals and assignments.
Only about two-fifths of the sample (42%) reported regular, timely performance reviews.
Even fewer (39%) reported that their performance review was helpful in improving their on-the-job performance.
Fewer than two in 10 employees (19%) report a clear, direct, and compelling linkage between their performance and their pay.

Davis and Landa conclude that performance evaluation is a highly stressful process and is viewed by some employees “as a figurative whip in the hands of management” (Davis, p. 25). They attribute the majority of the failure of performance evaluation systems to the biased judgmental nature of the system. Due to the anxiety surrounding appraisal systems, the authors state that, “It is difficult to understand how this process can be seriously considered a viable method for increasing motivation and productivity” (Davis, p. 25). As an alternative, Davis and Landa advocate informal, frequent communication between supervisors and employees in place of formal performance evaluation systems (Davis, p. 25).

Additional criticisms of traditional evaluation systems are noted in an article by Gary Brumback entitled “A Performance Appraisal That’s Better than Ratings and Rankings.” Brumback cleverly starts his article by stating, “Around the third or fourth century, the Chinese

philosopher Sin Yu complained that the Imperial Rater of the Royal Court was showing favoritism in his ratings. It has been an uphill battle ever since” (Brumback, p. 1). Brumback further states that most people throughout history have despised appraising or being appraised at work, typically due to the way in which appraisals are conducted.

Brumback cites ratings and rankings as being the main problems. He states:

*Performance ratings, although almost universally loathed, still exist. When will we ever learn that dishonest ratings are inevitable because they're so easy to fudge and so tempting to fudge when they're tied to consequences such as bonuses and promotions? I've seen a rating distribution with 98 percent of the people rated "outstanding," the only people who "stand out" being those who didn't get the fudged rating (Brumback, p. 1).*

In conclusion, Brumback recommends keeping the results of performance appraisals in perspective and to focus more on setting performance expectations (Brumback, p. 3).

On the same note, Susan Heathfield wrote a scathing criticism of performance evaluations in her article entitled, “Performance Appraisals Don’t Work.” Heathfield stated:

*Second only to firing an employee, managers cite performance appraisal as the task they dislike the most. This is understandable given that the process of performance appraisal, as traditionally practiced, is fundamentally flawed. It is incongruent with the values-based, vision-driven, mission-oriented, participative work environments favored by forward thinking organizations today. It smacks of an old fashioned, paternalistic, top down, autocratic mode of management which treats employees as possessions of the company (Heathfield, p. 1).*

Heathfield further argues that most appraisals are based on only what the manager can remember and on the manager’s opinion rather than verifiable performance measures.

Heathfield also attributes the failure of evaluation systems to the uncomfortable roles that the systems create for both the manager and employee. The manager must act as judge and jury and be ready to defend any ratings below outstanding. The employee then becomes the anxiety ridden “defendant.” Both employer and employee become defensive and tense. Since most

managers strive to create a harmonious work environment, they are uncomfortable with the level of conflict that performance appraisal systems foster (Heathfield, p. 2).

In addition to a review of the relevant literature, a search on the internet provides clues that managers may be frustrated with performance evaluation systems. A software product called “1,000 Bullets” is advertised on the web. The software provides managers with 1,000 bullet comments that can be plugged into employee evaluations. The vendor tells managers to “stop struggling with the right words” and to use this product to “write the perfect performance review in record time” (1,000, p. 1). The way the advertising is geared indicates that managers may find it difficult, time consuming and cumbersome to write evaluations.

Additionally, MindSolve, a division of MVP Enterprise, advertises a performance appraisal software package on the web. The MindSolve advertisement states, “Performance appraisal . . . feedback from people who don’t want to give it, given to people who don’t want to receive it.” The advertisement also states, “Performance Appraisal – Still necessary. No longer evil.” Clearly, the MindSolve product is being marketed based on the assumption that most managers do not view performance appraisal as a welcome task (MindSolve, p. 1).

However, on the bright side, a review of the current literature regarding appraisals did turn up some positive comments regarding “360 appraisals.” The “360 appraisal,” also known as multi-rater, multi-level and full-circle feedback, involves the collecting of comments and observations from a variety of individuals who work with an employee and are in a position to observe the employee’s behavior and skills. Some organizations have reported success regarding providing feedback to employees through this process. However, the key word is “feedback,” since “360 appraisals” are limited to this purpose. In an article regarding “360 appraisals,” author Jane Wilson advocates the use of “360 appraisals” for providing feedback. However, she

warns against confusing a “360 appraisal” with a performance appraisal and indicates a separate instrument should be used if performance appraisal is the goal (Wilson, p. 44-45).

Overall, a review of the relevant literature regarding both feedback and performance evaluation reveal two main points. First, employees want feedback. Second, performance evaluation may not be the most useful vehicle for providing feedback. In order to evaluate both topics further, a survey of non management employees in Michigan courts was conducted. The methodology and findings are noted below.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to explore the topics of feedback and performance evaluation further, a survey was designed and sent to non management employees in the Michigan Court system. The survey was done in an electronic format on [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)<sup>1</sup> and consisted of an Introduction, 22 questions and a “Thank You” page requesting a court identifier number. The survey also included an optional space for the respondent to enter contact information in order to receive a copy of the survey results if desired. A description of the survey questions is contained below and a complete copy of the survey can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Sixteen of the questions, which are listed in Table 1 on page 12 of this paper, were taken directly from Hinkin and Schriesheim’s study regarding perceived leader reinforcement. The sixteen questions fall into four categories: omission in response to good performance, omission in response to poor performance, contingent reward behavior and contingent punishment behavior. One example of a question from each category is listed in the table below.

<b>Table 6 – Examples of Perceived Leader Reinforcement Questions Used in Survey</b> <i>(taken from Hinkin and Schriesheim’s study) (Hinkin, p. 371)</i>	
Omission in response to good performance	I often perform well in my job and still receive no praise from my supervisor.
Omission in response to poor performance	I don’t get criticized by my supervisor when I perform poorly.
Contingent reward	My supervisor would quickly acknowledge an improvement in the quality of my work.
Contingent punishment	When my work is not up to par, my supervisor points it out to me.

Next, randomly mixed in with the sixteen leader reinforcement questions noted above were four questions designed to assess the employee’s level of satisfaction with feedback

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<sup>1</sup> All information obtained from Survey Monkey is copyrighted and trademark protected. Survey Monkey graciously allowed the author to use its name and to reproduce portions of surveys developed on the Survey Monkey website for purposes of this research project. Additionally, the author would like to note the ease and convenience of using this website for survey purposes and would highly recommend Survey Monkey.com to anyone conducting survey based research.

received and understanding of job expectations. These questions are noted in the table on the top of the next page.

<b>Table 7 – Survey Questions Regarding Employee Level of Satisfaction with Feedback Received and Understanding of Job Expectations</b>
I receive adequate feedback from my supervisor.
I understand what my supervisor expects from me.
The feedback I receive from my supervisor motivates me to improve my performance.
The feedback I receive from my supervisor is fair.

Both the perceived leader reinforcement questions and the level of satisfaction questions were presented as statements that the respondent had to rate on a five level Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree.

Additionally, the question “Does your court have any type of formal employee performance evaluation system that is used on a regular basis?” was included. The respondents had a “radio button” choice of “yes” or “no.”

The purpose of asking the above questions was to try to learn two things. First, as in the Hinkin and Schriesheim study, is there a difference in the level of employee satisfaction based on the type of feedback the employee receives? Second, do employees who work for courts that have formal evaluation systems have a different level of satisfaction regarding feedback than those who work in courts where no formal system is used?

An informal pretest of the study was conducted by sending a web link to volunteers. Some minor typos and wording changes were made as a result of the testing comments. Additionally, due to the web format, a couple of minor technical glitches were also discovered and worked out.

In order to find a willing population to sample, an email was sent in August 2005 to [List@micourtadmin.org](mailto:List@micourtadmin.org), a listserv available to all Trial Court Administrators in Michigan, asking for assistance. Seventeen administrators responded and stated that they would be willing

to randomly distribute the electronic survey to ten of their staff members. In September, 2005 an email was sent to the seventeen administrators to verify their willingness to participate, with an email containing instructions and a link to the survey following. Copies of the emails noted above and a list of participating administrators can be found in [Appendices B through F](#).

