

K-STATE SUPERVISORY FOUNDATIONS

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: SUPERVISORY BEST PRACTICES

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S.M.A.R.T. OBJECTIVES

Specific: State exactly what you want to accomplish (Who, What, Where, Why)

Measurable: How will the employee's performance be measured? How well, or how much, does an employee need to meet expectations? How will you demonstrate and evaluate the extent to which the goal has been met?

Achievable/Attainable: The employee needs to be able to achieve the task – you want to make the objectives challenging, but still within reach. Stretch and challenging goals within ability to achieve outcome: What is the action-oriented verb? Don't set your employee up to fail.

Relevant: Task/objectives must be associated with the position. How does the goal tie into your key responsibilities? How is it aligned to objectives?

Time-bound: Be sure to use specific time frames. If you use "as soon as possible" or "in a time manner" your employee may think they are meeting your expectations because those phrases mean different things to different people. Set 1 or more target dates, the "by when" to guide your goal to successful and timely completion (include deadlines, dates and frequency)

NOTES

10 Minute Check-In Conversation Guide



Preparation is the key to a fast and effective performance check-in between managers and employees.

This guide helps managers and employees:

- Prepare for an efficient check-in conversation
- Organize ideas and make note of key successes and challenges ahead of time
- Anticipate what topics both parties will want to cover
- Decide together on next steps for the employee

Instructions:

MANAGERS

Provide this worksheet to your employee two days before the scheduled check-in. Use the “notes” area in sections 2 and 4 to prepare for and guide the discussion topics you want to cover during the check-in. Be ready to provide answers to your employee’s questions in sections 3 and 5 once they have returned the worksheet to you!

EMPLOYEES

Review each section of this document as you reflect on the time since your last check-in conversation with your manager. Use section 1 to identify your key accomplishments and priorities. In sections 3 and 5, check-off the topics and questions you want to discuss during the check-in. Keep the original and make a copy of this document with your selections marked to share with your manager 1 day before your scheduled conversation. Use the “notes” section to capture your thoughts and prepare for your discussion!

WHO	TOPICS AND IDEAS FOR QUESTIONS	NOTES
<p>1. EMPLOYEE ~1.5 minutes</p>	<p>START THE MEETING WITH:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highlighting your recent contributions. What priorities have you achieved since your last check-in? What priorities will carry forward to your next check-in? 2. Asking what new priorities have emerged for you, your team or the organization? 	
<p>2. MANAGER ~1.5 minutes</p>	<p>KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING WITH:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing your insight on evolving work priorities that impact and involve the employee. 2. Highlighting the contributions to key work priorities that the employee has helped achieve since your last check-in. 3. Describe the actions to be carried out to move important initiatives forward until your next check-in. What can the employee do to help? 	
<p>3. EMPLOYEE ~2 minutes</p>	<p>YOUR PERFORMANCE: Now and Moving Forward. Check 1-2 questions you'd like to ask your manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What's on thing that I'm doing well and that I should continue with? <input type="checkbox"/> What's one thing I'm doing to support you that is working? <input type="checkbox"/> What's one way I could support you more? <input type="checkbox"/> What's one way we could work better together? <input type="checkbox"/> What's one thing I can do to grow in my position? 	
<p>4. MANAGER ~1 minute</p>	<p>MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What's gone well, employee contributions and their impact. 2. What's next to focus on. 3. Other topic ideas: 	
<p>5. EMPLOYEE ~2 minutes</p>	<p>YOUR DEVELOPMENT: New skills and work interests. Check 1-2 questions you'd like your manager to ask you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a new skill you want to develop? <input type="checkbox"/> What's one of your skills you'd like to use more of? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any projects you want to be involved in? <input type="checkbox"/> What on-the-job experience would help you progress? 	

WHO	TOPICS AND IDEAS FOR QUESTIONS	NOTES
6. MANAGER ~1 minute	MANAGER SUPPORT Questions to ask your direct report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What's one thing I'm doing to support you that is working? 2. What's one way I could support you more? 	
7. MANAGER AND EMPLOYEE ~1 minute	WRAP UP & ACTION ITEMS Both: Agree on the biggest takeaways from the conversation. Identify next steps, such as follow-up items, action items, new goals, ideas for development, etc.	

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QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYEE DURING PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETINGS

1. What was your greatest accomplishment at work?
2. What do you hope to accomplish over the coming year?
3. Where do you feel there's room for you to improve?
4. How can I help you succeed?
5. Do you feel the team is working well collaboratively?
6. What contributions have you made to the team working collaboratively?
7. What do you expect to be the most challenging about your goals?
8. What support can I and/or the department provide for you that will help you reach these goals?
9. What are your hopes for your overall achievements?
10. How can I be a better manager for you?
11. How often would you like to receive feedback?
12. What kind of schedule can we set up so that you don't feel micromanaged, but I receive the feedback that I need as to your progress on your goals?
13. What would be a helpful agenda for our one-on-one meetings?

