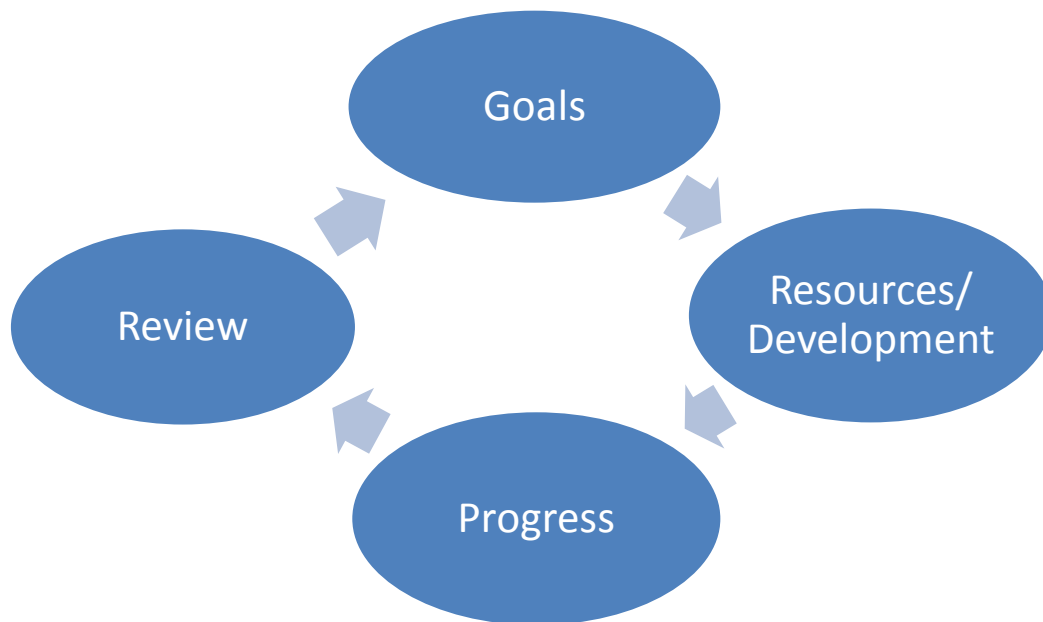


What is Appraisal?

A review of performance and the contribution an individual has made looking at the whole job not just part of it.

The Appraisal forms part of an overall Performance Management Cycle playing two vital roles – the review of and planning of performance and development.



Approach

A two-way discussion about how the year has gone and what the next year needs to look like. The manager 'hosts' the appraisal and the member of staff plays a very active part in it. It is formal in its process and place in performance management but not in its conduct. The best appraisals are collaborative, supportive and challenging and so create a motivational environment.

Format

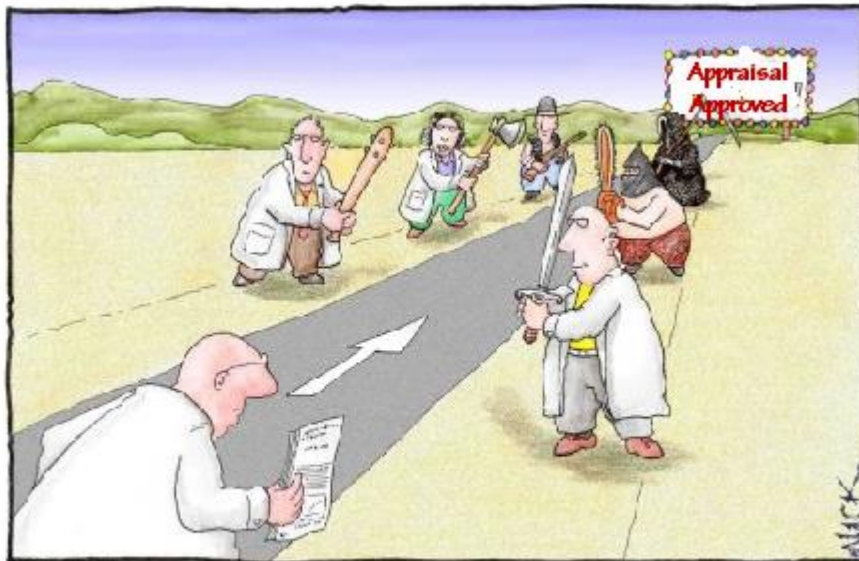
In its simplest form appraisal covers 5 main areas:

1. Review of past performance against the years agreed objectives.
2. Review of learning and development.
3. Agreement of next years' objectives.
4. Planning learning and development to support the achievement of objectives and the personal aspirations of the member of staff.
5. Longer term personal and professional aspirations.

The discussion is the most important feature of an appraisal. Note taking is essential and the recording of the outcomes and conclusions are also necessary for everyone, however, it is not a form filling exercise.

Appraisal should not be

- The only time you ever discuss performance with your staff
- When you tell your staff how they have been doing over the year
- A test
- An exercise in form filling
- A disciplinary meeting
- A waste of time.



