



BLINN COLLEGE

902 COLLEGE AVENUE
BRENHAM, TEXAS 77833
979.830.4120

Provided to you compliments of:

BRANDY S. SCHOLZE, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

An Employee Guide on How to get the Most out of Performance Appraisals

Why do we have performance appraisal meetings, and how can they benefit you?

Meeting with your supervisor to discuss how you're doing is a pretty good thing. In case you haven't really given it much thought, here are a few reminders for you.

- You get a chance to obtain information, directly from your supervisor, about his/her expectations and standards for you. That way, you know right up front what you need to do a great job.
- You get feedback on how you're doing. It's wonderful to hear about the good work that you're doing. It's also good to find out if you haven't been meeting expectations – once you know that there's something you could do better, you can work on it (which is definitely better than being in the dark and continuing to do something which doesn't work).
- You get the “big picture” about how you're doing on the job. Day-to-day feedback is great, but it helps, too, to step back and hear about how you're doing overall and how the work you do helps accomplish important goals of the organization.
- You get to talk with your supervisor about how you feel about your job. Do you enjoy the work you do? Are you ready for greater responsibilities? Are you feeling too overwhelmed by the work you've already been assigned? Do you need more assistance from your boss or your coworkers? This is your chance to have an open discussion with your supervisor's undivided attention about how you feel things are going.
- You get a chance to get to know your supervisor a bit better, and he/she gets to know you a bit better, too. The more you know one another, the greater the chances that you'll be able to communicate well on an ongoing basis, especially if a problem crops up.
- You get the opportunity to discuss your future with your supervisor. That can be as simple as discussing your interest in a training course to better handle a specific project, to something as broad as your career aspirations and how you plan to get there.

What Should You Do to Prepare?

Even though your supervisor is the one calling the performance meeting, you have considerable involvement in the discussion. In fact, you can and should give some thought to what you want to get out of this meeting.

Perhaps you want suggestions for how you can provide better customer service, or maybe you want specific feedback on what you do well and not so well when you give presentations. Just as your supervisor will be preparing for his/her meeting with you, you should do a bit of preparation of your own. Preparation for meeting with your supervisor has two phases:

1) Before your supervisor prepares your appraisal:

- Prepare a list of your key work accomplishments, and give that to your supervisor for his/her consideration in preparing your rating. This way, you can help ensure that your significant accomplishments are not overlooked. Keep a “kudos” folder with your accomplishments in it to refer to for this.
- If you have specific issues, which you will want to discuss with your supervisor, give him/her a “heads up”, so that he/she can be well prepared for your discussion. And come prepared to discuss clearly and concisely.

2) In preparation for the meeting when your rating is communicated, think about the following:

- What’s most important for you to learn/find out about how you’re doing?
- What have you done/accomplished/learned during the year?

Make yourself a list of key items, so that you can ask for your supervisor for feedback on specific projects or assignments.

What did you do particularly well? What are the ways you may have been disappointed in how you performed?

What kind of feedback would you like to give to your supervisor? (e.g., I really like it when you review and edit my drafts before they’re put in final form, so that we don’t waste a lot of time and paper revising documents at the last minute; thank you for letting me take so much time off when my parents were visiting; I really need to hear from you about how I’m doing when I’m working on a project, rather than assuming that your silence means I’m doing okay; etc.).

Do you have the skills that you think you need to do your job well? What skills might you want to work on polishing up?

Where do you see your career heading? How can your supervisor help you achieve your career goals?

It may help to jot down your key points and questions. That way, you can use your notes during your discussion and make sure that you don’t forget to bring up the important thoughts and questions you have.

The Performance Discussion

The day has come for your performance discussion. You've put some thought into how you're doing, and you're ready to have a good discussion with your supervisor. There's one more thing you may want to consider – take a look at your *supervisor's perspective* on the discussion you're about to have.

Your supervisor will:

- Review your performance over the past six months or year with a summary of key accomplishments, work that you did particularly well, work that could have been improved, areas where you may need to focus more effort, etc. He/She will offer you some examples, and will give you the opportunity to ask questions for clarification or to provide information. This is definitely a two – way dialogue.
- Ask you how you feel the past six months or year went, and what you liked and didn't like (with the goal of finding out in what ways you felt supported, or how you might have wanted feedback, or other information that he/she can use in working with you in the coming year).
- Look ahead to the coming six months or year and discuss with you his/her specific expectation for you.
- Ask you whether you feel that you have adequate training and resources to carry out your work. This will likely lead to a discussion of what additional information or materials you may need.
- Ask you about your short and/or long-term career goals. Based on your response, he/she may offer suggestions or resources to assist you.

During the meeting, don't be shy about asking for clarification, particularly about your supervisor's expectations of you. Refer to your notes, so that you don't overlook any points that you feel are important. If your supervisor doesn't bring up the topic yourself – if you want specific information, then ask specific questions. You may be amazed at how informative this discussion will be.

And yes, there is the paperwork that needs to get done. Your supervisor will ask you to sign your appraisal form, and will make sure that you receive a copy of your rating.

That's it. By the time you finish your discussion, you should have a good feel for how well you're doing, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and where you're heading in the coming year. Don't forget, though, that you can and should continue to discuss your performance with your supervisor throughout the year. While the setting might not be as formal as during progress reviews or rating discussions, it's still important to keep talking, day in and day out, with your supervisor. If you're ever in doubt about how you're doing, don't forget that you have an amazing tool at your disposal - you can simply, but directly, ask your supervisor for feedback, at any point during the year.

Still have questions about any of this, or about the performance appraisal process in general? Stop to chat with your supervisor, who will be happy to address any questions you have.