



Talent Management Perspectives

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Eight Tips for Effective Performance Feedback

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Delivering performance reviews - in a formal manner on an annual basis or as part of a weekly feedback session - can generate anxiety for even the most seasoned talent managers and HR professionals. Still, increasing the frequency and quality of performance reviews will go a long way toward ensuring a high-performance workforce.

Here are eight tips that can help better prepare managers to deliver meaningful performance reviews and, ultimately, improve the development and morale of their employees.

Do your homework. In order to assess an employee's performance, managers need a comprehensive view of their employees' work throughout the time frame being reviewed and should collect all relevant information before moving forward.

Look at the whole picture. When reviewing an employee or contingent worker, managers must consider work, skills and demonstrated effort. It's important not only to consider how well the employee fulfilled his or her job responsibilities, but also how this employee's performance compares with that of others in the same job. Which competencies were demonstrated that supported or enhanced performance? Also, did the employee seek to align his or her behavior with the values of the company, demonstrating a desire to drive better results and greater efficiencies?

Create the right setting. Performance reviews should be conducted behind a closed door. As eager as managers may be to deliver well-prepared feedback, they must remember to listen as much as they talk so that the performance review is conversational.

Communicate expectations and results clearly. Managers can reduce the inherent subjectivity by discussing and agreeing on as many measurable results as possible. For example, if the stated goal for a sales representative was to make 10 new prospect sales calls per week, then it's harder to argue about results when performance review time rolls around and, on average, only three weekly calls were made.

Include the positive. To keep employees motivated, managers must recognize their accomplishments. This extends to all members of the workforce: temp workers, consultants, traditional employees and subcontractors. Additionally, while performance reviews should be conducted in private, positive feedback is often best served in front of others.

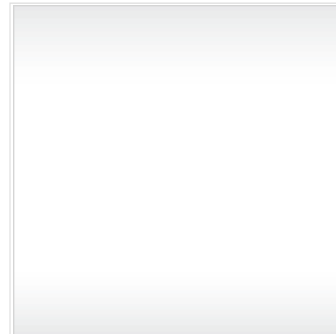
Make feedback frequent and informal. Going an entire year without feedback is like having a toothache in need of a dentist. Employees need to know how they're performing in their jobs - and this is especially true in the case of new employees or temporary workers, who need to have early feedback on a regular basis.

Keep documentation. Detailed records should be kept to document any performance problems as well as progress and accomplishments discussed. These records need to be dated and the corresponding expectations and next checkpoint noted. This will not only serve to refresh a manager's memory, but it can also serve as documentation in the event of promotional opportunities or legal or disciplinary actions that could develop.

Plan for the future. Managers must ensure that discussions for future development are actionable by turning them into development plan documents, in concert with the respective employee. They must be clear about expectations regarding results, evidence and timing of progress.



Steve Lopez is vice president at Veritude, a provider of temporary staffing, direct hire and managed services programs. He has more than 20 years of experience specializing in the areas of leadership and organizational development.



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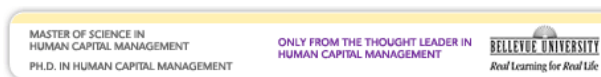
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