

THE APPRAISAL STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

For most staff, regardless of how their performance is measured, their appraisal interview is the only time that they can sit down with their manager and concentrate exclusively on their overall performance, as opposed to every-day task-related progress. That is why many staff treat appraisal very seriously and can be considerably demotivated if the appraisal interview is rushed or interrupted, making them feel that their work is neither valued nor understood.

It is important that staff understand the appraisal process, especially if they are new, or if a new appraisal system has been introduced. Otherwise, staff may be suspicious of the process: viewing the changes as an opportunity for management to avoid handing out expected performance-related increases or promotions.

That is why it is important to schedule adequate uninterrupted time in a suitably private setting for the staff appraisal interview, and to take time to listen to feedback and comments from the employee.

If a new appraisal scheme has been introduced, the employees who will be affected need to be briefed on the aims and benefits of the new scheme and the procedures need to be explained. There should be an opportunity for employees to voice any concerns that they may have about the new scheme. Once these are out in the open they can be addressed and hopefully alleviated.

IMPLEMENTING THE APPRAISAL

The key aspects of implementation are:

1. Pre-Appraisal Preparation

- Pre-appraisal meeting explaining appraisal process and objectives.
- Issue appraisal form for both appraiser and appraisee to complete prior to meeting.

2. Appraisal Meeting

- Build rapport with appraisee and put them at their ease.
- Arrange the setting so both you and the appraisee can give the appraisal your undivided attention.
- Set and agree the agenda with the appraisee.

3. Review Previous Results

- Ask questions.
- Allow appraisee to present self assessment on past performance.
- Feedback from manager with further input from appraisee.

4. Set Future Objectives

- Set SMART goals and objectives (see page 43) with emphasis on joint agreement.

5. Agree Appraisal

- Both parties agree appraisal outcomes in writing and sign off the appraisal form

6. Follow Up

- Regularly review to set objectives; update and review; evaluate and refocus.

THE PRE APPRAISAL MEETING

This meeting is an essential part of the appraisal process as it allows both the appraiser and appraisee to discuss the structure, content and timings of the appraisal. The manager should be aware that a member of staff new to appraisals may require some coaching on how to complete the form.

The meeting should be designed to cover the following:

- establish the agenda items
- explain the structure of the interview
- set out the importance of the appraisal
- outline the two distinct aspects of the appraisal
- show mutual benefit to the appraisee and the appraiser
- indicate what will and will not be discussed
- reassure the appraisee
- get confirmation on the completion of the pre appraisal form
- determine times, duration and location
- give sufficient time to prepare
- go over blank form with employee
- emphasise that their preparation is essential

A typical way of communicating the importance of the appraisal is given below:

“Hi Sarah, as you know your appraisal is in three weeks and I thought I’d let you know what will happen and also answer any questions you may have. I’ve booked the board room for 3pm on Thursday the 18th for two hours.

The purpose of the appraisal is to provide you with feedback about your job performance during the review period. I’ll need to know how you feel you’ve done over the last 12 months and then I’ll give you feedback on how I feel you have performed. It enables both of us to look ahead to agree objectives for the coming year and to agree a development plan for you.

I can’t stress enough that the appraisal is two way and your input is vital to its success. The next 12 months will be an exciting and challenging time for all of us and I want to ensure that you know what I’m expecting of you and for you to know how I’ll be supporting you and your development.

I’ll need you to fill in this self-appraisal form. It’s designed to enable you to reflect upon your past job performance and to plan ahead. It will help you make an effective contribution to your own appraisal. I’d like it back by next Thursday so I’ll run over the form with you now and if you’re still unsure about filling in anything on it let me know and I’ll help you.”