

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND APPRAISALS

PERFORMANCE REVIEW DEFINED

A Performance Review is a prescheduled meeting (ideally quarterly) when manager and direct report get together to review progress made toward the achievement of all short and long term goals mutually agreed upon.

Discussion centers on (1) goals that are incomplete and what the person is doing to achieve them - focus is on mutual problem-solving; (2) ways the manager can offer support to help the person achieve the goals; (3) determination - how adequately the direct report is coordinating with and involving others who are affected by the goals; (4) what new goals are need to be established, if those goals that were previously agreed upon have been achieved, and (5) what changes in priorities should be made if any.

PURPOSES OF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

1. They provide the opportunity to make course corrections necessitated by changing conditions or priorities.
2. They provide the opportunity for *giving* feedback to the employee and *receiving* feedback as well.
3. They provide the opportunity to improve communication.
4. They lessen the possibility of uncomfortable surprises occurring later during the final review or when a salary review may be conducted.
5. They provide the manager an opportunity to coach and counsel, if appropriate.
6. They provide a follow-up opportunity on previously made plans for the employee's continuing development;
7. They enable manager and direct report the opportunity to spot potential problems at an early stage.
8. They keep manager and direct report focused on objective criteria and performance given the working relationship with each other.

PROBLEMS IN CONDUCTING PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

1. Manager's unwillingness to take the time or make the effort to observe and analyze the employee's performance and progress thoroughly.
2. Reluctance to address problem situations for fear they might lead to confrontation with the employee.
3. Misunderstandings as to goals and priorities; changing the quantity and/or quality of goal measurements.
4. Addressing goals over which the individual had little control or goals over which the individual had control but others obstructed his/her ability to achieve them.
5. Confronting "wishful thinking" by the employee to express progress. In others words, the individual who is not in touch with reality.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND APPRAISALS (cont.)

6. Introduction of a totally new goal during the review.
7. Manager's reluctance to realistically assess performance, obstacles and needed changes, but sticks to the "safer" middle ground of "good" or "average" reviews.
8. Belief by many that a performance review is conducted primarily to determine if one should get a raise. This leads many managers to "work backwards" from the amount of the pay raise they want to recommend - to reviews that would justify it.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR PREPARING AND CONDUCTING THE REVIEW

1. Select time and place (preferably early morning and "neutral" location, if possible); tell direct report to prepare himself/herself by reviewing goals and quality of action steps taken toward accomplishment. Have direct report complete sections II, III, IV, V, VI (only for those who supervise or manage other staff members).
2. Reserve at least one hour for the session, even though you may not need a full hour with some individuals; do not postpone date originally agreed upon.
3. Review questions on the Goals Review Form as well as previous forms for data if previous reviews have been conducted. Note, in particular, your comments and corrective action agreed upon.
4. Create a way to set the individual at ease as you begin the session, remembering the primary purpose of a Performance Review is personal development.
5. Visualize how you will conduct the session and the kinds of probing questions you will ask; the kinds of problems that might arise and how you would respond; ways you will be supportive and the kinds of suggestions you might make should the individual be unable to think up ideas to solve problems.
6. Visualize the kind of outcome you would like to see happen.
7. Prepare additional goals you might introduce going forward should the situation warrant more stretch.
8. Make sure to jointly establish priorities; put goals in writing, make sure they are understandable and the individual gets a copy.
9. Make sure you take notes during the review and that you conclude by setting the date for the **Goal Setting session** for the coming year.

GET A MIND-SET: It's the manner in which the person developed and implemented the action steps or actually worked toward the achievement of the goals, as well as whether or not the goals were achieved.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND APPRAISALS (cont.)

A Checklist of Do's

1. Reassure the individual by building on strengths; give him/her confidence.
2. Use the "we" approach when discussing problems.
3. Be specific and descriptive when discussing performance; address behavior.
4. Keep the review on track; draw him/her out by asking thought-provoking questions (open-ended, not those that evoke yes or no type responses).
5. Listen actively; restate or reflect his/her statements; listen with warmth, frankness and genuine interest.
6. Function as a coach, not an inspector; counsel, don't advise.
7. Insure privacy and reduce physical barriers such as desks. Face to face sessions are always best.
8. Following is a Goals Review Form where you can note results (comments), in preparation for the meeting. It gives you an opportunity to review the goals more thoroughly.
9. Close properly by summarizing what you have discussed; plans for improvement and change. Make sure date and time for the next meeting is determined.

GOALS REVIEW FORM

For Completed Goals, Use the Following Guidelines in Preparing Your Comments:

1. How well was the goal achieved?
2. How difficult/easy was it to achieve the goal?
3. What was the quality and quantity of effort to achieve the goal?
4. Was there adequate communication on status toward goal achievement?
5. How adequate was your support in helping the person achieve the goal?

For Open Goals, Use the Following Guidelines in Preparing Your Comments:

1. Will the goal be achieved? If not, what is the problem and what should be done about it?
2. What is needed from you to help the person achieve the goal?
3. How adequate is communication so far in all directions?
4. Is the goal still appropriate in light of changing conditions?

GOAL SUMMARIES	PRIORITIES	REVIEW COMMENT

MASTERING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Good performance reviews and appraisals have benefits for everyone - the employee, the manager and the organization.

- They provide a permanent written record of the employee's strong and weak points so the manager can make sound decisions regarding promotion, training, opportunities in other areas - or, if necessary, discipline, demotion or discharge.
- They provide an incentive for improved performance and help the employee identify strengths and weaknesses through constructive feedback.
- They identify employees who need more training.
- They pinpoint an employee's talents and growth potential and help the manager utilize special skills for better benefit to the individual and the organization.
- And most importantly, performance reviews and appraisals can be a valuable resource of feedback between you and the employee - an important "key" for improved communication.

KEY CONCEPTS IN "MASTERING PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS"

1. Be objective - judge the job, not the individual.
2. Evaluate the performance on the goals and standards set.
3. Be honest - it's always the best policy.
4. Consistently strive for consistency.
5. Use accurate documentation.
6. Always follow BW's HR policy.