

SPRINGFIELD PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Tips for Supervisors & Managers



- Get the employee involved. Ask the employee to complete the accomplishments and employee rating sections on the performance assessment tool. Supervisors should ask the employee to review their own performance and expectations for the previous year. The purpose of this is to engage the employee in the performance assessment process and provide them a chance to think about and document how he or she performed in meeting job expectations and goals.
- There should be no surprises. The performance assessment is a review of the past year's performance. Through previous coaching, counseling, and other communications, the employee should be aware of any concerns you have about their job performance. The annual assessment discussion should not be the first time the employee learns or hears about your concerns.
- Be honest and fair in evaluating all employees. Be certain that you, as the supervisor, have assessed the performance of all of your employees in an objective and consistent manner as individuals and relative to other employees in the group. Among the many purposes of performance assessment is that it allows the supervisor to take a realistic snapshot of the employee's performance—although that snapshot comprises the employee's performance during the past twelve (12) months. You should never say the employee is improving if she or he is not performing well.
- Be consistent in your approach. Don't create a situation where it appears you are creating excuses for one employee while holding another employee accountable. Define your criteria for each of the five levels of performance (i.e., the five levels are provided in an earlier section of this guidebook and also included on each of the performance assessment forms) and use the same criteria for every employee. Don't set separate criteria for certain employees when they are performing essentially the same job.
- Be realistic. Don't inflate or deflate the impact of the employee's contributions or performance. When employees fail to receive a candid performance assessment and feedback, they are less able to adjust their performance and may fail to seek training to enhance their skill levels. In addition, employment decisions related to promotions, terminations, and pay increases become clouded by inflated ratings, as do assessments of organizational effectiveness.
- Rate the employee's performance, not the employee's "attitude." Keep your comments job related and based on the employee's ability to perform their job. Avoid phrases like "bad attitude," "he's not a team player," and other subjective type comments. Explain the behavior that is a result of the "attitude" you deem unacceptable.
- Set goals with the employee. Don't just criticize an employee's deficient performance; set goals for improvement and/or development. Work with the employee to create a plan of action to help him or her address any areas of deficiency and to establish goals for the coming year. Establish a timeline for monitoring the employee's progress and to reevaluate the employee at the appropriate time.
- A performance assessment should motivate an employee toward improvement. The employee should feel excited about the challenges and about their ability to meet them. If employees hear only about their failures and weaknesses, they likely will question their ability to succeed. If employees perceive support and encouragement from their supervisor, they will gain the confidence needed to keep trying. When the employee implements the supervisor's suggestions for improvement and those suggestions yield results and recognition, the employee is more likely to listen attentively to future suggestions.

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Common Rating Errors



The Leniency Error: Giving everyone high ratings regardless of actual performance in an attempt to avoid conflict or as a way to influence the employee's perception of the supervisor.

The Central Tendency Error: Clumping or clustering all employees in the middle performance categories in an attempt to avoid extremes. This error is usually caused by the rater's desire not to call attention to him or herself or by super ordinate sense of "democracy."

The Regency Error: Failing to take into account the entire evaluation period and focusing on a recent performance episode, positively or negatively. Base your evaluation on representative information from the whole evaluation period to avoid this error.

The Halo Effect Error: Letting one favored trait or work factor influence all other areas of performance, resulting in an unduly high overall performance rating.

The Horns Effect Error: Allowing one disfavored trait or work factor to overwhelm other more positive performance elements resulting in an unfairly low overall performance rating.

Contrast Error: Evaluating an employee in relation to another. Evaluations should be based on how well the employee performed in relation to their duties, goals and stated performance standards, i.e., actual performance compared to expected performance.

Past Performance Error: Rating on past performance rather than present performance.

Biased Rating Error: Allowing personal feelings toward employee to influence rating.

High Potential Error: Confusing potential with performance.

Similar to Me Error: Similar to me and therefore feeling of comfort and compatibility.

Guilt by Association Error: Evaluation influenced by employee's associations rather than performance.