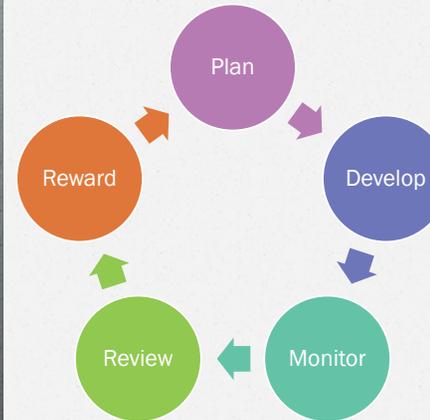


Performance Management: The Performance Appraisal

Linda Olson, Child Support Supervisor (Dakota)
Trish Skophammer, Child Support Assistant Director (Ramsey)
Linda Bixby, Economic Support Division Manager (Washington)

Overview

Performance management is the process that allows an organization to improve its effectiveness in the accomplishment of its mission and goals.



Performance Management System Components:

- **Plan** work and set standards
- **Develop** the capacity to perform,
- **Monitor** performance,
- **Review** performance in a prescribed process, and
- **Reward** quality performance.

- Create clear job descriptions
- Communicate the mission and goals
- Set performance standards
- Measure outcomes
- Involve staff in the process (what, why, how)
- Use the standards and measurements in performance appraisals
- Build in flexibility; things change

Plan



AT FIRST I LOVED A SIMPLE PLAN.
THEN I REALIZED, WITH CREEPING HORROR,
THAT THEY WERE SERIOUS.

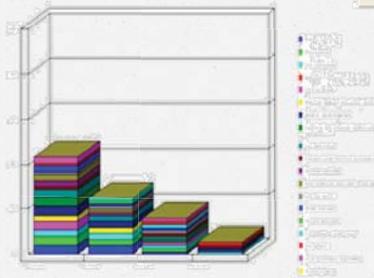
Develop



- Increase capacity through training
- Give assignments to gain new skills and take on more responsibility
- Encourage good performance
- Strengthen skill development
- Provide opportunities to keep up with a changing workplace (i.e., technology)

Monitor

- Consistently measure performance
- Provide regular feedback to employees and teams
- Track progress toward goals
- Provide an opportunity to make changes to unrealistic standards
- Identify areas for development/training
- Identify unacceptable performance prior to a formal review



Review

- Measure actual performance against expected performance
- Provide an opportunity for the employee and supervisor to exchange ideas and perspectives about job performance
- Identify training and development needs, and plan for career growth
- Support alignment of organizations and employee goals



Review

- Provide an instrument to compare performance among all employees
- Provide a process to look toward the future
- Provide the basis for determining compensation adjustment based on merit
- Provide legal protection against lawsuits for wrongful termination

Reward

- Acknowledge individual contributions and team successes
- Can be informal or formal
- Make it the normal course of doing business
- Has a big impact on:
 - ✓ staff commitment
 - ✓ how employees do their jobs
 - ✓ job satisfaction
 - ✓ workplace environment and image



The Performance Review...



Purpose of the Appraisal

- o Evaluate performance relative to the job classification
- o Determine if we're meeting the needs of clients and stakeholders
- o Improve as an office and as individuals
- o Promote innovation and efficiency

Purpose of the Appraisal

- o Improve communication between management and employees
- o Explore different and new assignments
- o Communicate strengths
- o Identify areas in need of improvement and create plans for improvement

Purpose of the Appraisal

- o Promote growth and development
- o Identify areas where training is needed
- o Recognize exceptional employees
- o Promote a culture of excellent and commitment to public service
- o Identify how managers can help

Components of a Review

- Assessment of technical knowledge and abilities
- Quality and quantity of work
- Degree and success in meeting goals
- Degree of success in defined work areas and traits
- Professional development
- Committee and workgroup involvement
- Setting new goals

General Tips

- **Be present**
 - ✓ Be available to observe your staff
 - ✓ Observations validate your data
- **Promote a performance culture**
 - ✓ Expect and support high performance
 - ✓ Communicate consistent messages about performance



