

This efficiency checklist helps grade employees

Figuring out how efficient and effective your employees are is not an easy task. Have a checklist that can help facilitate the review process.

■ When you've got to devise an efficient, thorough way to grade your employees on their job performances—perhaps in preparation for a merit raise—how do you start?

The best way, experts say, is to make sure you've got a complete checklist of the qualities you're looking for in a "perfect" employee. (The list at right will give you a head start).

Each employee, before being called in for a performance review—whether it coincides with a salary review—should be graded on the various components of his or her job by the immediate superior.

In its simplest form, the performance review issues a simple "yes/no" for each category. For instance, is the employee punctual? Yes or no? Does the employee put his or her ideas to action? Yes or no?

In a more complete review, the employee is graded on his or her performance in each of the categories. If you want to handle the grade like your high school teacher (A/excellent through F/failing), many employees can relate to that system.

However, you might want to make the grading process even more specific by using the grading scale listed at the bottom of the chart at the right. Simply make a matrix and check off whether the employee has been superior to unsatisfactory in each of the categories you're grading.

Another option is to use a numerical grading system. Normally, the employee is ranked from 0.0 to 4.0, or 0.0 to 10.0 (4 and 10 being the highest scores). In this manner, you can easily compare the performances of more than one person in each particular department or division. However, heed this warning: do not compare numerical scores compiled by two or more different supervisors, as these grades are highly subjective and the supervisors may be using different styles.

Finally, the most difficult but perhaps the most effective system of rating employee performance is a weighted system. Each of the categories you're issuing a numerical rating for, is issued a weight factor. Numbers are cross-multiplied before adding up a total score.

For instance, if you put a greater weight on an employee having an acceptable appearance than that employee responding to criticism, you might issue a weight factor of 2.0 or 3.0 to appearance while the "response to criticism" line would have a weight factor of 1.0.

Employee evaluations should all be done in writing by the supervisor. Besides whatever grading system you choose to use, evaluation sheets should also contain the following vital information:

- Employee name
- Department
- Job title
- Supervisor
- Date hired
- Current wage
- Date of review
- Recommendation of salary increase (if a salary review is included with the performance review)
- Overall employee grade, score or evaluation.
- Space for comments by the supervisor conducting the evaluation
- Space for comments on the evaluation by the employee being reviewed
- Appropriate approval signatures, up to and including owner/president, if necessary

After the written evaluation is completed, sit down and discuss it privately with the employee. You, as manager, should maintain an attitude of support and constructive effort. If you criticize them harshly, they will get defensive. So make sure you emphasize mutual problem-solving in problem areas. Invite the employee's participation, and establish specific goals, objectives and strategies during the interview.

Employee evaluations, if they are honestly done, can also be key elements in the process to dismiss ineffective employees (legally a delicate matter). Before committing to a particular system, consult your company attorney to avoid any legal employee rights infringements.

—Jerry Roche

Efficiency categories

JOB HABITS

- ✓ punctuality
- ✓ self-starting abilities
- ✓ willingness to learn
- ✓ team spirit
- ✓ quickness/productivity
- ✓ quality of work/thoroughness
- ✓ willingness to work overtime
- ✓ knowledge of equipment
- ✓ care of equipment
- ✓ following safety precautions
- ✓ honesty
- ✓ attendance

DECISION-MAKING

- ✓ creating options
- ✓ new concepts
- ✓ weighing ramifications
- ✓ solution-finding
- ✓ follow-through
- ✓ putting ideas to action

PLANNING/ORGANIZING

- ✓ planning
- ✓ setting priorities
- ✓ structuring time
- ✓ organizing equipment
- ✓ organizing jobs
- ✓ meeting deadlines
- ✓ assignment follow-up

COMMUNICATION

- ✓ face-to-face articulation
- ✓ keeping staff informed
- ✓ report-back habits

LEADERSHIP

- ✓ enthusiasm
- ✓ initiative habits
- ✓ positive attitude
- ✓ problem-solving
- ✓ staff interfacing
- ✓ appearance
- ✓ image
- ✓ authority
- ✓ respect of others
- ✓ flexibility
- ✓ motivator skills
- ✓ response to criticism
- ✓ career orientation

GRADING SCALE

- SUPERIOR = outstanding performance consistently demonstrated
- HIGHLY COMPETENT = sustained, high performance
- COMPETENT = sustained good performance
- AVERAGE = few noteworthy accomplishments, either bad or good
- IMPROVEMENT NEEDED = performance short of desired objectives
- UNSATISFACTORY = inability to perform job; corrective action needed