

APPRAISAL do's and don'ts

SUGGESTIONS for supervisors and managers

<i>Do</i>	<i>Don't</i>
Judge an employee's performance against standards defined in the work plan	Compare one employee's performance against another's
Base appraisals on verifiable results produced and on first-hand observations	Base appraisals on hearsay and third-hand reports
Focus on the employee's performance, on what the employee has actually achieved	Dwell on the employee's "personality" and perceptions about how outside factors might be influencing the employee's performance
Give the employee a rating based on performance during the past year	Give the employee a high rating as motivation to improve performance
Refer, in the appraisal document, to issues that have been addressed when they occurred during the year	Save up issues for the end-of-year appraisal rather than confront them when they occur
Have a structure worked out for conducting the appraisal discussion; know what you want the employee to understand and to do when the discussion is over	Go into the appraisal discussion with only the completed appraisal document but no plan for conducting the discussion; assume that you will "wing it"
Be familiar with the information in the appraisal document before the discussion	Go into the appraisal discussion "cold," not having refreshed your recollection of the employee's performance
Set a time and place to meet with the employee several days in advance	Drop in on the employee without advance notice and say, "Let's do your appraisal now."
Signal the importance of the discussion by conducting it when scheduled, not allowing other things to take priority	Repeatedly postpone the appraisal discussion as other things come up
Allot sufficient time for the appraisal discussion	Assume the meeting will only take a few minutes

<i>Do</i>	<i>Don't</i>
If you expect the discussion to be difficult, conduct it on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday	If you expect the discussion to be difficult, conduct it on a Monday when the employee is fresh from the weekend or on Friday so the employee has the weekend to become more frustrated with you
Conduct the discussion in a quiet and private place where distractions and interruptions will be kept to a minimum	Conduct the discussion in a crowded coffee shop or public area
Be on time for the discussion, thus symbolically communicating its importance to the employee	Show up late for the discussion, thus letting the employee know that there are many other things you consider more important than talking about the employee's performance
Turn your cell phone or pager off; put your office phone on forward on do not answer it during the discussion	Take every call that comes in during the discussion, thus giving yourself a "breather"
Sit at a table with the employee	Sit at a big desk and have the employee sit opposite you in a small chair
Make eye contact with the employee; be attentive when the employee is talking	Act like you do not really care about what the employee has to say
Get the employee to talk	Dominate the conversation
Stay on task	Let the conversation stray into topics not related to the employee's performance
Be concise and make good use of the time allotted for the discussion	Let the discussion drag on after the important points have been covered
Discuss actions and events that occurred across the entire year under review	Harp on a single incident
Take notes on significant comments and reflect back what the employee has said	Try to remember the employee's significant comments without taking notes – only school kids take notes
Ask probing questions when you do not understand what the employee has said or to uncover workplace issues the employee has hinted at	Avoid digging deeper into important issues, asking about issues the employee has alluded to indirectly, or otherwise "stirring up trouble"
Clarify the distinctions between exceeding, meeting, and not meeting expectations	Keep it a guessing game as to what the employee has to do to meet or to exceed expectations

<i>Do</i>	<i>Don't</i>
If performance needs to improve, problem-solve with the employee to uncover the cause and help the employee work out a solution	If performance needs to improve, just tell the employee to improve; or, give the employee a corrective action plan you have designed
Deal with minor performance deficiencies informally, but make note of what you discussed and what the employee agreed to do	Escalate every minor performance deficiency to the level of a corrective action plan
When improvement is needed, explain how failure to improve affects the work unit and higher level goals	Explain the need to improve performance by saying, "Because this is the standard," or "Because I told you to"
If the employee becomes emotional, suggest waiting a few minutes before resuming the discussion	If the employee becomes emotional, either forge on or call off the meeting
If the employee becomes angry and acts inappropriately (e.g., shouting, pounding the desk, leaving the room), wait calmly and resume the conversation after the employee is finished venting	If the employee becomes angry, talk louder, shake your finger, and scowl
Listen to the employee's career goals and schedule a separate meeting so that sufficient attention can be devoted to discussing them	Ignore the employee's career goals
To close, summarize the important points made during the discussion and any actions agreed to	After the details of the appraisal have been covered, stand up to signal the discussion is over
Have the employee review and sign the appraisal document and provide comments, if appropriate	Ask the employee to sign the appraisal document with allowing time to read it
Ask the employee to sign the appraisal document to indicate that the appraisal has been discussed	Ask the employee to sign the appraisal document without explaining the meaning of the signature
Let the employee know what will happen to the appraisal document; give the employee a copy of the document	Submit the appraisal document without explaining to the employee where it goes after the discussion or without giving the employee a copy

