

Developing Performance Appraisal Forms

The following material is based on a review of performance appraisal forms. It is designed to assist in creating, modifying or auditing performance appraisal forms. The material presented is initially divided into common divisions or segments that appear on many performance appraisal forms. Listed under each of the common parts or segments are checklists of typical information, examples of material and samples demonstrating typical verbiage.

The basic segments are:

- Information/data.
- Directions/definitions.
- Job factors/ratings/weights.
- Overall ratings.
- Employee assessment.
- Future objectives/actions.
- Summary.
- Employee comments.
- Signatures.
- Additional management and human resources review and comments.

These segments do not have to occur in the order listed.

Typically, the forms encourage the employee and the rater to use attachments if necessary to fully answer narrative questions. For administrative purposes, there may be a check off in a prominent position on the form to indicate that there are attachments. Additionally, there is a growing trend to include in the performance appraisal input from additional raters --peers, team members, other supervisors or leaders and customers.

Information/Data

This section of the form contains identifying information. That information may include:

- Employee's name
- Employee number
- Social security number
- Functional title/position title
- Job classification
 - Exempt or non-exempt
 - Management or non-supervisory

- Other _____
- Job grade
- Present salary/wage
- Compa-ratio or other indication of position in salary range
- Business phone and extension
- Time in position
- Job number
- Organization unit such as:
 - Company
 - Division
 - Department
 - Store number
 - Unit
 - Team
 - Other _____
- Job location
- Employee's job status
 - Active
 - Probationary
- Employment date
- Date of last review
- Overall rating in last review
- Date and amount of last increase
- Name of supervisor/leader
- Name of rater (if different from supervisor/leader)
- Type of review
 - Annual
 - Special

- Probationary
- Promotional
- Performance only review
- Performance and wage review
- Quarterly review
- Date prepared
- Period covered by the appraisal
- Job description attached
 - Date last revised
 - Date last approved
- Other attachments (list)
- Location/designation of human resources unit
- Corporate name and/or corporate logo
- Date form published

Directions/Definitions

Many performance appraisal forms print instructions for completing the form on the first page of a multipage document. The directions and definitions of terms used in the form are as diverse as there are systems.

Instructions

Sample 1

A sample of instructions is demonstrated by the following performance appraisal form:

This worksheet is designed to aid you in completing a performance appraisal. If you have any questions, check with your manager or your personnel representative.

1. At the end of each year, review the employee's major responsibilities. Jointly develop with the employee a list of expected results, objectives and priorities for the coming year. Document in a written performance plan all results which will be the basis for the employee's evaluation.
2. Periodically during the year, preferably once each quarter, discuss progress and performance against this plan. During these reviews identify and document any problems that have occurred in each area. If business conditions have changed update the performance plan accordingly.
3. Each January, using performance documentation collected during the year, list the employee's major accomplishments and results. Supporting documentation should be maintained in your files for at least three years.

4. Summarize the employee's accomplishments and results, then determine a rating using the exempt performance rating definitions.
5. Review the rating and accomplishments statements with your manager. Obtain his/her concurrence and signature.
6. After all ratings in your organization have been reviewed and finalized at the division level, provide the employee with a comprehensive face-to-face review of his/her accomplishments and results as they compare with the performance plan. Obtain the employee's signature and comments.

Sample 2

This sample is from a multi-state chain of retail stores:

All full and part-time clerks are to be evaluated by their Department Manager. Use pencil to complete evaluation. Then meet with your Store Manager to review, agree upon and approve the evaluation. Ink in the agreed evaluation. Both persons should then sign below.

At this point, the department manager should privately review the results of this evaluation with the associate. The associate will sign the form, and it will be mailed to the personnel department for grading. No evaluation will be graded that is received without the associate's signature.

Purpose of this Performance Evaluation:

- (1) To provide a realistic assessment of how effectively this employee is achieving the job performance required by his/her job. You should have the ability (or documentation) to explain all of your ratings.
- (2) To encourage and motivate the employee by giving direction, recognition and encouragement. Results will be used to determine merit pay --consideration for promotion would include other areas of concern not included in this evaluation.
- (3) To promote supervisor/subordinate relations and provide an opportunity for open two-way communication.

