



Appraisal Training Course Workbook

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Appraisal Workbook

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1 The aim of staff appraisals

To optimise the performance of each employee and thus improve the overall effectiveness of the organisation.

Staff appraisal is a tool which creates something positive for both the individual and the organisation.

The basic principle behind staff appraisal is that organisations can more readily be developed through people than through procedure.

The practical implication is that, no matter how good the procedure, it is useless if the individuals involved are not prepared to carry it out.

If the aim is to make an organisation more effective through making its individual members more effective, the process must be cumulative and continuous. As soon as one level of improvement is reached another emerges, thus any appraisal system must have a facility built into it which can bring about change and development.

2 The Appraisal

An appraisal may be defined as:

- **A formal management process**, which takes place at planned and fixed intervals, usually annually.
- **A review and planning process.** Certainly the past is appraised, but not to apportion blame. The purpose is to understand the factors which contributed to past performance and to plan to change them so that performance can improve in the future.
- **Objective-based.** The employee's performance is appraised against last year's objectives and the key outcome from the appraisal is a new set of agreed objectives for the following year.
- **A development opportunity.** Two of the major variables affecting employees' performance are their skills and their knowledge. The second key outcome from the appraisal is a development plan to give the employee the extra skills and knowledge they will need both to achieve their new objectives and to prepare them for additional responsibilities in the future.
- **Participative.** Appraisee's usually know more than their managers about the reasons for past performance and what could he achieve in the next year. The manager therefore needs maximum input from the appraisee in the formulation of objectives and development plans.
- **Empowering.** A well-conducted appraisal involves the appraisee fully in the management process, including problem analysis, what the new objectives should be, and how they will be achieved. Appraisal can therefore be the cornerstone of an empowering management philosophy.
- **Planned performance.** If objectives are set appropriately and the manager gives the necessary planned support, then there is a very high probability that they will be achieved. Each individual appraisal is, therefore, a building block in the pyramid of corporate performance.

Exercise 1 – List what you believe are the benefits of an appraisal system to the following:

3.1 Benefits to the Appraiser

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3.2 Benefits to the Appraisee

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3.3 Benefits to the organisation

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4 Your experience of an appraisal

Exercise 2 – Think of people in your past that you know have influenced you significantly in a positive way. They could have been a useful role model or challenged and supported you to acquire a new vision and take a new direction.

Then answer the questions below:

1. What did it do for you?

.....
.....
.....

2. What qualities did that person display that made them so valuable?

.....
.....
.....
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3. How can you use that experience to the benefit of a person you are appraising?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5 Managing Performance: True or False?

Exercise 3 – From your current knowledge of a performance review please read the statement and put a mark in the box you believe is correct

		True	False
1.	The major emphasis of performance management is on the annual performance review.		
2.	Objective setting is concerned with establishing expectations based on the organisation's and the department's goals.		
3.	Objectives are established at the beginning of the year.		
4.	Development Planning is focused on solving performance problems.		
5.	Development Planning occurs as a result of a coaching and feedback discussion.		
6.	Coaching and feedback occurs quarterly in a formal progress check discussion.		
7.	If coaching and feedback have taken place throughout the year, then a formal annual review is not necessary.		
8.	Once objectives have been agreed, they do not change.		
9.	Performance management is all about dealing with performance issues.		
10.	Managers are wholly accountable for performance management.		

6 Steps of an appraisal

The review meeting is an important occasion for both the appraiser and the appraisee. The appraiser needs to recall past achievements and progress, and to view suitable targets for the future. The appraisee also needs to recall achievements and progress and reflect on how personal aims match in with the requirements of the organisation.

The appraisal requires planning if it is to be effective and do justice to both parties. This is not an occasion for playing it off the cuff, relying on intuition or just responding to gut-feeling.

6.1 Prepare

During the year gather facts about your staff's performance and keep a record of them.

Tell them you will be keeping a record and they are welcome to see it at any time.

Compare how they performed against their agreed objectives.

Agree an appraisal meeting at least one week before it is due. This gives both of you time to consider their performance against their objectives.

Ensure that the meeting takes place without interruption from telephone calls, pagers and visitors.

Arrange the seating so that barriers are removed and you will both be comfortable at the same level.

6.2 Discuss

The meeting should be a discussion and not an interview.

Discuss their performance since the last appraisal; compare planned performance with their actual performance.

Sandwich their area(s) for development between the good points. Be sincere and as generous as is reasonable about the good points. Are there any lessons to be learned from them?

When discussing their area(s) for development, focus on the problem – not the personality. Jointly identify the reasons (wrong priorities, low resources, and competence). Allow face-saving if necessary and possible. What lessons can be learned?

