

Manager checklist for appraisals

Appraisals can be daunting, both for the Manager and the team member. All too often they are hastily scheduled into calendars to meet a deadline set by HR with minimal preparation and a tickbox attitude to the process. So what can you do as a Manager to ensure you conduct a positive, effective appraisal?

Firstly, it's all about the preparation!

You need to ensure you have evidence of successes (or possibly failures!) Perhaps gather some information from other members of the company who have interacted with your team member, and that you are entering the meeting with an open mind to really listen to what your team member is telling you.

Secondly, let's be honest!

Open and honest communication between both parties will make all of your interactions (not just appraisals) much more successful, as you are creating a culture of trust and transparency that will only lead to more positive results.

Thirdly, no surprises please!

The appraisal isn't a time to spring a huge surprise on someone (from either side of the table.) Performance Management isn't a once yearly activity; you should have been having regular checkin's (or 1:1's) with your team throughout the year and addressing issues as they have arisen. If someone drops a bombshell during an appraisal then your communication has broken down.

Let our Manager Checklist help.

By using this checklist, and the information you and your team member have collected throughout the year via clear objectives/targets, regular check-ins, career aspiration discussions and recording development actions (no it's not difficult to collate all that information, if you use Actus[™] Software – it's as easy as pressing a button) the length of your appraisals will be reduced, and feel considerably less painful than they might once have been.

Print this checklist before your appraisals and make them as successful as possible!



Before the appraisal

- Set up a time and date for the appraisal with your employee in a private location, and make sure you will definitely be there.**
Nothing says “I have more important things to worry about” than a manager rescheduling an appraisal, especially if it happens multiple times!
- Ask your employee to come up with a summary of the things they have accomplished this year and to provide evidence.**
If you use our performance management system Actus[™] the evidence should easily be found, as you are able to record everything within it throughout the year. Ask the employee to also think about what these accomplishments have highlighted about their performance, so they can start thinking of how they would like to improve. This will help inform the objectives you set together for the next business year.
- Review the objectives the member of staff was set last year yourself, and analyse their performance against them, preparing notes for the appraisal.**
Using Actus[™] you can look at the comments you’ve made against their objectives, the milestones that have been input, or the notes recorded during one to one’s. Going in unprepared is another way to demonstrate to your employee that you’re not interested!
- Consider the temperament and communication style of the employee.**
Every member of staff is going to react differently, so don’t assume one style will suit all in your approach and delivery. We’ve written before about the benefits of a coaching style of management – this is something you could perhaps try.
- If you use ratings, make an initial judgement on a rating you feel is applicable to the employee.**
It doesn’t have to be set in stone – it may adjust during the appraisal.
- Take a look at our infographic on bad appraisals below**
to get an idea of what you really shouldn’t do!



During the appraisal

- Invite the employee to begin the appraisal with a summary of how they feel they have performed over the past six months/year.**
This will give you an indication of how they feel before you drill down into topics you want to raise, and will inform how you proceed. In the U.K employees tend to rate themselves performing at a lower rating than they actually are, so this step is important.
- Explore the evidence.**
You will both have evidence taken from your performance management system to support your views, which will fuel your discussion, and help define their rating. How does this evidence demonstrate they have achieved their objectives? Make a note of any objectives that have not been achieved.
- Review development that has taken place.**
How has it aided the employee to perform better? Do they feel they have been more successful at their job since taking a course, or completing some on the job learning? Is there any further development needed in the next year that would help to close any other skills gaps?
- Decide on a performance rating together.**
- Draft objectives for the next year.**
Using everything you have discussed during the appraisal, you and the employee probably highlighted areas for improvement throughout. You can input them within Actus[™] together, and they will always be available to look at. You can also take this opportunity to record development actions if they have been agreed, and set a date for their completion. Actus[™] sends you reminders when completion dates are approaching, so you can arrange one to one meetings after the development action has been completed.

We have lots of resources on appraisals and how to conduct them well. You can find out more information, download our free white paper outlining the 7 simple steps to appraisals, or take a look at our infographic on bad appraisals. Alternatively, contact us for a free demo, where we will show you how Actus[™] can help revolutionise your appraisal process.



Eight facts about bad performance appraisals

How do you feel about your performance appraisals? Most people find them more of a chore than an opportunity to get good feedback and improve their performance. This infographic highlights some of the big issues around bad appraisals – but remember, appraisals can be very useful if handled well!

PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE U.S FOUND EMPLOYEES WITH A DESIRE TO IMPROVE ARE **SIGNIFICANTLY BOTHERED** WHEN THEY RECEIVE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

ALMOST HALF OF HR FEEL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS DO NOT TRULY REPRESENT EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

20% OF EMPLOYEES FEEL THEIR APPRAISAL PROCESS IS **UNFAIR**

58% OF COMPANIES SURVEYED CONTINUE TO USE EXCEL SPREADSHEETS OR **PAPER FOR APPRAISALS**

30% OF EMPLOYEES ARE DEMOTIVATED BY BAD APPRAISALS

MANY COMPANIES HAVE IDENTIFIED AN ISSUE WITH **PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS** BUT **AREN'T DOING ANYTHING TO FIX IT**

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ONLY BETWEEN **35-40% OF COMPANIES** DO PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS WELL

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT **WILL BE LOWER** WHEN STAFF DO NOT LIKE THE APPRAISAL PROCESS

As performance appraisals are usually carried out by line managers rather than HR professionals, it is important managers understand how appraisals contribute to the overall goals of the performance management process.

TO FIND OUT HOW TO STOP BAD APPRAISALS VISIT www.actus.co.uk

<http://www.i4cp.com/trendwatchers/2013/10/31/performance-management-sticking-with-what-doesn-t-work>
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/danpontefract/2015/03/31/only-55-percent-of-employees-feel-as-though-performance-management-appraisals-are-effective/#3f944e053bb2>
<https://hbr.org/2012/06/crowdsourcing-your-performance-r>
<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/should-performance-reviews-be-fired/>
<http://dupress.com/articles/hc-trends-2014-performance-management/>
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201402/why-performance-appraisals-dont-improve-performance>
<http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/performance-appraisal.aspx>

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