Of the original seventeen administrators who agreed to participate, four were not able to do so due to internet connectivity problems, emergencies or court workload issues. The remaining thirteen administrators were able to distribute the link to ten randomly selected non management employees. Therefore, 130 surveys were sent out to the 13 participating Michigan trial courts. Originally, the deadline to respond was set at September 30, 2005, but was later extended to October 15, 2005.

Since the survey was distributed through a web application, all responses were automatically received through the Survey Monkey website. The administrators did not have to collect any survey responses. Of the 130 surveys distributed, 89 responses were received electronically by the October 15 deadline, resulting in a 68% response rate.

The survey results were then analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, mainly percentages and averages of percentages, which will be described in more detail in the Findings section below.

## **FINDINGS**

As noted above, 89 court employees responded to the survey and all 89 completed the twenty Likert Scale questions regarding perceived leader reinforcement and satisfaction with feedback. Additionally, all 89 responded to the question regarding whether their court uses a formal evaluation system on a regular basis with 46% replying “yes” and 54% replying “no.” The responses to each individual question can be found in [Appendix G](#). Below, is a summary of the findings relevant to the research questions being explored.

First, the data for the sixteen questions regarding perceived leader reinforcement were analyzed to determine if there were any differences in employee satisfaction regarding feedback based on the perceived feedback style being used by the employee’s supervisor. To do so, the data was filtered four times, one time for each category, to get only those responses that were “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” For example, the four questions that fell into the category of “Omission in response to good performance” were selected and filtered to only include the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” responses. Then, the level of satisfaction questions, noted in Table 7, were analyzed for this group, also only for those responses which were either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” An example of the filtering process is noted in the table below.

<p><b>Table 8 – Filter Example: Omission in Response to Good Performance</b></p> <p><b>Step 1: The data was filtered to find only the “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” responses to the following four Omission in Response to Good Performance questions:</b></p> <p>I often perform well in my job and still receive no praise from my supervisor. When I perform well, my supervisor does nothing. My good performance often goes unacknowledged by my supervisor. My supervisor gives me no feedback when I perform well.</p> <p><b>Step 2: An additional filter was applied to the above results to find the percentage of “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” responses to the four Level of Satisfaction with Feedback and Understanding of Job Expectations questions:</b></p> <p>I receive adequate feedback from my supervisor. I understand what my supervisor expects from me. The feedback I receive from my supervisor motivates me to improve my performance. The feedback I receive from my supervisor is fair.</p>
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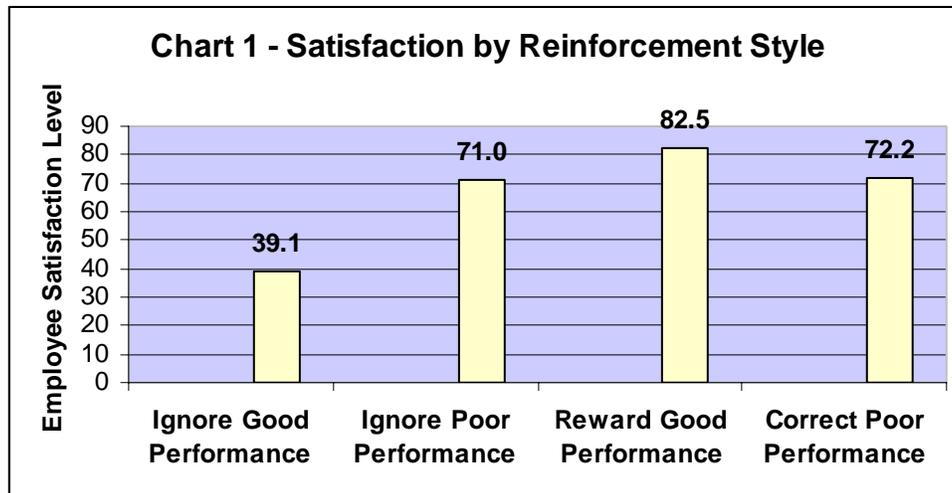
The same procedure was followed for the remaining three perceived leader reinforcement styles: omission in response to poor performance, contingent reward behavior and contingent punishment behavior. A summary of the results are listed in the table below.

<b>Table 9 – Level of Satisfaction with Feedback and Understanding of Expectations Based on Perceived Leadership Style</b>	
<b>Omission in Response to Good Performance</b>	
<i>Example: I often perform well in my job and still receive no praise from my supervisor.</i>	
Employee receives adequate feedback	33.4%
Employee understands what is expected	71.7%
Feedback is motivating for the employee	20.5%
Feedback is perceived as fair by employee	30.8%
<b>Average satisfaction level</b>	<b>39.1%</b>
<b>Omission in Response to Poor Performance</b>	
<i>Example: I don't get criticized by my supervisor when I perform poorly.</i>	
Employee receives adequate feedback	69.8%
Employee understands what is expected	83.7%
Feedback is motivating for the employee	65.2%
Feedback is perceived as fair by employee	65.1%
<b>Average satisfaction level</b>	<b>71.0%</b>
<b>Contingent Reward Behavior</b>	
<i>Example: My supervisor would quickly acknowledge an improvement in the quality of my work.</i>	
Employee receives adequate feedback	83.4%
Employee understands what is expected	95.0%
Feedback is motivating for the employee	71.7%
Feedback is perceived as fair by employee	80.0%
<b>Average satisfaction level</b>	<b>82.5%</b>
<b>Contingent Punishment Behavior</b>	
<i>Example: When my work is not up to par, my supervisor points it out to me.</i>	
Employee receives adequate feedback	69.0%
Employee understands what is expected	90.2%
Feedback is motivating for the employee	60.6%
Feedback is perceived as fair by employee	69.0%
<b>Average satisfaction level</b>	<b>72.2%</b>

The responses were what was expected and consistent with the Hinkin and Schriesheim study.

The highest level of satisfaction regarding feedback and understanding expectations was found in the contingent reward behavior category at 82.5%, followed by contingent punishment at 72.2%,

omission in response to poor performance at 71.0% and omission in response to good performance at 39.1%. These results are represented visually in the graph below.



Next, the data was analyzed to see if any significant differences in satisfaction and employee understanding of expectations could be noted between those courts regularly using performance appraisal systems and those courts without a system. As noted above, 41 of the respondents stated their court does have a formal system in place versus 48 who responded that their court does not. The data was filtered twice, first for those courts with systems and second, for those courts without systems. The answers to the four satisfaction questions, filtered to include only the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” responses, were then analyzed for each group. The results are summarized in the following table.

<b>Table 10 – Level of Satisfaction with Feedback and Understanding of Expectations Based on Whether Court has Performance Appraisal System</b>		
<b>Does the Court Have a Formal Evaluation System?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Employee receives adequate feedback	73.2%	54.2%
Employee understands what is expected	90.3%	79.1%
Feedback is motivating for the employee	61.0%	47.9%
Feedback is perceived as fair by employee	75.6%	50.0%
<b>Average satisfaction level</b>	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>57.8%</b>

Despite the criticisms of performance evaluation noted in the literature review, the results of this survey indicate that the court employees who responded report higher levels of satisfaction and understanding of job expectations in courts where performance evaluation systems are in place. The satisfaction level reported was higher for each individual question with an average of 75% for the courts with a system versus 57.8% for those courts without a system.

In addition to the questions discussed above, one open-ended question was included. The respondents were asked to include any comments regarding the survey in a free form text box. Thirty-five of the eighty-nine respondents answered. Some of the relevant quotes are listed in the table below. A complete list of the comments may be found in [Appendix H](#).

