



Six Steps To Creating More Productive Staff Performance Evaluations

When you think about having a performance evaluation or review, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? For many people, however skilled and good they may be at doing their job, the thought of an upcoming performance evaluation creates anxiety. Expecting the worse, people tend to focus on the negative feedback, never hearing the positive feedback. This article provides some steps that you, as a supervisor, can take to put your employee at ease, make the evaluation process flow smoothly, and ensure the evaluation is productive for both you and your employee.

1. When you hire an individual, be clear as to when and how he will be evaluated. This includes how often you will conduct regular staff meetings to monitor the employee's performance, what happens during and following his probationary period, when his annual performance evaluation will be conducted, what evaluation tool will be used, and anything else you feel would be helpful.
2. Evaluate the employee after his probationary period. Probationary periods are generally six months, but may vary depending on the organization. During this period, it is a good idea to meet weekly or every other week with the employee to ensure that he has the knowledge and skills to be successful, that he is learning and becoming proficient at his job, that he is a good fit for the organization, and that following the probationary period, you will have sufficient information to permanently employ or terminate him. Remember to document what is discussed and agreed upon during these meetings.
3. Schedule regular meetings with your employees. These meetings can be held monthly, quarterly, or on some other predetermined schedule. During these meetings, discuss the employee's goals and objectives, strengths and weaknesses, areas for improvement, training needs, and any other issues that will increase the employee's productivity and retention. Make sure you document what is discussed, areas that need to be addressed, and deadlines for when improvements need to be made. This process will help eliminate any unexpected surprises.
4. Determine the type of evaluation tool you'd like to use for the annual performance review. You can use a standard evaluation tool, with only the supervisor evaluating the employee, or you can conduct a 360 degree evaluation, where the employee's supervisor, peers, subordinates, and stakeholders outside of the organization provide feedback regarding the employee's

performance. Whatever tool you use, make sure that it is current, designed to measure what you want it to, is applicable to the employee's position, and contains the employee's annual performance goals and objectives.

5. Remind your employee of his annual performance evaluation at least two weeks in advance, and how the evaluation will be conducted. This will give you and your employee adequate time to prepare. Some employers like to have the employee conduct a self-evaluation prior to the actual performance review, to see how the employee evaluates himself in relation to the achievement of his goals and objectives. During the actual review, the employer will discuss his observations in comparison to how the employee rated himself.
6. Conduct the annual performance evaluation, keeping in mind the following items:
 - a. To reduce the employee's anxiety level, help him to relax by discussing his family, a recent vacation, his hobbies, or some other subject that is neutral. Explain that the review is to help the employee learn and grow, and that you want an open and honest two way conversation. Disclose that any comments, issues, or concerns will be kept confidential.
 - b. Once you have created a warm and trusting environment, discuss the employee's annual performance goals and objectives, achievements, areas for improvement, training attended, training needs, and other issues or concerns. Always state the positive feedback first, finishing with recommended areas for improvement.
 - c. Once the review has been completed, both parties should sign the evaluation, documenting that they both agree with it. If one party disagrees on a specific item, this should be documented prior to signing the completed evaluation.
 - d. Discuss whether or not there will be a salary and/or cost of living increase based on the employee's performance and achievement of pre-established goals and objectives. Document any increase in salary.
 - e. Provide a copy of the completed performance review to the employee and retain the original copy for his personnel file.
 - f. Following the performance evaluation, turn your attention to developing the employee's performance goals and objectives for the next year.

By conducting regular meetings with your employee throughout the year, discussing progress on his goals and objectives, training needs, and other job-related issues/concerns, this keeps the communication channels open, eliminating any unexpected surprises. In addition, remember to

create a warm and safe environment to put the employee at ease during his evaluation. All of the above steps should help facilitate a more productive and successful performance review.

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