General Tips

- **Relative performance is important**
 - ✓ Provide the context
 - ✓ Explain why it matters
- **Don't ignore performance problems**
 - ✓ Learn how to address issues
 - ✓ Practice
 - ✓ Address issues timely



Common Mistakes

- Inadequately defined, or misunderstanding of, performance standards
- Over-emphasis on recent performance
- Waiting for the evaluation to give feedback
- Reliance on gut feelings
- Being overly positive or overly negative
- Lack of appraiser preparation

mistake



Common Mistakes

- o Hesitance to make subjective conclusions
- o Viewing the appraisal as an isolated event rather than an ongoing process
- o Insufficient or unclear performance documentation
- o Inadequate time allotted for the discussion
- o Too much talking by the supervisor and/or not enough listening
- o Lack of a follow-up plan



Coffee Talk – Scenario 1



Tips for New Supervisors

- o Don't radically alter prior rankings without objective data
- o Review the previous performance evaluations
- o Review the previous supervisor's file
- o Consider expressing concerns verbally rather than in the performance evaluation, and then document the discussion
- o If you can't back it up, don't say it
- o Call peers in other counties for support, ideas and advice

Helpful
Tips

Documenting Critical Incidents and Significant Behaviors

Record these as soon as possible, stick to the facts:

Critical Incident

- o Event that is usually extreme
- o Good or bad

Significant Behaviors

- o Noteworthy conduct that impacts performance
- o Positive or negative

CONFIDENTIAL

Documentation

- Increases the accuracy of the performance appraisal
- Provides evidence to support ratings
- Guarantees that you will consider the performance during the entire review period
- Reduces bias that occurs when you rate only recent behavior
- Supports actions you need to take in the future



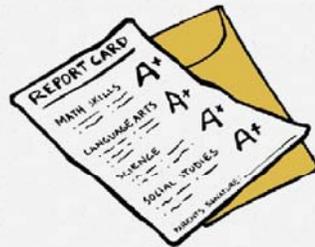
Appraisal Forms

- Poorly constructed forms can prevent good discussion
- Avoid rating inflation
 - ✓ Balance is important
 - ✓ Glowing evaluations don't motivate; everyone will know it's a fraud
- Understand the pitfalls of "rating scales"
 - ✓ Tendency for employees to focus on how they were "scored."
 - ✓ Often viewed as a "report card" or "grade."



Appraisal Forms

- The **emphasis should be on the narrative** (detail) of your evaluation, not on the actual rating assigned.
- **Squeeze the rating scale.** Example: "Sue performs on the high end of benchmark for her technical knowledge."



Moving Beyond Writer's Block

- Develop a system to track performance and behavior throughout the year
- Use the job description as a starting place
- Use objective, measurement-oriented language:
 - ✓ Don't overuse vague, generic terms such as "good" or "excellent"
 - ✓ Focus on action words: *exhibits, demonstrates, grasps, generates, manages, possesses, communicates, achieves*



Moving Beyond Writer's Block

- o Stick to the facts
- o Choose words that focus on performance, not personality
- o Add examples to illustrate your analysis
- o Complete the review over time, revisiting periodically until done



Moving Beyond Writer's Block

Resources

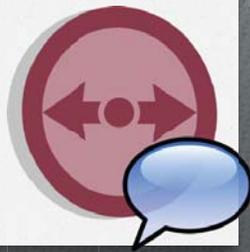
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Engaging Employees

Employees may hesitate to engage in the performance evaluation process when they:

- o Don't understand the purpose
- o Are afraid, or not given an opportunity, to express their opinion
- o Are not given time to prepare
- o Their thoughts and ideas are discounted
- o The process feels meaningless



Engaging Employees

Ideas:

- o Schedule regular informal check points to discuss work and goal progress
- o Discuss actual performance data/significant behaviors
- o Compare data with responsibilities/goals
- o Focus on finding solutions to problems, not on finding fault



Engaging Employees

- o Maintain a positive focus
- o Express confidence that there are solutions to problems
- o Solicit and use feedback from your employee relating to their performance, goal development and action plans
- o Provide recognition



Engaging Employees

- o Discuss specific actions for you and the employee to take
- o Coach when opportunities arise
- o Use two-way communication (see “*Conversation Starter*” handout)
- o Add a self-evaluation component to your review process