<b>Table 11 – Comments from Michigan Court Employees</b>
<i>While no one is perfect, I choose to give my supervisors and fellow employees the benefit of the doubt . . . we are all only human. However, encouragement and a little praise go a long way. Thank you for conducting this survey, I hope that this information will be helpful to courts and court employees.</i>
<i>I feel my supervisor gives me good feedback. We usually talk [about] all the good performance and bad performance at the time it is noticed. Even when I am notifying her of something she did wrong, she takes it as constructive criticism. I think the Supervisor/Subordinate relationship is very good and very important to our division.</i>
<i>I am very lucky to have a great supervisor. I feel she is fair, both when a job is well-done or something needs improving. She consistently treats employees fairly and will praise publicly and discuss poor performance in private. She is a positive person and motivates employees to that extent as well.</i>
<i>The only feedback received is negative . . . unless the positive is “flaunted.” It is very problematic that my court has NO employee evaluations and although most people know what is expected of them . . . there is little constructive criticism given.</i>
<i>When my work is not up to the level it should be, my supervisor’s feedback is done in a positive non judgmental way.</i>
<i>I was once given a token gift, and more importantly recognition, for doing a little extra. I became committed to that supervisor, not just for the gift, but for noticing, and taking the time to express it.</i>
<i>My supervisors set goals that are to be achieved, then ask if there are any other goals I would like to strive for. The nice thing is they really try to provide the opportunity for success in the achievement of these goals agreed upon. Therefore, the feedback whether it is from poor performance or great performance is encouraging and helpful on the path to success.</i>
<i>Whether the sentiment is approval or disapproval, it is always expressed professionally, leaving room for the possibility of individual growth during learning curves.</i>
<i>If I ask, then I get the feedback.</i>
<i>My supervisor gives us incentives to do a good job. She sometimes allows us to add 30 minutes to our lunch time.</i>
<i>Feedback is readily available if one asks for it.</i>

Overall, the survey results, as well as the comments, indicate that employees want and appreciate feedback. Positive feedback is preferred, but corrective feedback is also preferred over no feedback at all. Additionally, the court employees surveyed reported higher levels of satisfaction in the courts where an employee evaluation system is in place. The implications of the survey findings will be discussed in the Summary portion of the Conclusions.

## CONCLUSIONS

### **Summary:**

Both the literature review and the survey conducted reveal at least one undeniable fact. Employees want feedback. Employees thrive on praise and recognition. Additionally, when necessary, employees even appreciate constructive criticism as opposed to no feedback at all. Employees want to know how they are doing and they want to be appreciated for their efforts.

Of particular importance, managers should take time to recognize their high performers. The least satisfied employees are those who are doing really well and no one is noticing. Although the poor performers often demand management attention, the good performers should not be forgotten. The star employees need to be recognized, rewarded and challenged.

When it comes to how to provide feedback, if the feedback is positive, then anything goes. Employees definitely appreciate raises and promotions. However, much anecdotal evidence noted in the research suggests that even the smallest gestures go a long way. A simple “thank you,” email, or even a post-it note can do the trick. Additionally, particularly the high performers, often appreciate being given increased responsibility or challenging assignments (provided they are not overburdened).

However, there is one note of warning regarding praise and positive reinforcement. To the extent possible, praise should be specific to the individual. A blanket “thank you, you all did a great job” to a group is not effective if the group is composed of both high and low performers. The high performers know who they are and will resent being generically lumped in with the low performers. Additionally, the low performers may actually think they are doing a good job and being acknowledged will only encourage their mediocrity.

If the feedback is negative, the general rule of “praise publicly, reprimand privately” should be followed. Negative feedback should be honest, direct, to the point, and delivered in a tactful manner. Regarding the “tactful” part, managers are cautioned to not let too much tact get in the way of honesty. Most good managers cringe at the idea of having to provide negative feedback because it is uncomfortable and they don’t want to offend the employee. However, not correcting the employee when appropriate, robs the employee of the chance to improve performance. Additionally, employees definitely appreciate a little constructive criticism at an early stage as opposed to a big blow up further down the line. Don’t avoid it, just do it and keep it simple.

That being said, the focus should always be on positive feedback. Negative feedback should only be used when the behavior is significant and requires correction. A big deal should not be made over trivial matters. If an otherwise good employee makes an insignificant error, let it go. Always place the most emphasis on the employee’s strengths.

So, the next big questions regarding feedback are how much and how often? The simple answers are as much as possible and as often as possible. Specifically, feedback is most effective when given as close in time as possible to the behavior you are trying to reward (or correct). Additionally, according to the FFAS research incorporating the Gallup poll question, it is optimum for managers to create a “recognition rich” environment in which employees receive feedback at least once every seven days (Gallup 4, p.1).

A traditional method for providing employee feedback has been through the use of performance appraisal systems. Depending on who you listen to, evaluation systems are either the fundamental backbone to the human resource functions of an organization or the greatest evil visited upon mankind. Evidence can be found in support of both points of view.

The true believers stand by performance appraisal for a variety of reasons. First, the proponents of evaluations see them as a way to motivate employees and to improve communication between managers and subordinates. Further, they view annual appraisals as a time to provide counseling and coaching to employees. Additionally, proponents cite traditional evaluation systems as being vital for staffing decisions and legal documentation purposes.

Some survey results, including the results of the survey conducted for this paper, have shown a preference among managers and employees for having evaluation systems in place. Even in the studies that have shown a lack of confidence in traditional performance appraisal systems, many human resource professionals still stand by them. This could in part be due to a comfort level and familiarity with traditional systems.

On the flip side, there are also studies and statistics that show a great dissatisfaction with traditional systems. Chief among the criticisms is that some traditional systems are too resource intensive. Time spent writing, reviewing and preparing for evaluations can be burdensome. This point is underscored by the marketing for evaluation software. If managers are buying prepackaged “bullets” to be able to write evaluations in “record time” and ads describe writing evaluations as a necessary “evil,” then clearly this is not a welcome task on the part of most managers. In addition to time costs, monetary costs associated with the time costs, as well as the actual money spent purchasing a specific performance appraisal system, can be excessive.

Another primary concern regarding evaluations is the subjective nature of most systems. The majority of the input for most appraisals is the judgment of the employee’s immediate supervisor. If all supervisors were fair, even tempered, super humans, there would not be a problem. However, no matter how good of a manager someone is, basic human biases and

emotions may interfere in the appraisal process. This can be particularly problematic when ratings or rankings are part of the system and the system is tied to salary increases.

In any context, ratings and rankings are not at all popular. In fact, ratings and rankings were often cited as the most troublesome or anxiety producing aspects of performance evaluations. Managers are uncomfortable having to pick a number or rank and employees are defensive when ratings are below what they expect. Also, because they are subjective, ratings and rankings are often viewed as arbitrary or unfair. Performance reviews often turn into an adversarial process with managers trying to justify their ratings and employees mounting their defenses.

On this note, critics state that performance evaluations have a demoralizing effect and actually lead to reduced productivity and performance on the part of the employee. Further, opponents contend that performance appraisal encourages an authoritarian style of management which results in an atmosphere of forced compliance rather than a collaborative team approach.

Finally, a fundamental concern of appraisal critics is the timeliness of the feedback received in a traditional system. Rather than promoting continuous feedback, some evaluation systems create an environment in which feedback is provided only once or twice a year. Therefore, the majority of feedback is often given well after the behavior has occurred, rendering it almost useless. Many critics of traditional systems conclude that feedback is vital, but that frequent, informal feedback is acceptable and even optimal.

### **Recommendations:**

Providing feedback to employees is essential. How to go about doing it is questionable. However, in the absence of a fictitious perfect system, it may be possible to create a system that

minimizes the negatives associated with some traditional programs. In creating a plan for the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court, it was concluded that the system should:

- Be informal;
- Clearly define expectations;
- Encourage continuous feedback;
- Emphasize positive feedback; and
- Provide necessary documentation for legal purposes.

Additionally, it was also concluded that the system should not be:

- Burdensome;
- Costly;
- Directly tied to pay increases; or
- Based on ratings or rankings.

As noted in the literature review, “Performance-related discussions between bosses and subordinates do not require a formal, full-blown performance appraisal system” (Nickols, p. 9). Instead, it is perfectly acceptable to have an informal system which encourages continuous feedback. Oftentimes, it is the formal system itself that causes the stress and anxiety surrounding performance evaluation. **Recommendation:** the system for the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court should be an informal, user-friendly system.

Through the research conducted for this paper, it was determined that one of the main benefits to having a prescribed evaluation system in place is that it gives employees a better understanding of what is expected of them. **Recommendation:** before providing any type of feedback regarding performance, it is necessary to define expectations. For that reason, clearly defining job expectations was determined to be an essential ingredient in the Court’s new performance evaluation system.

**Recommendation:** the new system should foster continuous feedback. It is a fundamental principle of behavioral psychology that behavior should be rewarded or corrected as close in time as possible to when a behavior occurs. Waiting for the next scheduled performance

evaluation to let an employee know how he or she is doing is ineffective. Therefore, it was decided that the Court's system should encourage continuous feedback, not just scheduled annual or biannual performance review meetings.

**Recommendation:** positive feedback should be emphasized above all other feedback. As noted in the literature review, even a quick email or simple thank you can do the trick. Therefore, providing a mechanism for the delivery of frequent positive feedback was also established as a central objective.

