



Planning the Interview

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Explore motivational tools and techniques
- ✓ Discuss how to plan effective performance interviews.

Planning the Interview

What should a manager or supervisor do to prepare for the actual appraisal interview?

- Set up the appointment and choose a location where you will not be interrupted.
- Give the employee some advance notice (at least a week).
- Most importantly, decide what is to be discussed and in what order. Appraisers can easily overwhelm the employee with things that need improvement. Pick those that are most outstanding for praise, and those performance challenges that most need to be addressed—usually no more than two or three items.
- Have documentation on hand for any criticisms.
- While goals should be those of the employee, you can be a part of that goal-setting process. In fact, you must be if you have never asked an employee to develop goals for themselves before. This is a learning process for them too, and as such, they need your guidance and coaching.
- Gather personnel files, last year's performance appraisal, the position profile or job description, and any documentation gathered through the year.
- Remind participants that they are being evaluated on the whole review period (usually six or 12 months).
- Provide them with adequate time to review a draft of your written comments before the meeting. You may also want them to complete a self-assessment.
- Mentally prepare for interviews. On a receptivity scale, how receptive will the employee be to your feedback? Can you prepare for their reaction?

The Interview

A Basic Format

Typically supervisors invite an employee in, ask them to sit down, and then launch into a monologue, telling the employee all their faults, and what they have to do about them. If they aren't careful the interview will be over before the employee has had an opportunity to say more than, "Hello."

The basic organization of the performance appraisal interview is generally the same as for all types of interviews. They consist of three phases: the opening, the discussion, and the closing.

The Opening

To skip the opening phase of a performance review interview is just as serious a mistake as to forget to set up an agenda for any other meeting, or to forget to introduce the topic when you are making an oral presentation. The opening phase of an interview includes three basic steps: rapport, orientation, and motivation. Usually they are done in the order listed, but the order is less important than remembering to do them.

Rapport

Developing rapport with your employee is key to their receptivity. You actually need a good rapport together before this meeting, so make sure that you are one of those supervisors who gets to know their staff, and have a professional relationship with them. When the appraisal meeting comes, choose neutral territory, or at least arrange the room informally, rather than across a desk from each other. Shake hands, show the person where to sit, offer coffee or juice, engage in small talk for a few minutes, and adopt a friendly, interested expression.

Orientation

Once you have established rapport, explain approximately how long the review will take, and exactly why the company does reviews. Tell the employee how much you appreciate the opportunity to meet one on one for a conversation with all employees. Tell them you want to get their opinion on their performance and you want to add a few thoughts of your own. Tell them you would like to see them leave this review with a good idea of how they are doing and some goals for the year/period ahead.

Motivation

Explain the benefits to the employee for being a willing and cooperative participant in this review. Suggest that this is their opportunity to tell you some of the things that have been on their mind, and perhaps give you some suggestions of how you can be of more help to them. Let them know that this is an opportunity for the employee to think about a personal development plan; a way to enhance their career.

The Discussion

This is where you openly discuss how an employee really thinks and feels about their results. There are a number of things to keep in mind during this very important part of the review process. Remember not to talk too much yourself. The object is to get them talking. If you want to create a willingness in employees to do a thorough and candid review of their performance, you will find you can learn a great deal by asking open questions and probing their responses.

The Closing

It's equally important to tie up all the loose ends at the close of the interview. Summarize all the points that have been covered, get the employee's commitment to any changes asked of them, and agree on a follow-up date.

Summary

The summary should contain the employee's agreement with what has been said (or note that they don't agree, as can be the case) and recap the highlights of good performance and improvement goals, along with agreed upon follow-up plans and dates.

Commitment

You should also note what commitment supervisors are looking for. For example, the employee may make a commitment to the performance improvement or development plan that supervisor and employee created together, and there may be some deliverables expected from the supervisor, such as coaching, training, or others.

Follow-Up

What sort of follow-up plan is reasonable and possible? This will depend on the employee, the organization and the resources available, including the supervisor's time, but the plan must be something both know will happen.

Conclusion

The review should be concluded on a positive note, with supervisor thanking employee for taking the time to do a self-assessment and a review with the supervisor, and the supervisor reiterating their confidence that the period ahead will be a good one.

Preparation

Choose one of the case studies below and prepare a simple role play of a performance appraisal.

Case Study 1

One of your employees in the maintenance department, Art LeBrun, seems to be having difficulty meeting some of his work assignments. According to standards that were set several years ago, all work orders are to be completed within 48 hours. However, he seems to spend a lot of time on the phone ordering supplies. You know this is a job that needs to be done, but you have a "just in time" policy for ordering supplies, as you have a really tight budget and no place to store supplies. What will you do to handle this situation?