Coffee Talk – Scenario 2



Managing Employee Reactions

- o Give frequent feedback
- o Address performance problems timely
- o Be constructive; focus on performance not the person
- o Understand the job being performed



Managing Employee Reactions

- o Listen, even when you disagree
- o Acknowledge and address resistance & defensiveness
- o Explain but don't rehash what went wrong



Managing Employee Reactions

- o Describe what successful performance looks like
- o If there is disagreement, acknowledge it
 - ✓ A disagreement in perception exists
 - ✓ There are no right or wrong perceptions, but
 - ✓ You are the boss



Constructive Feedback

- o Express your concern
- o Use "I" messages
- o Be tactful and direct
- o Subtlety can create misunderstanding
- o Describe the behavior, don't judge it
- o Have examples to illustrate
- o Be cautious when using co-worker's input

Compliment →

Criticism →

Compliment →



Constructive Feedback

- o Assume the employee has positive intentions and express that
- o Understand the whole story
- o Listen, ask questions, confirm your understanding
- o Reinforce correct behavior
- o Describe the consequences
- o Describe the impact (employee, customer, etc)
- o Describe what you want to see in the future

Compliment →

Criticism →

Compliment →





Constructive Feedback

- Brainstorm alternatives; discuss the pros and cons of each
- Develop a plan
- Get employee commitment to work the plan
- Monitor progress
- Periodically discuss and provide feedback

Compliment →

Criticism →

Compliment →



Turning a Negative into a Positive



- Your work has been sloppy lately.” (**Negative:** too vague)
- “Your last three out of four TQRs showed incorrect PRISM coding medical support on SUOD.” (**Positive:** cites specifics)
- “You obviously have trouble understanding the statutory modification criteria.” (**Negative:** focuses on the person, not on performance)
- “I know you are capable of correctly applying the statutes to your work.” (**Positive:** reaffirms confidence in employees abilities)
- “Don’t let it happen again” (**Negative:** blanket demands)
- “How can we prevent errors from happening in future payment agreements?” (**Positive:** asks for feedback on improving performance).

Performance Communication

Regular check in meetings:

- Foster good communication
- Provide consistent work direction
- Promote innovation and efficiency
- Identify and build on strengths

Performance Communication

Allow for flexibility and adapt your style:

- Some will appreciate you asking about their kids and vacation
- Others want to get straight to the point
- Don’t overwhelm them with all the problems

Performance Communication

Questions to get the discussion going:

- How are things going?
- What committees or workgroups are you involved in?
- What are you waiting on from me?
- What is frustrating for you?
- What questions do you have?

You are the Supervisor and not the Psychologist

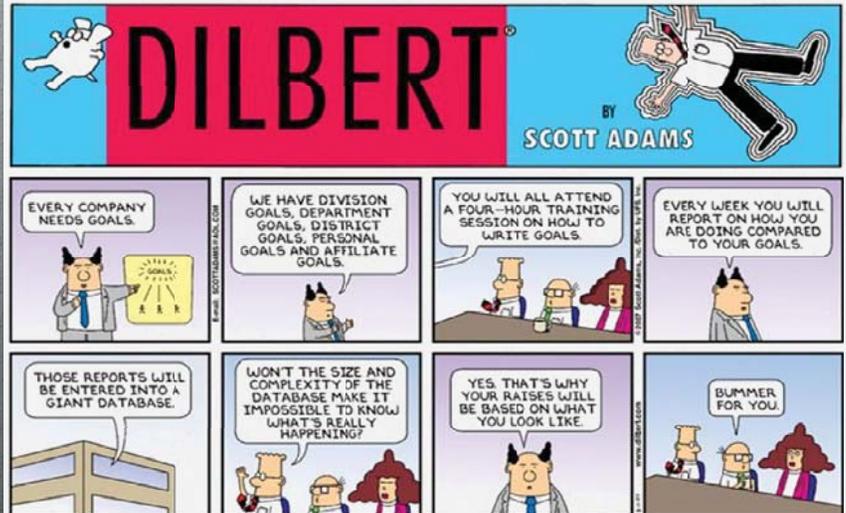
- Don't diagnose
- Don't be the confidant or counselor
- Don't assume that your employee has a mental health issue
- Be very careful about making informal accommodations
- Refer employees to your Employee Assistance provider as appropriate



Coffee Talk – Scenario 3



Goals



Goal Basics

What are goals?

