

Staff Appraisal



SUMMARY

Most people want to know how well they are doing and welcome positive feedback. Appraising performance against objectives or targets gives a valuable opportunity to give very welcome and often much-needed praise. Setting up an appraisal can be a time-consuming process but the benefits will outweigh the costs in terms of enhanced employee performance and business success. Staff appraisal can be used as an important development tool for your business, enhancing the communication of business objectives. This section of the website provides information on how to set up and operate an appraisal system.

Most people want to know how well they are doing and welcome positive feedback, no matter what sphere of life, in or after work! Also, surprisingly perhaps, almost everyone is their own worst critic and generally has a lower opinion of their abilities than other people have. Hence “appraising” performance against objectives or targets usually creates an opportunity to give very welcome and often much-needed praise. Staff appraisal can help communication within your business and is a key component of the Investors in People Standard (see IIP information in Whodoiask.com).

If objectives are being met, but you feel there is an opportunity to improve an element of performance further, it is possible to identify training and/or development needs for that individual. Because you know that any training or development needs are linked to business objectives, you can be satisfied that it will be money well spent in helping the business achieve its own objectives, at the same time as enhancing the employee’s skills, capabilities and confidence.

Appraisals will also help you identify where job roles are evolving and the employee has taken on enhanced responsibilities over a period of time. As the business develops, you may find job descriptions need revising as people’s roles and responsibilities will change as the business does. Having written job descriptions for everyone at the start will have helped you to identify what changes have taken place and what new objectives the changed role is meeting.

You may, of course, find that your employee is exceeding expectations, and again, this appraisal of performance will enable you to think about the career opportunities for that individual in your business – perhaps they would be capable of a more senior role with greater responsibilities? Internal promotion opportunities are a great motivator for staff, particularly where they are linked to an appraisal process so that everyone can see that the promotion is based on genuine merit. Conversely, it can also ensure that you don’t automatically promote someone to fill a gap left by a senior colleague when they have neither the capability nor wish to do so – frequently disastrous for both parties. In any event, your employee’s expectations of career progression can be discussed and you will gain greater insight into their hopes and aspirations for the future.

One thing to bear in mind – appraisals should be the same as all other effective communication methods – two way! It is an opportunity to find out how your employee feels about their job role which can be an invaluable



KEY POINTS

- Staff appraisal is an important development tool for your business
- Staff appraisal can enhance the communication of business objectives throughout your business
- Staff appraisal can make your employees feel valued and allow you to provide valuable feedback on performance
- Staff appraisal can help you identify skills gaps and training needs for individual employees.

WHO DO I ASK?

insight into different areas of the business and how efficiently they function. It is important that employees feel ownership of their objectives and have the opportunity to do a self-assessment of their progress against them as well. Staff should be given time to consider what you will be discussing in advance of the appraisal so that they can reflect on their performance and identify areas for discussion with you. The outcome of an appraisal with an employee should be mutually agreed between you – so that you both know what is expected of that person between then and the next appraisal six months or a year later. The best way to make sure of this is to give the employee the last word!

Setting up an appraisal structure can be a time-consuming business. If you have a lot of staff, it may seem daunting. If you only have a few, it may not seem worth it. But having a system in place where you are able to talk to your employees individually about how they are doing against objectives that are important to the success of your business reinforces all the positive communication messages we covered in the first chapter, as well as making sure that their training and development benefits both you and them.

An Appraisal Form should include:

- basic personal details, that is; name, department, post, length of time in the job
- job title
- job description
- a detailed review of the individual's performance against a set of job related criteria
- an overall performance rating
- general comments by a more senior manager
- comments by the employee
- a plan for development and action.

A checklist for the appraisal interview:

- Employees should be given adequate notice of the appraisal interview. Self assessment forms can help them prepare
- At least one hour should be set aside for the interview
- Seating arrangements should be comfortable and the interview free from interruptions
- The appraiser should suggest ways in which the employee's good work can be continued and how he or she can achieve further improvement
- Both parties should discuss how far agreed objectives have been met and agree future objectives

The benefits of appraisals are:

- You are able to "appraise" or measure your employees' effectiveness against the objectives agreed in their job descriptions
- Appraisals create a valuable opportunity for positive feedback on performance
- Training and development needs related the job role can be discussed confidentially, and be tailored to the individual
- All employees will benefit from a systematic approach to identifying training and development needs and you will be sure that it is linked to achieving business objectives

For further information on introducing and implementing appraisal schemes, including sample appraisal forms (www.acas.org.uk/).