

Managing Employee Performance

Annual performance evaluations. The phrase brings many reactions for supervisors when they hear it. A large majority dread the events because they are not a part of the regular office routine. Other supervisors feel they discuss current projects with their staff every day, multiple times a day, so why should they have to set aside a special time to discuss it all again?

Whatever the reason, annual performance evaluations shouldn't be as dreaded as most supervisors make them out to be. Below are some tips for easing the dread of the task and hopefully making this year's evaluations a little better for you!

1. Use your unit's work plan to drive staff member individual work plans.

Your unit should already have a work plan which aligns responsibilities to your agency's overall work plan. This document, along with your staff member's position description, should be the basis for their individual work plan. Use both to create an annual work plan for your staff member.



Don't copy the unit work plan items directly to the staff member's work plan unless they are completely responsible for that item. Normally a staff member is responsible for a portion of items on the overall work plan. Right size what you add to the staff member's work plan by only listing the responsibilities the staff member is to complete from the larger, overall responsibility.

Example:

Unit Work Plan Item	Staff Member Work Plan Item
Properly submit all necessary documentation for current Federal grants to ensure reimbursements are timely received.	Track, retain and submit all necessary documentation for project # 30758 to ensure reimbursements are timely received.

Another important point with work plan items is to make certain they are “SMART” – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound. The topic of SMART goals is covered in a separate RON update. Please see “Using SMART Goals in Staff Work Plans”.

2. Don't focus on the word “Annual”.

Remember the supervisor who said at the beginning of this document, I talk to my staff every day about their tasks? This supervisor is on to something. While performance evaluation titles usually have the word “Annual” in them, communication should be occurring throughout the year. Set aside time on a regular basis which makes sense for your unit's work and schedule. Whether it is



just a weekly half an hour to discuss the top work plan issues, or a structured quarterly invite where you go over everything on the work plan in detail, communication needs to happen more than annually.

You know what works best for your communication style and for your work unit. Just make sure the work plan discussions are happening throughout the year so there are no surprises when it gets down to the Annual Performance Evaluation time!

3. Ask for feedback from your staff before you start writing the evaluation.

Life has taught me everyone sees things from their own point of view. I believe this is magnified when you talk to someone about actions they have personally taken. To make sure I understand each staff member's point of view concerning their actions in completing their work plan, I ask for their feedback before I sit down to begin writing their

performance evaluations. This allows me to confirm what I remember occurring with what they have provided me. It also gives staff members time to provide documentation or explanations as to why a work plan item hasn't been completed so the information can factor into





what I document in the evaluation. This type of open communication and dialog will put everyone more at ease during the performance evaluation period.

4. Focus on facts.

FACTS

“Just the facts.” As a TV police inspector used to say in a 1950’s show. Facts are the only thing which should be included in a performance evaluation to document whether assignments have been completed or not. If you find it hard to use facts to objectively determine if a work plan task was completed or not, then you need to revisit SMART goals discussion in the RON update: [Using SMART Goals in Staff Work Plans.](#)

Well written work plan goals can be evaluated the same by yourself or others just using the facts. This is what makes a work plan goal objective.

If you are interested in learning more about this topic or other technical topics, please visit the Route of Navigation (RON) resource page at the following link:
http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/LocalPrograms/LTAP/Pages/Route_of_Navigation_Series.aspx.

Notes
