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CONTACT:

Award Staffing
8030 Old Cedar Avenue S. #110
Bloomington, MN 55425
Tel: (952)924-9000
Fax: (952)929-1300
Email: success@awardstaffing.com

Working World Report Cards: How to Administer Effective Employee Performance Reviews

Do you remember back to your school days when October not only meant it was time for the big Homecoming football game, but it also meant it was time for first quarter report cards? In high school, report cards were a quarterly review of academic performance and behavior that set the grounds for praise, rewards, constructive criticism, and setting future goals. For many adults in the working world regular progress reports are mere memories from school days passed that have not found a place in their office environment. However, much like report cards in high school, well-designed, periodic job performance reviews are an important tool for gauging previous performance and setting future goals.

If you are an employer you are probably thinking that performance reviews are cumbersome tasks that often cost more time and effort than they are worth. While it is true that administering effective employee performance reviews does take a significant amount of effort, they are a worthwhile venture that can be made easier by sticking to a few basic principles.

Principle #1: Plan performance reviews in advance.

It is important to plan performance reviews in advance so that both the reviewer and the employee come to the review prepared.

Reviewers should come ready to discuss the employee's goals, achievements, and areas in need of improvement for the review period. A good way for an employer to easily and accurately prepare for a review is to maintain a file for each employee in which new goals, achievements, and problem areas are noted on an ongoing basis. Employee files should be kept in an easily accessible place for updates throughout the year and read in preparation for each review.

Employees should come prepared to accurately assess their own job performance over the review period and discuss any questions, comments, or concerns they may have regarding their role in the company.

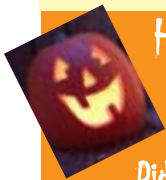
By making reviews a two-way discussion instead of a one-way assessment, employees have a chance to let employers know about the accomplishments they are particularly proud of and the areas in which they feel they need additional support. Moreover, by getting employee input, employers may learn about an employee accomplishment or concern that they may have missed, resulting in a more accurate review. Together, the reviewer and the employee can compare notes and set realistic goals for the employee's future role in the company.

Principle #2: Hold performance reviews regularly.

If you hold performance reviews, hold them regularly or not at all.

(Reviews continued on page 2...)

We speak your language- clear and simple. Performance Counts.



Happy Halloween from
Award Staffing!

Did you know???

-Anoka, Minnesota is home to the Halloween Capital of the World.

-Anoka earned this designation because it was home to the first official citywide Halloween celebration in the United States in 1921.

Witch Hat Halloween Treats

You will need:

- Keebler Stripes Cookies
- Hershey Kisses
- A tube of Orange Icing

Instructions:

Place Stripes Cookies on a tray so the striped side faces down. Place a Hershey Kiss over the hole in the middle of each cookie. Squeeze a line of icing around the Hershey Kiss to fix it in place. Enjoy your Witch Hat Halloween Treats!

(...Reviews continued from page 1.)

As mentioned above, the purpose of a performance review is not solely to review an employee's past performance, but also to set goals and guidelines for an employee's future performance. Regular reviews serve as benchmarks for these goals, motivating employees to meet their deadlines and allowing employers to ensure that goal timelines are on track.

Principle #3: Make performance reviews straightforward and standard for all employees.

Performance reviews should be straightforward and standard for all employees to ensure that they are accurate and objective.

By sticking to the basics of praising exceptional past job performance, assessing areas in need of improvement, determining necessary remedial steps, and setting future goals, employers can objectively give job performance feedback without inadvertently giving feedback on an employee's character or personality that could appear as favoritism or an unfair attack to the employee. Both employers and employees should be prepared to use concrete examples in a performance review to guarantee that the review is as objective and useful as possible.

Having a standard review that is the same for every employee allows employers to stick to the review content basics outlined above and further guarantees that no employee is receiving special treatment or being unfairly assessed. Furthermore, if all employees are measured by the same standard, it is easier for employers to compare review results and to see which employees are top performers and potential candidates for promotion or additional responsibilities.

