

5 Ways to Evolve the Dreadful Annual Performance Review

Driving employee productivity with performance reviews

There's been a lot of talk lately about the challenges with annual performance reviews. They are meant to motivate employees, yet they end up being time consuming and difficult for both manager and employee. But it's important to set goals and measure performance, so how can we make sure performance reviews are motivational and worthwhile? Here are 5 keys to driving productivity with performance reviews.



Performance happens daily (reviews should too)

Really useful annual reviews summarize information gathered and conversations held throughout the year. Nothing in them should be a surprise or a reason to worry. We want to get the best from employees, and when you provide real time feedback to accomplishments or challenges, you give them the opportunity to grow throughout the year. Then come review time, reviews can focus on the accomplishments and growth of the employee instead of rehashing challenges from earlier in the year.





Performance reviews should be conversations

Managers and employees should be comfortable discussing performance, not having awkward, unnatural verbal exchanges. Don't talk at them in HR employee terms like satisfactory, effective, and exceptionally effective. Instead, discuss specific achievements they can be proud of and areas where they can improve. Give them action steps and information they can use. Above all, just talk to them like they're people.

And while we're at it, use systems designed to capture what you're discussing - don't fall into the trap of only talking about what can neatly fit in a box on a form.



Reviews should have a purpose

Why bother with reviews if all you do is fill out a form and file it away. Reviews should have a purpose – they should collect useful employee performance information that is put to work for the entire organization. If managers see the value of performance reviews, they'll get done. And if employees can see positive benefits come from reviews as well, they'll make a greater effort.



Simplicity and consistency

Simple, frequent reviews will give you a clear, current understanding of what is happening with your team, and contribute positively to individual engagement. Great companies position reviews as just another part of business, and consider reviews in terms of what works for employees and managers.

Reviews should be straightforward, and let you focus on the person sitting in front of you, not on deciphering the form or translating HR-ese. After all, managing people is hard enough without having to deal with the effects of painfully complicated performance reviews.



Change the review experience

We've all had a bad review experience in our career. Whether you're on the giving or receiving end of it, it can be better. It's all in your approach...

Great organizations position reviews as part of everyday operations (not as an HR function).

Great managers talk about performance every day, giving timely (and useful) feedback to their teams.

Great employees welcome feedback as a source of inspiration, motivation and reassurance.

Great performance management systems encourage everyone to collect information on performance incrementally, and return that information to the organization to assist in decision making.

See how Cornerstone OnDemand has been helping growing businesses transform the performance review process to drive employee engagement and productivity.

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Cornerstone OnDemand is a leader in cloud-based applications for talent management. Our solutions help organizations recruit, train, manage and connect their employees, empowering their people and increasing workforce productivity.

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