Most appraisers regarded the new streamlined appraisal-review process as "quite an improvement."

What is in it for me?

Benefits to the Manager (Appraiser)

- Enables you to achieve your strategic objectives through your staff and give them a sense of having contributed and had impact
- You find out more about the people who work with you
- May catch problems before they escalate
- Enables work to be measured
- A chance to receive feedback on you and the support you give to help you grow as a manager
- Aids motivation and trust, you can give praise and highlight skills and knowledge you value in that individual
- A chance to discuss training and development needs and expectations. It provides the opportunity to identify gaps in experience/knowledge.

Benefits to the Staff Member (Appraisee)

- Helps them to see how their work impacts on the organisation and plan where they are going with their job and career
- Involves them in the planning of their work
- Contributes to developing an effective relationship with their manager
- Selfish, uninterrupted time to talk about themselves and their job
- A chance to receive constructive feedback on their contribution
- A chance to discuss training and development needs and expectations.



Roles and Responsibilities

	Appraiser	Appraisee
BEFORE	Collect relevant documents	Ditto
	Book times and places and agree with appraisee	
	Review last appraisal	Ditto
	Review work in last period and contribution made	Ditto
	Prepare comments on achievements + difficulties	Ditto
	Plan future objectives	Ditto
	Review present development plan and think about future	Ditto
	Prepare specific feedback	Ditto
DURING	Ensure you are free of interruptions	Ditto
	Make the environment conducive to discussion	
	Structure and guide meeting	
	Take notes	Optional
	Remember to listen as well as talk	Ditto
	Reach agreement on future and next steps	Ditto
AFTER	Develop action plan	Ditto
	Write up form	
	Pass back to appraisee to check and sign	Put own comment about the appraisal on form. Check and sign form
	Pass to countersigning manager	
	Copy form for self and appraisee, plus copy to HR to go on personal file	

The Appraisal Process



Preparation and discussion should take place about the following:

- A general overview of the staff member's contribution.
- Specific achievements.
- Difficulties.
- Review of past objectives (if no objectives were set for last period, then review work under "main responsibilities" in job description).

Points to Remember

- Whilst you should not gloss over the past, you should not dwell in it too much either.
- Remember that constructive feedback is a mixture of praise and criticism: both should be specific and genuine.
- This is a two way process - input should be as much from the appraisee as from you.
- Try to let the appraisee go first under each point: that way you get to hear their view before it is coloured by yours.
- Encourage two-way feedback....you may have to be brave!
- Don't duck out of commenting on their work.
- Ensure you have evidence of performance outcomes, both good and bad, not a woolly list of personal criticisms.



Preparation and discussion should take place about the following:

- Agreement about changes, improvements and new areas of work.
- Agreement of specific objectives for the next review period.

Points to Remember

- Seek input from the appraisee about the future and possible objectives: they may have some really good ideas and have explored areas you had not thought of.
- Remember that objectives are work related, but can also enable personal development.
- Be clear and honest about what is required and what you want them to achieve.
- Accept that some jobs may not offer much scope for change, but try not to be blinkered.
- Encourage your member of staff to challenge themselves, but to be either too easy or too hard on themselves when planning work for the future.
- Ensure all future work links into the departmental and organisational plans.
- There is no optimum number of objectives to set. It depends upon the work, the person, the time scales and the needs of the organisation.
- Keep language (oral and written) simple, clear and specific.

For further guidance with objective setting see our Guide to Objective setting on the web site – www.sharpstoneskinner.co.uk

Development and Support

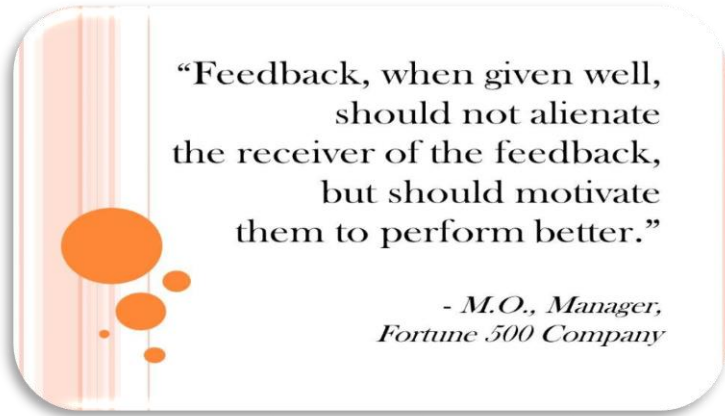
Preparation and discussion should take place about the following:

- Review of development and training in the last period.
- Discuss future development and training needs – refer to their Job description and next year's department/divisional plan to see where the skills and knowledge is needed.
- Agree appropriate solutions.
- Review management support and identify support needed for the future.

