

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluations are important opportunities for supervisors and employees to share in open dialog concerning attainment and setting of goals as well as the employee's individual performance. To that end, performance evaluations should strive to achieve the following:

- Stimulate communication between the supervisor and employee;
- Create a mutual understanding between the employee and supervisor concerning the duties and responsibilities of the employee's job and of the performance objectives established for the appraisal period;
- Identify and resolve performance issues, as necessary.
- Provide managers with information to aid in personnel decisions, which may require an assessment of an individual's job performance. These personnel actions may include, but are not limited to: promotions, merit pay adjustments, job transfers, selection for committee/special duties, disciplinary actions, awards/rewards, etc.

SUGGESTIONS ON PROVIDING FEEDBACK

A performance appraisal is a continuing process, not an activity restricted to the production of the annual performance appraisal. Supervisors are encouraged to provide periodic feedback on progress toward completing the performance goals that were established at the beginning of the appraisal period. This is particularly important in situations where performance is clearly below requirements. Suggestions for feedback discussions include:

- How the job is going (giving praise where due and criticism/ suggestions where necessary);
- How the subordinate is progressing in attaining the performance goals identified at the beginning of the appraisal period;
- What problems, if any, have arisen in the job;
- What specifically is expected of the individual over the next several months?

These feedback discussions should form a natural progression, culminating in an appraisal in which, ideally, there is no information that comes as a surprise.

THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

- **The Environment:**
It is generally agreed that the proper setting for the interview is:
 1. Private - either in the supervisor's office or a separate location where others will not be able to hear what is being said.
 2. Free from distractions and interruptions - there should be no ringing telephones and no employees interrupting the interview.
 3. Conducted in an informal setting- comfortable chairs facing each other, rather than with a desk between the participants.
- **The Process:**
The annual appraisal interview should:
 1. Enable the supervisor and employee to analyze performance using the comments, ratings and remarks contained in the appraisal form.
 2. Enable them to discuss and agree on what can be done to improve performance in those areas where improvement is needed and possible.
 3. Enable them to have an open discussion and agree on performance objectives for the next year.
 4. The interview should be a discussion. Two-way communication is essential if full advantage is to be gained. Ideally, as much input should come from the person receiving the appraisal as from the supervisor.

Getting the most from the interview:

1. Avoid an atmosphere of stress.
2. If the employee has earned a good appraisal, break the ice by saying so up front.
3. If the employee has earned an appraisal that is critical of his/her performance, either overall or for a particular task, make sure he/she understands the reason for the rating.
4. Since a fundamental part of the appraisal process is the avoidance of surprises in the appraisal interview, supervisors must be aware of when and how previous criticism and suggestions for improving performance, counseling, etc., occurred and have documentation available for reference should the employee question the validity of the rating, occurrence, etc.
5. Employees should be encouraged to write their own comments on the appraisal form. The inclusion of comments by the employee is purely voluntary.
6. End the interview on a positive note. Encourage the individual who has done well. It is just as important to encourage the employee who, although he/she has received a less than satisfactory report, has the potential for improvement and has admirable qualities.

APPEALING A PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Employees have the right to appeal an evaluation with which they do not agree. The appeals process should follow the Grievance Procedure outlined in Section 9 of the Troy State University Staff Handbook.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND THE APPRAISAL PROCESS

Troy University is an equal opportunity employer and encourages employees to attain their maximum potential regardless of their race, sex, age, color, creed, disability, or national origin. The appraisal process should assist all staff employees in attaining their maximum potential.