**Recommendation:** Any performance evaluation system needs to provide the necessary documentation for legal purposes. Particularly, regarding corrective feedback, documentation of any formal or informal meetings should be included in the employee's file in the event it may be needed to support demotion or termination decisions. Also, documentation of positive feedback is necessary in order to bolster positive employment actions such as raises and promotions.

First on the list of "do not want" for the Court's new system was anything burdensome. Having to spend excessive amounts of time writing, reviewing and delivering complicated employee evaluations is too resource intensive, particularly if a supervisor has a large number of employees in his or her department. Additionally, it creates a stigma regarding performance evaluation that detracts from the overall goals of the process. **Recommendation:** labor intensive or time consuming processes should not be included in the Court's new program.

Next, since the Court, like most public agencies, is forced to operate within the confines of a limited budget, expensive software driven programs were ruled out. The cost of purchasing a program, in addition to the associated time and labor costs to train employees, excluded the use of any system that must be purchased and continuously maintained. **Recommendation:** Evaluation software should not be purchased.

**Recommendation:** the performance evaluation system should not be directly tied to pay increases. As noted in the literature review, directly tying pay to the performance evaluation system obscured the overall goal of the system. Instead, performance reviews turned into confrontations over specific ratings and rankings in a battle over pay increases.

On the same note, any type of ratings or rankings system appears to be universally despised. Reducing employee performance to numbers and check marks is demoralizing and ineffective. **Recommendation:** ratings and rankings should not be used in the design of the Court's system.

All of the above criteria were taken into consideration when coming up with a design for the Court's evaluation program. A detailed description of the Court's proposed new system follows.

### **Proposed Evaluation System:**

All factors considered, it was determined that the overriding goals would be to create an informal system which would define employee expectations, provide continuous feedback and encourage a recognition rich environment.

In order to be clear regarding performance expectations, the first step in the new system is to create an actual list of employee expectations for each job classification. (*The court has job descriptions, but up to this point, expectations have just been assumed.*) The lists will then be given to and discussed in detail with all new hires. Additionally, the expectations will also be discussed with existing employees upon implementation of the new system. Creating the lists of expectations will be time consuming, but the majority of the work is a one time shot. After the system is in place, the lists will only need to be updated, not recreated, year after year.

Examples of job expectations (as opposed to a job description) are provided in the following table.

<b>Table 12 – Job Expectations Example</b>
<p><b><u>Excerpt from a job description for a Deputy Clerk I:</u></b> <i>Gives information at the counter or by telephone to the general public, attorneys and law enforcement personnel regarding civil, criminal, traffic, and/or probation cases in accordance with established court rules, applicable laws and internal procedures.</i></p> <p><b><u>Employee expectations based on job description excerpt:</u></b></p> <p>With the proper training, employee will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn the appropriate court procedures, court rules and state laws in order to be able to provide the proper assistance to court patrons;</li><li>• Master the policies and procedures of the specific department in which the employee works in order to provide the appropriate service;</li><li>• Provide superior customer service both on the phone and at the counter;</li><li>• Learn to master the skills necessary to meet the needs of all clientele and diffuse potentially hostile situations; and</li><li>• Understand when it is necessary and appropriate to direct court patrons to a different department and/or when to seek assistance from court supervisory personnel.</li></ul>

As noted in the table above, one line from a job description carries with it quite a few job expectations. Therefore, before giving feedback regarding performance, it is essential to clearly define job expectations.

Next, supervisors will be required to provide, at a minimum, one positive feedback occurrence per employee under his or her supervision per month. These interactions may be big or small, but the feedback should be specific and provided as close in time as possible to when the positive action occurs. Additionally, the supervisor will make a short note documenting the date and time and write a very brief description of the interaction. If the feedback is given via email, the email itself may serve as the necessary documentation.

For example, the supervisor of the Traffic Department notices that an employee under her supervision handles an upset court patron with exceptional skill and professionalism. The Supervisor then sends an email to the employee stating something like, “I noticed how well you handled the situation regarding (specifics of the event) this morning. You were very professional

and I just wanted to say thank you.” If the supervisor prefers, she may tell the employee in person and then write a brief note to be placed in the employee’s file instead.

Additionally, supervisors will be required to have at least one face-to-face discussion with each employee under his or her supervision within every six month period. The purpose of the meetings will be to provide feedback, coaching and to discuss goals and expectations. The meetings should be documented after the fact, but may be informal and do not need to be specifically scheduled in advance. Instead, supervisors will be encouraged to look for spontaneous coaching opportunities.

For example, following the positive customer service experience noted above, the supervisor could then take the opportunity to have an informal discussion with the employee. The supervisor could start the dialogue with something like, “I’ve noticed how well you’ve mastered this department and that your customer service skills are excellent. I know they need someone who would be able to help back-up the counter in the Criminal Department. Would you be interested in learning the functions of the Criminal Department?” The supervisor could then steer the conversation to include topics such as the employee’s long term career and educational goals and offer ways to provide assistance.

The supervisor’s final responsibility will be to provide corrective feedback as needed as close in time as possible to when the negative behavior occurs. Supervisors will be advised to be tactful but direct and will be provided training on how to deliver negative feedback if necessary. Additionally, supervisors will be required to document all significant episodes of corrective feedback in detail. If the negative behavior continues to occur, the supervisor will continue to document all interactions and progressive disciplinary actions will follow.

Next, the employees will be involved in the continuous feedback system through the implementation of a simplified employee recognition program. The motto of the program will be “Anyone, Anytime, Anything,” meaning that anyone within the court may nominate anyone at anytime for anything. For example, if a coworker cuts her lunchtime short to help an overwhelmed employee with a line of customers at the counter, the employee may be nominated. Nominations will be accepted for anything – big or small.

To nominate someone, all that will be required is to send an email to the employee’s supervisor stating who is being nominated and a brief description of why. As soon as possible, in order to try to reinforce the behavior when it’s occurring, the supervisor will then forward the nomination to the nominee as well as to the other court supervisory personnel. Once a month, the management team will sort through the nominations and choose an employee of the month. As a reward, an award poster will be made which will incorporate some or all of the quotes from the nominations. The award will be posted at the employee’s desk, but also emailed to the entire staff. Additionally, token gifts, a prime parking space for the month, and an extended lunch hour or afternoon off will be offered as rewards.

In order to encourage nominations, employees will be offered incentives for making nominations. For example, employees may be offered an extended lunch hour or an hour of time off for every 5 nominations they submit per month. In addition to employee nominations, all positive letters or comments from court patrons will be counted as nominations for the employee. Instructions and a more detailed description of the program can be found in Table 13 on the top of the next page.

**Table 13 – “AAA” Employee of the Month Program**

**Purpose of the Program:**

- To encourage positive feedback to all court staff and to recognize the contributions and achievements of all court personnel as often as possible.
- The motto of the program is “**Anyone, Anytime, Anything,**” which means that anyone within the court may nominate anyone at anytime for any reason.
- Nominations will be accepted for any and all contributions, no matter how big or small.

**Examples of Nominations:**

- *I would really like to thank Jane for assisting with the line at the Traffic counter today. Although she was not assigned to the counter, she could see that it was backed up and she jumped right in to help me out.*
- *I want to nominate John for helping me find a missing file this afternoon. I was getting stressed out trying to find it and he helped me track it down.*
- *I think Karen should be recognized for her wonderful attitude. No matter how crazy things get around here, Karen never loses her cool. She makes it fun to work here due to her positive outlook and wonderful sense of humor.*

**Procedure:**

- To nominate someone, just send an email to his or her supervisor stating who you are nominating and the reason why.
- Title the email “Nomination.”
- The supervisor will then immediately forward a copy of the nomination to the employee as well as to the other court supervisors.
- Any positive feedback received from court patrons regarding a specific employee will automatically be considered a nomination for that employee.
- Once a month, the supervisors will select an employee of the month from among the nominations.

**Rewards and Recognition:**

- An award poster incorporating the nominating quotes will be posted at the employee’s desk and distributed to the entire court staff via email.
- Employee will receive a front row reserved parking spot for one month.
- Employee will receive a \$20 gift certificate to a local store or restaurant.
- Employee will receive an afternoon off to be used within the following month.

**Incentive to Nominate:**

- All employees will receive one hour of time off for every 5 nominations they submit per month. (All nominations must meet the criteria noted above and only one hour off may be earned per month.)