- o Agreed-upon statement of what will be achieved in a specified period of time
- o Indicate how success will be attained
- o Sets parameters and define roles (how, who, when)
- o Should be measurable, attainable, moderately difficult and accepted by the employee



Goal Basics

Why should you have goals?

- o Aligns employee goals to organizational goals
- o Allows for measuring and recognizing achievement
- o Identifies and corrects performance problems
- o Identifies and directs focus to top priorities



Goal Basics

Goals



What can you focus on?

- o **Volume** of work : measures the amount of work performed
 - ✓ The number of court cases resolved by stipulation
 - ✓ The number of legal actions completed in 2011 compared to those completed in 2012
- o **Accuracy**: measures the degree to which the work is performed free of error, or the quality of work
 - ✓ The percentage of current support collected
 - ✓ The percentage of default orders receiving CSM deficiency notices
- o **Timeliness**: measures the duration it takes to perform the work
 - ✓ The number of days it takes for a case to move from case initiation staff to enforcement staff
 - ✓ The number of days it takes to serve process after locating an NCP

Goal Basics

How can you measure them?

- o **Monthly reports**: "Performance is acceptable when completed monthly reports are turned in no more than two times late in a twelve month period."
- o **Forecasting**: "Employee will bring to supervisor's attention when return phone calls fall behind by more than 48 hours."
- o **Observation (for Behavioral Goals)**: "Employee will not visit with co-workers outside of designated breaks."



Behavioral Issues & Goals

- o **Types:**
 - ✓ Increase general positive behavior that is expected
 - ✓ Decrease or eliminate specific problem behaviors
- o **Measurement:** Observation and feedback
- o **Timetable:** Immediately and ongoing (unless training is required beforehand)
- o **Observable:** Description should clearly state what the behavior looks like with no ambiguity
 - ✓ Describe as though you are taking a picture

Behavioral Issues & Goals

Examples

- ✓ (Name) will use face-to-face discussion rather than email to resolve conflicts (Measurement: Observation and Feedback)
- ✓ (Name) will not roll her eyes in unit meetings. (Measurement: Observation and Feedback)



Assessing Goal Accomplishment

- o Use a scale for rating goals that are easy to measure:
 - ✓ Did not meet goal
 - ✓ Partially met goal
 - ✓ Met goal
 - ✓ Exceeded goal
- o Use a frequency scale to rate behavioral factors since they are more complex or not easily quantifiable:
 - ✓ Rarely
 - ✓ Sometimes
 - ✓ Usually
 - ✓ Almost always



Coffee Talk – Scenario 4



What those Words in Performance

Reviews Really Mean 😊

- Outgoing Personality:** Always going to be out of the office
Good Communication Skills: Spends lots of time on personal phone calls
Work is First Priority: Too ugly to get a date
Independent Worker: Nobody knows what he/she does
Actively Social: Drinks a lot
Quick Thinker: Offers plausible excuses
Meticulous Attention to Detail: A nit picker
Has Leadership Qualities: Is tall or has a louder voice
Career Minded: Back Stabber
Loyal: Can't get a job anywhere else
Careful Thinker: Won't make a decision
Relaxed Attitude: Sleeps at desk

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The End...



That's all Folks!

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Performance Appraisals: Promoting a Two-Way Conversation



- Tell me about how you are doing in your job.
- Do you think your current tasks accurately reflect your written job description?
- What is the most interesting or exciting part of your job?
- What is the most challenging or frustrating part of your job?
- What gives you the most satisfaction in your work?
- How could we ensure you maintain or improve that satisfaction?
- Are there any other ways you and I could improve that satisfaction?
- Is there anything I could do; more or less of, or differently to improve your job satisfaction?
- In the morning, does your job make you jump out of bed or hit the snooze button?
- What makes for a great workday?
- What were your biggest challenges this past year?
- What would you like to do better and what resources do you need to meet your goals?
- Over the past twelve months, what was your most significant or outstanding accomplishment?
- What tasks did you do best or improve in the most over the past year?

