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**FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE - MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS**

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The Performance Management and Appraisal Program is about performance and results. Creating a performance culture where employees know what is expected of them; there is a shared vision of what needs to be accomplished to meet the mission; and employees and supervisors are engaged in continuous two-way communication about performance. You are encouraged to help employees take ownership of their performance. This brochure provides you with information on what you should be doing to:

- Link individual performance with organizational goals
- Discuss performance elements, career goals and developmental needs with your employees
- Monitor performance
- Evaluate contributions and accomplishments

**It Starts with You!**

Focusing on performance requires leadership and a clear understanding of what drives organizational and individual performance. Periodically reviewing your organization's strategic goals will help you stay focused on what is relevant; what work activities are important, and ensure individual performance elements are aligned with mission requirements. Consider:

- Your organization's mission and strategic goals
- How your team will achieve these goals
- What individual performance elements can support the goals
- How will you both know when success is achieved

**Alignment is Key –  
Linking Individual Performance with Organizational Goals**

Understanding the linkage between organizational goals and individual performance elements is essential to implementing the Performance Management and Appraisal Program. As a supervisor, you are responsible for ensuring your employees' understanding the Performance Management and Appraisal Program and encourage their involvement in the process.

Start with analyzing the work you and your employees perform and identify the relationship between what your employees do and how this helps the organization achieve its mission. Are your employees focused on the right type of work? Is the work properly aligned? By taking time to assess what you are doing, you can focus on high-value tasks and eliminate low-value tasks, where possible.

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Further, identifying gaps and eliminating redundancies will maximize team performance and give you a better picture of how each individual contributes to team and Organizational success. This level of information will assist you in jointly developing performance plans with each employee. Give yourself time to think about what you want to say and what you need to continue to be successful.

### **Performance Planning – Thinking About Employee Contributions to Mission Success**

Performance planning is a shared responsibility. Before meeting with your employees, have them consider the role they play in the organization and what they want to focus on during the appraisal cycle. You may ask them to think about:

- What they do and how they perform their job
- How they contribute to the group accomplishments
- How they support the team in working toward its goals
- How to maximize their strengths within the team
- Where they would like to improve and what support they need

Employees and supervisors/managers need to mutually understand the jointly established performance plan standards and elements which will be the basis for determining their accomplishments in the final performance appraisal discussion. Performance standards and elements should be written to the Fully Successful level.

**Here is a simple acronym to use when writing your performance standards**

**S**pecific – what to accomplish

**M**easurable – a way to calculate/quantify accomplishments

**A**chievable –task completion should be within the employee's control

**R**elevant – related to your mission

**T**imely – identify realistic time frames for completion

### **Establishing Performance Elements**

Performance elements should be clear, concise, measurable statements that describe the specifics of what to accomplish during the year. While the number of performance elements established depends on the nature of individual work, employees typically have between three and five performance elements (ten is the maximum).



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As you develop performance elements, keep the following in mind:

- Elements should not be complicated
- What can be accomplished during the year
- This is an opportunity to discuss expectations and gain a shared understanding of where to focus during the appraisal cycle.
- This is a chance to encourage your employees think about their career and identify opportunities for them to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to progress.

### Meeting with Employees

The performance planning discussion provides a structured opportunity for you and your employees to discuss the key activities they will engage in throughout the appraisal cycle and how to facilitate ongoing communication. Ensure you have sufficient time and privacy to meet with each employee. Discussions should be scheduled around a mutually agreed upon time that allows you both to share your thoughts and openly discuss performance elements. During this meeting, you should also discuss any developmental needs identified. Be realistic about the type of support you can offer – consider training, mentoring, coaching, on-the-job activities, rotations, detail opportunities, or some other assistance that would serve as the foundation for an ongoing dialogue between you and your employee. Individual Development Plans are encouraged for use in identifying potential or desired training and development.

### Monitoring Success

You and your employees should meet regularly to make sure they are on track to achieve their performance elements. Making performance reviews a regular part of your routine builds mutual trust and confidence that you are working together to achieve individual and organizational success. These discussions can occur informally in brief meetings or e-mail exchanges or on a more formal basis. You will be able to identify strengths, examples of success, how well they performed, and what they can do to repeat these successes. Document these successes for future reference and provide frequent recognition for a job well done. After all, it is not about the 365<sup>th</sup> day! In addition, you will be able to identify weaknesses and address any performance issues early. Make time to communicate with employees about performance; sometimes they simply are not aware of improvement areas. Once an improvement area is mutually identified and understood, you must provide time for performance improvement prior to the final performance appraisal discussion. This interaction builds performance accountability. Employees will be more engaged in the process and more inclined to take ownership of their performance.



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**Communicating Accomplishments**

Help your employees achieve their performance standards by creating an environment that fosters success. Continuous two-way dialogue supports a mutual understanding of what has been accomplished in the performance period. Thus, the results of the final performance appraisal discussion should not be a surprise to either party. Rather the meeting should be an opportunity for you to offer suggestions for ways that they can translate what they do well into other areas and to address deficiencies in a constructive manner. While employee input is voluntary, you may need to help employees document their accomplishments. Employees should:

- Write their accomplishments in a clear and concise manner
- Identify specific examples of what they achieved
- Demonstrate how their accomplishments resulted in the organization achieving its goals

This discussion is also a time to discuss career goals, training and other career broadening opportunities that the employee was able to take advantage of to enhance skills, identify additional skill building opportunities, and plan for anticipated developmental needs.

The Performance Management and Appraisal Program provides the tools and the focus for increasing individual and organizational effectiveness. Helping your employees shape their careers and ensuring their work assignments are aligned with organizational goals are the keys to their success – and yours.