

Evaluating Employees the Right Way

Performance reviews are a great opportunity to reinforce solid performers and help get poor ones back on track. Done the right way, the process of evaluating employees can improve employee performance. Here are 3 tips on how to evaluate your employees in the best way.

1. Set Expectations Early

The goals and tasks for employees shouldn't be a surprise in the evaluation period. Many human resources professionals recommend developing a [performance plan](#) for all workers.

For top performers, this can include reach or stretch assignments for a promotional path. For good performers, it focuses on maintaining their strong qualities. If you have someone who needs to bring their performance up, the plan includes specific ways to improve.

So at performance appraisal time, employees are evaluated according to their plan. Top performers may be promoted if they have done well. Good performers will continue to support the company with strong performance. Poorer performers will either have improved, if they met the goals of their plan, or will need additional action.

2. Coach Constructively

Employee evaluations can be stressful for both managers and employees, both because the feedback can seem very personal and it can have major effects on salaries and promotional paths.

To eliminate the [personal](#) tone that might come across by targeting "good" or "bad" performance, focus on a "stop-start-continue" model. In "stop-start-continue," you use current performance to indicate whether an employee should stop a given behavior or method, start a new behavior or method, or continue what they are doing.

3. Have the Conversations That Need to Be Had

It's important to be direct in the evaluation. Transparency for top and good performers will likely be relatively easy in terms of goals. However, many managers may tend to be less direct if strong performers request raises or promotions that company performance or departmental needs make unlikely or unfeasible. If you know that their desires are not likely to be met, it is best to be as direct as possible for the sake of the ongoing relationship.

Managers may also become somewhat uncomfortable being direct with poor performing employees who need improvement — or didn't improve at the end of a specific period. It is best to be direct here as well, so the employee can plan.

Bring in human resources for these discussions if necessary. They are experienced and can facilitate the conversations that need to be had.

A staffing agency can help with performance assessments. Do you want advice from seasoned staffing professionals? We're happy to help.