



Manager's Guide to Mid-Year Performance Management



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Mid-year Performance Reviews

Plan the performance appraisal meeting

One of the primary goals in preparing for a performance appraisal is to move you from an evaluation approach that was based on feelings, opinion and belief, to an appraisal that is based on fact and backed up by meaningful data.

Communicate the process

There are two primary goals associated with performance appraisals: **the first is to strengthen conduct that leads to good performance; the second is to change conduct that pulls performance down.** This can only be accomplished if the employee understands the appraisal and trusts the accuracy and fairness of the process. To increase the employee's understanding and acceptance of the appraisal, consider the following strategies –

- 1. A shared responsibility -**
Giving the employee one to two weeks notice of the appraisal meeting allows time to think about what he/she has accomplished, problems they may have experienced, and what the critical job elements of the position are.
- 2. A participative process -**
When you set up the meeting ask the employee to come prepared to talk about accomplishments, problems, objectives for the next cycle and personal and professional growth.
- 3. A means to recognize achievements and an opportunity to set or re-calibrate goals -**
Indicate what you expect to do at the meeting and how you expect to conduct it. Suggest to the employee that he reread the performance plan, position description and review whatever supporting documentation is available.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

- Be sincere and interested.
- Try to relieve the tension initially, but don't waste time on small talk.
- Review the positives first.
- Don't converse in generalities- tell the employee what needs to be improved, and suggest options or different approaches.
- Back up your review with facts.
- Ask for the employee's input, perspective and evaluation.
- Focus on the future, not the past.
- Use the employee's strengths as a basis for change.
- Allow the employee to preserve dignity.
- Let the employee talk without interruption. Don't do all the talking. Listen as well. The review can be a learning experience for both parties.
- Stay in control of the agenda.



Gather information and analyze performance

1. Review the employee's performance plan and position description and compare what should have been done with the actual results. Hopefully, you have been maintaining supporting documentation to back up your findings.
2. Identify situations where the employee has made outstanding contributions or has experienced failure when attempting to fulfill critical job functions
3. Seek a variety of input from others who know the work of the employee being reviewed. By having more than one perspective, you will avoid errors in judgment. Informal feedback can come from a customer compliant or compliment, or when other managers or supervisors casually mention that your employee did a good job or had a problem.

Inputs into the Review

- FY employee performance plan
- Documented coaching and feedback sessions (if applicable)
- Performance Improvement Plans (if applicable)
- Rewards and recognitions throughout the first half of the year

Plan for the discussion

Once you have gathered the information, made an analysis of performance and set up a development plan, it is important to plan the appraisal discussion. In planning the discussion:

1. It is important to limit the objectives and topics of discussion. Because you are reviewing a half a year of an employee's work and planning the next half it is critical that the discussion concentrate on only those elements of performance that are critical, very important and relevant.
2. Limit the number of areas in which you want the employee to improve and be ready to suggest techniques for improvement.
3. You may want to incorporate into the agenda time for the employee to present his self-assessment, time for both you and the employee to explore the causes of any challenges, and time to set objectives and work out a development plan for the next appraisal period.



Hold the meeting

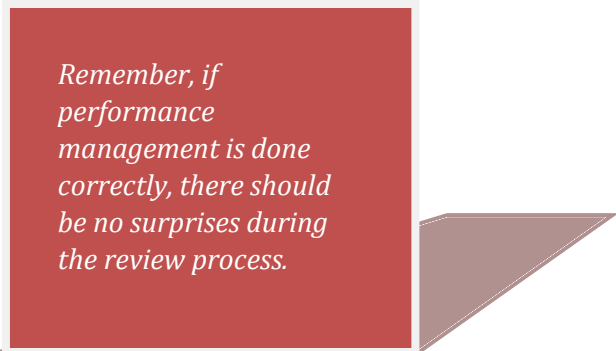
Finally, choose a time and a place for your meeting where you and your employee will have privacy and the ability to concentrate on the discussion. Consider the following suggestions:

1. It is a good idea to hold the meeting in a place where you and the employee can sit face-to-face without a desk between you to encourage the free flow of conversation.
2. Once you have set up the appointment for the appraisal meeting, keep it. If you later cancel or postpone it, you will be sending an inadvertent message that whatever you are going to do is more important than good performance.

