

## Human Resources Management Tools

# Managing Employee Performance



# Acknowledgements

This module is one of six developed as part of a project involving the production of human resources management tools for use in the cultural sector. A second project involved the production of a report on Best Practices in human resources management in the cultural sector.

## Partners

Funds for these projects were made available through the Cultural Careers Council Ontario and the Cultural Human Resources Council. The projects were carried out in partnership with the Ontario Museum Association, Directors Guild of Canada – Ontario, and Professional Association of Canadian Theatres.

The partners gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the following individuals who were involved in one or both of the projects.

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Clark Reed and his associates at Netgain Partners Inc. NetGain Partners is a team of management, development and human resources specialists committed to helping cultural, other not-for-profit and public organizations reach their immediate and long-term goals.

Thanks

These projects made possible by support from



Canadian  
Heritage

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Human Resources  
Development Canada

Développement des  
ressources humaines Canada



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# Managing Employee Performance

## WHAT IS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT?

Like many management terms, the words “performance management” have been interpreted, and the concept implemented, in many different ways. But the major goal in any good performance management system is to ensure that employees’ activities – what they do and how well they do them – are in sync with the goals of the organization, while maintaining a motivated and happy workforce.

A significant proportion of organizations in the cultural sector have not managed employee performance in a systematic way for a variety of reasons including:

- ▶ not knowing how to do it effectively
- ▶ cultural managers’ lack of comfort with evaluating or judging employee performance
- ▶ misunderstanding the fundamental requirements of the manager’s role
- ▶ the belief that cultural organizations are unique and that some human resources practices normally accepted in other sectors (e.g. corporate) cannot be readily applied to them
- ▶ frustration with the complexity of performance management systems, which can lead to a rejection of the whole concept.

The following guidelines and suggested procedures are intended to address these issues.

## TYPES OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Performance management systems vary enormously in their complexity – from an occasional informal chat with the employee about how their work is going, to systems with multi-page appraisal forms for different levels of staff, with performance ratings that are linked to compensation and promotion decisions.

Our focus in these guidelines will be on a continuous feedback system that focuses on regular, effective communication between managers and staff and minimizes bureaucracy.

Its features:

- ▶ A focus on simplicity and informality, both in the components of the system and its implementation
- ▶ Frequent and unstructured feedback to employees on their job activities and performance
- ▶ An annual review meeting, to allow manager and staff to stand back from day-to-day pressures and review the job and performance as a whole
- ▶ Less focus on the past and more on the present and future.

## Continuous Feedback

In general, employees *want* feedback. They want to know how well they're doing, whether they're doing the right things and whether they're meeting your expectations. They like feedback that's delivered at the right time and in a respectful way. In the busy, dynamic environment of most cultural organizations, continuous feedback provides you with the opportunity to give adequate direction on a more frequent basis than simply relying on a once-a-year review session. The continuous feedback approach addresses these basic employer/employee needs.

The mechanics of continuous feedback are quite simple. You recognize and reinforce the performance you want. Undesirable performance is identified at a time when change and/or direction can easily be made. Clearly your behaviour, as manager, is vital since providing continuous feedback may be a dramatic change from the behaviour your staff have learned to expect from managers in their working life to date.

In addition to giving continuous feedback, you should have at least one dedicated review session with every employee each year, where the person's overall work and aspirations can be discussed, away from their and your daily pressures and activities.

Since the person is getting continuous feedback from you, the nature and objectives of these annual discussions are quite different from the traditional performance appraisal. In your annual review session there is no need to re-hash the past in detail since issues were recognized or corrected at that time. Exceptional performance over the year can of course be acknowledged again.

However, the major focus of the annual discussions should be the present and the future, not the past. Although it's an oversimplification and more detailed guidelines will be given later, the following questions give an idea of the right tone for these meetings:

- ▶ How's your job going?
- ▶ What can be done to make the services you're providing even better?
- ▶ Is there anything I or the organization can do to help you do your job better?
- ▶ Where do you see yourself work-wise in 2 or 3 years time?

We will address the content of that meeting in more detail later.

But first we'll look at the key skills that will help you get the most from your performance management activities.

## The Skilled Performance Manager

In the world of culture and the arts where workers tend to change jobs quite frequently, you want to keep your best people motivated, happy, and focused on achieving their goals within your organization. Regardless of whether your team includes full or part-time employees, temporary workers, artists, volunteers, or a combination of the above, you need to have a management presence that ensures you keep your best people.

The best cultural managers don't *make* their people succeed, they *enable* them to do well at their jobs. They do this by providing the necessary tools, removing obstacles, and communicating constantly to ensure that their activities are in line with the organization's priorities.

Following are the high-impact practices used by managers who have discovered what effective performance management really means:

- ▶ Make your expectations crystal clear and help people to stretch their goals
- ▶ Provide continuous feedback and support
- ▶ Reward your best people.

### CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS AND CREATE STRETCH GOALS

These guidelines will help ensure your team's individual goals are tied to your organizational priorities:

1. *Share your vision and goals for the organization or your department.* Let your people know what success looks like for your organization. Share with them what results you're working towards. Be open with them about what *you're* accountable for.

Share your own goals with your team. You can't expect your staff to show serious commitment to their work unless they see you doing what it takes to succeed.

2. *Explain how their work contributes to the organization's goals.* Let your staff know why their work is important. Help them to see how their efforts fit into the big picture. Help them answer the question: "What

difference do I make in this place?" Explain your vision and goals to everyone on your team and ask for ideas and suggestions for improving them.

Make sure your staff know what you expect of them. Don't mislead anyone about your expectations. Be very clear and up-front about the behaviours and results you expect from them.

3. *Ask each person to develop a draft set of performance goals.* Get them involved in goal setting. Have them take the lead in developing their performance goals. In many cases, they know their job better than you do and will be more committed to achieving their goals if they help to define them.

Ask each person on your team to develop a performance plan with no more than four to six measurable goals. Ask them to challenge themselves when setting these goals, but keep them realistic.

4. *Meet with your people to review and agree on their performance goals.* Make sure everyone's goals are clear and within their control or influence to achieve. At the same time, make sure that the goals are challenging and will stretch the individual to be their best.
5. *Finalize goals and communicate them to everyone on your team.* Make sure everyone on your team knows what's expected of the rest of the team. Share and communicate performance goals to everyone. Make sure everyone knows what other team members are responsible for.

## PROVIDE CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

Good cultural managers are great supporters of their staff. Becoming an effective coach takes time and effort. The challenge is easier if you apply a few proven techniques for showing support:

1. *Get to know your staff well.* It's important that you understand the strengths, weaknesses, and motivations of the people who work for you. This will help you to adapt your management style to the individual and the situation. Meet regularly with your team to discuss their progress, concerns, ideas and goals.
2. *Know your own strengths and weaknesses as a manager.* How effective do you think you are as a manager? Are your management skills

top-notch or do they leave room for improvement? How often do you do the following:

- ▶ Openly acknowledge good work and effort
- ▶ Give constructive feedback
- ▶ Inspire employees by being a great role model
- ▶ Delegate tasks to help people stretch their activities
- ▶ Focus on maintaining a high level of employee motivation
- ▶ Ask for feedback
- ▶ Act as a mentor and career guide for your staff.

## REWARD YOUR BEST PEOPLE

The vast majority of people don't work in the cultural sector to make a heap of money. Much as they would like it, they know they are unlikely to get substantial financial reward for their efforts.

But if you want to keep your best people, you've got to find ways to reward them for their contributions to organization. Successful cultural managers use a creative mix of rewards to motivate their people to continue to perform at high levels. Whether full or part-time employees, you need a plan to reward your best people.

1. *Be very aware of the people who are critical to helping you grow and develop the organization.* Consider people with special skills, experience and attitudes that are critical to your success. Also consider those who've made significant contributions to your organization - or other cultural organizations - already.
2. *Determine what rewards or incentives are most important to your key people.* The following are some potential motivators:
  - ▶ Money (an occasional but rare option in the cultural sector)
  - ▶ Involvement in artistic activities
  - ▶ Health/medical benefits
  - ▶ Fun and upbeat working environment
  - ▶ Job security
  - ▶ Contact with artists and performers

- ▶ Recognition for a job well done
- ▶ Involvement in decisions that affect their work
- ▶ Interesting and challenging work
- ▶ Opportunities for growth and promotion
- ▶ Personal feeling of accomplishment
- ▶ Time away from work
- ▶ Fair management practices
- ▶ Relationship with co-workers

3. *Look at all the reward possibilities that currently exist in your organization.* How much do they reflect the things that *really* motivate your staff?
4. *Think of new rewards and types of recognition that will truly appeal to your top performers.* Easier said than done in many cultural organizations with limited resources, but effective managers make a focused effort to do it.

## Three Tips for *Successfully* Rewarding Your Best People

Regardless of the reward, it's important to consider the following guidelines when rewarding and recognizing your best people:

- ▶ ***Match the reward to the individual.*** Make sure whatever you do *really is* appreciated by the person on the receiving end. Ask your top people to tell you what motivates them most – what “turns them on” at work. You may think you know, but you may be surprised by what they tell you.
- ▶ ***Match the reward to the contribution.*** Effective rewards reflect the significance of the contribution or achievement. For example, a person who just obtained a major corporate donation through major and prolonged efforts should be rewarded in a more substantial way than someone who worked a few extra hours to complete a project on schedule.
- ▶ ***Be timely and specific.*** Rewards have their biggest impact if they are given as soon as possible after the achievement. If you reward good work weeks or months after the fact, you'll do little, if anything, to encourage higher levels of performance.

Remember that the most powerful motivator you have at their fingertips is recognition. The least expensive means is the one-on-one “Thank you” or “I really appreciated that or “That's looks just great”. You know how good that feels when you hear it from your superiors. Your staff are the same.

