Making Performance Evaluations Meaningful

MSBO Facilities and Operations Directors Conference

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Tim Ammon
Meet the enemy
Why do we do this?

- So we don't get sued, 80%
- Hold people accountable, 10%
- Change compensation, 8%
- Help employees develop, 2%
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What is usually included in an evaluation?

- Behaviors
- Traits
- Performance
- Scoring tool
What could possibly go wrong?

• Timing issues
• Recency bias
• Central tendency
• Lack of preparation
• Lack of perspective
• Lack of data
• Lack of resolution
What *else* could possibly go wrong?

- Individual vs. team activities
- “Objective” vs. relative growth
- Public vs. Private sector differences
The highlights of why this process feels/is so terrible

- Commingling of purpose
- Mistaken beliefs about goals
- Idiosyncratic rater effect
- Fundamental attribution error/Actor-observer bias
Is this fixable?

It may not be fixable. The methods used to assess, inform, develop, and reward employees may need to be rethought.
How do we make this better?

Less of this

More of this

Large bowel (colon)

Colonoscope

DSG
Make the process better

Revise the timing
- Increase the frequency
- Increase to proximity to events

Revise the structure
- Remove the table
- Separate development and compensation
- Determine approach

Revise the content
- Measurable content
- Connect performance and training
Make the process even better

- **Recency Bias**
  - Frequency of feedback
  - Data capture

- **Central Tendency**
  - Clarify the scale
  - Distinct difference between ratings

- **Courtesy Bias**
  - Setting and frequency of feedback

- **Halo Effect**
  - Data collection
Questions?
In Summary

• Recognize the need and value of different skill sets
• Focus on the sum of abilities
• Design a measurement process around outcomes not traits
• Share things you can actually validate
How do we make this better?

Less of this

More of this
Reading list

• View and Review: Questions for Performance Reviews. This 2013 blog post provides sample questions to use in performance reviews.

• It’s Your Performance Review, Own It. A 2015 Public Management (PM) article gives specific actions that can be taken to make a performance review a positive one.

• Maximizing Employees’ Performance. In another PM article from 2017, the focus is on how to get the most from employee performance, including how to give good feedback.

• How to Engineer Public-Employee Engagement. A 2017 blog post that focuses on how to improve employee engagement, including three tips to actively engage your workforce.


• https://www.amanet.org/articles/the-dos-and-donts-of-performance-reviews/

• Nine Lies About Work, Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall

• Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment, Thomas Gilovich, Dale Griffin, Daniel Kahneman
Questions

Tim Ammon
TF: (800) 994-0483
O: (856) 338-8122
E: tammon@decisionsupportgroup.com
Web: www.decisionsupportgroup.com