

FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE

Performance appraisals provide important feedback for measuring and improving productivity. But managers and employees both tend to dread them. One study found that 75 percent of the managers polled either put off, didn't prepare for or avoided appraisals altogether. Nevertheless, an appraisal is a tool to help the manager and the employee focus on continued job satisfaction. The American work ethic is changing and it is essential that motivators change with them.

For Good And For Bad

Every company has its own form of employee evaluation. It may range from poor to excellent. An appraisal form that does not reflect measurable goals may be so subjective that it is difficult and frustrating to use. A bad form is like handing out a report card. It does nothing to increase manager-employee relations and may be useless in litigation. However, doing nothing is worse. Avoiding the review process altogether demonstrates apathy and irresponsibility and creates a gap in employee accountability. It is a manager's job to help

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improve the company evaluation form and to make each employee's review a positive experience.

Traits Of A Good Appraisal

Job functions—There should be a detailed job analysis that identifies the crucial responsibilities of your employee's job. Select the five or six most important ones for measuring. **Performance indicators**—Choose at least three measurable or observable indicators of each job function. **Standards**—For each indicator establish a minimum, a satisfactory, and an outstanding performance level. Set the minimum level as "needing improvement," satisfactory as "adequate," and outstanding as "deserving reward."

American Work Ethic

In a Gallup poll, 88 percent of the workers said they considered it

important to do their best. Yet only 23 percent said they were putting forth a maximum effort. Researchers found that the reasons stemmed from motivational approaches and reward systems that failed to keep pace with changing attitudes and values. Today, many employees see the importance of hard work and believe a good job is a major source of personal satisfaction. A good manager can design creative programs to maximize each worker's potential.

Motivating Your Workers

Provide opportunities for self-development. Encourage the learning of new skills. Provide a climate for creativity. Allow more autonomy, and job satisfaction will rise. Promotions, extra training and challenging assignments will lead employees to do their best. Provide adequate resources so employees can do their job. Give them credit for good suggestions. Base raises on merit. Job perks and privileges should be linked to performance, not job title. Let employees know that hard work and excellence receive praise and rewards. 

