

REVIEWS

GUIDELINES:

Employee evaluations are a challenging but essential practice that can help employers and their employees align on shared goals, review past challenges, celebrate accomplishments, and set forth a game plan for future improvements.

A well-conducted employee review can help motivate an employee to thrive in their career, and help employers get better quality work from their team members. Employee evaluations are also an opportunity to course-correct problems, lay the groundwork for a team member's advancement within the company and create helpful documentation for HR concerns.

However, poorly conducted evaluations can leave workers feeling confused, dejected and unengaged.

Ensure your performance evaluations benefit you and your employees by trying these six pieces of advice.

Prepare all feedback ahead of time

Don't walk into an evaluation empty-handed, and don't plan to fill out the employee evaluation form during your meeting with the employee. Instead, take time to compile your thoughts and feedback in advance and use your evaluation document as a framework for the meeting. By having all comments formulated beforehand, you can ensure the meeting stays on track, and you don't miss any critical points.

Keep your remarks clear and concise

If you're not direct and transparent when delivering employee evaluations, you risk

employees leaving the meeting with confusion around goals or misconceptions about your expectations. The best way to guarantee clarity is to use specifics whenever possible. For instance, if you've given an employee a low score for time management, share examples of missed deadlines, or times when other teammates had to pick up their slack.

The same holds true for goal setting, too. Make sure each goal includes a timeframe and method of measurement, so employees know exactly how you'll determine whether they've succeeded or failed.

Provide employees with a copy of the completed evaluation form

While employees often enter performance reviews hoping to hear news about a potential raise or promotion, having the opportunity to receive honest feedback about their professional performance is something most workers value, too. By issuing employees a copy of their completed evaluation form—or at least a portion of the form—you'll give your team members something to reference and help them stay on track to make the improvements you've outlined.

Keep employee review meetings a two-way conversation

Rather than lecturing an employee on the many things they need to improve and then sending them on their way, make sure the meeting is an open conversation. Give employees a chance to share their self-assessment, such as their greatest strengths, their biggest challenges and where they believe they should improve in the month, quarter or year ahead.

If an employee is quiet and doesn't seem comfortable speaking up, engage them by asking questions like:

- What's the one accomplishment from the review period that makes you most proud?
- Where do you think you've made the most progress since your last review?
- In what areas would you say you need the most improvement?
- How can I support you in meeting your goals?

End with a focus on the future

Discussing negatives, like recent failures or areas where employees have scored poorly, are uncomfortable for both managers and employees—but they must be addressed. After you've discussed these things, it's time to shift towards the future, outline new goals and share your plans for improvement. Be sure employees understand you're on their side, you want them to succeed and you're always available to chat through their challenges and concerns.

By ending on a forward-focused and positive note, the employee is more likely to leave the meeting feeling motivated and hopeful rather than criticized and discouraged.