By involving the employees in the process, it is anticipated that employees will receive more feedback than could be achieved without the program. As noted in the literature review, it is optimal for employees to receive some sort of positive feedback at least once a week. Since even the most well-intentioned supervisor would have difficulty meeting that goal, the employee

of the month program will be able to supplement the supervisory feedback and help meet the goal of frequent feedback on a continual basis.

By defining expectations, providing supervisory feedback, and encouraging multiple sources of feedback through the employee recognition program, the management team of the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court is hoping to provide a simplified, continuous feedback system which will promote a productive and recognition rich environment.

### **Implementation:**

In addition to creating a new program, implementing a new feedback system can be tricky all on its own. Many seasoned workers have grown weary of new management ideas and particularly skeptical regarding performance evaluation programs. Before implementing the program it will be necessary to effectively communicate the program and address the needs of all participants: the supervisors, the employees, upper management and judges.

Since the supervisors are critical to the success of the proposed program, it is important to make sure they are thoroughly prepared for the change. Since the new system is more informal than most traditional systems and emphasizes simplicity over burdensome procedures, the system itself should be an easy sell to the supervisors. The biggest challenge for the supervisors will be to learn to look for opportunities to provide feedback and, particularly, to develop the necessary skills for providing both positive and negative feedback.

As noted in the literature review, author Gail Weiss offers excellent advice regarding how to give feedback in her article entitled, “How to Give and Receive Employee Feedback: Tell Staffers Early and Often How They’re Performing, and Listen to Their Job-Related Concerns” (Weiss, p. 78). Weiss’s Top Ten List is noted in the table below.

<b>Table 14 – Top Ten Feedback Tips (Weiss, p. 78)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Praise publicly, reprimand privately;</li> <li>2. Think before you speak;</li> <li>3. Be specific;</li> <li>4. Avoid giving feedback based on hearsay;</li> <li>5. Comment on the behavior, not the person;</li> <li>6. Put it in writing;</li> <li>7. Watch your body language;</li> <li>8. Don't bother with trivialities;</li> <li>9. Accent the positive; and</li> <li>10. Offer a feasible alternative.</li> </ol>

As noted throughout this paper, the golden rule of feedback is to praise publicly and reprimand privately. Being corrected in front of coworkers or the public is demoralizing and humiliating. On the other hand, when someone does something well, it's nice to let them know as well as to let others know. The employee gets a pat on the back and it gives the remainder of the staff the opportunity to learn what types of behaviors are valued and rewarded.

Next, specifically in regard to corrective feedback, it's imperative to think before speaking. Particularly, when a supervisor feels annoyed or angered by an employee's actions, the supervisor should take a step back and regroup before addressing the issue. All feedback should be well thought out and delivered in an appropriate manner.

Continuing, supervisors should focus on being very specific in their feedback. A generic, "thanks, you did a good job," is less effective than "thank you for helping Carol at the Civil counter today. She said you explained the forms very clearly and that you were extremely helpful when answering her questions." By being specific, the employee knows that the supervisor really understands what occurred and the employee knows the exact type of behavior that is being recognized (and, hopefully, will be reproduced in the future).

The next tip is to avoid giving feedback based on hearsay. This definitely applies to negative feedback much more than positive feedback. Unless there has been a pattern of

inappropriate behavior which has been brought to the supervisor's attention or unless there is a way to verify the hearsay, supervisors should avoid giving negative feedback about behaviors that cannot be substantiated. On the other hand, passing on positive comments from a third party is almost always beneficial. It gives the employee a boost and also makes the employee appreciate the third party who made the original comment.

Next, supervisors should learn how to comment on behaviors, rather than the employee's overall character. Again, this is more imperative when it comes to negative feedback. If an employee misspells the defendant's name on a case, the supervisor should simply ask the clerk to correct the error. The Supervisor should not state that the employee's work was sloppy or that he or she was being careless, etc. Instead, only the specific error should be pointed out and addressed.

As noted in the description of the program, although documentation has been simplified, it is still required. Whenever a supervisor gives any type of feedback to an employee, it needs to be noted. Supervisors should note the date and time of all interactions and provide a brief description of the occurrence. If the feedback is negative, the description should be more detailed and also indicate if anyone else was present or involved in the incident which requires the feedback.

Although it can be difficult to learn, the supervisors will have to pay particular attention to their body language when delivering feedback. Once again, this is more significant concerning negative feedback. Even if a supervisor chooses his or her words very carefully, negative body language can speak louder than even the best crafted words. It would be particularly useful to provide the supervisors with training on this point since it involves learning how to control subconscious actions and movements.

Despite the fact that the whole point of this new program is to get the message out to provide feedback, feedback and more feedback, it's important for the supervisors to refrain from giving negative feedback regarding trivial matters. Everyone makes mistakes, even the best employees. No employee wants to feel like they are working under a microscope and that they are constantly being corrected. Insignificant errors and incidents should not be mentioned unless they are repetitive or part of a pattern of occurrences. Supervisors will need to learn to distinguish among the employee's behaviors accordingly.

In many courts, as well as in other organizations, supervisors have been exposed to and trained in an "old school" authoritarian style of management in which the supervisor's main job was to actively look for and point out mistakes. In order for the new system to be effective, some supervisors will have to experience a paradigm shift in order to see their role as more of that of a coach than a disciplinarian. Supervisors will need to learn how to look for and reinforce positive behaviors above all else.

It is also important for supervisor's to be prepared to offer feasible alternatives when providing corrective feedback. For example, if a supervisor tells an employee she did not handle a customer appropriately at the counter, then the supervisor needs to tell the employee the types of actions that would have been appropriate instead.

As mentioned, the proposed system does represent a bit of a paradigm shift in management style. In order to prepare for implementation of the program, it would be beneficial to provide the supervisors with specific training. Additionally, input regarding the structure of the program should be encouraged. Since the supervisors are the cornerstone of the feedback system, every effort should be made to ensure that they understand and are comfortable with the new program prior to implementation.

On another note regarding the supervisors, the employee evaluation process can also be viewed as an opportunity for the supervisors to rate themselves. As noted in the literature review, if supervisors face a lot of hostility from their staff members when they are providing feedback, it is a good indication that something isn't working. Gauging employee reactions when delivering feedback is a good method for Supervisors to evaluate the strength of the supervisor and employee relationship. Of course, it is expected that employees will be upset from time to time when receiving corrective feedback. However, an overall pattern of hostility with multiple employees should be a signal to the supervisor that he or she needs to evaluate his or her own communication and feedback style.

Next, the employees need to have input and buy-in. They shouldn't have a new system sprung upon them out of the blue. After the supervisors are comfortable, information regarding the new system should be distributed to the staff, and meetings to answer questions and get input should be held prior to implementation. Additionally, the employees should be made aware of their contributions and responsibilities regarding the employee of the month program. By making nominations, the employees' input and opinions are heard. The employees need to view themselves as an integral part of the process. Additionally, the supervisory staff needs to encourage open communication to facilitate the process changes. After implementation, the evaluation system should be thoroughly discussed with all new hires as part of an employee orientation program.

Additionally, upper management as well as the Judges should be brought into the mix. A compliment or a kind word from a judge is a powerful motivator. The judges should be encouraged to provide positive feedback whenever possible. Additionally, on the same note, supervisors should be encouraged to look for positive behavior across departments. While

corrective feedback should only be handled by an employee's direct supervisor, positive feedback should be encouraged across departmental lines.

The supervisors, employees, upper management and the judges will all have to work together to create the desired recognition rich environment. In order to get the program started on the right foot, the needs of each individual group will have to be addressed. Specifically, the supervisors may require, and be more comfortable, if provided the proper training regarding how to give both negative and positive feedback. The employees need open communication about the program and the ability to provide input. Additionally, the upper management and Judges need to be encouraged to participate. In order for the program to be effective, all members of the court will need to have an understanding of and voice in the new system.

One final note in closing is that any system, no matter how well thought out or researched, is only as good as the people behind it. The key to the success of the continuous feedback system for the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court is the staff's ability to adapt to and buy into the new system. Also, it's particularly important that feedback is genuine, not just made up to meet a monthly requirement. The program will be successful if the staff of the Court is able to truly look for and appreciate the positive contributions of fellow coworkers.