APPRAISAL do's and don'ts for employees

Do	Don't
Ask questions before the appraisal discussion to make sure you know how the performance management process works	Be in the dark as to how the performance management process works
Review your work plan prior to the appraisal discussion so you will know the performance expectations your supervisor will be focusing on	Show up for the appraisal discussion with a fuzzy recollection of your past year's performance expectations
Document your own performance prior to the discussion, comparing what you actually achieved to the expectations defined in your work plan	Leave it up to your supervisor to document your performance over the past year
Prepare a list of changes and improvements you have made during the year	Assume that your supervisor remembers or has documented the important results you have achieved during the year
Make a list of issues you want to cover during the appraisal discussion, such as barriers you are encountering in your work and ideas for improvements	Assume that your supervisor knows the problems you face in your job or has no interest in helping you overcome them
Plan to discuss the current status of issues you addressed with your supervisor during the year, including barriers to your work and your suggestions for improvement	Save up problems concerning barriers to your work until the appraisal discussion so you will have excuses when your supervisor is critical of your performance
If, prior to the appraisal discussion, you are asked to give your supervisor information about your achievements, provide concise, objective information	If you are asked to give your supervisor information about your achievements, do so grudgingly while complaining about having to do your supervisor's job for him or her
Once the appraisal discussion begins, speak up and make sure you help to make it truly a discussion, not a lecture from your supervisor	Be passive and unresponsive, listening and nodding your head in agreement with everything the supervisor says
Stay focused on discussing performance	Go off on tangents, change the subject or engage in gossip
Express yourself clearly and concisely	Try to get in as many words as you can

Do	Don't
Ask for clarification if your supervisor brings up an area for improvement that you don't agree with or don't understand	Become defensive and emotional if your supervisor is critical of some aspect of your performance
Actively engage in problem solving with your supervisor	Expect your supervisor to have a solution to every problem
Be open to changing the way you do things and to taking on different responsibilities	Resist making any changes
Ask your supervisor for ideas on how to make improvements	Be afraid to learn how you can improve
Use the appraisal discussion to learn something new about the business and to get to know your supervisor better	Don't raise any questions or offer any suggestions so the discussion can be completed as quickly as possible
If your supervisor has difficulty clarifying expectations or justifying a rating, help your supervisor by providing relevant information and examples	If your supervisor has difficulty justifying ratings on your appraisal, keep quiet and maybe your supervisor will get in trouble for poor documentation
Ask questions to better understand your performance expectations and how actual performance has been evaluated this time and will be evaluated in the next cycle	Keep yourself in the dark about what is expected of you and how your performance has been and will be appraised
Get clarification, before leaving the discussion, on the key points brought out during the discussion and on any actions you or your supervisor have committed to	Avoid summarizing what has been discussed and what actions have been suggested in order to avoid having to do extra work or to change your routine
Regard the appraisal form as an imperfect but necessary summary of your performance relative to expectations over the course of the year	Get hung up on the design of the appraisal form and how it is filled out
Sign the appraisal after the appraisal discussion has been completed – your signature provides documentation that your supervisor has held the discussion with you	Refuse to sign the appraisal because you disagree with it or are angry with your supervisor – your signature does not indicate agreement with the appraisal or endorsement of your supervisor

www.performanceSolutions.nc.gov/motivationInitiatives/PerformanceMgmt/Stage3/AppraisalDosa ndDonts.pdf