# Constructive Criticism

Most managers are comfortable acknowledging and rewarding good work but dread having to criticize their employees. One reason is that they (like most of us) dislike being criticized themselves and don't like doing it to others.

Another reason could be that their criticism has backfired in the past, worsening rather than improving an individual's performance.

A firm focus on ensuring that you give *constructive* criticism is your safe-guard against this managerial disaster.

When well-handled, constructive criticism has four basic elements, each preparing the way for the next:

- ▶ Confirming the facts
- ▶ The conversation
- ▶ Keeping the strengths, eliminating the problems
- ▶ Giving or inviting reactions.

## CONFIRMING THE FACTS

Before you criticize someone's behaviour or job performance, it's important that you fully understand the issue. You need to make sure you have an informed view of the situation. Taking time to confirm the facts can sometimes reveal special circumstances that gave rise to what *you* saw as problem behaviour. The behaviour might actually have been unavoidable in which case criticism would clearly be inappropriate and unfair.

Confirming the details could spare both you and your employee the embarrassment of totally misplaced criticism which would almost certainly damage your relationship, their morale, and your credibility with other staff. These things often aren't easily repaired.

Of course, when you check out the facts it might confirm your hunch that critical comments are in order.

## THE CONVERSATION

Obviously you will tell the person what your concerns are about their work, but also let them know what you *do* like. If you focus solely on the negative behaviour, they might take it as a “blanket” condemnation of their work and conclude that everything they do is wrong.

To avoid this pitfall, use the information you gathered and express what you see as the person’s strong points and what you see as cause for concern. This two-sided, strengths-versus-weaknesses approach lets you “save the baby” while “throwing out the bathwater”. It’s also less likely to demoralize and discourage the person. They’ll see that the good work they do has been noticed.

Strengths and concerns must be stated as clearly and specifically as possible.

It’s not always easy to find something commendable in an employee’s performance, especially if your concern about them is a major one. But ask yourself, “How does the way they do their job contribute to what we’re doing here?”

Follow up the strong points with your concerns. Stay calm. Avoid talking in a formal, authoritative way, which can intimidate people and make them less receptive to what you are actually saying. Remember, your criticism should not sound like an attack on the individual, so don’t present it as though it were. That can embitter and anger the person and their performance may even worsen.

Concerns might be introduced as follows, after mentioning a positive part of their work:

“What does worry me, however ...”

OR

“Some aspects of what you’re doing do concern me, though ...”

## KEEPING THE STRENGTHS, ELIMINATING THE PROBLEMS

Obviously, just expressing your concerns doesn’t solve the problem. To do that, you must find ways to preserve the person’s strengths and contribution to the organization while eliminating the negative behaviour.

Involve the person in this part of the process. Invite their suggestions and suggest remedies of your own. Two heads are usually better than one and your

employee is more likely to be committed to a solution they helped devise than to one that is imposed by you.

It's usually wiser to listen to your employee's suggestions first. That will involve them in the search for a solution from the start. Also, some individuals may be reluctant to suggest a solution of their own if it contradicts one you've already put forward. But maybe their solution is the better of the two! You want to make sure you hear it.

In some cases though, you'll feel that it's better to get your idea out on the table, as a good springboard for discussion. In that case, start off with that. Just take care to do it in a way that shows the person that you still have an open mind on the issue.

Example: "I've been kicking around this idea. Tell me what you think of it. Maybe you can come up with a better one..."

An important point: If you are very clear about a particular course of action and don't have an open mind on the issue, *don't* invite your employee's suggestions. They'll feel manipulated and patronized – and for good reason.

## GIVING OR INVITING REACTIONS

Each suggestion made - by you or your employee – calls for a reaction. An ignored suggestion is a subtle but severe form of criticism in itself.

Similarly, make sure that you get a reaction to each suggestion you make. Ask them: "What do you think?" or "So, Tony, does that plan work for you?"

Once all the concerns, suggestions and reactions are on the table, summarize the suggestions that you, as the manager, have decided will be adopted. Be thorough and specific in order to avoid misunderstandings.

## Managing Differences

Cultural organizations employ many different types of people, some with business skills, some with artistic and creative skills, all with their own individual wants and needs. Sometimes, however, an employee's wants or needs won't fit smoothly into your organization's *internal* culture, or into your view of how a job ought to be done. Proactively managing these inevitable differences can help in resolving situations where differences of opinion or approach exist between people.

As a manager, you could simply tell your staff to comply with organizational requirements, or to do their job your way. But this would only escalate a perfectly normal difference into a conflict, in which each of you zealously defends your respective position until yours - the manager's - prevails. How much cooperation can you expect from an angry and resentful employee?

Contrast this no-win strong-arm tactic with handling differences *effectively*. The skilled manager views a difference as the starting point for manager-employee communication. Involve your employee in looking for a solution that enables you to stick to your priorities and still preserve your employee's dedication and commitment.