Identify any job changes - any extra or different duties or responsibilities? Any change of job emphasis? Does any of this relate to recent performance?

Consider knowledge, skill and career aims. Does the job as it is, (or as it may shortly become) require something that the appraisee does not yet possess? Discuss job and career ambitions to see how these might be combined with business needs.

Ask for their objectives for next year and develop them into SMART objectives that are linked to the organisation's objectives. All this becomes a basis for the next set of performance targets, which should, ideally, be agreed rather than imposed.

The objectives will relate to the goals of the organisation in the following way:



- Forget that learning is an active and continual process
- Ignore those things that need to be changed and done differently
- Expect answers to everything
- Have only a cosy chat that achieves nothing
- Receive counselling or therapy.

9 Appraisal Outcomes

9.1 Appraisal Skills

Conducting appraisals are essentially a practical exercise and you will find that your skill as an appraiser will get better with practice. No two situations are identical and what works within one relationship will not necessarily work for another. There are very few instances when you can apply a standard answer to any particular problem, and thus there are no right or wrong solutions you will be able to apply universally. Nevertheless, there are certain good practices that will help you to tackle the role in a positive manner. Likewise, there are several bad practices to be avoided.

Exercise 5 – Mark the Following with A for Always; S for Sometimes and N for Never depending on whether you believe they should be used in the appraisal meeting.

- Listening with empathy
- Discipline
- Sharing experience and learning
- Providing help and support
- Opening doors!
- Developing insight through reflection
- Performance management
- Being a sounding board
- Supervision
- Using coaching behaviours
- Challenging

9.2 Discussions

Exercise 6 – The discussions you have with your appraisee are vital for their development. Some of the following sentences are good to use and others are not.

Delete those which you believe are not good to use.

- “I’m far too busy to meet you next week.”
- “What do you want from me?”
- “You have done a good job with this action plan.”
- “What you need to do is
- “Let’s reflect on this for a moment.”
- “Get to the point, we haven’t got all day.”
- “Let’s check that I have understood.”
- “From what I have seen you are lazy and need to pull your socks up.”
- “Well she’s a woman; you have got to expect that sort of thing.”
- “What are the implications of doing this?”
- “What choices do you have?”
- “Sometimes I have difficulty hearing what you say because when you are very enthusiastic about something you talk quickly.”
- “You seem unusually quiet. How are you feeling now?”
- “I recommend you read/attend/speak with...”
- “How do you think you can improve the situation?”

9.3 Model Discussions

These are some model discussions you might like to consider using:

- “Where do you see yourself in the organisation?”
- “Where would you like to be three years from now?”
- “What steps can we identify to bring you closer to your career goals?”
- “What challenges are you facing now in your position?”
- “What is working particularly well for you?”
- “What has changed since your last appraisal?”

Here are some tools you can use to develop your appraisal skills.

Some types of questions include:

1. Open
2. Closed
3. Leading
4. Hypothetical
5. Paraphrasing.

Let's look at these in more detail.

1. Open Questions

These require a lengthier response. For example, rather than saying "Do you enjoy working in your team?" you could ask "How do you feel about working in your team?" This open question will encourage a more detailed response.

Open questions usually begin with "Who", "What", "When", "Where", "Why", "How", "Tell", "Explain" and "Describe"

2. Closed Questions

Closed questions can be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No" answer and responses are limited.

3. Leading

These questions suggest the answer and try to gain agreement.

Example – "You would agree that"

Advantages

- When testing understanding
- When testing to find out if the appraisee will agree with you.

Disadvantages

- Forcing an agreement
- The appraisee's knowledge and ideas are not discovered.

11 Checklist of behaviours that hinder and behaviours that help

This list is a guide of how you can develop rapport with others. To succeed, practice doing less of the hindering behaviours and more of the helping behaviours.

Hindering Behaviours

Lean away with hands clenched, arms crossed and legs crossed.

Look at the other person for less than 50% of the time.

Listen silently with no continuity noises and/or interrupt before the other person has had their say.

Sit opposite the other person.

Don't use the other person's name or use it artificially so that it jars.

Offer no summaries and don't check your understanding.

Stick rigidly to saying things that are routine and standard.

Don't acknowledge the other person's expressed feelings or point of view.

Acquiesce or never explicitly agree with the other person.

Pick holes in the other person's ideas.

Criticise the other person.

Be defensive and never admit to any inadequacy.

Be secretive and withhold information from the other person even though it affects them.

Remember the choice is yours and, so far as other people are concerned, **you are the behaviour.**

Helping Behaviours

Lean forward with hands open, arms uncrossed and legs uncrossed.