Test Your Knowledge

The Opening

The Discussion

The Closing

Case Study 2

Ariana Stanford is responsible for housekeeping for the entire facility. She and her two part-time staff get through a tremendous volume of work, and she prides herself on a high level of cleanliness throughout the building. She is always cheerful and ready to stop and help others. Every time you pass her in the hall, you tell yourself you should stop and tell her she is one of the reasons the facility has such a good reputation for quality. But you are always late for a meeting when you run into her, and the moment passes. Over the last two weeks she has been looking a little worn, and the level of cleanliness has dropped noticeably. What do you need to do?

The Opening

The Discussion

The Closing

Case Study 3

Four months have now passed since you sat down with each staff member and established performance expectations and a support plan for each of them. You have finally found a few minutes to update files, and you pick up Yvonne Dresser's file. Yvonne is responsible for managing your computer systems. Her objective at the outset was to improve her own ability to meet deadlines by delegating more. You know she has made an effort. She has taken the course on delegating that you recommended, and she has been delegating some of the more routine software support work to her two staff. However, you have been approached by both of her staff, who are complaining about not knowing what they are supposed to be doing, and whether what they are doing is the right thing. What do you need to do?

The Opening

The Discussion

The Closing

Let's imagine that the employee has just been hired, and is meeting for the first time with their supervisor. This is the meeting where the employer goes over the employee's job description and sets goals (at least three) to get the employee started in their new role.

Test Your Knowledge

Goal One

Goal Two

Goal Three

Additional Notes/Goals

Providing Feedback

Provide feedback for the appropriate situation.

Test Your Knowledge

Quickee Documentation Ltd.

The boss has just walked into the staff room and sees the new employee with a laptop. This is in strict violation of the no-technology policy. What do you do?

Ace Laboratories

As the president, you walk into the reception area to find the receptionist missing, four people waiting, and two phone lines ringing. What do you do?

Acme Airlines

As the vice-president, you've been keeping an eye on the sales figures for the cargo transportation department and they're not as high as you would like. How do you address this?

Leaky Pipes

Your new plumber is late for work for the third day in a row. When he finally shows up, what do you do?

Sunshine Travel

You, the senior travel agent, walk into the office and find mud all over the floor. However, the walls have been re-painted. The new janitor arrives and asks how you like the new wall color. What do you do?

Coaching

The Importance of Coaching

As the workplace changes, employees often ask for coaching to help them grow. One of our roles as a leader is to help others, and the ability to help others improve their skills and attitudes is extremely important.

Coaching is one-on-one mentoring that helps people develop their skills, set goals, and understand your company's success. Coaching is a way of telling the truth, confronting tough issues, and using language to inspire.

The secrets of successful coaching include building on the positive, being diplomatic about the negative, and a commitment to never, ever yell.

When you are coaching your staff, you rely on your ability to listen, ask open-ended questions, support what you say with non-verbal language, and help to grow their career skills. This includes the ability to:

- Make eye contact
- Use supportive body language
- Acknowledge what the other person is saying or feeling
- Use open-ended questions

When you are working on your skills at performance appraisals, help your employee to discuss how they feel they are doing. Then, setting your own personal objectives aside, help them to set goals that make sense for their career and do not simply reflect your desires for them.

Test Your Knowledge

Task Preparation

Prepare a coaching session for the appropriate situation.

Quickee Documents Ltd.

The boss arrives at the staff meeting and the employee has captured everyone else's attention as she describes the features of her new smartphone. What do you do?

Ace Laboratories

For the third time this past month, the president walks into the reception area and finds utter chaos. In fact, you feel that you've spent more time doing your receptionist's job than she has! How do you address this?

Acme Airlines

Although you met with the new cargo manager a month ago, sales still have not increased as much as you would like. How do you address this?

Leaky Pipes

After you spoke to your employee, her/his punctuality improved for a month. Today, however, he hasn't shown up for work at all. How do you handle this?

Sunshine Travel

You, the senior travel agent, arrive back at the office after a week's vacation. You notice that the washroom is filthy, although new paintings have been added throughout the office. What do you do?

Appraisal Preparation

Test Your Knowledge

Employers

The Opening: Rapport, Orientation, and Motivation

The Discussion

The Closing: Summary, Commitment, Follow-Up, and Conclusion

Team	Notes

Further Reading:

