

# PERSONNEL EVALUATION

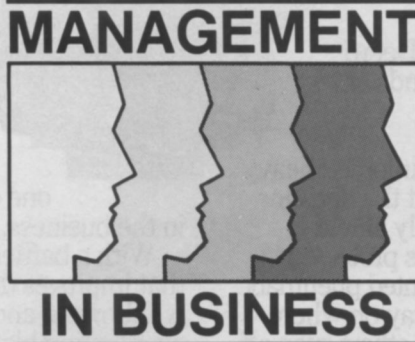
Landscape managers rely heavily on their employees for good work and good business. Evaluating this important asset is often done improperly, or not at all. These guidelines will help in the evaluation process.

by Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke

**T**he development of your company's personnel plan should consist of separate recruiting, interviewing, hiring, training, evaluation, compensation and career progression plans for your employees.

The development of a personnel evaluation/appraisal system for non-management employees should be an integral part of a larger plan for your employees. The purpose of this system should be to answer the following questions for each employee:

- What aspects of the job performance skills does each employee have that are considered strengths of the individual?
- What aspects of the job performance skills does each employee have that are below standard and need improvement?
- How does an individual's effort on the job contribute to the company goals?
- What skills and proficiencies are



needed for promotion?

- When will each employee have the competence necessary for advancement in your company?
- What will the opportunities for promotion be in your company during the next three to five years?

While it will not be possible to keep all individual subjectivity out of an evaluation system, assessing as many evaluation factors as possible on a quantitative basis will help.

The basis of successful evaluation/appraisal systems is to have all employees in a specific job rated with the same evaluation factors and comparatively scaled against each other. This is helpful as you start operating more than one location and need to identify the personnel who have the potential to be future managers within the organization.

The evaluation/appraisal system developed should include the following areas: sales, operations, administration, safety, truck and equipment maintenance, resource sharing, technical knowledge, procedures and practices, customer service and facility maintenance.

You, as the owner, know many aspects of your operation. You may also assume that all of your employees have a basic knowledge of how to perform their job. This system should help reduce assumptions on your part.

Often we hear of employers having unusual turnover, believing the problem is in the recruiting of new employees. The real problem may be that management doesn't have a consistent standard of performance evaluation and training to identify employees who need additional training to become proficient in their job. This often results in employees who do not yet have the skill proficiency needed for a job being erroneously discharged for not performing a job well. The reality of the situation may have been that they didn't have the needed training to perform the task.

In developing your evaluation system, you should decide whether an employee is skilled, needs training or doesn't need the particular skill being evaluated. Another part of the evaluation/appraisal plan should be a quantitative evaluation of the employee's job performance.

This rating should be on a scale of one to five. Five is assigned to performance significantly above expectation, four being the attainment of performance above expectation, three for meeting the job expectations, two for performance below expectation, and one for unsatisfactory performance.

This evaluation system will provide the owner/manager a comparative rating system that will identify the highest and lowest performers in the company. This ranking, together with observing the individuals, should serve as the basis for identifying your company's potential future managers, those employees needing training and those employees who need to be replaced.

Implementing a system of employee evaluation/appraisal will identify for the owner/manager those employees who have demonstrated technical competence, business understanding, sales performance, and a comparison with other employees.

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