The key to managing differences, as in so many management activities, is communication. Differences often arise because two people devise two different ways to get to the same goal. Here are some guidelines to help you effectively manage differences between yourself and an employee:

- ▶ Clearly identify and agree on the area of disagreement
- ▶ Concentrate on what it is you want to achieve and leave some flexibility on the "how" if possible
- ▶ Explore the differences and how they evolved. Look at the motives and needs that led each of you to your particular viewpoint.

Once you and your employee have explored and understood the difference, you can share ideas and suggest alternatives that might work for both of you. This two-way problem solving process - similar to that used when giving constructive criticism - generates solutions that combine the best of both worlds, and might even be better than solutions that either of you could muster separately.

Managing differences can be quite simple. Or quite difficult. But rarely impossible.

Even if no mutually satisfactory solution can be devised, you'll be better off from having tried to "bridge the gap". Your employee will be pleased that, even though they didn't get what they wanted, at least you listened to and considered their views. Their morale and dedication - and the all-important lines of manager-employee communication - will stay intact.

## HOW TO MANAGE DIFFERENCES

Some differences are relatively uncomplicated. It isn't always necessary to suggest alternative solutions. A clear statement of what each of you wants and needs often seems to uncover an obvious solution. Sometimes it uncovers the fact that no difference really exists. Both of you want the same thing and just express your wishes differently.

When clearly stating your wants and needs doesn't "do the trick", ask your employee to suggest alternatives. As you do when you constructively criticize, let them make the initial suggestion. They'll be more committed to a solution of their own and maybe more open to making suggestions at this point in the process. Then, if that isn't leading you to a solution, suggest your own ideas.

Sometimes in looking for a solution, it's useful to reject conventional thinking for a while. Forget about being practical. Ignore reality for awhile. Temporarily put aside the real-world restrictions that govern your daily work life.

### **Ask yourself and your employee, for example:**

What if we had to make a decision on a venue for the reception *this afternoon*?

OR

What if we could afford to hire you a part-time assistant?

OR

Let's assume that private donation falls through completely. What then?

A brainstorming session like this is often just the thing to draw out people's real wishes and concerns. From apparently far-out ideas, practical solutions can often emerge.

In a brainstorming session in which restrictions are removed and then reintroduced, you play the more important role in ensuring that the final solution is a practical one. You have a better grasp of the overall situation than your

employee does. You know which rules can be “bent” for good reason, which priorities can be shifted and which have to be conscientiously observed.

It’s useful to look for alternatives but may not always be the best approach. Sometimes you’re faced with a difference of opinion between people when you’re in the middle of a crisis, and then you have to take a managerial decision.

## ENDING THE DISCUSSION

Ideally your exploration of differences and discussion of alternatives with your employee will produce a solution that you can both live with. That is “managing differences” at its best. But it’s not always possible.

You have certain organizational priorities that can’t be changed to suit the personal wants and needs of employees. As a manager, it’s your duty to be aware of and stick to these priorities. In these cases you may not be able to satisfy your employee’s needs. Nevertheless, you can still make your employee feel that you fully heard and considered their needs. End the discussion by:

- ▶ acknowledging their viewpoint and letting them know that you understood it
- ▶ explaining what you’ve decided to do and why, while recognizing that they might not agree with it.

Managing differences, even in a skilled and sensitive way, is not going to work miracles. But the emphasis on communication will allow your employee to air their concerns and frustrations. The two of you can discuss the issues and perhaps come up with ways of resolving them. If that’s impossible – as it sometimes is – the person will at least feel that you respect their right to disagree, indeed that you respect them *period*, and they’ll still feel committed to doing the best they can under the circumstances.

## HANDLING EMOTIONS

Emotions can hugely complicate your efforts to managing differences. Always have your discussion in private, in case tempers flare or tears flow.

If feelings do get out of hand, calmly suggest that you and your employee continue the discussion at another time. It can be difficult - and downright

hazardous - to persist in looking for alternatives with someone who's persisting in looking for the nearest heavy object to throw at your head.

## The Annual Review Meeting

The most effective way of managing performance is to give continuous feedback and resolve issues and concerns as they arise – not to save them for a once-a-year discussion.

But regular performance review meetings – annual or twice-annually – have a very important place in your relationship with your staff. This is an opportunity to stand back from your and your employee's day-to-day preoccupations and discuss the job, their performance, their problems, their wishes and aspirations.

Many managers feel that they are in close communication with their staff anyway and don't need to set aside a special meeting for this kind of discussion. In fact, if you don't plan it, it usually doesn't happen. Setting aside the time *makes sure* that this kind of discussion occurs.

Your performance review meeting with your employees should hold no surprises. If you have been communicating openly with your staff during the work year about their performance, they should know how you feel. Following are tips on conducting the annual performance review meeting:

1. *Make sure the time and place are planned to allow for enough time – at least an hour – in a comfortable setting.* This can often be a challenge in small cultural organizations with limited private space, but every effort should be made to do it.
2. *Be open and flexible to changing meeting dates and time.* Sometimes there may be for a good objective reason, or sometimes you feel you are not at your best and unlikely to give your employee the appropriate attention and level of engagement.