Instructions:

Carefully review the employee's performance in each characteristic as it relates to the requirements of his/her total job performance. Place an "X" mark on each rating scale, over the descriptive phrase that most nearly describes this employee. Evaluate each characteristic separately.

Three common mistakes in rating are:

- (1) A tendency to rate nearly everyone as "average" on every trait instead of being more critical in judgment. The evaluator should use the ends of the scale as well as the middle.
- (2) The "Halo Effect," *i.e.*, a tendency to rate the same individual "excellent" or "poor" on every trait. However, each person has strong points and weak points and these should be indicated on the rating scale. Don't be influenced by unusual cases or occurrences.
- (3) Evaluations are often skewed for increase purposes, which gives an inappropriate reading of the associate's abilities. Please give a truthful assessment.

Definitions

It is a good idea to define any uncommon, unusual or unique terms. Definitions could be included in a written policy, management training on performance appraisals, printed on the form or in all of the situations. Consider asking several new supervisors to review the form and written policy to identify terms to define.

Job Factors/Ratings/Weights

Job factors is a technique that labels the traits and behaviors necessary to perform the job and ranks the individual factors or assigns weights (or points) to establish value. Many companies do not have fixed job factor and ratings systems and may use a variety of other methods of appraisals.

It is typical for companies to have two different appraisal forms for management and nonmanagement or to have a separate section on the form that is used to review management staff.

It is common to define the meaning of each job factor. For example, the term "Job knowledge/skills" can be defined as possessing the knowledge and skills required to perform the job.

If a company adopts a forced choice --a weighted job behavior system, the form would combine both job factors and ratings.

For further information, see [¶1047](#).

Job factors

Listed below are several samples of factors.

Sample 1

- Job knowledge/skills: Possesses the knowledge and skills required to perform this job.
- Dependability: Adheres to work schedules and completes assignments on time.
- Communication: Gets along well with others.
- Initiative: Speaks, writes and listens effectively.
- Time management: Organizes work well and uses time effectively.
- Problem solving/decision making: Produces creative, innovative and workable solutions. Makes sound decisions.

Factors that apply to managers only:

- Management principles: Plans, organizes, delegates, coordinates and controls effectively.
- Development/evaluation of subordinates: Counsels, develops and evaluates subordinates effectively. Is willing to release subordinates for developmental opportunities.
- Equal employment opportunity: Takes affirmative action in employment, development and advancement of protected classes.

Sample 2

- Courtesy/Customer Relations --politeness and respect toward **CUSTOMERS** and fellow associates, supervisors

- Quality and Accuracy of Work --consistency, thoroughness and precision of work
- Attendance/Punctuality --daily attendance and conformity to scheduled work hours
- Attitude/Cooperation --ability to work with and for others toward the best interest of the department and the store
- Appearance --cleanliness and conformity to dress code
- Quantity/Work Output --amount of work regularly produced including speed and consistency of output

Sample 3

- Quality: Emphasizes a high standard of excellence in all work endeavors. Ensures accuracy and thoroughness of work. Pays attention to details.
- Job Knowledge: Demonstrates competence in the technical skills and knowledge of the functional areas. Understands job requirements, internal/external procedures and regulations, and how the job interacts with and supports other parts of the business. Initiates learning to broaden skills and knowledge.
- Customer Focus: Properly identifies internal and external customers, their needs, and involves customer in developing solutions to problems. Delivers what the customer needs.
- Responsiveness: Is results oriented and demonstrates a bias towards action. Responds quickly and appropriately to internal and external requests for assistance. Assumes responsibility and accountability for own work. Takes initiative. Is flexible and adaptable to changing conditions.
- Communication: Speaks, writes and presents effectively. Listens well and clarifies question. Interacts professionally with customers and other employees. Keeps appropriate people informed on status of projects and key issues.
- Teamwork: Works effectively in a team environment. Interacts with coworkers in a positive and cooperative manner. Is trusted and respected by coworkers. Asks for help when needed, and offers assistance to others.
- Work Commitment: Produces quantity of work that is consistent with role. Responds to unscheduled requests on a timely basis. Asks for more work when available. Is on time and in attendance as required. Is available during crunch times to work extra hours. Takes responsibility for own work.
- Interpersonal Skills: Is aware of and sensitive to needs of others. Gives others the benefit of the doubt. Maintains high ethical standards. Helps maintain a workplace free of bias in terms of race, creed, national origin, sex, age or disability. Avoids and disapproves of behaviors, words and actions that contribute to discriminatory treatment or sexual harassment.
- Problem Solving: Identifies tasks that need to be done and develops effective workplans. Organizes and prioritizes to avoid delays, crises and excessive overtime. Properly identifies problems and creative solutions in a timely manner. Takes accountability for problem resolution.
- Coaching --giving/receiving: Seeks and receives feedback in a constructive manner and applies it to enhance future performance. Sets a positive example for others. Remains open-minded. Provides coaching on an ongoing basis.