Solicit feedback (optional)

Informal, 360 or 180-degree¹ feedback allows managers to assess strengths and development areas of their employees based on customer and/or coworker input. The feedback should be compiled into themes or patterns of behavior to be share with the employee at a high-level.

Please consultant with your HR representative prior to conducting a feedback assessment program.



Remember, if performance management is done correctly, there should be no surprises during the review process.

¹ 180° feedback is when an individual invites feedback from one particular area of their working lives, most commonly this being managers direct reports. This feedback is usually based on a set of competencies or behavioral statements and requires the individual to also complete a self-assessment. In its purest form the process is known as 360 degree feedback which includes an individual receiving feedback from all aspects of their working life, i.e. peers, direct reports, line manager, customers, suppliers and comparing this to your own self-perception.

Before you launch your 180 assessment program, there are some important logistical considerations and effective steps you can take to help your initiative succeed. Remember that the prospect of giving and getting feedback can be very uncomfortable for some people. You should be mindful of this fact every step of the way and do whatever you can to help people feel comfortable with both giving and receiving feedback.



Measure performance consistently

The evaluation scale below provides a clear and consistent scale to measure performance in each of the sections.

Exceeded	The employee's performance far exceeded expectations due to exceptionally high quality of work performed in all essential areas of responsibility, resulting in an overall quality of work that was superior; and either included the completion of a major goal or project, or made an exceptional or unique contribution in support of unit, department, or college objectives. This rating is achievable by any employee though given infrequently.
Achieved	The employee's performance consistently met expectations in all essential areas of responsibility, at times possibly exceeding expectations, and the quality of work overall was very good. The most critical annual goals were met. Typically demonstrates proficient knowledge, skills and abilities for the required work.
Not Achieved	The employee's performance did not consistently meet expectations and failed to meet expectations in one or more essential areas of responsibility, and/or one or more of the most critical goals were not met. The employee's work failed to meet the goals of the job function and generally falls short of performance goals; even though sometimes approaching goals. The employee provides minimal support to the contributions of the organization.



Performance Review Checklist

Listed below is a short checklist of things that supervisors and employees should do before a performance evaluation:

Supervisors:

- Review the employee's job description.
- Review performance standards that have been discussed and agreed upon.
- Review employee goals, if appropriate.
- Review documentation from the performance period (including customer comments, notes, letters of commendation, etc.).
- Determine areas of excellence and note specific examples to share.
- Determine areas for improvement and develop specific suggestions to discuss.
- Reflect on the training and growth needs of your employee. Develop a list of suggested activities.
- Evaluate performance for the period being appraised and assign ratings.
- Develop a list of questions to engage your employee in the discussion, for example:
 - What do you enjoy the most about your job? The least?*
 - How can I help you optimize your performance?*
 - Is there anything that gets in the way of your performance?*
 - What would you like to learn?*
- Give your employee advance, personal notice of the meeting.
- Encourage your employee to do a self-evaluation prior to the meeting.
- Schedule ample time for the discussion.
- Plan to minimize interruptions.
- Select a setting that will put your employee at ease.

Employees:

- Review your job description.
- Review your goals, if appropriate.
- Review documentation from the performance period (including customer comments, notes, letters of commendation, etc.).
- Review your previous performance evaluation. Where have you made improvements? What have been your major achievements? Where could you continue to improve?
- Identify areas of excellence and note examples to discuss.
- Identify areas for improvement and develop specific suggestions to discuss with your supervisor.
- Reflect on your training and growth needs. Develop a list of suggested activities.
- Ask yourself, "*In the coming year...*"
 - ...What would I like to learn?"*
 - ...How could my supervisor help me be more successful?"*
 - ...What resources do I need to do my job better?"*
 - ...What responsibilities would I like to take on?"*



- By following these easy steps, both supervisors and employees can prepare to participate in a meaningful performance review.

