

The purpose performance feedback

[Business](#), [Human Resources](#)



Performance feedback, also known as Performance Review or Appraisal, is difficult for both, the manager and employee, but necessary. It is the process by which both parts can see where are they standing and the progress they have accomplished in a certain amount of time. For example, an appraisal can take place every six months (mid-year review and end-year review) or once a year (yearly review).

The purpose of an appraisal is not necessarily to find fault on the appraisee but to provide constructive information that will enable him/her to progress, improve and even advance in his/her career path. It is true that appraisals are also used to identify faults and areas of improvement, however, the intent is not to damage or undermined the employee, but rather to assist him/her to identify those areas and create a plan for improvement.

Likewise, the process of appraisal is also important to help the appraisee minimized a defensive attitude or behavior. Appraisals must be comprehensive, realistic and objective. The content of an appraisal varies according to the position/role that the employee is performing. But what do appraisals review? Let's talk about a little bit about competencies.

Competence is the ability that the individual has to perform a job. A competency, according to an article by the Business & Finance Human Resources department of the University of Lincoln, Nebraska, is “ The combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success”. This set of skills and attributes are attainable with experience and training. In other words, people can improve in their ability to perform a certain task or objective.

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It is important for the appraisal to contain defined, clear and concise competencies for the employee to focus on and use as a guide to be performing his/her job. Otherwise, we would be setting them for failure. A clear competency will provide security to the appraisee because it will clearly mark what is expected and demanded of him/her. A concise list of competencies will help the employee not to feel overwhelmed, but rather motivated to accomplish realistic objectives. This will provide a sense of certainty to the appraisal, essentially diffusing any defensive behavior or attitude that otherwise would arise. Why? Because the employee knows what is expected of him/her. This process also makes the employee accountable for his/her performance and gives them control of their individual development.

So, what does a comprehensive appraisal should contain to help diffuse defensiveness? Here, I will use as an example one of my own appraisals for purposes of illustration. Identification section – To ensure we are evaluating the right person. Usually, this section contains the employee's official name, employee ID number, the name of the appraiser performing the review, job code, and in some cases, cost center. Setup section – Displays who initiated the appraisal and the duration of the appraisal with a start and end date. Main section – The Competency Ratings, where each core competency, related to the job, is listed and described for both appraiser and appraisee to evaluate. For example, some of the competencies listed for my old position were, Change Agility (the ability to adapt to change), Collaboration (teamwork), Communicating for Impact (communication skills), Competitive Edge (involvement in extracurricular projects to obtain exposure to other

aspects of the line of business), Inspirational leadership (community work or head spearing a project), Mastering Complexity (development in the form of certifications, completed training, etc) and Performance Drive & Execution (how effective was my performance/results in a quantitative manner).

Each competency also contains a rating system that goes from 1 to 4. 1 being “ requires work”, 3 “ Successfully meets expectations” and 4 “ Exceeds expectations”. As you can see, each competency covers an aspect of what the role entailed. So I was clear on what it was expected from me.

Goals Section – These can be in general for the company or specific to your group/department. A couple of mine were, Community events and

Mandatory EH&S trainings. Questionnaire Section – This section, in my opinion, is very important too. The appraiser is able to generate more specific questions for the appraise in regards of his/her development during the year. The appraiser might ask the appraise to write a short paragraph providing details of major accomplishments, list areas to be further developed or to list additional comments with respect of performance or the review itself. In other words, by answering these questions, the appraise has the opportunity to express him/her self in a more free manner, while still preserving an appropriate interaction between the appraiser and appraise.

When performing an appraisal, the appraiser has to find objectivity when evaluating the appraise as to minimize the risk of defensive attitude, thus, the purpose of the appraisal is to seek improvement rather than fault. The appraise, in return, has to be willing and open to accept the constructive feedback. Last but not least, is worth to mention that competencies are to be

accomplished progressively during the course of the year, therefore, it is in the best interest of the appraisee to find out what these are early on and have a reference of the expectations that the job entails.

With that being said, however, it is inevitable to encounter the occasional unhappy, disagreeable appraisee. What is left to do then? The company or organization may have a set of norms in place that the dissatisfied employee can follow to file for an appeal to the review and/or request a different appraiser. In this case, the appraisee will have to present founded reason for such appeals, such as discrimination, for example.