But don't re-schedule more than once. If you do you're in danger of giving the person the impression that meeting with them is a low priority for you.

3. *Make sure there are no interruptions.* In the busy, congested offices of most cultural organizations, meetings are always being interrupted. There are questions that need immediate answers, mini-crises occurring and urgent phone calls that have to be answered.

*Don't* let that happen in performance review meetings. Treat this time with your employee as sacred. They will appreciate it and feel valued.

Don't answer the phone during the meeting. Tell key people in advance where you'll be, what you're doing, and that you are not to be interrupted unless it's an emergency. Maybe go to a "neutral" location where phones can't ring and where both of you feel like you're on "neutral" turf away from the hustle and bustle of the workplace.

4. *Be prepared.* You should be clear what you want to cover in the meeting, You should have completed a form or outline – it can be a very simple one of the individual's goals and performance on each one (see sample appraisal forms in Appendices I, II and III).
5. *Let your employee talk first, giving you their perception of their job and performance.* Be alert for opportunities that may help you inject two or three particular points you have on your mind.
6. *Listen.* You may think you know the person very well. But you'll probably find you don't have the full picture until you've listened carefully to what they say. Be willing to change your preliminary judgement about overall performance based on new information and insights that your employee may bring to your attention. These may be things that just weren't easy to bring out in brief, task-focused feedback sessions during the year. That's one of the benefits of making sure you have annual review meetings.
7. *Be candid and open, and focused.* Don't waste time chatting about events in the office that aren't related to why you're there.
8. *If there are sensitive matters to discuss in relation to the employee and their job, make sure you focus on work-related behaviour – not the person.* Deal with things that can be changed, not fixed personality characteristics.
9. *Always build on strengths and be constructive in feedback around areas that need improvement.* As far as possible concentrate on the positive aspects of performance and offer constructive criticism that points the way to improvement. Rehashing past errors or shortfall should be brief and done only to illustrate possible development needs. You should have dealt with these issues as they arose during the year, so make sure this review is a constructive summary, not a repeat of past conversations.
10. *Don't promise what you can't deliver.* (e.g. pay increases, reduced workload).

11. *Encourage the person to analyze their own performance to determine areas of development need and strengths. Ask questions like: “Why do think we’ve had so many complaints about service at the box office?” or “Why do feel that way?” Try to reach agreement on issues and summarize where appropriate.*
12. *Before the end of the meeting, agree on any action to be taken. “Where do we go from here?”*

## Performance Review Forms

Cultural organizations vary widely in the amount of detail they want to include in their human resources management documentation. Some smaller organizations don't want to use performance "rating" systems of any kind as they view them as too judgemental and bureaucratic for their internal cultures. Others, as they grow larger, decide that they need more structured rating systems to deal more objectively and consistently with their growing staff.

Appendices I to III show three examples of Performance Review forms of varying complexity. They range from a simple "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" assessment on factors defined by the manager (Sample Form A), to one which has a scale of four rating possibilities on predetermined factors (Sample Form C). Each form has other sections that distinguish them from each other.

We recommend that you:

- ▶ read all of them first
- ▶ select those features which you think are most suitable and acceptable to your staff, given your organization's size, cultural field, stage of development and internal culture
- ▶ combine the best from each to produce your own customized appraisal form.

## Interim Progress Reviews

In addition to the annual review, you may like to have a regular but informal review meeting with each employee once or twice during the year to talk about “How are we doing so far?”, to minimize surprises and maximize performance at the end of the year.

The cultural and business environment we live in, and organizational priorities, change frequently, and therefore your staff’s goals and their activities may need to be examined periodically.

The frequency of these reviews is highly situational. You may plan some of them as a result of whatever happens in the annual review meeting. You may schedule others when either you or your employee have concerns about obstacles in making progress toward a goal. However, the rule of thumb is “once a year is usually *not* enough”.

You may find that things have not gone exactly as anticipated. You then decide on what adjustments need to be made to job content or priorities.

# Action Plans

Action planning is a natural outcome of performance review meetings where something in the employee's work activities is going to change.

Important: Action planning does not just apply to situations where performance *improvement* is needed. Your employee may in fact be *excelling* in their current role and the action plan you develop is intended to build on their strengths, prepare them for more responsibility or a more senior position, or help them pick up new skills.

This section will deal with:

- ▶ What is an action plan?
- ▶ Who develops the action plan?
- ▶ Choosing the activities

## WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN?

An action plan simply identifies the activities that will be undertaken in order to get to the goals that you have agreed with your employee. It specifies who will be involved and the activities they will be involved in during the development period.

Action plans can be drawn up in a variety of formats, depending on your preference. But they should at minimum contain a lists of activities that will be undertaken, coupled with names and dates. You and your employees should select an action-planning format that will best serve your particular purposes.

Appendix IV shows a simple Action Plan format that you can use to record agreed actions.

## WHO DEVELOPS THE ACTION PLAN?

You can develop an action plan together with your employee, or you may hand it over completely to your employee to develop.