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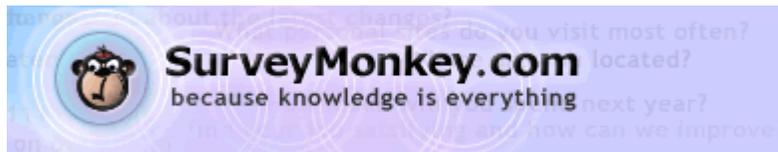
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## Design Survey




To change the **look** of your survey, select a choice below. Click 'Add' to create your own custom theme.

Theme:

### Feedback





#### 1. Introduction





Thank you for agreeing to complete the following survey. The survey contains only 22 questions and should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Please do not worry about anyone seeing your answers - all answers will be kept strictly confidential.

On the following page, you will be asked a series of questions regarding feedback that you receive from your immediate supervisor. Please think only of your immediate supervisor and check only one answer per question. When you are ready to begin, please click "Next."



#### 2. Survey Questions











1. My supervisor would quickly acknowledge an improvement in the quality of my work.

Strongly  
Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly  
Agree









2. I often perform well in my job and still receive no praise from my supervisor.

Strongly  
Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly  
Agree









3. I receive adequate feedback from my supervisor.

Strongly

Strongly

Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

**4. I don't get criticized by my supervisor when I perform poorly.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

**5. I understand what my supervisor expects from me.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

**6. My supervisor would reprimand me if my work was below standard.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

**7. When my work is not up to par, my supervisor points it out to me.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

**8. My supervisor gives me special recognition when my performance is especially good.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

**9. When I perform well, my supervisor does nothing.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

**10. My supervisor gives me no feedback when I perform poorly.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>				

[Add Question](#) [Add Page](#)

[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Copy/Move](#) [Add Logic](#)

**11. My supervisor always gives me positive feedback when I perform well.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

[Add Question](#) [Add Page](#)

[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Copy/Move](#) [Add Logic](#)

**12. My supervisor commends me when I do a better than average job.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

[Add Question](#) [Add Page](#)

[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Copy/Move](#) [Add Logic](#)

**13. When I perform poorly, my supervisor does nothing.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**14. My good performance often goes unacknowledged by my supervisor.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**15. The feedback I receive from my supervisor motivates me to improve my performance.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**16. My supervisor shows his/her displeasure when my work is below acceptable levels.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**17. My supervisor gives me no feedback when I perform well.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

**18. My poor performance often goes unacknowledged by my supervisor.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

**19. My supervisor lets me know about it when I perform poorly.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

**20. The feedback I receive from my supervisor is fair.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

**21. Does your court have any type of formal employee performance evaluation system that is used on a regular basis?**

Yes      No

**22. If you have any additional comments regarding the feedback you receive from your supervisor, please feel free to use the following space to comment.**

### 3. Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Below, you are asked to identify which Court you are from. Please note that this is for survey control purposes only and in no way compromises your confidentiality.

Additionally, a space is provided for you to enter your email address if you

would like to receive a copy of the survey results. Again, please do not worry about confidentiality -- all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Thanks again!

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23. Please enter your court name or number in the space provided:

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24. Please enter your email address if you would like to receive the results of this survey:

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**From:** Marlinga, Jennifer  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 11, 2005 10:19 AM  
**To:** 'List@micourtadmin.org'  
**Cc:** 'Libby Smith'; 'Oeffner, Kevin'  
**Subject:** CEDP Project

Hello all. I am in Phase III of the National Center's Court Executive Development Program and I am working on my research project. My research question is "What is the most effective method of providing feedback on employee performance?" As part of the project, I need to conduct a survey of court employees. If I can provide you with an email copy of the survey within the next month, would some of you be willing to distribute it to your employees and have them email it back to me? All results will be completely confidential and I will provide all of you copies of the overall results. Please let me know if you think you would be willing to participate. Thanks.

*Jennifer M. Marlinga*  
Court Administrator  
51st District Court  
(248) 618-7696  
[jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us)

**From:** Marlinga, Jennifer

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 13, 2005 3:29 PM

**To:** 'Nancy L. Moylan'; 'Julie Fend'; 'Karen Haydett'; 'Michelle McCullough'; 'Joyce Renfrow'; 'Keith Zeisloft'; David Walsh; 'Lori Shemka'; 'court@gpwmi.us'; 'Linda Lenahan'; 'kbowlin@co.ottawa.mi.us'; 'cstockin@co.grand-traverse.mi.us'; 'Beaudet, Donna'; Jim VerPloeg; 'Susan Greco'; Linda Hammerstein; 'oeffnerk'

**Cc:** 'Libby Smith'

**Subject:** Feedback Survey

I would like to thank all of you for agreeing to help me with my research for my Court Executive Development fellowship. The research focuses on supervisor to employee feedback styles. Attached is a copy of the survey questions for your review. This is not the actual survey. The actual survey is web based (and looks much better than the attached file). I'll send you the link to the survey, which you can then forward on to your staff, as soon as you reply to this email.

When you receive the email with the link, please simply forward the link to 10 non supervisory court employees and ask them to complete the survey no later than **September 30, 2005**. (*Please do not include judges' staff members unless they are under the direct supervision of someone other than their judge.*) Also, please use any reasonable method to randomly select the 10 employees – please do not select employees based on how you think they will respond to the survey.

Since the survey is web based, I will receive all of the results electronically. Therefore, you will not need to collect any survey results. However, since it is web based, it will require the use of the internet. I hope this is not a problem or concern.

Please let me know if it is okay to send you the link. You can reach me by email at [jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us) or by phone at (248) 618-7696 (work) or at (248) 892-4402 (cell/home). Thanks again for helping me out. I really appreciate it!

P.S. I'll send all of you a copy of the results and the paper when I am finished.

*Jennifer M. Marlinga*

Court Administrator

51st District Court

(248) 618-7696

[jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us)

**From:** Marlinga, Jennifer

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 14, 2005 11:19 AM

**To:** 'Karen Haydett'; 'Shryl Samborn'; 'Lori Shemka'; 'court@gpwmi.us'; 'Linda Lenahan'; 'verploegj@co.oakland.mi.us'

**Subject:** Survey

Dear Admins - Thanks again for agreeing to help with the survey. Please randomly select ten non supervisory employees and send them the following (or something very similar):

You are being asked to complete a survey regarding supervisor to employee feedback for a research project being conducted by Jennifer Marlinga, the Waterford Court Administrator, for her fellowship project for the Institute for Court Management. The survey is web based and contains 22 questions. The questions focus on feedback you receive from your immediate supervisor. Please think only of your immediate supervisor when answering the questions. If you run into any technical problems or if you have questions, please contact your Court Administrator or feel free to contact Jennifer directly by phone at (248) 618-7696 or (248) 892-4402. You can also reach Jennifer by email at [jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us). Also, please note that your survey answers are completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone, including your court administrator.

To access the survey, please type in or click on the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=518651275767>

Thank you very much for your participation. It is greatly appreciated.

*Jennifer M. Marlinga*

Court Administrator

51st District Court

(248) 618-7696

[jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us)

**From:** Marlinga, Jennifer

**Sent:** Monday, September 26, 2005 11:37 AM

**To:** 'Michelle McCullough'; David Walsh; sparke@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us; 'kbowlin@co.ottawa.mi.us'; 'Beaudet, Donna'; 'Susan Greco'; Linda Hammerstein

**Subject:** Survey

If you're still willing to participate in my CEDP research project survey, could you please send the following message (or something like it) to ten non supervisory employees:

You are being asked to complete a survey regarding supervisor to employee feedback for a research project being conducted by Jennifer Marlinga, the Waterford Court Administrator, for her fellowship project for the Institute for Court Management. The survey is web based and contains 22 questions. The questions focus on feedback you receive from your immediate supervisor. Please think only of your immediate supervisor when answering the questions. If you run into any technical problems or if you have questions, please contact your Court Administrator or feel free to contact Jennifer directly by phone at (248) 618-7696 or (248) 892-4402. You can also reach Jennifer by email at [jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us). Also, please note that your survey answers are completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone, including your court administrator.

To access the survey, please type in or click on the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=518651275767>

Thank you very much for your participation. It is greatly appreciated.

