



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### **Shifting Focus**

Everyone wins in an organization when the focus on employee shifts from evaluation to performance development. However in a traditional set up most managers find performance appraisals are difficult to conduct and they obtain limited results. Managers are often provided with neither an appraisal process nor tools - usually just a written form. They are expected to make, annually, subtle and accurate observations about their subordinates performance and behavior for the entire year.

Moreover, they are also required to convey the evaluation in a way that will motivate employees to improve.

It's no wonder that appraisals usually fail to motivate or to develop employees. Simply shifting the focus from evaluation to employee performance development will alter it.

### **Clarify and Align Goals**

A true performance development process begins with a one-on-one meeting between manager and employee. The manager asks, "Together, how can we reach our goals?" Goals at all levels, from individual to organizational, are discussed.

To maximize performance, employees must feel that helping the organization reach its goals also benefits them personally. It is the manager's responsibility to help individual employees and teams understand their place in the larger organizational scheme.

### **Agree on Standards**

Once managers and employees agree on goals, job responsibilities, and individual objectives, they must address the types of behaviors that describe "good" and "exceptional" performance. This discussion can be contentious. Yet it is critical, because it establishes the standard against which people can measure themselves and others.

### **Use a System**

Clarifying goals and agreeing on standards are essential aspects of a performance management system that must be at the heart of all appraisal processes. The success of everything that follows - documenting performance, coaching, recognizing achievement, taking mid-course corrective action, writing and delivering the formal appraisal - depends on having in place clearly-defined responsibilities, objectives, and standards of performance that reflect individual and organizational needs.

When a manager and an employee begin with a common understanding of what they want to accomplish, and both take responsibility for seeing that it gets done, the appraisal process becomes a performance development exercise. That's what it should be: a positive, motivating experience for both parties that support employee excellence on an on-going basis.