Once the end results of the improvement or development process have been agreed to, action planning is a decision-making process. You and/or your

employee need to identify, evaluate and select alternative ways of getting to those results.

In some situations you may want to be closely involved in this process, to contribute your knowledge and expertise, and to give assistance and direction to your staff. In other situations, you may be confident that the person can decide themselves how best how to reach their goals, and will delegate the responsibility for putting together their own action plans. In this case, make sure that you are made aware of the content of the action plan. You need to have the opportunity to react to it, to confirm that they are on the right track.

## CHOOSING THE ACTIVITIES

An action plan should include one or more review sessions with your employee, for planning, briefing, instruction or discussion on progress. But the main emphasis should be on determining activities that your employee will undertake, to work towards the improvement or development goal. The following are different types of activities that can be included:

- ▶ **Specific Job Actions:** Any action plan geared to improvement in a specific aspect of a job will include performing that aspect of the job correctly, once or several times, during the development period.
- ▶ **Project Work:** You may be able to match individual (or group) development needs with a current project, providing a pay-off for the organization. Useful if you want the person to stand back from their current day-to-day activities, or if you want to encourage initiative.
- ▶ **Problem Solving:** The total action plan may be built on a problem-solving project, or it could include activities to solve problems. Helps to develop objectivity, reasoning and decision making skills.
- ▶ **Self-Appraisal:** Your employee evaluates their own performance and needs at each stage. Worth building in to every action plan, to help develop the discipline of critical self assessment. This is the basis for continuing self development.
- ▶ **Standing in for You:** A practical way to obtain experience in a management task, through temporary delegation.

- ▶ Undertaking a Different Role: Doing part of someone else's job, on a temporary basis. Useful for broadening experience, or to prepare individuals for a new job.
- ▶ Information Collection: An initial activity may be to gather detailed information about what is happening in a particular area. Also useful for developing organizing and fact-finding skills, and attention to detail.
- ▶ Information Analysis: A follow-up to information collection. Also useful for developing skills in interpretation, evaluation and decision making.
- ▶ Observing Someone Else: Arranging first hand observation of you, or someone else, working on a task. A useful step in delegating, or in trying to overcome a weakness, by providing a model of required performance.
- ▶ Contact with Others: Finding out more about other parts of the organization. Useful for gaining better insights from the point of view of another department.
- ▶ Report Preparation: Useful for improving written communications, and ability to think logically and reason things out.
- ▶ Verbal Presentation: Making formal presentations to you at stages of the plan (reporting back), or to a group. A particularly good activity for developing the skill of 'coming across' to other people.
- ▶ Self-Study: Directions to studying relevant websites, other cultural organizations, publications, books, or other materials.
- ▶ Exercises: Inclusion of practice activities or roleplays, for learning or checking progress. Worth considering only if there is a lack of opportunity for real practice through job actions or project work.
- ▶ Training Course: If the individual is weak in a critical skill or basic knowledge, the action plan may include attending an external training course.

Remember – when working with your employee to decide development activities, you have to consider how much of *your* time will be required:

- ▶ how frequently you should review progress
- ▶ whether you should build in one-on-one coaching sessions.

## MONITORING PROGRESS

Making sure that you are aware of progress is a key part of any development activity. You need to agree what you need to be told during the development period, how you want to be kept informed, and how often, and this should be in the action plan.

During the development period, you may change the goal itself if things have changed in such a way as to make the original goal no longer reasonable. Or you and your employee may change the action plan in various ways, adopting new strategies or changing the sequence or schedule of activities. In all cases you should have a clear focus: Given where we are now, how can we best get to where we want to be?

In the case of a very critical goal that has major implications for the organization, or perhaps a seriously underperforming employee, progress reporting may need to be quite detailed and required quite often. For less critical objectives or a high-performing employee, you may only need to know when key milestones have been reached.







(Attach additional sheets, if necessary)

Employee's career goals:

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Describe how the current position meshes with career goals:

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Performance Improvement or Development Plan (record details on separate Action Plan form):

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Employee Comments (if any):

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Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Performance Review

### I. KEY OBJECTIVES

To give employees feedback on their work performance and provide an opportunity for discussion of their job, issues and future aspirations. To determine the need for employee training and/or development, either to improve current shortfalls or to further build on particular strengths.

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### II. EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Started Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Period: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

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### III. SIGNATURES

Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

This review was discussed with me, and I received a copy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED \*

## IV. DEFINITIONS

***Performance Rating Categories:***

<b>Exceeds Requirements</b>	Consistently exceeds all major requirements. Achieves results superior to most employees at this level of responsibility and makes significant contributions to the success of the organization (or department).
<b>Meets Requirements</b>	Meets all major job requirements. Often achieves results beyond those expected. Has complete and thorough knowledge of all job functions. Results may be improved for minor job requirements with a reasonable amount of training or experience.
<b>Does Not Meet Requirements</b>	Unable to achieve results required at this level. Seldom achieves major goals. Appears unable to overcome limitations. Action required.

