



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Appraisal Cops

Perhaps performance appraisal is the most misunderstood management tool in an organization though HR officials feel that performance appraisal is an important one.

Performance appraisals often do not get completed on time, with managers and supervisors hesitating to review performance. While HR professionals spend a lot of time urging managers to do their respective employees' appraisals, the appraisers look for a variety of reasons to delay the process.

It is uncomfortable to do performance appraisals because appraisers undertake them for the wrong reasons and wrong perspective. Managers and employees often can end up on opposite "sides".

Appraisals are generally used for determining pay increases and promotions and also focus on what went wrong. The following steps ensure an effective appraisal process:

Step 1: There should be less focus and stress on paperwork. When the emphasis on paperwork overshadows the real purpose of doing appraisals, then huge amounts of resources are wasted. Avoid it.

Step 2: HR professionals should stop believing that a ratings based form of appraisal will serve as protection against lawsuits by employees. The desire for false security is one-reason HR departments feel they need to pressure managers to get the forms rated; at least until their first lawsuit.

Step 3: Using an automated system for performance appraisal is a waste of money and time, because doing an appraisal is an interpersonal communication process. Even between two people, it's often not done well. HR professionals who prefer that route are doing charitable work for the vendors of the software.

Step 4: Managers may not understand the purpose of the printed appraisals forms supplied to them by the HR departments. This could be the reason for the delay for filling up of the forms. To avoid any confusion, HR departments should ensure that managers are given extensive training, not only about the nuts and bolts of the appraisal process, but about the whys and interpersonal parts of it.

Step 5: Similarly, employees should also be trained about their role in the appraisal process, because performance appraisals work only when employee and manager work together. Very few organizations offer anything but a superficial orientation to the appraisal process. That should be avoided.

Step 6: To make reluctant managers to do the appraisal, HR departments should make them feel useful.

Step 7: HR departments get stuck with the responsibility of getting appraisals done by managers.



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Though it is not their fault, it is a strong indicator that the system being used is failing or has failed. If a manager is not carrying out the responsibility, it is his boss that should be evaluating the manager. No appraisal system is going to work until each manager's boss makes it clear that getting it done is going to be a factor in the manager's own appraisal.

HR departments shouldn't be appraisal cops if anyone is to do that, it should be the manager's boss. Anything less is going to be a waste of time and effort.