NOTES

THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

COMMON BIASES

- **Halo Effect:** This occurs when a worker is rated higher overall than actually is deserved because of good performance areas. For example, a worker who is extremely dependable but doesn't have a good grasp of the job may be overrated on job performance as a result of his or her dependability.
- **Central Tendency:** Supervisors who rate all workers as average performers are guilty of central tendency error. Evaluating workers as average is much easier than explaining why one is below average or why others are superior. Improving job performance is not made any easier, however.
- **Strictness-Leniency:** Supervisors differ in their expectations of workers. Some are never satisfied, while others are satisfied too easily with their workers' performance. These expectations carry over to the review process. Finding workers who are evaluated as average by one supervisor, but who would probably be evaluated higher by another supervisor, is not uncommon.
- **Recent Behavior Bias:** A significant amount of time and job behavior is covered in the formal review process. It is understandable that supervisors are prone to evaluate workers on the basis of their most recent performance. But when the review period covers performance over six months or a year, this bias clearly is inappropriate. Maintaining a log or diary of observed behaviors is one way of reducing this type of error.
- **Spillover Effect:** Supervisors often are influenced by previous performance review results. If a worker has received good evaluations in the past, there is a tendency to give good evaluations in the present – even when actual performance is not satisfactory.

- **Friendship:** Supervisors get to know and like some workers better than others. It is sometimes difficult to separate your role as a supervisor who directs and reviews a worker from that as that worker's friend. Clearly, if performance reviews are to be perceived as fair, questions of friendship should not enter into the process.
- **Stereotypes:** Stereotyping also can affect performance reviews. The effect can be either positive or negative. In both cases, it introduces bias into the evaluation. For example, a woman working in a job traditionally held by men may be underrated because of the supervisor's stereotype of women.
- **Contrast Effects:** Here supervisors evaluate a worker in relation to other workers rather than the actual performance requirements. In a work group where workers are generally below standard, the tendency may be to evaluate the best "below-standard" worker as outstanding. But if that worker doesn't meet the performance requirements, this ranking is inappropriate. On the other hand, if you have a clearly superior worker, evaluating the other workers in comparison to this superstar is just as absurd. Focus on whether performance requirements are being met by each worker individually.
- **First Impressions:** Impressions of workers formed during their first few weeks of employment must be held in check. Often these impressions are lasting, regardless of whether they are warranted.
- **Similar-to-Me-Effect:** Supervisors tend to evaluate workers who are similar to them in attitudes or background more favorably than those who are not.

OVERALL RATING RECOMMENDATIONS

Exceptional (E): Performance far exceeded expectations. An employee performing at this level should be performing at a significantly higher level than those who Exceed Expectations. Only a small percentage of employees will achieve this level of performance.

Exceeds Expectations (EE): Performance consistently exceeded expectations. An employee performing at this level should truly be performing above and beyond what was agreed to as their objectives and other performance criteria (i.e. employee took on additional duties beyond what was agreed upon or completed the duties significantly better than was expected).

Meets Expectations (M): Performance consistently meets expectations. An employee who completes all of the objectives and competencies identified at the beginning of the review period is performing at this level. The majority of employees will perform at this level.

Needs Improvement (NI): Performance did not meet expectations. An employee performing at this level is inconsistent in performance. Continual improvement is required to fully meet expectations.

Unsatisfactory (U): Performance consistently below expectations. Immediate improvement is required.

Note: Mandatory to use for USS Performance Reviews

NOTES

12 Tips for Handling Employee Terminations and Disciplinary Actions



By [Lisa Nagele-Piazza, J.D., SHRM-SC](#)

1. **Confirm the information.** When someone comes to you about a worker's misconduct, attendance issues or performance problems, be sure to confirm the source of the information and verify the facts.

2. **Check the policy.** If an employee is being disciplined for violating a company policy, make sure everyone involved knows what the actual policy says. Also make sure that the employee had a copy of the policy. Of course, employees should know the more obvious rules without reading a policy—it should go without saying that sleeping on the job, for example, isn't allowed.

3. **Review past practices.** Make sure consistent procedures are followed. Does the business have a progressive discipline process through which employees first receive a verbal warning, then a written warning and so on? Are there certain circumstances that are grounds for immediate termination?

4. **Remove emotion from the decision-making process.** If emotions are running high, talk it out with someone first. "Take it down a notch, and be reasonable, because you say things in anger that you wouldn't necessarily otherwise say and you're also not thinking clearly," Reidy said.

5. **Arrange for a witness.** It is best to avoid having the conversation alone. When a witness is present, the conversation can later be verified if there's a disagreement.

6. **Have a plan.** Before the meeting, decide who is going to speak and what will be said. For unionized workplaces, confirm whether an employee's representative needs to be informed about or present for the meeting.

7. **Prepare documents in advance.** If the employee needs to sign anything regarding a disciplinary action, performance improvement plan or termination, be sure that everything is ready prior to the meeting.

8. **Meet in person if possible.** Firing someone by text, voice mail or e-mail is probably not the best thing to do, because it adds insult to an already emotional situation, Reidy said.

9. **Have the meeting in a private location.** Make sure there won't be any awkward or distracting interruptions during a difficult conversation.

10. **Give the real reasons.** Outline the issues in advance and tell the employee the truth. In the case of a termination, don't say "Business is slow" or "We're having a layoff" if the real reason is related to performance.

11. **Let the employee talk.** This shows fairness. An employee might say, "You're right, this wasn't the right job for me." Or the employee may take that time to share his or her point of view. But be sure to keep control of the conversation and don't let it go on too long.

12. **Don't be stubborn.** If something comes to light during a termination meeting that may have changed the decision if it had been known in advance, be prepared to suspend the employee (or take other temporary action) until a more thorough investigation can be completed.

Other Considerations:
