

HOW TO Make Performance Reviews Meaningful and Memorable

Most employees dread performance reviews and many managers dread giving them. But it doesn't have to be this way! With effective preparation, a collaborative approach, and a template to guide you, performance reviews will feel more meaningful and produce better results for your organization and your employees.

- ▶ **Don't only talk about performance once a year!** Work with the staff you supervise to set goals at the beginning of the year. Consider setting monthly or quarterly benchmarks and make sure you're meeting regularly to discuss progress, challenges, and changing circumstances. Performance goals should relate to your nonprofit's goals and also include your employees' professional development and learning goals.
- ▶ **Refresh.** Review notes from your monthly or quarterly discussions before conducting an annual review. Doing so will help you avoid the recency bias: putting too much weight on recent events and circumstances.
- ▶ **Involve.** Invite your team to complete a self-evaluation. Share a form or document with self-evaluation questions a few weeks before the employee's response is due. Better yet: meet with your team to discuss the questions and invite their suggestions, changes and additions!

Check out the HR & Risk Resource Center for [sample questions!](#)

- ▶ **Commit to 'no surprises.'** Most performance reviews involve some constructive criticism. Problems or concerns raised by a supervisor should not catch the employee off guard. The annual review is a chance to revisit challenges previously discussed at regular check-in meetings.
- ▶ **Acknowledge the employee's superpowers.** Identify areas of strength the employee can build on for their professional growth and that of the organization.





Performance Review Tips & Reminders

- ▶ Use specific language (what behavior do you want the employee to start, change or continue?)
- ▶ Use measurement oriented language (progress toward fundraising goals, etc.)
- ▶ Use powerful action words.
- ▶ Stay positive and constructive.
- ▶ Focus on solving problems.
- ▶ Focus on opportunities for growth.
- ▶ Focus on the individual; don't compare the employee to other current or former team members.
- ▶ Recognize your biases and lenses.

Be Forward-Focused.



Helpful Resources.

- [13 Performance Review Tips That Actually Improve Performance - Quantum Workplace](#)
- [A First Time Manager's Guide to Performance Reviews - The Muse](#)
- [Managing Employee Performance - Society for Human Resource Management](#)