Look at the other person for approximately the same of time as they look at you.

When listening nod and make "I'm listening" noises such as "umm, yes, really".

Sit beside the other person or if this isn't possible, at a 90% angle to them.

Use the other person's name early on in the transaction.

Summarise back to the other person what you think they have said.

Say things that refer back to what the other person has said.

Show empathy by saying you understand how the other person feels and can see things from their point of view.

When in agreement with the other person, openly say so and say why.

Build on the other person's ideas.

Be non-judgmental towards them.

Admit it when you don't know the answer or have made a mistake.

Openly explain what you are doing, or intending to do, for the other person.

12 Feedback

*“All that I withhold diminishes me and cheats you
All that you withhold diminishes you and cheats me
When we hold back ourselves for each other’s sake
We only collude in the weakening of us both.”*

In today’s slimmed down, flatter organisations where more is being demanded from fewer people - the ability to give, and receive, feedback is becoming even more important for managers, team leaders and supervisors, in fact for anyone who wants to improve the performance of people around them.

Feedback is central to most development activities including coaching and appraisal. If people are to develop they need constructive feedback so they can see for themselves where they are performing well and where they might do better. But there is more to it than this. If you work in a team, you have to get on with the other team members and it is here that feedback skills become crucial. Team members need to know how to give one another feedback in a way that improves the performance of the team and does not cause friction. Managers and team leaders have a key role to play in creating the kind of supportive environment necessary for enabling teams to ‘build bridges’ and focus on business objectives.

Some of the most important information we can receive from others (or give to others) consists of feedback about our behaviour. Such feedback can provide learning opportunities for each of us if we can use the reactions of others as a mirror for observing the consequences of our behaviour. Such personal feedback helps to make us more aware of what we do and how we do it. Thus increasing our ability to modify and change our behaviour and to become more effective in our interactions with others.

It therefore includes specific *information* and comment about *feelings* or *beliefs*.

In short, feedback is communication to a person (or group) which gives that person information about how they affect others. Feedback helps keep on individual “on target” so they may be able to achieve their goals.

To be helpful, it needs to be given in a direct and caring, supportive way, and to include both positive and negative observations. Criticism without some genuine praise or encouragement can be too upsetting to hear, so the person may forget it, or believe it’s just you getting at them and not take action to change their behaviour.

When a group gives a person feedback consider that person to be likened to a paper boat in a pond. If we throw stones at it and they land near it the ripples will cause the boat to gradually sink. Similarly if one person throws a large stone at it, it can also sink, so take care and give feedback with feeling so the good points are not lost in the sea of development.

The golden rule

The golden rule of feedback is be precise. If you don’t know what you are doing well you can’t do more of it and if you don’t know what you are doing wrong you can’t change!
Use the EEC formula for effective feedback:

- **Example** - give an example – tell them what they did
- **Effect** - describe the effect it had

- **Turn the negative into the positive.**

For example:

- "Let's see how we can improve your letter writing."
 - "Let's consider what you need to do to bring your sales figures up to the required targets."
 - "You always submit your reports in time but I still have to correct the grammar and layout. It will be useful for both of us if we can develop those areas."
- **Ask, don't tell.** Feedback is more effective if you can get people to see for themselves what is good and less good in their performance. If you are concerned about an issue or area of performance, ask them what they think of it, allow them to reflect on it and realise for themselves where they may have gone wrong. Don't simply jump in and tell them what you think.
 - **Focus on what you've seen or heard**, not on what you guess are the reasons for it, e.g., "I see you haven't got that report in by the deadline we agreed", "Can you tell me what's been happening", "I feel concerned because of the reputation of our department." Not "It's not good enough you know, to leave things just because you can't be bothered to do this paperwork."
 - **Be specific rather than generalising.** Avoid general comments which are not very useful when it comes to developing skills. Statements such as "You were brilliant" or "It was awful" may be pleasant or dreadful to hear, but they do not give enough detail to be useful sources of learning. Pinpoint what the person did which led you to use the label "brilliant" or "awful."

For example:

"The comments you made when I was upset helped me to overcome my concerns."
"It makes me angry when you yell across the room like that while I am talking to the class."

If you find yourself wanting to say, "You always....", or "You never...."

Check:

- (i) Do I have examples to discuss?
- (ii) Have I really never seen the individual do this.. or anything!

To be told that one is 'dominating' will probably not be as useful as to be told that, "Just now when we were deciding the issue you did not listen to what others said and I felt I had to accept your argument or face attack from you."