Given the diversity of the factors that are used on these forms, other variations appear that include:

- Job factor scales that are based on individualized goals and objectives developed at the last performance appraisal review.
- Tasks described on the employee's job description or the job description itself to establish the specific job factors to be measured.
- Establish a place for the rater to write a narrative description to document the employee's performance.

Ratings

Typically, when there is a rating system, each factor will be marked by a designated letter or number and that mark will appear in a specific box or place on the form.

Sample 1

Appraisal codes: (Note: Plus or minus shading may be used; e.g., 3+, 4 --, etc.)

L --Limited: Employee has not been in the job long enough (less than 6 months) to fairly and fully evaluate performance.

3 --The level of performance during this rating period did not fully meet the established standards of performance or expectations.

4 --The level of performance during this rating period met the established standards of performance or expectations.

5 --The level of performance during this rating period exceeded the established standards of performance or expectations.

Sample 2

Provisional: does not meet minimum requirements

Satisfactory: meets minimum job requirements

Good: performs at expected levels

Superior: normally performs above expected levels

Outstanding: consistently performs much above expected levels

Sample 3

One form of rating each factor would be to take a factor, such as attendance, and to describe several levels of performance for that factor.

For example, the levels for the factor "absenteeism" could be described as:

- Sometimes absent without good excuse and/or reports to work late
- Normally present and on time, frequently calls when delayed or sick.

- Consistently prompt and regular in attendance. Rarely absent or tardy. Always calls in time for management to make necessary arrangements. Tries to instill this type of dedication within his/her fellow associates.

Sample 4

- 0 = Unacceptable
- 1 = Below expectations
- 2 = Meets expectations
- 3 = Exceeds expectations

Weight/point systems

Where there is a difference in value to the company of the individual factors, there may be in addition to the method of rating job factors, an assignment of points or weights to the factor and/or to the various levels of performance of the factor that can be demonstrated.

This process can be simple or very complex depending upon the needs of the company.

Example One of the simplest methods is to assign three levels of performance for each factor. Each level has a fixed number of points. Then the points are added up for a total score.

Assume you have a form that describes three job factors --Job knowledge, Dependability and Initiative. Each of the factors can be rated on a scale from zero which means "unacceptable," to 3 which means "exceeds expectations." One employee is rated a "3" in Job knowledge, a "2" in Dependability, and a "0" in Initiative. The total score is "5".

How that score would be characterized would depend upon how the company wanted the score to be characterized. Each company may set up different standards and cut-offs as long as the standards are bias free, depending upon the company's need, history appraisal system and overall compensation philosophy.

Samples

Sample 1b

The following reflects a scoring system that is based in part on total scores. Some of the following categories are also used for salary planning.

Top 5%: Those whose performance ranked among top 5% of peers.

Top Quintile: Those whose performance ranked among top 20% of peers (*i.e.* those in the 6th to 20th percentile).

- Outstanding: Performance clearly exceeded requirements of the position. Most planned objectives were achieved with results beyond established goals. Major accomplishments were made in addition to planned objectives. Quality and timeliness of results is consistently beyond the basic expectations of the job.
- Very Good: Results against planned objectives generally met goals. There were no critical areas where accomplishments were less than planned. Any minor shortfalls in results were counterbalanced by solid accomplishments in other areas, so that the overall job met expectations.