Performance Review Tip Sheets

Preparing for Your Review

Often times the performance review causes worry and anxiety for both managers and employees. It can – wrongly – be seen as a punitive process, rather than supportive. The performance review is simply a culmination of conversations and feedback offered throughout the year. There should be no surprises for either the employee or the supervisor during the review.

Here are some tips to help you get – and offer – the most out of a review:

Prepare yourself for the conversation:

- Quietly reflect on the past year – What was accomplished? What might be an area of development or growth for next year? What do you need from one another?
- Approach the conversation with positive thoughts and curiosity.
- Review the university values and expected behaviors.

The review conversation:

- Be candid and honest.
- Be non-judgmental.
- Focus on the future, not the past.
- Provide an environment where the manager and the employee both are fully engaged in the conversation.
- Be prepared to ask each other open-ended questions that will help you understand one another's thinking and perspective.
- Identify strengths and areas of growth and development.
- Listen, reflect your understanding and ask clarifying questions if needed.
- Share personal and professional goals.

After the conversation:

- Reflect on the feedback received and determine how to apply it.
- Continue to ask clarifying questions so you are both on the same page.
- Commit to providing one another regular coaching and feedback.

Schedule time to have a planning conversation where goals and objectives are set for the next year.



Growing Your Coaching Skills

Successful coaches encourage, support and offer guidance. Above all, they are patient. They take a genuine interest in the people they are coaching. Successful coaches are engaged listeners and ask powerful questions that help the employee better understand their own thinking and behaviors. So how can you become a more effective coach? First, ask yourself these review questions:

- Did I take time in the beginning of the conversation to set a safe environment?
- Did I ask clear, open-ended questions?
- Did I listen closely without interrupting?
- Did I allow the coachee to come to his/her own conclusions?
- Did I provide appreciative feedback?
- Did I provide constructive feedback?
- Did I encourage ownership and accountability and support action?
- Was I patient?
- Did I demonstrate that I am interested in seeing them succeed and perform at a higher level?
- Did I ask for feedback from them?

Coaching Tips!

- Practice, practice, practice! Deliver lots more appreciative feedback every day. Start today and practice giving more of it at home and at work. There are many more opportunities to offer appreciative feedback.
- Provide more constructive feedback to develop people and keep them on target. Don't assume they know better, they might not. Convey the feedback in the spirit of, "you could be even more effective if..." Follow up and catch them doing it approximately right.
- Consult with a peer, friend, mentor etc. about a recent coaching conversation. Ask them how they would coach the employee. Ask for coaching tips!
- Ask for feedback from your employees. This will help you become more aware of your coaching strengths and areas of growth. Asking your employees will also help to build a trusting and open relationship.
- Be aware of how you are feeling when you are coaching. When you are on the lower end of the Mood Elevator, your thinking may not be as reliable. Or when the coachee is on the lower end, they may become defensive or they won't hear you.



Feedback

- Provide feedback, both appreciative and constructive, as soon as possible
- Share feedback in the spirit of respecting and helping someone
- Set expectations
 - Be detailed
 - Be realistic
 - Share the “why”
 - Share measurement criteria
 - Write it down
- Assume positive intent
 - Most people are trying to do their best work
 - Make the assumption that the employee thought what he/she was doing was best for the customer, team or university.
- Make an observation
 - Pay attention and watch your employee perform
 - Note both the positive and development performance behaviors
 - Use first-hand knowledge to give feedback; avoid formulating feedback based on hearsay or rumors
 - Discuss only observable behaviors and avoid a discussion about the employee’s motives or personality
 - Use as many details as possible
- Describe the preferred behavior
 - Concentrate on only one or two behaviors at a time
 - Use “I” messages (“I observed you today and noticed...”)
 - Ask the employee for his/her ideas on what to change
- Talk about the future
 - Restate expectations and clarify benefits or consequences associated with changing behavior
 - Check for understanding
 - Create a plan for moving forward



Developing Your Employees

One of the most important qualities of a good manager is the ability and desire to develop their employees. Taking an active role in the development of your team demonstrates confidence and concern for the future of the organization. Unfortunately, development coaching doesn't come naturally to many managers. By following these tips, you can prepare your employees for success at the next level.

