



## PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS: SOME PRACTICAL TIPS

1. Don't rely on gimmicks. The best "canned" appraisal plan will not relieve you of your responsibility for making decisions about an employee's job competence. The best way to evaluate performance is to work with the employee daily: observing performance during routine moments, during stressful moments, and during a variety of assignments.
2. Don't save up your criticisms. A good leader gets fingertip control from knowledge of her people. If you tell employees when they have done well or when they have not done well, and do it in a natural way when it happens, their resentment of criticisms can be minimized—and their appreciation of praise will be genuine. If you hoard your fault-finding and lump it together in a single grueling session held once or twice a year, you'll make the situation exceedingly difficult on both you and the worker.
3. Evaluate yourself first. Before you can call an employee on the carpet for a substandard job, ask yourself frankly: "Has my leadership contributed in any way to this deficiency?" "Did I expect too much?" "Did he understand my instructions and expectations?" "Did she have the proper training to accomplish the task?" "Is my criticism absolutely fair and not the product of bias or other outside influence?"

Answer these questions honestly and objectively. Such objectivity enables you to discuss an employee's shortcomings in a constructive manner. **Your willingness to accept accountability for mistakes will make the worker more willing to shoulder her own responsibility.**

4. Make sure the employee has an understanding of the work that you do. Once the worker appreciates the work you do, the worker will likely be more attentive to the expectations you have placed on the worker and the reasons therefore.
5. Encourage the worker to participate in the evaluation. You may find they never realized that they were accountable for certain parts of their work, which you claim they were neglecting. You will only understand your staff's view of their job if you hear it from them.
6. Get down to specifics. Vague generalities don't get you anywhere with the employee, and it will not correct any job shortcomings. Explain in clear-cut and specific language where you feel the employee is falling short and what he can do to correct the shortcomings. Make certain they understand precisely what standards you expect him to meet.

7. Criticize the work, not the person. AVOID personalities when discussing an employee's job performance. Certainly there are exceptions, like when the employee's attitude is affecting job performance. In general, confine your remarks to the job and job performance itself.
8. Don't try to be funny. Many supervisors make the mistake of trying to hide criticism behind humor. Sarcasm and irony are rarely successful. An employee's competence at work is a serious matter to both you and the employee and should be treated as such. Your job is to build a productive employee team, and to do that you must maintain a serious, professional relationship.
9. Comment on improvements and strong points. If an employee corrects a shortcoming which you have identified as needing a correction, let them know you have observed this improvement. They will realize that you don't hold past mistakes against them and are quick to change your opinions when the previous opinions are no longer applicable. A skillful leader plays to the strengths of and develops the strong points of her subordinates. It is much better to develop strong points than to constantly attempt to overcome shortcomings.
10. Don't debate. You are the final critic of an employee's job performance. This doesn't mean that you should shut off all discussion; allow employees to provide her point of view, and if it is right, so acknowledge. Do not, however, allow the discussion to turn into an argument.
11. Don't compare. Don't compare one employee to another; such comparisons are almost always offensive to employees. This is particularly true in discussing job performance. Most employees are willing to accept criticism of their performance, but once another employee is brought into the equation, resentment almost always results.