

A Typical Set Up

Most organizations we work with have a well-intended system of annual performance reviews designed around items that can be scored on a scale of 1 to 5.

What We Actually See and Hear

“It’s time for annual performance reviews” followed by eye roll

“Annual” reviews happen every 16-36 months, if at all

Forgetting the great thing that happened 11 months ago

“I don’t give all 5’s” and the employee feels demotivated

Review gets tossed into a mystery file and has no effect at all

“Here are your opportunities for growth” and the employee feels scolded

A Better System

Hold (at least) quarterly performance reviews designed with and for the employee’s current and future development.

What Difference Will It Make?

What happens if you hold (at least) quarterly performance reviews designed with and for the employee's current and future development?

You develop trust between supervisor and employee.

You increase supervisor's competence.

You improve employee's performance.

You strengthen relationships between supervisor and employee.

You strengthen relationships among employees.

You increase the quality of communication between supervisor and employee.

You improve morale among employees.

You reduce conflict between supervisor and employee.

You decrease misunderstandings.

You directly address where standards are and are not being met.

You establish a culture of continuous improvement.

You increase supervisor's and employee's self-awareness.

Most importantly...

You do the right thing. Employees deserve honest and supportive feedback and professional development. Plus commitment to your organization and profession requires this kind of honesty and support.



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How to Create an Effective Performance Review System

Step 1

The supervisor will design the first performance review around the employee's job description. Choose a few elements or projects for the employee to work on and set clear, measurable expectations around those elements with a clear time frame. Depending on the job description, you may or may not be able to address every item in every performance review. Be realistic about what the employee can accomplish in the given time frame. This performance review will be one of many in an ongoing process, so no need to address everything all at once.

Step 2

Meet with the employee to go over the format for the performance review. This is NOT a review of the employee's performance but a conversation to set clear expectations. Schedule the date of the actual performance review. Make sure it is no more than 90 days later. It could be even shorter. You're practicing a new system, so more frequent check ins to start might be helpful. Ask the employee "Anything else we should include? Any another area you'd like to address?"

Step 3

At some point before the performance review meeting, both the supervisor and employee should write up some notes. Address each of the elements in the performance review. How did it go? What worked? What didn't? What will you do next?

Step 4

Have the Performance Review meeting with the employee. In the meeting, compare evaluations. Have the employee start. Your job is to listen closely and compassionately. When it's your turn, build on what the employee already said. Be sure to cover in detail what they're doing well so they can continue with confidence. When making corrections, stick to descriptions of observable behaviors – don't assign motives, don't assume what they're thinking and don't speak to attitude. Give specific, descriptive observations of what you saw or heard. Compare your observations to standards, mission or other expectations. Give conclusions of what they did well and what they need to improve. Coach areas of improvement using a future-oriented strengths perspective. Using what you know of their strengths, help them identify resources and build solutions for next steps. Restate what they did well in clear, unambiguous terms. Offer statements of gratitude. Make adjustments to the performance review with clear expectations for the next one. Schedule the next review within the next 90 days, if not sooner.

Some leaders/managers have had mentors in their career to help them develop the skills required for these sorts of conversations. Most of us have not had that kind of training. It may be that you'll need some support. We can help. [Contact us](#) for more information.



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