- **Focus on the behaviour rather than the person.** You may feel that the employee is lazy, stupid or incompetent, but handing out labels is counter-productive. Think in terms of shortfall from a given standard.

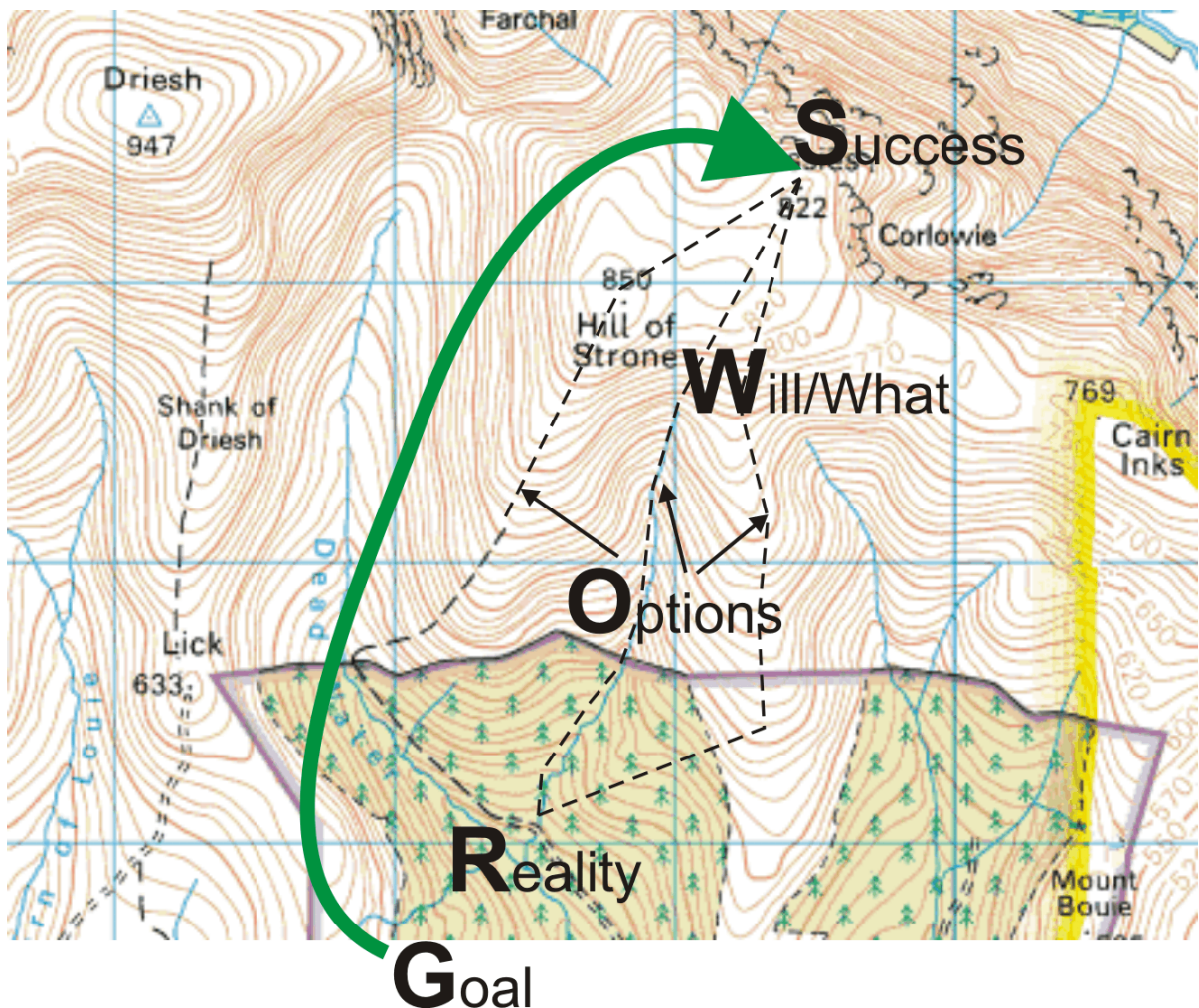
For example; not, "You're a big mouth," but "I found it difficult to say much at the meeting because you appeared to be doing most of the talking." It is important to describe what a person does which you like or dislike rather than comment on what you imagine he/she is.

13 The Grow model

The GROW Model is deservedly one of the best known and widely used coaching models, but is very adaptable to an appraisal.

It provides a simple yet powerful framework for navigating a route through an appraisal session, as well as providing a means of finding your way when lost.

A useful metaphor for GROW is a map: once you know where you are going (the **G**oal) and where you are (current **R**eality), you can explore possible ways of making the journey (**O**ptions). Next you must have the motivation or **W**ill to make the journey. Once you reach your goal you can celebrate your success.



