



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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The Discussion of the Year

Organizations conduct employee appraisals in order to give and receive feedback; help employees develop and grow; and have an objective means to make compensation and promotion decisions. In case traditional methods fail, experts advocate an ongoing dialogue between managers and employees throughout the year.

Making performance review one of the year's best discussions:

Before the performance review:

- Ask the employee to do a self-evaluation. These help HR because employees often list accomplishments that HR might have forgotten.
- Ask the employee for names of several people from whom HR can gather feedback. Ideally, the list will include a few employees, peers and internal/external customers.
- Base the evaluation on patterns of behavior, not on a one-time incident or the most recent events. Note these examples and refer to them during the review to illustrate the points.
- If necessary, check out the rating with the boss before telling the employee. There are instances where the manager's boss may not have been very happy because the manager had given the review before checking with him.
- Let the evaluation "cool" overnight and review it before giving it to the employee.

During the review:

- Nothing should be a surprise.
- Airtime should be approximately 60/40, with HR doing most of the talking. Tell the employee that the discussion will be open and two-way. Explain that the goal is to help the employee use his strengths, enjoy his job and grow.
- Be as specific as possible.
- Limit the areas to improve to the vital few.
- Spend enough time on the employee's strengths. A performance review is a perfect opportunity to motivate the employee and thank him for all his hard work.
- Use the discussion as an opportunity for coaching, not just evaluating.

After the review:

Set aside time to discuss the goals for the forthcoming year. This is also a great time to discuss the employee's career interests, so that HR can find ways to tie the employee's work to his own goals.