*Jennifer M. Marlinga*

Court Administrator

51st District Court

(248) 618-7696

[jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us](mailto:jmarlinga@twp.waterford.mi.us)

**List of Participating Court Administrators**

Nancy Moylan	<a href="mailto:nmoylan@ci.east-lansing.mi.us">nmoylan@ci.east-lansing.mi.us</a>
Julie C. Fend	<a href="mailto:jfend@ci.walker.mi.us">jfend@ci.walker.mi.us</a>
Karen Haydett	<a href="mailto:khaydett@voyager.net">khaydett@voyager.net</a>
Joyce Renfrow	<a href="mailto:renfrowj@co.oakland.mi.us">renfrowj@co.oakland.mi.us</a>
Keith Zeisloft	<a href="mailto:zeisloftk@ewashtenaw.org">zeisloftk@ewashtenaw.org</a>
Dave Walsh	<a href="mailto:dwalsh@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us">dwalsh@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us</a>
Lori K. Shemka	<a href="mailto:shemka@concentric.net">shemka@concentric.net</a>
Susan Tobin	<a href="mailto:court@gpwmi.us">court@gpwmi.us</a>
Linda Lenahan	<a href="mailto:lleanahan@allegancounty.org">lleanahan@allegancounty.org</a>
Carol Stocking	<a href="mailto:cstockin@co.grand-traverse.mi.us">cstockin@co.grand-traverse.mi.us</a>
Jim VerPloeg	<a href="mailto:verploegj@co.oakland.mi.us">verploegj@co.oakland.mi.us</a>
Linda Hammerstein	<a href="mailto:hammersteinl@co.oakland.mi.us">hammersteinl@co.oakland.mi.us</a>
Kevin Oeffner	<a href="mailto:oeffnerk@co.oakland.mi.us">oeffnerk@co.oakland.mi.us</a>

1. My supervisor would quickly acknowledge an improvement in the quality of my work.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	3.4%	3
Disagree 	16.9%	15
Neutral 	18%	16
<b>Agree</b> 	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>42</b>
Strongly Agree 	14.6%	13
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>89</b>
(skipped this question)		0

2. I often perform well in my job and still receive no praise from my supervisor.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	13.5%	12
<b>Disagree</b> 	<b>33.7%</b>	<b>30</b>
Neutral 	15.7%	14
Agree 	31.5%	28
Strongly Agree 	5.6%	5
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>89</b>
(skipped this question)		0

3. I receive adequate feedback from my supervisor.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	1.1%	1
Disagree 	19.1%	17
Neutral 	16.9%	15
<b>Agree</b> 	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>43</b>
Strongly Agree 	14.6%	13
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>89</b>
(skipped this question)		0

4. I don't get criticized by my supervisor when I perform poorly.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	6.7%	6
Disagree 	23.6%	21
Neutral 	27%	24

<b>Agree</b>		<b>32.6%</b>	<b>29</b>
Strongly Agree		10.1%	9
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		(skipped this question)	0

5. I understand what my supervisor expects from me.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		0%	0
Disagree		3.4%	3
Neutral		12.4%	11
<b>Agree</b>		<b>59.6%</b>	<b>53</b>
Strongly Agree		24.7%	22
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		(skipped this question)	0

6. My supervisor would reprimand me if my work was below standard.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		1.1%	1
Disagree		18%	16
Neutral		25.8%	23
<b>Agree</b>		<b>48.3%</b>	<b>43</b>
Strongly Agree		6.7%	6
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		(skipped this question)	0

7. When my work is not up to par, my supervisor points it out to me.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		1.1%	1
Disagree		10.1%	9
Neutral		29.2%	26
<b>Agree</b>		<b>55.1%</b>	<b>49</b>
Strongly Agree		4.5%	4
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		(skipped this question)	0

8. My supervisor gives me special recognition when my performance is especially good.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		7.9%	7
Disagree		19.1%	17
Neutral		22.5%	20
<b>Agree</b>		<b>39.3%</b>	<b>35</b>
Strongly Agree		11.2%	10
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>89</b>
<b>(skipped this question)</b>			<b>0</b>

9. When I perform well, my supervisor does nothing.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		13.5%	12
<b>Disagree</b>		<b>39.3%</b>	<b>35</b>
Neutral		16.9%	15
Agree		27%	24
Strongly Agree		3.4%	3
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>89</b>
<b>(skipped this question)</b>			<b>0</b>

10. My supervisor gives me no feedback when I perform poorly.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		10.1%	9
<b>Disagree</b>		<b>57.3%</b>	<b>51</b>
Neutral		27%	24
Agree		4.5%	4
Strongly Agree		1.1%	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>89</b>
<b>(skipped this question)</b>			<b>0</b>

11. My supervisor always gives me positive feedback when I perform well.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		6.7%	6
Disagree		25.8%	23
<b>Neutral</b>		<b>30.3%</b>	<b>27</b>
Agree		27%	24

Strongly Agree		10.1%	9
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		<b>(skipped this question)</b>	<b>0</b>

12. My supervisor commends me when I do a better than average job.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		3.4%	3
Disagree		21.3%	19
Neutral		24.7%	22
<b>Agree</b>		<b>38.2%</b>	<b>34</b>
Strongly Agree		12.4%	11
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		<b>(skipped this question)</b>	<b>0</b>

13. When I perform poorly, my supervisor does nothing.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		5.6%	5
<b>Disagree</b>		<b>57.3%</b>	<b>51</b>
Neutral		30.3%	27
Agree		6.7%	6
Strongly Agree		0%	0
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		<b>(skipped this question)</b>	<b>0</b>

14. My good performance often goes unacknowledged by my supervisor.

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Strongly Disagree		9%	8
<b>Disagree</b>		<b>41.6%</b>	<b>37</b>
Neutral		13.5%	12
Agree		31.5%	28
Strongly Agree		4.5%	4
		<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>
		<b>(skipped this question)</b>	<b>0</b>

15. The feedback I receive from my supervisor motivates me to improve my performance.

**Response Response**

	Percent	Total
Strongly Disagree 	5.6%	5
Disagree 	11.2%	10
Neutral 	29.2%	26
<b>Agree</b> 	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>33</b>
Strongly Agree 	16.9%	15
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>89</b>
(skipped this question)		0

16. My supervisor shows his/her displeasure when my work is below acceptable levels.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	2.2%	2
Disagree 	15.7%	14
Neutral 	34.8%	31
<b>Agree</b> 	<b>43.8%</b>	<b>39</b>
Strongly Agree 	3.4%	3
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>89</b>
(skipped this question)		0

17. My supervisor gives me no feedback when I perform well.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	7.9%	7
<b>Disagree</b> 	<b>43.8%</b>	<b>39</b>
Neutral 	19.1%	17
Agree 	25.8%	23
Strongly Agree 	3.4%	3
<b>Total Respondents</b>		<b>89</b>
(skipped this question)		0

18. My poor performance often goes unacknowledged by my supervisor.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	6.7%	6
<b>Disagree</b> 	<b>55.1%</b>	<b>49</b>
Neutral 	27%	24
Agree 	11.2%	10
Strongly Agree	0%	0

**Total Respondents** 89  
 (skipped this question) 0

19. My supervisor lets me know about it when I perform poorly.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	1.1%	1
Disagree 	10.1%	9
Neutral 	29.2%	26
<b>Agree</b> 	<b>52.8%</b>	<b>47</b>
Strongly Agree 	6.7%	6
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>	
(skipped this question)		0

20. The feedback I receive from my supervisor is fair.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Strongly Disagree 	1.1%	1
Disagree 	18%	16
Neutral 	19.1%	17
<b>Agree</b> 	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>42</b>
Strongly Agree 	14.6%	13
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>	
(skipped this question)		0

21. Does your court have any type of formal employee performance evaluation system that is used on a regular basis?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Yes 	46.1%	41
<b>No</b> 	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>89</b>	
(skipped this question)		0

22. If you have any additional comments regarding the feedback you receive from your supervisor, please feel free to use the following space to comment.

**Total Respondents** 35  
 (skipped this question) 54

23. Please enter your court name or number in the space provided:

<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>88</b>
(skipped this question)	1

24. Please enter your email address if you would like to receive the results of this survey:

<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>34</b>
(skipped this question)	55



## Open-Ended Results Detail

&lt;&lt; Back

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### Filter Results

To analyze a subset of your data, you can create one or more filters.

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**Total:** 89

**Visible:** 89

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[Configure...](#)
**Status:** Enabled

**Reports:** Summary and Detail

 Page Size: 

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If you have any additional comments regarding the feedback you receive from your supervisor, please feel free to use the following space to comment.