Principle #4: Document a summary of the performance review.

Keeping a signed and documented record of a performance review serves as a useful tool in preparing for future reviews and ensuring employee comprehension of goals set in the review.

If review summaries are recorded, then a reviewer has a starting off point for determining job successes and failures in future reviews by simply reading past review summaries to see which goals have or have not been met.

All employees should be asked to read their review summary and sign a statement saying that they have agreed to the decided upon goals and actions for their future career growth. This allows employers to ensure that employees can and will work towards achieving their goals.

Finally, if an employee has repeated unsatisfactory reviews and all remedial steps have been exhausted, a documented review can give an employer fair grounds for terminating an employee and protection from claims of unfair termination.

Review Benefits

Abiding by the principles of an effective performance review will lead to increased productivity and profits for your company. Employees who receive regular reviews that follow these principles feel appreciated for their accomplishments and guided in their areas of weakness. As a result, they are more effective and motivated workers. Employers who give regular performance reviews are better able to pinpoint problem areas, identify individuals who are capable of handling important responsibilities, and accurately determine compensation rates and pay increases for employees based on performance levels.

Ultimately, if you are an employer you should consider implementing periodic employee job performance reviews or re-vamping your existing reviews according to the four main effective review principles. Progress reports should not be a distant memory of days school days passed for your employees. Make Fall 2006 the first quarter for administering or restructuring periodic job performance reviews and making sure that all of your employees are making the grade!

Standard Employee Performance Review Outline

Make it easy for your company to administer standard performance reviews by using the standard employee review outline provided on the following page. Use the outline as is, or edit it to fit your organizations goals and standards.

Instructions : Complete this form prior to each employee performance review. Provide comments for each category, using specific examples where possible. Use a separate piece of paper if necessary. Fill out the "Agreed Upon Actions" portion at the end of the review session. Make sure the review summary is signed by both the reviewer and the employee to be used as a benchmark for progress in future reviews.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Employee Name: _____

Review Completed By: _____ Date: _____

JOB ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

List the employee's job accomplishments during this review period as compared to your expectations. Provide an overall rating for this period.

[]-1 Unsatisfactory []-2 Satisfactory []-3 Average []-4 Above Average []-5 Excellent

STRENGTHS

List the key strengths that the employee exhibited during the review period as compared to your expectations.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the employee's communication skills. Provide an overall rating for the review period.

[]-1 Unsatisfactory []-2 Satisfactory []-3 Average []-4 Above Average []-5 Excellent

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

List areas in need of development or improvement. Suggest additional training, support, or remedial steps to reach improvement in these areas.

TEAM BUILDING SKILLS

Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the employee's team building skills. Provide an overall rating for the review period.

[]-1 Unsatisfactory []-2 Satisfactory []-3 Average []-4 Above Average []-5 Excellent

GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

Describe and rate the employee's degree of success in meeting predetermined goals.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Does the employee seem to manage his/her time well? Provide a description and a rating.

[]-1 Unsatisfactory []-2 Satisfactory []-3 Average []-4 Above Average []-5 Excellent

JOB KNOWLEDGE

Describe the level of knowledge that the employee has about his/her job in particular and the company in general. Rate his/her job knowledge.

[]-1 Unsatisfactory []-2 Satisfactory []-3 Average []-4 Above Average []-5 Excellent

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Provide a summary of the employee's overall performance. Rate his/her overall job performance.

[]-1 Unsatisfactory []-2 Satisfactory []-3 Average []-4 Above Average []-5 Excellent

AGREED UPON GOALS AND ACTIONS

Make a list of all agreed upon goals and actions, using the following format:

Goal/Action: By Whom: Timeline/Due Date:

COMMENTS

List any additional comments you have.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO BY:

Employee Signature Date

Manager Signature Date

Sources of Information for *Working World Report Cards: How to Administer Effective Employee Performance Reviews*:

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