- 1. Encourage professional development.** High-potential employees are not satisfied with the status quo. You want these employees on your team. They are typically ambitious, high performing, and dynamic. They will be the future leaders of your organization if they are given proper guidance in their development. If not, be prepared to lose them to the competition.
- 2. Create a plan.** Planning is crucial to advancing your career. Help your employees establish goals that are aligned with their strengths, interest and experience and then create a plan to get there. A development plan serves as the roadmap that will take you to your goal. It can be simple or complex but it must include action steps, resources, and deadlines.
- 3. Pair your employees with a mentor.** Once their goals have been established, find someone who is in a similar role to the target position to serve as a mentor. Mentoring enables an organization to use its existing talent to impart their knowledge and expertise to one another. Everyone – the organization, the mentor, and the mentee – benefits from the mentoring process.
- 4. Identify opportunities to expand their professional network.** Having a solid network is imperative to the success of future leaders. A network is a great source of information, advice, support and inspiration. Recommend opportunities within the organization, as well as, networking or professional groups that will help them build strong connections.
- 5. Challenge your employees to move out of their comfort zone.** You can't move forward if you don't grow and you can't grow if you never leave your comfort zone. When possible, give your employees challenging assignments. Help them prepare by providing them a safe environment to learn from the mistakes that they are bound to make.
- 6. Engage a coach.** For high-potential employees and employees who need to be redirected to another career path, it can be best to bring in an outside coach. An external coach provides a confidential environment where employees are free to discuss the challenges and opportunities they face in their careers through the use of assessments, powerful questions, and individual development plans.



Motivating Your Employees

Your ability to lead and motivate people is critical to your success as a manager. When people work well together, there is energy and enthusiasm. When they don't work well together, employees can become dissatisfied or bored with their jobs and then productivity declines. As a manager, you play a big role in building team motivation.

- **Find out what motivates your employees.** In your conversations with your employees, find out what is most important to them. Is it time off with their family? Recognition from you?
- **Help your employees prioritize work to focus on the most important tasks.** This means that your employee's goals need to line up with your departments goals and the university values and priorities. For example, make sure employees understand why customer service is a priority. To achieve maximum performance, try to include some tasks employees especially like to do or excel at.
- **Train and explain.** Make sure your employees have the skills and knowledge to do their work effectively. IF they don't, teach them or arrange for them to get the training they need. Explain tasks carefully so that employees know what is expected.
- **Let people work.** Your job is to explain the "what" and the "why" of the work, and to see that your employees have the skills, tools and support to do the work. Their job is to get the work done in the way they find most efficient. Keep track of people's progress. However, avoid micromanaging or second-guessing employee's work. Be patient when employees make mistakes – it's how people learn.
- **Expect excellence.** People will put their hearts into work if they think the team, the department and the university is striving for excellence.
- **Treat employees with respect.** Rudeness and a lack of respect for employees are big demotivators. Show respect by listening and responding to your employee's thoughts, ideas and concerns.
- **Care about your employees and show that you care.** A positive relationship with their manager is a strong motivator for most people. Make time to talk with your staff about things beyond the immediate tasks. Ask people how they are doing. Ask what they think of their work. Ask if there are things that are getting in the way of their doing good work. Don't open your e-mail or look at papers on your desk when someone is talking with you. Your employees are much more likely to care about work if they know that you listen and care about them.
- **Remember the shadow you cast and lead by example.** Motivate yourself first. Be energetic and positive, and your energy will be contagious. Show what it means to focus on the customer and deliver excellent results. Work hard to model important and healthy values.