1. While no one is perfect, I choose to give my supervisors & fellow employees the benefit of the doubt....we are all only human. However, encouragement and a little praise goes a long way. Thank you for conducting this survey. I hope that this information will be helpful to courts and court employees.
2. I feel my supervisor gives me good feedback. We usually talk all the good performance and the bad performance at the time it is noticed. Even when I am notifying her of something she did wrong she takes it as constructive criticism. I think are Supervisor/Subordinate relationship is very well and very important to our division.
3. I am very lucky to have a great supervisor. I feel she is fair, both when a job is well-done or something needs improving. She consistently treats employees fairly and will praise publicly and discuss poor performance in private. She is a positive person and motivates employees to that extent as well.
4. Number 21. We have just started being evaluated again.
5. The only feedback recieved is negative....unless the positive is "flaunted." It is very problematic that my court has NO employee evaluations and although most people know what it expected of them....there is little constructive criticism given.
6. I would have answered N/A to some questions, so I thought Neutral was the closest thing to that.
7. My supervisor is always very encouraging and suppportive. He motivates me to do my best and he frequently provides feedback on my job performance. To my knowledge, my supervisor has never been dissatisfied with my work. I'm sure if there's an occasion when he feels I've performed below my capability, he would discuss it with me because he has my best interests at heart.
8. This survey was difficult for me to do since I have only worked in the department a few weeks. However, I have noticed that she is very willing to listen and give feedback and feels strongly about teamwork and working to your best potential.
9. Jennifer: The problem here is that in my capacity of Family Counselor, I work closely with a referee and I'm sure I would hear from him if I were performing poorly. I'm certain this is how it is with the other family counselors, and we all like it this way. There are two Family Counselors who do have supervisory duties in addition to their duties as family counselors. They are also assigned to a referee, but they don't provide any true supervision, i.e checking work, giving direction or feedback. When I first came to the FOC there was a woman who assigned our work (she was a H.S.graduate and the family counselors were college graduates, that is not meant to imply that we resented the education difference, we were all very fond of her)when she retired the position of Director of Family Counseling was created. The situation was exactly as it is now, we worked with the referee to whom our caseload was assigned. When the director retired a few years ago, that position was also retired. I do believe that the reason the referee is not put into the supervisory position is strictly financial. There are 17 referees and for them to be supervisors would require 17 salary increases. I'm quite happy with the situation as it stands,I have no complaints. By the way, I've worked at the FOC for 26 years, during that time I cannot think of one family counselor leaving to because a better job came along. Good luck with your survey, and I would love to read your results. Elaine Bryant
10. As for me, my supervisor responds to any questions, comments or concerns I may have, about my performance, timely and efficiently. I am aware that other concerns have been brought up and addressed by other employees,

however, those issues have yet to be resolved.

11. I fortunately have not needed to be counseled or reprimanded on a poor performance and therefore I am not aware of what my supervisor's reaction would be. I would expect that it would be brought to my attention in a very professional manner and that we would deal with the conduct on that level. That is why those answers are neutral in regards to poor work performance.
12. My supervisor and I have an excellent working relationship. I feel we communicate well and I almost always know exactly what is expected of me.
13. We are just going back to regular reviews. I am an attorney (referee) as is my supervisor, so I believe he has no more use for formal evaluation than I do. We are both busy doing essentially the same job, so it is a little uncomfortable having performance related discussions. He'd probably only let me know there was a problem if I really fell down on the job. Other than that, we work pretty independently.
14. When work is not up to the level it should, my supervisor's feedback is done in a positive non judgemental way.
15. I feel that I have a very good working relationship with my supervisor and am pleased with with amount of feedback I receive.
16. Ridiculous. why ask the same question over and over again. Why asked the same question several different ways. This could have been done in 5 or 6 questions. My supervisor is brand new and there has not been much interaction to this point. Only when a mistake has been made has there been any comments on work load.
17. Needs to acknowledge the experience, skills and expertise with certian employees, and stop portraying that everyone is "equal". tends to criticize those that are strong, and can handle the negative feedback, but conversley does not commend the higher than average professionalism. Does not back up employees that are proficient w/ the judges
18. I was once given a token gift, and more importantly recognition, for doing a little extra. I became committed to that supervisor, not just for the gift, but for noticing, and taking the time to express it.
19. REVIEW ONCE A YEAR
20. i feel that these questions are to stump me. they are basically the same over and over. i don't appreciate that. some do not apply. if i mess up, i hear about it. if i do well, i hear about that too. i feel like you are trying to make my boss look bad.
21. Where there have been case management problems, and my performance has been questioned, after hearing and even seeing proof that clerical error was not my error, has sided with those above her with statements such as, well you just need to cover your self better, rather than documenting a prior established pattern of solid technique.
22. My supervisors set goals that are to be achieved, then ask if there are any other goals I would like to strive for. The nice thing is they really try to provide the opportunity for success in the achievement of these goals agreed upon. Therefore, the feed back whether it is from poor performance or great performance is encouraging and helpful on the path to success.
23. My immediate supervisor is a very wise woman. I admire her intelligence. She is overwhelmed at times with everything that lands on her desk. She tends to have 'favorites' in our office which tends to lead to negative energy between co-workers.
24. In regards to question 21, we have had a formal employee performance evaluation until recently. We are in the process of changing/updating the current format and therefore have not had any evaluation for a while.
25. I have 3 supervisors. I completed this survey based on only one. Most of the feedback regarding correction, reprimand, etc from my supervisor was motivated by another co-worker. NEVER should that occur. I believe that a "supervisor" should correct, reprimand, etc. based solely on their own observations, expectations and their personal contact with me. I also believe that a supervisor should be professional, tactfull and fair in the way things are handled. Never should minor situations that does not negatively effect work, a co-worker or the environment, infrequent minor mistakes or similar things be blown out of proportion.
26. Whether the sentiment is approval or disapproval, it is always expressed professionally, leaving room for the possibility of individual growth during learning curves.
27. I feel my paycheck is my incentive to do my job and my personal upbringing to "do the best you can do" at anything you may endeavor. Positive encouragement would be nice but not necessary. Also, trying to do a good job to avoid any NEGATIVE feedback is more of an incentive.
28. I have often thought it would be fair to have mutual evaluation systems here, allowing employees to evaluate their supervisory staff as well as having them evaluate you. I also believe it is only fair and the law to base an employee evaluation on what is observed and not what other employees have told a supervisor, which is somehting my supervisor does and has admitted to at past yearly reveiws.
29. There is always room for improvement for everyone but working as a team is most important. All commits and suggestions are greatly appreciated to improve doing my job to the best of my abilty.

- 30.** I don't think this survey will be very effective because if you do not perform poorly then your answer has to be neutral. There should be a "does not apply" option for most of these questions. I also think that if there is an employee who may perform poorly then they may just be upset and my not see/or care when a supervisor praises there good performances or they my think the supervisor is being sarcastic. I feel that an employee should want to do a good job because they have pride in their performance and have integrity even if it seemingly goes unnoticed. I do think that we like to be appreciated but that should not be the only motivation we have. We have an employee performance evaluation but I don't think that it is effective because it is given yearly and the result of the survey our "raise" is determined by the Judges of the Court and they do not directly know all that I feel would be necessary to make that determination. I feel that they try to do it as fairly as they can but it is almost an impossible task. I think that we should have a reorganization of classifications and pay scale because our responsibilities have changed drastically since the last job description on file that dates back to the early 80's and I feel that has a negative impact on how we as employees may feel about how important our jobs are to the City of Ann Arbor. I hope that this information has been helpful and I would also like to thank the Judges for allowing us to participate and I would like to see more surveys being taken by the Court staff.
- 31.** regarding the evaluation question, we had them until last year. Now only new employees get evaluated. They ended them because the tool was used only to point out bad performance and never to praise the employeee
- 32.** If I ask then I get the feedback.
- 33.** I ENJOY WORKING HERE AND MY SUPERVISOR IS ALWAYS VERY HELPFUL AND KIND TO ME AND UNDERSTANDS ALOT OF THINGS WE GO THROUGH WITH CUSTOMERS AND MAKES SURE THAT WE ALL HAVE TURNS AT THE WINDOW AND THE PHONE.
- 34.** My supervisor gives us incentives to do a good job. She sometimes allows us to add 30min onto our luch time.
- 35.** feedback is readily available if one asks for it. many coworkers hesitate to seek feedback of any kinf - good or bad. supervisor is fair, helpful and collaborative if given the chance.

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