Points to Remember

- Discuss all recent past learning activities. Apart from training courses, these could include one to one coaching, reading, work shadowing, delegated tasks, distance learning and studying for a qualification.
- The important questions to ask are:
 - How far did the development activity meet the need?
 - How successfully was the learning put into practice?
 - What can the person now do as a result?
- Try to be creative when responding to development needs e.g. try not to just look at a list of courses - there is more than one way to meet a need, especially where cost constraints exist.
- Don't re-invent the wheel - find out if others in the team or around the organisation have had a similar development need. How was it met?
- Put the need before the solution.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.





“Feedback, when given well,
should not alienate
the receiver of the feedback,
but should motivate
them to perform better.”

- *M.O., Manager,
Fortune 500 Company*

A Structure for Feedback or Debriefing

Description

What happened? Do not make judgements yet or draw conclusions, simply describe.

Positive evaluation

What were the things that went well and why?

Negative evaluation

What were the things that went less well and why?

Feelings

What were your reactions and feelings?

Analysis and conclusion

What sense can you make of the situation? What was really going on? Were other people's experiences similar or different?

Action Plan

What are you going to do differently in this type of situation when it occurs again? What steps are you going to take on the basis of what you have learnt? What is your action plan?

Recording the Information

Points to Remember

- Notes can be made on the form at the time of the appraisal and then used to help write the appraisal up neatly afterwards.
- The form should represent the fact that this was a discussion between two people.
- A summary of the discussion with agreements on action and future work is sufficient: a word for word account of the meeting is neither practical nor necessary.
- It should be easy to read and a workable document, not just something to be dusted down annually.
- It should be written up by one of those present at the meeting.
- Once the form is complete, it should be signed by the appraiser, appraisee and countersigning manager.
- Nothing should be added after signing.
- The appraiser should make it clear who will have access to the form.
- At the very least, the appraiser should keep a copy; one should be given to the appraisee and one sent to HR to be kept in the employee's personal file.



How is information recorded?

Bringing core Values and Behaviours into the Appraisal

Values and Behaviours describe 'how to perform and conduct yourself' rather than 'what to perform and achieve'. Appraisal is an ideal time to discuss evidence of the Values being brought alive by your member of staff and planning how some may be further developed in the coming year.

Discussions around Values can be had at the following points:

Reviewing Objectives

When reviewing objectives, managers need to bring the Core Values into play by asking how achievement of each objective enabled the jobholder to demonstrate any of the core values and note any example.

Agreeing Future Objectives

Similarly, when agreeing objectives for the next period, consider and discuss how achievement of the objective enables the jobholder to demonstrate adherence to the core values.

Reviewing and planning development

Much learning in the workplace is informal and takes place

Creating Development opportunities

The work environment provides a good variety of development tools, which are outlined below. In selecting the tools you and the learner should take into account:

- The nature of the task or role to be learnt.
- The resources (including time) available.
- The individual learning styles of the learner.

Within the job

If the aim is to improve performance in a specific job action or task then that task must be included in a planned coaching programme

Other activities within the job which could be used to help someone develop might include:

- Attending meetings
- Making a presentation
- Acting as spokesperson
- Writing a report
- Visiting a member or supplier
- Showing people around.

Project work

Is there a special project the individual could undertake to develop that skill? Particularly relevant when the individual needs to develop a skill that is not part of their current job e.g. preparing for promotion or a change of job. Project work would also include useful opportunities to develop skills in:

- Planning
- Information gathering
- Analysis
- Decision-making
- Team working
- Negotiating and influencing
- Report writing
- Presentation skills.

Visits/secondments

Even short visits can be enlightening in helping people to understand how their job fits into a wider picture, and thus develop better appreciation of priorities. Could include visits to another team in the organisation, or to an outside organisation.

Problem solving

Problem solving activities will help to develop objectivity and decision-making skills. Solving a problem will also boost confidence -as long as you make sure that there is a good possibility of an achievable solution

Swapping jobs/job rotation

This can be within the existing teams (which has the added advantage of increasing flexibility within the team) or within the wider organisation. Very useful in broadening experience and skill range

Standing-in

Good practice for individuals seeking promotion and/or wanting to acquire management skills and experience. You will have to set very clear parameters of authority

Delegation

Again, clear guidelines will be needed. Only real work should be delegated, and the manager should not be hands-on

Sitting by Nellie

The traditional on-the-job training, now coming back into fashion; did it ever go away? Not to be under-valued, but must be used with care. Needs an example of good performance and should ideally include some hands-on experience

Work shadowing

Watching an expert in action. This is best as preparation for having a go at a later date. An example would be attending meetings as an observer or to take minutes before becoming the team's representative.

Self-study

This can include reading a book, distance learning, using computer based or multimedia packages. Has the great advantage that the learner can go at his/her own pace, but the down side is that the individual needs to be strongly motivated. Useful as preparation before undertaking other development activities, or attending a course, to get a grasp of the theory before the practice.