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Performance Appraisals: Promoting a Two-Way Conversation

- Were there any problems or obstacles that you overcame that made you feel especially proud?
- Over the past twelve months, what tasks could you have performed better?
- How would you evaluate your performance against our previously agreed to goals?
- In what areas would you like more experience or training?
- What are you doing that you feel I am not seeing or noticing?
- How do you rate your performance?
- What do you think effective performance looks like for (define) part of your job?
- What needs to happen for you to find our annual performance appraisal meeting motivational for you?
- Are there any skills that you do not have now that you would like to develop?
- What are the specific things you need to do in the next 12 months for your own development?
- What courses, training, or experience especially benefited you during the past year?
- What could I have done, as your supervisor, to help you be more effective?
- What have I done to help or hinder your job performance?
- How do you feel your team is working?
- In the past year, what has your role been within your work team?
- How could you be more helpful to people on your team?
- How could I be more helpful to your team?
- In the past year, tell me what you have learned about the role you play in your team.
- Why do you think it's important to your team that you achieve these goals?

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Performance Appraisals: Promoting a Two-Way Conversation

- What specifically have you done within the past year to increase the value you contribute to your team (and/or our customers)?
- What is happening in the department that I am not seeing or noticing?
- What suggestions, ideas, concerns, do you have for yourself, or for the entire unit/department?
- If you could change one thing about our department, what would it be?
- What conditions here enable you, or make it hard, for you to do your best work?
- Do you have skills now that you are not using, or that you feel are under-used that you would like to use more?
- How will you know you are meeting your objectives?
- What do you think is the best way for us to monitor performance against this objective?
- What are your long range work plans (next three to five years)? How can the County assist you in achieving your goals?
- Which job responsibilities do you view as most important? Why?
- What would help you to do your job better and provide greater job satisfaction?
- Have any new responsibilities been added or removed from your job this year? If so, what?
- What do you want most from your job?
- Thinking of the future, if you could create your dream role within our department, what would it look like?
- When you do a great job, how do you like to be recognized?
- Thinking about the best supervisors you have had over the years, how do you like to be supervised?

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GOAL EXAMPLES

Technical and Professional Knowledge

- Increase modification court order outcomes. (Target Date: December 31, 2012; Standard: Obtain a minimum of 100 court orders for modification, which is a 25% increase over 2011 outcomes).
- Develop and implement a legal document template for medical-only modification stipulations (Target Date: July 1, 2013; Parameters: Obtain county attorney feedback and input in development of this legal document; work with Office Support II to make document available to staff; disseminate process to affected staff in a unit meeting).
- In paternity cases, where the applicant is not a biological parent of the child(ren) and the ALF is unknown, close the case if the ALF remains unknown after diligent efforts have been made to establish paternity, including interviewing the applicant, using case closure reason code **910-Biological Father Unknown**.
- Meet federal locate requirements in paternity and establishment cases (Target Date: Immediately and ongoing; Standard: 75% of cases will be correct for this measure):
 - ✓ Within 75 days of a case moving to LO (locate) function, initiate and document manual locate attempts, and if NCP/ALF remains unlocatable, create a CAVT to review in one year. Manual locate includes a CP locate questionnaire, or phone contact, and credit header (unless the case is a paternity case).
 - ✓ Within 5 working days of receipt, review and follow up on incoming automated locate data.
 - ✓ Within 10 working days of determining NCP/ALF may be out of state, initiate manual locate to that state via NCMR and assess the case for long arm jurisdiction
 - ✓ Process a "New Hire" within two days of receipt.
- Complete a health care coverage review of enforcement caseload, reviewing court ordered terms and enforcement medical provisions of order against PRISM coding. Update PRISM to reflect court order terms. Review NCD/CPID against NCPD/CPID for insurance availability. (Target Date: May 1, 2013, with quarterly status reports to supervisor in conferences; Goal Parameters: Data warehouse and Infopac reports will be used to help meet this goal).
- When employment ends for a CP or NCP, review SUOD for medical language, and update CPPD/NCPD accordingly. Initiate follow up with the employer as needed to obtain insurance end date data (Target Date: Immediately and ongoing).
- When SOP falls at an NCP home address, arrange for service through his/her employer. (Target Date: Immediately and ongoing).

