



End-of-Cycle Evaluation Tips

Performance review discussions and feedback exchanges in general are key parts of boosting [employee engagement](#) and productivity so they are important to get right. But not knowing what to say or write can make the process downright painful, especially on a deadline.

This guidance sheet provides managers with tips for assessing performance at the end-of-cycle stage. It complements other guidance available online: [Tips for Writing Effective Feedback](#) and [Tips for Giving and Receiving Feedback](#).



Questions to Consider

Before beginning a performance evaluation, please take the quiz below.

- Am I rating/assessing the staff member(SM) based on how I feel about them?
- When reviewing the Staff Member's performance does one particular trait or characteristic stand out?
- Does the staff member remind me of myself?
- Am I basing my evaluation on conclusions drawn from my first impressions and /or inferences?
- Do I evaluate each staff member using the same criteria?
- Am I giving undue weight to an occurrence which took place recently?

Did you answer “Yes” to any of the above questions?

If so, then you are probably making one or more generalizations. You are making assessments based on your perceptions rather than on founded observable job-related behaviors. You should try to a special effort to avoid this.



Common Communication Biases

Beware of the following common communication biases that can appear when evaluating performance

Recency Filter: Feedback is based on recent actions instead of looking at performance patterns.

To Counteract: Look for sustained patterns of performance that need to be changed or maintained.

Comparison Filter: You compare the performance of a staff member against that of another individual rather than focusing on the staff member's own actions and behavior.

To Counteract: Base the feedback only on the feedback recipient's demonstrated performance, without comparing to others.

Central Tendency Filter: You consider the feedback recipient as being “about average” and your feedback becomes generic. The recipient finds it difficult to act upon the feedback.

To Counteract: Elaborate on specific strengths and areas of improvement that you would like the feedback recipient to act on.



Sample Positive Comments on Competencies

Creativity

Peter often demonstrates creativity in his work. For example, he doesn't accept "we've always done it this way" as a solution; instead, he constantly reviews solutions to see if they are the most effective way of doing things.

Joan is very creative as evidenced by the way she solved an on-going problem by looking for a solution that would solve multiple issues from all angles.

Client Orientation

Paul works with customers very well as evidenced by his ability to deal with irate clients in a calm and rational manner.

Paula is great at handling customer issues. She consistently clarifies their needs upfront and follows up with them to see if they need further help.

Planning and Organizing

Jane has demonstrated great planning and organizing skills: she always creates flexible plans that meet changing needs.

Leo is competent in planning and organizing as shown by the way he formulates strategies, tactics and action plans that drive results in his work.

Communication

Brenda is quite good at communicating difficult messages with other team members and clients. She makes an effort to call them first or talk to them in person before sending written communication to them.

Larry is a very competent communicator. He has consistently received very positive feedback from his stakeholders throughout the year and is highly sought after by other teams.

Teamwork

Sylvia works well with others. She has shown that she can identify their needs during busy periods and consistently offer to help in any way she can.

Tom works well in the team. He goes an extra mile to seek input from his colleagues before finalizing his work and expresses appreciation for their feedback.

A photograph of two men in a meeting. One man is seen from the back, wearing glasses and a dark shirt. The other man is facing him, wearing a light-colored jacket and gesturing with his hands. They are sitting at a table with water bottles and papers. The background shows a bright room with windows and other people.

Other useful phrases

Empowering Others

- Encourages staff to achieve X results by setting challenging goals
- Helps staff gain visibility through...
- Encourages staff to be accountable for achieving results related to X area of work
- Shows appreciation and recognition for achievement of results and effort
- Delegates with clearly defined responsibility and autonomy in important areas of their work.

Managing Performance

- Provides team with support through [example].....
- Accurately estimates amount of time and resources needed to accomplish a task and matches tasks to skills
- Regularly discusses performance and provides regular feedback
- Clarifies expectations and makes sure that roles and responsibilities are clear in the team
- Provides support during periods of change
- Actively supports the development and career aspirations of staff

Creativity

- Actively seeks to improve services as demonstrated by(example)
- Offers new and different options to solve problems such as..... (example)
- Takes interest in new ideas or ways of doing things
- Creates improved means of accomplishing results by.....(example)
- Is continuously planning for improvement

Planning and Organizing

- Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies
- Adjusts priorities as required by.....
- Allocates appropriate time and resources for completing work as shown by...(example)
- Adjusts plans and actions as necessary to achieve X results

Communication

- Effectively communicates expectations by...
- Excels in facilitating group discussions by...
- Listens attentively to others by
- Effectively communicates upward, downward, and laterally by.....

Building Trust

- Creates an environment in which others can talk without fear by.....
- Follows through on agreed upon actions as demonstrated by.....
- Treats sensitive or confidential information appropriately as evidenced by.....
- Gives proper credit to others by.....

