

5 Ways Managers Should Prepare for Performance Reviews



Performance reviews are a critical aspect of documenting the results of an employee's job. Managers and employees engage in honest and ongoing conversations about what is working well and any areas needing improvement. The aim is to give employees direct feedback on their performance and have a clear guide towards success. This practice also allows supervisors to provide employees with opportunities to excel by highlighting the skills they have demonstrated on various projects.

To limit the stress of performance reviews for your employees, managers should clearly communicate to their team members what they can expect and what they should prepare ahead of time. Use these five tips to prepare for the annual performance review.



Have Performance Expectations and Goals

Preparing for an annual review starts with the hiring process. A well-written job description should include what great performance should look like and the skills required to succeed in the role. For example, if posting for a maintenance position, include details such as the facility's name and location, the equipment to be maintained, specific metrics the employee will be measured against, and the performance standards used to judge applicants.

Performance standards and expectations should be discussed with your employees at the beginning of each quarter so they have a clear understanding of what's expected of them. Consider working with the individuals on your team to develop goals, metrics, and scorecards that align with the department's goals. This gives your staff an exact standard of what great performance looks like and helps them know if they are on track with what's expected of them. Discuss these expectations with them and revisit them regularly.

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Provide Regular Feedback

Employees deserve and need positive and critical feedback regularly. Providing feedback to employees regularly is essential to helping them understand how their work contributes to the team and organization. Feedback should be relevant, timely, and easy to understand. This makes it easier for employees to improve and gives them a clear path forward.

If someone is doing a great job on a project, let them know while they are still working on it. Similarly, if there is something to correct or improve upon, do not wait until the end of the quarter or even the end of the year to review it. Address the issue right away so the team can fix any problems before they worsen. To keep the communication consistent throughout the year, regularly hold open conversations with your workers to give feedback on what's going well and what could be improved.

Deal with Performance Problems Quickly

Sometimes, it can be difficult to know whether to address a severe performance problem head-on or wait for it to improve on its own. But the annual review is NOT the time to address a severe performance problem for the first time. If an employee's performance has been lacking, find a time to sit down with them and provide corrective feedback for the situation. Managers need to learn how to recognize, diagnose, and discuss performance problems as they arise.

If you notice that an employee is having trouble keeping up with their workload or seeing a decrease in the quality of that person's work, schedule a meeting with them to discuss the problem. For example, if you see one of your employees having trouble balancing their workload because they are taking on new responsibilities at home and in the office, try meeting with them to create a schedule. Suggest they create reminders in their calendar for upcoming tasks. These may include making a daily to-do list, assigning each item a time limit, and setting aside several minutes at the end of each day to review the day's progress and plan for the following day.

Get Feedback About Yourself Too

Have your team complete a performance review with you. It's a good idea to sit down with your team members and ask them for feedback about how you're doing as their manager. By listening and responding to their suggestions, you'll grow as a manager and help the organization meet its goals, making everybody's job more rewarding.

Encourage feedback by using an anonymous review system. This allows employees to feel comfortable providing constructive criticism and don't worry about job security. Always remember that negative feedback is an opportunity to improve your leadership skills and management style. You should never retaliate against employees who provide negative feedback.

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Have Examples Ready

If you want to point out specific areas that need improvement, have concrete examples ready. Don't just tell an employee that they aren't a team player; explain what makes you think so and provide specific times when they didn't demonstrate teamwork. Having examples ready makes it easier for the employee to understand what area you're wanting them to improve upon.

In addition to pointing out areas where an employee needs improvement, point out their achievements. Praise is something everyone appreciates, and it will motivate the employee to work harder and do better in the future.

Focus on performance and expectation goals from the start, give ongoing feedback, open yourself up to receiving feedback, and keep a record of specific examples of the highs and lows of your team member's performance. The performance review will summarize everything you have already discussed throughout the year. Allowing you and your employee to set expectations and goals for next year.

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