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GOAL EXAMPLES

Builds Effective Work Relationships

- Attend county-sponsored training ("*The Professional Edge and How to Get It*" on (date) and "*Ethics in the Workplace*" on (date)) and apply concepts learned to take responsibility for decisions and exhibit the boundaries needed to maintain healthy professional relationships and a productive work environment.
- On a monthly basis, beginning in September 2012, meet with me and initiate a discussion where you provide me with three times you recognized the potential for negative interaction with a co-worker but were able to address and resolve the interaction in a team oriented, respectful, and positive manner.

Provides High-Quality Service

- When communicating with CPs and NCPs/ALFs by phone or in person, verify:
 - ✓ Address (CPDD/NCDD)
 - ✓ Employer data (CPD/NCID)
 - ✓ Phone number(s) (NCDE/CPDE)
 - ✓ Email addresses (NCEC/CPED)
 - ✓ Insurance data for joint children (CPPD/NCPD)
 - ✓ Nonjoint children data (CPHD/NCHD)(**Target Date:** Immediately and ongoing; **Goal Parameters:** This communication will occur during all in-person and phone contact with customers and goal achievement will be measured by documentation of actions on CAAD).
- Increase core and technical competencies, to provide high quality service to our customers, by completing a minimum of 16 hours of training as recommended in the county's training model. Trainings may be obtained by county-sponsored or CSED-sponsored course offerings, training conferences, or self study of child support policies and procedures. (**Target Date:** September 30, 2012)

Work Habits and Traits:

- Maintain a PTO balance sufficient to handle unplanned time off requests. (**Target Date:** Immediately and ongoing; **Goal Parameters:** Use of *Board Leave Without Pay with Benefits*, activity code 974, will not be utilized without approval of the department head)
- Be to your desk and ready to work by 8:00 a.m. each morning. This will be tracked by you emailing yourself each morning when you get in. (**Target Date:** Immediately and ongoing with progress discussion at monthly conferences)
- Before seeking out the assistance of a lead worker and/or supervisor, review CSED and internal policies and procedures. When you approach a lead worker or supervisor with a policy/procedures question, have all of the case facts and articulate them in a clear, concise and sequential manner. Offer a potential answer/solution to your question/issue, along with your reasoning. (**Target Date:** Immediately and ongoing, with progress discussion at monthly conferences)

Confronting Poor Performers: Tips for Supervisors

No Supervisor looks forward to having to have "the talk" with an employee that is not meeting standards. Remember that when you approach people in a fair, problem solving manner you will have better results. Be prepared, the employee will likely respond in two ways, they will either improve their performance or move. (Moving or finding other employment may not always be a bad thing)

Use these tips to help you prepare:

- Be Specific:** If the problem is the employee is late every Monday let them know that. Avoid using exaggerations such as "You are totally unreliable." Instead say "This is the third Monday this month that you have been 10 minutes late." If you have dealt with this issue in the past, be specific and say explain that to them "We spoke about this in June and now again in August. This is not acceptable for you to continue to be late."
- Focus on the Business Reasons:** always refocus the employee on the business reason for your comments. Example: "Customers rely on us to be ready when they have questions or problems they may need resolved".
- Give Timely Feedback:** Feedback should be an ongoing process, not just tossed out at the annual performance review. Poor performers require more feedback, not less. Make them aware immediately if they have made a mistake.
- Consider employee's personality:** Everyone handles feedback differently. If you have an employee who wants straightforward communication, be frank, you can say "you gave the customer wrong information, because you didn't have an updated manual, how do you think we should handle this?", or for the more sensitive employee you might say "I understand you provided the customer with this information, are you aware that the guidelines have changed? What do you suggest we do in this situation?"
- Check for Understanding:** After you have had "the talk" with the employee, ask them to summarize their understanding of the situation. Make sure you use your listening skills and let them talk. Ask them to lay out the action steps or accountabilities that were discussed.
- Keep a paper or electronic file trail of your discussions:** Good documentation allows you easily identify when the performance improves. It will also help you when you sit down to write the annual performance review.