Team Work

- Displays an ability to collaborate with others by.....(example)
- Shares learning experience with peers by (example)
- Seeks feedback from others to learn and improve
- Is willing to learn from others as shown by ...
- Solicits inputs, ideas and expertise from others through (example)



Samples of Overall Performance Narratives/Comments

Accountability

John is a self-motivated team member and a pleasure to work with. He demonstrates superior technical ability and sometimes produces work of exceptional quality. John takes the time to fully understand the scope of projects and but lacks some attention to detail in the presentation of data.

This has led to delays in report completion and stress in the team about who was responsible for the errors. During the next quarter, I will work with John to help him ensure that he is fully accountable for the reports assigned to him. This may include touching base each morning to set daily progress goals and helping John keep a record of time spent on various reports each month.

Communication

Kate has displayed improved communication skills since our last review period. She responds to emails in a timely fashion and maintains transparency in the work she is performing with her team members. To help achieve this, she has committed to delivering a weekly progress report and arriving with prepared notes to her one-to-one sessions.

Kate could have even more impact on her role by consistently asking questions to clarify issues raised by the team. This would ensure that the team's views are reviewed and taken into account where appropriate.

Client Orientation

Having worked at our organization for four years, Monica is an experienced member of the team and displays a high level of institutional knowledge. She requires a minimal amount of supervision to fulfill her job duties and maintains a good working relationship with team members cross-functionally. Sometimes, however, clients from other departments have expressed frustration when they have contacted Monica about HR policy information.

These complaints are potentially harmful to the division's reputation which should be one of openness and helpfulness. Over the next three months I will work with Monica on how she addresses and assists clients. We will meet weekly to review client requests and responses. I will also discuss growth assignments with Monica to see if she would like to take on new tasks that might diversity the type of contact she has with clients.

Accountability

Phillip is committed to producing work of a high standard. He is always looking to improve the quality of his deliverables and often reaches out to team members in different departments for advice and guidance. He frequently goes above and beyond in his efforts to ensure consistency and generate content that exceeds expectations. Phillip actively seeks feedback and uses it to enhance his work.

Over the next three months, I would like to see Phillip create a professional development goal that will support him to expand his knowledge of the organizational procurement rules and regulations in order to strengthen efficiency in his role.

Teamwork

Taylor maintains a highly positive attitude at work and is quick to build strong relationships with others. She strives to help integrate new employees and is eager to please both internal and external customers, making her an excellent cultural fit for our team. Taylor recently demonstrated her ability to work effectively cross-departmentally during a recent team-building event. She helped secure buy-in from our leadership team and worked with our HR team to coordinate logistics. The result was a fun and productive day for all involved.

Taylor is a good independent team member and would make even more impact on her role by showing more consideration for the ideas and input of others. I will work with Taylor over the next 6 months through frequent one to one sessions to support her to identify key team members who she needs to proactively get input from in order to strengthen her work outputs.

Leadership

Michael has demonstrated fine leadership abilities since transitioning into his role as Director of Human Resources. Michael understands how to drive and direct team members effectively in order to meet the organization's goals and challenges his direct reports to meet their own professional goals and objectives for career growth opportunities within the organization.

He is supportive of team members and stands behind his employees' decisions. Michael often seeks out the broad perspective of multiple team members before forming holistic solutions to problems and challenges. Michael's communications to his team could be strengthened further by ensuring that relevant information is shared transparently with all team members involved.

Planning and Organizing

Robert is a motivated and conscientious staff member who takes pride in his work. Robert would benefit from organizing his time more efficiently. He occasionally fails to prioritize important pieces of work and instead spends a large amount of time on projects that are not in alignment with our departmental goals and make little impact on the delivery on the team goals

During this next review period, I would like to see him establish specific and relevant goals to help him focus and stay on track in the context of wider objectives within our organization.



Remember these 5 top tips

1. Remember that the end-of-cycle conversation consolidates the staff member's performance for the period. Positive and/or constructive feedback should be provided on an ongoing basis to the staff member throughout the cycle to reinforce good behavior and encourage continuous improvement.
2. It is recommended that any sensitive/constructive feedback be shared in person with staff members throughout the performance cycle. This way they have opportunities to improve before the end-of-cycle and the possible recording of the action or behaviours in the ePerformance evaluation.
3. The comments should include specific examples to support observations. For example: "[Employee] worked on [project/task] and was responsible for [responsibility]. Employee displayed [good skill / trait] while delivering [results] during [time period]."
4. Performance discussions with staff members should be scheduled before completing the written evaluation in ePerformance. Please refer to the [End of Cycle Guide](#) and [Giving and Receiving Feedback Guide](#) for more information/tips.
5. Hold a follow up meeting after the performance discussion to discuss goals for the next cycle and agree to meet on regular cadence to discuss progress toward those goals.