ilm

Section one:

Carrying out performance appraisals

The first section will help you examine your role, and show you techniques to improve your team's performance.

What are appraisals?

Regular staff appraisals are one part of the performance management process. They are used to review progress to date, explore solutions to problems and plan for the future in a way that benefits the organisation overall. If good practice guidelines are followed, appraisals can also be used to increase staff morale and engagement with the organisation.

Each organisation that formally practises regular appraisals, or encourages informal regular appraisals, has its own way of going about it.

A   Roll over the icons to find out about some types of appraisals.

Top-down
The team member's line manager carries out the appraisal

Self-appraisal

Peer appraisal

360-degree appraisal
The team member's line manager, peers and own staff if they have them, are all involved in the appraisal

The most common type of appraisal is **top-down.**

In some organisations appraisals are very formal, and the same forms and procedures are used across that organisation. Others leave it to each of their managers to decide the best way in which to do it. Despite these variations, research has shown that successful appraisals all have certain things in common, which the rest of this section will examine.

For example, reviews should be regular and the appraisal should review past activity and behaviour as a basis for planning future improvement and development.

At its best, an appraisal interview should provide an opportunity to do all the following:

- Review performance and give objective feedback (ie feedback based on facts)
- Establish mutual expectations
- Identify problems and need for support
- Find out what particularly motivates and engages the appraisee
- Identify unexploited potential and further capacity
- Set work objectives. These should be "SMART" – specific, measurable, achievable/agreed mutually, realistic and time-bound. It is best if they are mutually agreed to get the appraisees to buy into them.
- Consider the appraisee's career development

Nothing you say to a team member in an appraisal should come as a surprise to them. Remember that praise and constructive criticism given at the time of any particular incident is far more effective in terms of performance than saving up that feedback for an appraisal meeting. But an appraisal meeting is the best opportunity to stand back and look at the situation overall together, and use that to engage and motivate your staff and plan for the future.
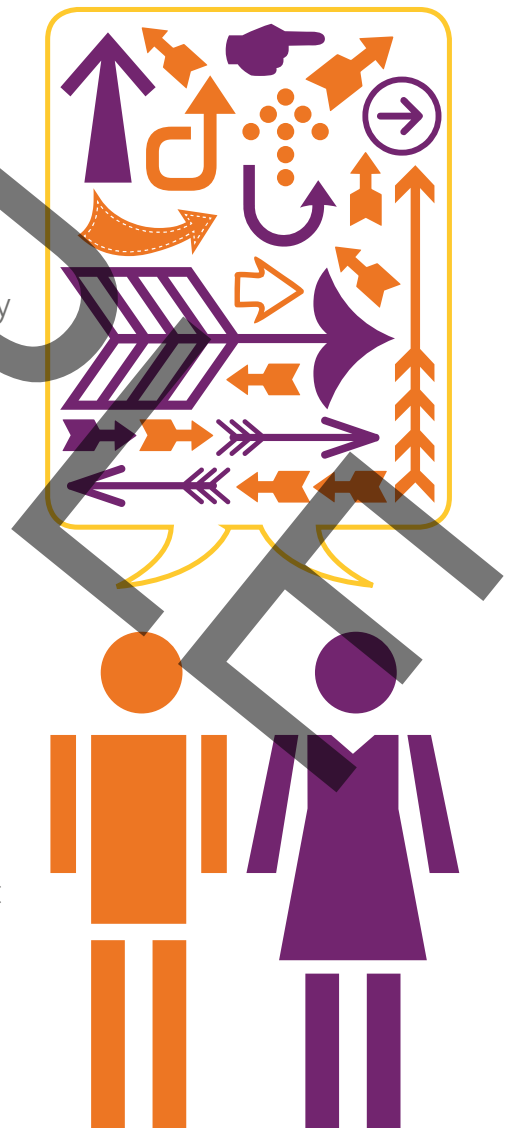
A   ## Task three: Correcting assumptions

Imagine going to work somewhere as a team leader where regular appraisals are not done, and that you want to persuade your new boss to give YOU regular appraisals. In the boxes on the left are some of the things your boss might say. What might you say to correct those assumptions?

Type your answers into the spaces provided.

Incorrect assumption/belief

What you would say in reply

'It's a bit backward–looking. It's no use crying over spilt milk.'

'OK then, but it may make me realise I ought to have sacked you...'

'Don't worry, I'll tell you immediately if you do anything wrong! We don't need regular appraisals.'

A Type your answers into the spaces provided.

Incorrect assumption/belief

What you would say in reply

'I don't see how your future career is my responsibility.'

'You should be able to figure out where you're going wrong for yourself.'

'If I didn't think you could do the job I wouldn't have hired you.'

'I really don't have the time for all that.'

Preparation

The importance of preparing thoroughly for an appraisal cannot be overemphasised. Both appraiser and appraisee should prepare carefully and thoughtfully for the meeting. This gives the appraisee a chance to self-appraise by reflecting on their performance and any difficulties they have had during the period. Before the meeting you should ensure that the appraisee has thought about the following:

- Have they fulfilled the objectives set at their last appraisal or in their job specification? If not, why not?
- What have they been doing particularly well?
- Where do they think they could be doing better and why?
- What do they believe they know and can do which is not being made use of at the moment?
- Where are they going with both the job and their career?
- What new SMART objectives do they think that it is reasonable to set for their job now?
- How are they going to achieve them?
- What do they need to learn?
- What support or guidance can be provided by the organisation/manager?

As an appraiser, you should think about the answers the appraisee might give to the above questions. In addition, you should try to find evidence, specific examples from the whole period – what the team member has done well and what they could improve upon – so that you are in a position to give fair, open, honest and sensitive feedback.

You also need to think about what new goals and objectives the organisation requires for the team member. As mentioned before, it is important that these are SMART – specific, measurable, achievable/agreed mutually, realistic and time-lined (ie what will be done by when).

(A)   **Task four: Preparing for an appraisal**

Carry out preparation for any member of your team (or a colleague)
as if you were about to have an appraisal meeting with them.

Type in your answers to the questions below.

What objectives were set at
their last appraisal, or what are
the main objectives of their job
at the moment, and have they
achieved them?

If the answer to the last question
is no, say why you think that is.

If the answer is yes, have
they managed to achieve that
in particularly difficult or
unanticipated circumstances?

What have they been doing particularly
well and has this been helping them
achieve their objectives?

What could they be doing better?

A **Type in your answers to the questions below.**

Do they have potential or capacity that the organisation is not using (and what is it)?

What do you think their career aims are (or could be, in your opinion)?

What are the two most important objectives – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – for them to achieve over the coming period? Justify the SMARTness of each one.

What support and resources will they need to achieve these? What obstacles need to be removed?

In what ways, specifically, do they need to develop and how can this be achieved?

You also need to find an appropriate place and time to hold the appraisal meeting that is private and where you will not be disturbed. This usually needs planning in advance.

A **Task five: Keep it private**

How would you ensure any appraisal you carried out in your own organisation would be private and uninterrupted?

Type your answer below.

How would you ensure the appraisal was private and uninterrupted?

Type your answer below.