**Performance Management-8 Steps to a Better Process**

Performance appraisals have been in use for more than 50 years as a standardized method for evaluating an employee’s job performance.  Most performance appraisals are conducted annually, but if job performance isn’t evaluated throughout the year as it happens, employers miss the opportunity to get the most productivity and best quality efforts from their employees.

Avoid common errors during employee performance appraisals. Below are eight steps to a better performance appraisal process.

**#1 – Make Performance Appraisals an Ongoing Process**

Employee management is an everyday process.  Rather than wait for an annual performance review, managers should provide both constructive feedback and praise to their employees throughout the year and use the annual performance appraisal to summarize the prior year’s performance.

**#2 – Be Prepared**

Forms and paperwork should be completed on time, and any solicited feedback from management and peers should be compiled and entered. Take the time to review the employee’s self-assessment prior to the appraisal meeting and be prepared to offer feedback.

**#3 – Focus on the Entire Year**

In summarizing the employee’s accomplishments throughout the prior year, try not to focus too much on only one or two events, or recent projects. Offer feedback and praise that are general and that span the entire evaluation period.

**#4 – Be Interactive**

The performance appraisal must be interactive in order for the employee and the manager to arrive at the same conclusions at the end of the review. Employees may be nervous or apprehensive when entering a meeting about their performance, and the manager should strive to put them at ease.

**#5 – Employees are Individuals**

Employees should not be compared to other employees in their performance appraisal. Each employee must be evaluated according to his/her job description and performance in his/her job.

**#6 – Solicit Feedback from Others**

As a manager, you will want to request input from other managers, team members, and stakeholders with whom your employee interacts. The more information you have regarding how others in the organization view an employee, the better your position will be to help him/her be successful.

**#7 – Performance Levels Dictate Merit Increase Levels**

Giving two different employees very different performance appraisals and awarding them identical increases sends a message that performance does not matter.

**#8 – Listen to Your Employees**

The performance appraisal is an opportunity to provide feedback to an employee and to gain valuable insight from the employee’s perspective. It is an important time to listen to your employees – one on one – and get their viewpoints on their performance and the organization as a whole.

For additional information on the performance appraisal process, contact a member of Catapult's  Advice team at 919-878-9222.

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