The GROW Model is described here as it applies to an individual appraisal session but part of its strength is that it can equally well be applied to a part of a session, or to series of sessions. In each case, the principle is the same.

Use the GROW model to structure an appraisal conversation and deliver a meaningful result.

The framework provides a simple four-step structure for an appraisal session:

Goal

The discussion should start by defining the topic in order to understand what specifically the appraisee wants to talk about, what territory they are in, the scale of the problem, the importance and emotional significance of the topic to the player and the player's long-term goal for the topic.

Reality

As well as knowing where you are trying to get to, you need to know where you are starting from - the Current **R**eality. It is surprising how often this is the key part of an appraisal session and that by just seeing clearly the situation (rather than what was thought or imagined to be the situation), the resolution becomes obvious and straightforward.

Options

In the options stage the appraisers intention is to draw out a list of everything that is possible for the player to do without judgment and evaluation. The appraiser elicits suggestions from the appraisee by asking effective questions and guides him/her towards making the right choices.

Will or **W**rap Up

In this stage the appraisee's intention is to gain commitment to action. The appraisee selects the most appropriate options, commits to action, defines the action plan, the next steps and a timeframe for achieving the agreed objectives and identifies how to overcome obstacles.

13.1 Summary of the GROW Model

Goal

- What do you want from this discussion?
- Agree SMART objectives
- What are the consequences if you do not reach this goal?

Reality

- What's happening?
- What have you tried so far?
- What were the results?
- What's your sense of the obstacles?
- Is the goal still realistic?

Options

- Describe your 'ideal state'?
- If you could do anything, what might it be?
- If you were another person involved in this situation, what would you have to see and/or hear to get your attention?
- If you were watching this conversation, what would you recommend?
- Would you like suggestions from me?
- Do any of these ideas interest you to explore them further?
- If you were to do this, how might you go about it?

Will, Wrap Up or Way Forward

- Are you interested enough in the option you have selected to take action?
- How will you go about it?
- What might get in the way?
- How will you overcome it?
- What do you need to do next and by when?
- Agree a SMART action plan.

14 Smart Action Plans

A study at Yale University asked students about their plans for the future. Only 3 per cent of them had written goals. Twenty years later the researchers returned and discovered that the 3 per cent with written goals were now worth more financially than the other 97 per cent put together.

The researchers also discovered that the 3 per cent seemed to be happier and more joyful than the others. It's amazing that only a small percentage of people actually bother to make lists of their goals.

As the German Philosopher Gerter once said, 'the greatest thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we're moving.'

Under the pressure of task and daily responsibility, it is easy to lose sight of any sense of overall direction and planning for your own professional development. One way to counter this is to make a conscious effort towards personal goal setting and subsequent evaluation.

Successful leaders of companies benefit by seeking answers to the following questions:

- where are we now?
- where do we want to be?
- when do we want to be there?
- what barriers are there to overcome?
- how will we get there?

We can also benefit by answering these questions.

There are several models to choose from, however all action plans and goals should satisfy basic criteria by being:

Specific and unambiguous
Measurable and meaningful
Agreed and achievable (with supervisor/manager)
Relevant and realistic
Time bound

It is recommended that action planning should not exceed more than 2 or 3 areas being identified at any one time. This enables you to focus in on the plan and keep it manageable.

Remember - Target specific skill areas especially those that will help you to develop skills, attitude, knowledge and understanding. For example, to say that you want to develop "interpersonal" skills is at best vague, be specific and state exactly what you mean, for example verbal communication, non-verbal communication, effective listening, etc.

Prioritise your area for development by asking the following questions:

- What skills *must* be developed?
- What skills *should* be developed?
- What skills could be developed?

The following example of action planning is included for guidance. When preparing ask yourself these questions:

Where am I now?

The thought of having to make a presentation concerns me. I do not have sufficient knowledge on how to do presentations or the confidence to do them effectively. Feedback and reaction from the audience suggest that I lack confidence and the talk lacks structure.

Where do I want to be?
(**S**pecific – Not general)

To make effective presentations and feel confident when speaking at public meetings, forums and briefings.

14.1 Example SMART Action Plan

Complete this action plan and give a copy to your appraiser

Where am I now?	
Where do I want to be? S pecific Goal – Not general	
How will I know if I've been successful? M easurable	
What barriers are there to overcome? A chievable	
Am I being R ealistic to achieve it?	
When do I want to be there? T ime bound	
Actions to be taken to achieve the goal:	
Support/resources needed to achieve goal:	
Date(s) to review goal:	