FOREWORD

A major responsibility faced by every person in a managerial or supervisory position is the evaluation of employee performance. Increasingly, performance reviews are also being conducted by peers, subordinates and customers. Many individuals have also found the need to make self-evaluations.

This guide is designed to help the appraiser in selecting phrases and words that accurately describe a broad range of critical rating factors.

The phrases contained in this handbook are extremely positive and reflect superior performance. Negative phrases are not included in order to avoid redundancy. Verbs and other wording can simply be substituted to place emphasis on the need for improvement. For example, “excels in delegating routine tasks to subordinates” can easily be changed to, “you can improve your effectiveness by delegating routine tasks to subordinates.”

In addition, the phrases need to be substantiated with factual documentation at every opportunity. As an example, “Demonstrates sound cost effectiveness” may be expanded to “Demonstrates sound cost effectiveness as shown by your ability to achieve a 10% reduction in departmental expenses through the first six months compared to last year.”
The same phrase may be used to describe unsatisfactory performance by stating “Since your departmental expenses are 10% over budget for the first six months compared to last year,” you are expected to “Demonstrate sound cost effectiveness by meeting your year-end budget.”

Phrases are continuously added and revised to describe ever changing job responsibilities in today’s workplace. This expanded and revised edition reflects the growing emphasis on ethics. Management skills have been divided into Top Management and Middle Management. New sections have also been added covering Customer Service, Recruiting and Risk-taking.

While every effort has been made to avoid duplication, some headings are closely interwoven by their very nature. For example, a person using the “Supervisory Skills’ section may also find the “Management Skills” section helpful.

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GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL EVALUATIONS

I. RATE OBJECTIVELY

You can improve the accuracy of your ratings by recognizing the following factors that subvert evaluations:

1. THE HALO EFFECT:

The tendency of an evaluator to rate a person good or bad on all characteristics based on an experience or knowledge involving only one dimension.

2. LENIENCY TENDENCY:

A tendency toward evaluating all persons as outstanding and to give inflated ratings rather than true assessments of performance.

3. STRICTNESS TENDENCY:

The opposite of the leniency tendency; that is, a bias toward rating all persons at the low end of the scale and a tendency to be overly demanding or critical.

4. AVERAGE TENDENCY:

A tendency to evaluate every person as average regardless of major differences in performance.

Legislation, court cases and government directives have added a new dimension to the performance appraisal process. Employee evaluations may become a key issue in litigation. Clearly, the accuracy of performance appraisals is a requirement of the highest priority.

II. USE SIGNIFICANT DOCUMENTATION AND FACTUAL EXAMPLES

It is essential that performance evaluations be measured in relation to any pre-existing standards, objectives or other specific job requirements.

Most appraisal systems require the rater to cite examples of performance. Examples should be objective and specific rather than subjective and general.

Whenever possible, use quantitative examples which can be expressed in numerical terms using figures, percentages or amounts. For example, it is preferable to state “exceeded sales objective by 10% through the first six months” rather than “exceeded sales objective.”
III. PLAN FOR APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

The appraisal interview is one of the most important elements of the evaluation process. The purpose of the interview is to review performance and let people know how they are doing. You can improve the effectiveness of the interview by adhering to the following guidelines:

- select a quiet, comfortable and appropriate location
- plan to avoid interruptions
- allow ample time for the discussion
- sit aside of the person
- put the person at ease
- conduct the interview in a positive manner
- review the ratings by category
- keep the interview performance-oriented
- encourage the person to talk, but remain firmly in control
- listen carefully
- avoid the defensive
- focus on patterns rather than isolated instances
- respond to objections, problems and disagreements
- concentrate on facts
- be honest
- be a coach, not a judge
- place emphasis on positive reinforcement
- develop positive action plans
- end the interview on a positive and supportive basis

IV. EMPHASIZE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Effective performance appraisal programs place emphasis on planning for future development. The attainment of organizational goals coupled with maximum employee growth is the mark of true management success. You can develop the full potential of subordinates by implementing the following:

1. Analyze performance and develop appropriate strategies for strengthening areas in need of improvement.
2. Develop a goal-oriented plan to prepare for greater responsibility.
3. Establish follow-up plans to ensure employee growth.
4. Use positive reinforcement to motivate.

V. EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE

The positive use of performance appraisals combined with sound management practice will contribute to the improved effectiveness of every organization.