Lower 5%: Those whose performance ranked among the bottom 5% of peers.

Not Acceptable: those whose performance failed to meet important planned objective; or do not have solid accomplishments in day-to-day performance; or do not adequately contribute to team effort; or otherwise fail to meet company standards.

Progressing: Typically this employee is new to the Company or in a significantly different assignment. Normally this rating would apply only during the first year in the new job.

Another method that can be used alone or with other rating methods is to assign points based on the value of the rated trait to the company.

Example A trait such as punctuality may be critical to one company and not as important to another. Additionally, the value of a trait may vary based on the actual job.

Example Therefore, punctuality may not be critical when rating an executive but may be absolutely critical when evaluating a customer service representative.

For further information, see [§1011](#).

Overall Rating

The overall rating may be expressed as a category such as "above average" or a number that converts to a rating (and in some programs may equate to a fixed percentage increase).

Other programs may have narrative overall or summary ratings.

Employee Assessment

Commonly, this is a blank area on the form where an employee may document their personal assessment of their performance over the period under review. The employee may also be encouraged to use this part of the form to document reasons why the employee was unable to achieve established goals or document other mitigating circumstances.

Sample 1

IMPORTANT! Part 3 to be completed by the employee being evaluated prior to the appraisal interview. The superior should provide the employee with this part at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the interview. It should be reviewed jointly by the employee and the supervisor during the interview.

[each of the following is a separate area on the performance appraisal form]

Self-Assessment: You are encouraged to comment on your performance during the period covered by this report. Particular emphasis should be given to any circumstances which affected your performance either positively or adversely.

Personal Improvement: What do you plan to do during the next appraisal period to improve your performance? How, in your opinion, can your supervisor and/or the Company help you improve?

Career Interest (Optional): Which functional area do you prefer next? Geographic preferences?

Sample 2

In addition to a generalized section for the employee to describe their performance, some companies allow information to be provided as illustrated in the following example.

List personal development objectives met during this period of performance review. For each objective, please rank its importance to the Company separately from its importance to you, why the objective was important and the degree of accomplishment.

Future Objectives/Actions

This section is reserved to describe what the future goals and objectives are and what actions the employee must take. Typically, these become the factors that are reviewed at the next evaluation.

Sample 1

DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN: What specific actions will be taken by the supervisor and/or the employee to improve the employee's performance? What actions, if any, are recommended to prepare this employee for possible future assignments? Indicate who (supervisor, employee, others) will initiate the actions and when it will take place.

Sample 2

The following example has three separate areas dedicated to this summary:

- Summary of strengths and achievements.
- Summary of areas where improvements can be made.
- Specific actions to be taken over the next year (e.g. training programs, change in procedures, new job assignments, etc.)

Sample 3

As above, the following example reflects separate areas on the form.

- Summary of objective results which met/exceeded expectations.
- Objective results which did not meet expectations.

Summary

Some forms provide for a separate area for summary comments in addition to the segments described above. In most cases, it is simply labeled "summary" and used as a recap of the review.

Employee Comments

This place on the form is usually provided, even if there are other areas for the employee to provide input or comments. This area provides a place for the employee to react to the evaluation itself as well as to other topics.

Sample

EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

Do you agree/disagree with the review: Why?

Can your supervisor provide any additional assistance which you both agree would further contribute to your overall effectiveness and/performance development?

Signatures and Approvals

The following information is commonly found:

- Signature of employee.
- Printed name of employee.
- Date signed by employee.
- Signature of rater.
- Printed name of rater.
- Title of rater.
- Date signed by rater.
- Date of next appraisal.

Some forms may indicate that the employee signature denotes that the employee has read and understands the review. Other forms may indicate that the signature does not indicate agreement with the results of the review.

Additional Review and Comments

Many forms call for a next level management to review and approve the appraisal. Some systems may require a review and signoff by a designated human resources reviewer.

Other systems may provide quarterly or other periodic reports to the performance appraisal on file. In that event, there would be an area for check-off noting that the periodic update had been received and included in the official file.

(CCH; 12/08)