

A Review of Performance Reviews

A performance review is a chance for a manager to evaluate an employee's work since his or her last review, discuss any issues and set a series of goals to be attained by the next review. On paper, it seems rather effortless and straight-forward. In reality, performance reviews can be anxious events, both for the employee and the manager.

But they don't have to be. By following these tips from Leddy Group—and getting HR consulting assistance if you need it—performance reviews can be anything but a chore.

1. Follow Company Policy: Your employee handbook should reference company policy regarding performance reviews. For instance, some hold reviews annually. “Whatever your policy, make sure you follow it to the letter for all employees,” said Susannah Chance, Vice President of Human Resources for Leddy Group.

2. Be Prepared: Show your employees how much you value them and recognize their contributions by conducting a well-planned and insightful review.

3. Be Objective: Stay focused on the intention of the review and be impartial when discussing issues. Remember, the goal is to evaluate employee job performance, and not the employee.

4. Be Consistent: Evaluate work in terms of quality and quantity as they relate to each employee's job requirements. If you review elements like attitude, teamwork and willingness to take on new tasks, be sure to have specific examples and clearly defined expectations.

5. Avoid Shock Treatment: Don't wait for a review to give an employee feedback. Offer input along the way, especially if you're seeing a behavior that doesn't follow certain established protocols.

6. Speak the Truth, Always: “When it comes to conducting performance reviews, people love to avoid conflict,” said Chance. “But, in trying to avoid conflict, managers could be setting themselves up for discord due to inconsistent ratings or contradictory evaluations.” Even if a topic is uncomfortable, be honest during the review and on your evaluation form, even if you know an employee isn't going to like it. “It's really hard to defend a decision to fire an incompetent employee if all the reviews in their file are good,” said Chance.

7. Have a Conversation: The most effective reviews are more like structured discussions. Ask questions and make sure to listen and look—you can pick up on both verbal and non-verbal clues, and you'll gain a lot of insight from what you learn.

Leddy Group offers a wide range of HR consulting services—you can call as questions come up or you can arrange a complete soup-to-nuts evaluation solution for your company. In the latter case, Leddy Group representatives can work on-site at your

facility with your management team to train your staff for effective performance evaluations that support your company culture and policies.

Ala carte consulting services include:

- How to design an easy but comprehensive evaluation form;
- How to prepare for and deliver a review;
- How to have difficult conversations; and
- How to write objective, measurable quantitative statements.

For more information, contact Susannah Chance, Vice President of Human Resources for Leddy Group at 866-LEDDY HR.