***Performance Evaluation Factors:***

The following factors assess:

<b>Job Knowledge</b>	how well the employee understands the methods and procedures required to perform their job, and its relationship to other jobs.
<b>Productivity and Effectiveness</b>	the quality of work produced, and the degree to which the employee achieved or exceeded the goals which were set for the review period, including organizational skills and judgement.
<b>Effectiveness of Relationships</b>	the effectiveness with which the employee conducts both internal and external work relationships, including teamwork, communication skills and the ability to adapt when flexibility is required.
<b>Initiative</b>	the degree to which the employee takes leadership in initiating productive work-related activities.
<b>Health and Safety</b>	the degree to which the employee demonstrates an awareness of Health and Safety issues, as related to themselves and others they work with.

**Creativity/  
Originality** the degree to which the employee demonstrates creativity and originality while performing their daily tasks.

**Service  
Orientation** how effectively external customers and/or internal departments and staff are serviced.

**Self  
Development** the extent to which the employee makes a conscious effort to improve their job-related knowledge, skills and/or capabilities.

V. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Evaluate each <b>applicable</b> performance factor as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Select the upper or lower range of the appropriate performance rating category.</li> <li>▶ Explain your evaluation, giving examples where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Does Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
Requirements			
<b>Job Knowledge</b>			
<b>Productivity and Effectiveness</b>			
<b>Effectiveness of Relationships</b>			
<b>Initiative</b>			
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>			

Evaluate each <b>applicable</b> performance factor as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Select the upper or lower range of the appropriate performance rating category.</li> <li>▶ Explain your evaluation, giving examples where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Does Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
Requirements			
<b>Creativity / Originality</b>			
<b>Service Orientation</b>			
<b>Self Development</b>			
<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT</b>			

VI. FUTURE PLANS

Goals for the next review period

Development plans

Training Needs

Employee Career Interests

VII. EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

## Performance Review

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### A. Position Specifications

1. The primary responsibilities of this position are:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) \_\_\_\_\_

2. The main skills needed to meet these responsibilities are:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) \_\_\_\_\_



### C. Performance Assessment

This section is designed to assess the performance of the employee since his/her last review.

There are 4 items for you to complete for each skill/behaviour area. They are intended to help guide you in your performance discussion with your employee:

- ▶ In the section with boxes to tick, tick one box in each of the horizontal lines to indicate the level at which the employee normally works in that aspect of their job.
- ▶ Using the **IMPORTANCE SCALE**, indicate the relative importance of the skill/behaviour area in the employee's job.
- ▶ Using the **PERFORMANCE SCALE**, give an overall *summary* rating of the employee's performance in that skill/behaviour area over the entire review period.
- ▶ Under each skill/behaviour, wherever possible, give supporting examples.

Should a particular skill or behaviour not be applicable to this position, indicate N/A. Under "Other" list any other skills or behaviours which are required in this position, along with an assessment and supporting examples.

#### 1. JOB KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates exceptional understanding of the job, including processes to be followed, materials and equipment to be used	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates good job knowledge and understanding required to do all aspects of job.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates fair knowledge of job duties	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates limited knowledge of job, does not have good understanding of methods/ procedures
<input type="checkbox"/> Has mastery of the technical skills required to perform this job	<input type="checkbox"/> Has strong, consistent technical skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical skills are satisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical skills require improvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely requires assistance in performing the job	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires assistance infrequently	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires general instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires assistance frequently

IMPORTANCE SCALE				PERFORMANCE SCALE			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Critically important	Below acceptable standards	Needs some improvement	Fully acceptable	Exceeds expectations

Comments/supporting examples:

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**2. QUALITY OF WORK**

<input type="checkbox"/> Work is consistently of the highest quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Work is at the level normally required by this job	<input type="checkbox"/> Work is inconsistent, sometimes falling below the level required	<input type="checkbox"/> Work is consistently less than the expected level
<input type="checkbox"/> Pays close attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/> Pays attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/> Pays some attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/> Pays little attention to detail
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (patrons, other departments, coworkers, etc.) are consistently pleased with the work produced	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (patrons, other departments, coworkers, etc.) are normally pleased with the work produced	<input type="checkbox"/> Feedback from others (patrons, other departments, coworkers, etc.) is inconsistent	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (patrons, other departments, coworkers, etc.) are frequently unsatisfied

IMPORTANCE SCALE				PERFORMANCE SCALE			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Critically important	Below acceptable standards	Needs some improvement	Fully acceptable	Exceeds expectations

Comments/supporting examples:

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**3. TEAMWORK, FLEXIBILITY, AND ABILITY TO ADAPT**

<input type="checkbox"/> Goes out of the way to be cooperative and has excellent relations with others	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative and maintains good relations with others	<input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour can be inconsistent when working with others	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to get along with, causes friction and may be unapproachable
<input type="checkbox"/> Inspires teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Works well in a team setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Has some difficulties working in a team environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not work well in a team setting
<input type="checkbox"/> Adapts very quickly to changing circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/> Responds well to changing circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/> Has some difficulty adapting to changing circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/> Resists change and changing circumstances

