

7 SIMPLE STEPS TO APPRAISALS



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Introduction

Performance Appraisals, if badly structured and poorly managed can cause significant damage and demotivate your staff sometimes to the point where they leave the organisation. There have been reports of some companies removing the formal appraisal process and replacing it with ongoing performance conversations and feedback – but the irony is that this is what a good performance appraisal should already be about! In this 7 Simple Steps to Appraisals we look at how the appraisal should be a continuation of what is going on all year round and prove that it doesn't have to be a once a year laborious tick box exercise for both manager and employee but an engaging summary dialogue to drive both development and results.

1.

What is the purpose of an appraisal?

- An appraisal is a formal meeting to discuss, evaluate and record employee performance against set objectives within a given period
- They can be held during the year to assess progress, remotivate and focus the employee
- They can also be used to objectively assess and rate behaviours or performance



2.

What types of appraisal are there?

Mid-year

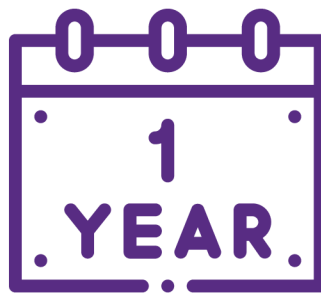
- Discussion of performance resulting in a projected performance rating for year end
- A mid year appraisal should really be a mini version of an end of year appraisal. It may include discussing progress against objectives and updating or amending them if needed. It can also include a discussion around behaviours against competencies or values. Depending on your organisation, it may include a conversation about development needs and also an indicative performance rating if that is relevant to your process. The mid- year appraisal is essential for re-focusing people and preventing any nasty surprises for people at the year end.

End of year

- This is going to be similar to the mid-year appraisal but with a specific focus on what has been achieved this year and what the focus should be for next year. It is important to include conversation about career aspirations or next steps at this point to show you value your people and to keep them motivated. If you use performance ratings, that should be an output of this meeting, but not the overall focus.

Quarterly

- A shorter, lighter version of the mid-year



3.

What should be covered?

- How well the individual is meeting the requirements of their role or job description (if defined)
- Clarifying role requirements and relevance of these documents if they exist
- Progress against objectives, targets or KPI's
- Constructive discussion about performance against ratings (if relevant)
- Development needs or career aspirations if not covered elsewhere during the year
- Constructive feedback and coaching around future goals, plans and expectations

4.

When should they be held?



At least once a year, ideally twice a year or even quarterly if that aligns with the needs of your organisation (They should be supported by regular 1 to 1 conversations as well).

5.

How long should an appraisal take?

An appraisal should take between 60 minutes to 3 hours depending on the frequency over the course of the year. It is important for both parties to prepare thoroughly so they can focus on a constructive conversation when together. Documentation (whether electronic or paper) should be light touch and ideally concluded during the meeting.



6. How do I conduct an appraisal?

- If you use an online performance management system such as Actus then you can schedule your appraisals in advance so that diary time is booked and both parties have sufficient time to prepare
- At least 30 minutes of preparation is usually required by both parties and any supporting evidence of achievements collated
- They should be held face-to-face and definitely in private (an employee will be extremely uncomfortable discussing their performance in an open environment)
- If both parties have been following the 4 point Actus continuous appraisal model and having regular 1 to 1's throughout the year then there should be no nasty surprises during the appraisal as the culture of transparency and trust has already been created



7.

Important To Remember

- As a manager if you move/cancel or are late for these meetings it sends a message to your employee about how much you value them
- It is essential to prepare and bring behavioural evidence to support your view on the individual's performance rating
- Be open minded and listen to the individual's opinion and evidence to support their own performance rating
- Manage expectations and use mid-year ratings to challenge higher performance
- These meetings should be motivational but realistic



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