IMPORTANCE SCALE				PERFORMANCE SCALE			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Critically important	Below acceptable standards	Needs some improvement	Fully acceptable	Exceeds expectations

Comments/supporting examples:

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**4. JUDGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING**

<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional ability to identify relevant facts and analyze available information	<input type="checkbox"/> Good ability to identify relevant facts and analyze information	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair ability to identify relevant facts and information	<input type="checkbox"/> Has not demonstrated the ability to assess and analyze the relevant facts
<input type="checkbox"/> Always identifies alternatives prior to making a decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Usually identifies alternatives prior to making a decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes identifies alternatives prior to making a decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely identifies alternatives
<input type="checkbox"/> Decisions are always implemented in a timely manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Decisions are usually implemented in a timely manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Decisions are not always implemented in a timely manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Decisions are rarely implemented in a timely manner

IMPORTANCE SCALE				PERFORMANCE SCALE			
1 Somewhat important	2 Important	3 Very important	4 Critically important	1 Below acceptable standards	2 Needs some improvement	3 Fully acceptable	4 Exceeds expectations

Comments/supporting examples:

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**5. ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS AND PRODUCTIVITY**

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent in following through on assignments; always meets deadlines and/or completes work in assigned time	<input type="checkbox"/> Follows through well on assignments; generally meets deadlines and/or completes work in assigned time	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not always follow through on assignments; does not always meet deadlines or complete work in assigned time	<input type="checkbox"/> Often procrastinates, requires frequent follow up or deadlines will be missed; often takes longer than expected to complete work
<input type="checkbox"/> Productivity exceeds expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Amount of work produced always meets the expectations of the job	<input type="checkbox"/> Amount of work produced sometimes falls below level required	<input type="checkbox"/> Productivity is below the acceptable standard for this job

IMPORTANCE SCALE				PERFORMANCE SCALE			
1 Somewhat important	2 Important	3 Very important	4 Critically important	1 Below acceptable standards	2 Needs some improvement	3 Fully acceptable	4 Exceeds expectations

Comments/supporting examples:

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**6. COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional ability to communicate verbally	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to communicate well verbally	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal communication is sometimes unclear and requires explanation	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal communication skills require improvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional ability to produce written communication materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to produce well-written communication materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs some assistance in preparing written materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing skills require improvement
<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional listening skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Normally listens well to other's ideas, needs, and directions	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes does not listen well to other's ideas, needs and directions	<input type="checkbox"/> Listening skills require improvement

IMPORTANCE SCALE				PERFORMANCE SCALE			
1 Somewhat important	2 Important	3 Very important	4 Critically important	1 Below acceptable standards	2 Needs some improvement	3 Fully acceptable	4 Exceeds expectations

Comments/supporting examples:

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**7. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently works in a safe manner, follows safe work practices and reports any unsafe condition to the supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Usually works in a safe manner and follows safe work practices; will normally report unsafe conditions to the supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not consistently work in a safe manner and may not report unsafe conditions to the supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Often works unsafely and has disregard for some safe work practices; fails to report unsafe conditions
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IMPORTANCE SCALE				PERFORMANCE SCALE			
1 Somewhat important	2 Important	3 Very important	4 Critically important	1 Below acceptable standards	2 Needs some improvement	3 Fully acceptable	4 Exceeds expectations

Comments/supporting examples:

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**D. Professional Development**

- 1. The goals and activities which will improve the employee's performance over the next year include:

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- 2. The employee may wish to identify future career interests, including cross-training, new skills they wish to acquire, or promotional aspirations. Over the next year, the following formal training and/or on the job training experiences will contribute to this goal:

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- 3. Identify any other issues or factors discussed:

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Completed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Additional Comments (Manager):

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This Review was discussed with me, and I received a copy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Additional Comments (Employee):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ACTION PLAN

Based on this performance review, agree specific improvement needs in the employee's job performance, and/or plans for the employee's career development or personal growth. Then list WHAT action will be taken by both the employee and manager to bring about the desired performance or results. Also, establish specific dates when progress will be reviewed (REVIEW DATES).

<b>1. WHAT/HOW:</b>		
<b>BY WHOM</b>	<b>BY WHEN</b>	<b>REVIEW DATES</b>
<b>2. WHAT/HOW:</b>		
<b>BY WHOM</b>	<b>BY WHEN</b>	<b>REVIEW DATES</b>
<b>3. WHAT/HOW:</b>		
<b>BY WHOM</b>	<b>BY WHEN</b>	<b>REVIEW DATES</b>
<b>4. WHAT/HOW:</b>		
<b>BY WHOM</b>	<b>BY WHEN</b>	<b>REVIEW DATES</b>

**EMPLOYEE COMMENTS:** (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

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