

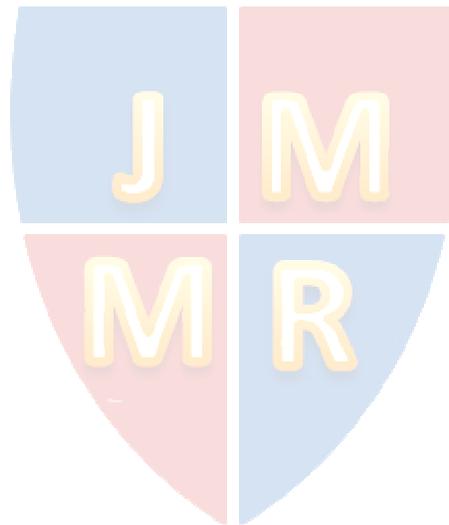
Performance Appraisal in the Workplace

Kenneth Chukwuba
Walden University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the uses and tools for performance appraisal in the workplace. Many organizations appear to be reluctant when it comes to conducting performance appraisal for their employees. Organizations can benefit a lot from performance appraisal by seeing it as pivotal part of management responsibility.

Keywords: performance appraisal, appraisal cycle, appraisal tools, workplace, operational definition



Introduction

This paper deals with performance appraisal in the workplace. Many organizations have acquired the unenviable reputation of being reluctant in conducting performance appraisals. In some organizations, management does not like to conduct it or does not have the idea of how performance appraisals should be done. Obviously, performance appraisals can influence overall performance of an organization

This paper will only discuss performance appraisal management systems, which include the appraisal cycle and performance appraisal tools.

Operational definition of terms

In order to effectively understand the concept of performance appraisal the meaning of the relevant terms in this discourse, performance appraisal must be explained without looking to far bad effects of poor performance appraisal management in some organizations can be easily detected. Admittedly, performance appraisal is the process of determining how well employees do their jobs compared with a set of standards and communicating that information to those employees. The reason for appraising performance is to provide feedback and to encourage employees to perform at their best so that the organization can reach its mission and goals, rewarding employees relative to these efforts and contributions reinforces their behaviors in a manner that increases the likelihood that they will achieve their own personal as well as organizational goals.

Performance Appraisal Cycle

According to Hodgetts, (1993), performance appraisal is a four-step process referred to as the performance appraisal cycle. First, there must be some established performance standards that specify what the worker is supposed to be doing. These standards are quantified; that is, the machinist is supposed to process 25 pieces an hour or the typist is expected to type an average of 60 words a minute. Such performance standards establish a basis against which to evaluate the individual.

Secondly, there has to be a method of determining individual performance. Example, say “Tom does a good job” or “Karen is an asset to the department” is not a sufficient appraisal instruments that measure desired performance. In the case of the machinist, we would want to consult daily output records to see if his or her average is 25 pieces an hour; in case of the typist, we would want to check the number of pages of material turned out in a typical day. Of course, appraisals would not be conducted on a daily basis, but if proper evaluation instruments are designed, output can be recorded periodically and can be evaluated later. (Hodgetts, 1993, p.314).

Thirdly, there must be some comparison of performance against standards. At some point, usually once a year, and the individual’s work record should be compared with the standards set for the job.

Finally, an evaluation of performance should be made on the basis of the comparison. This process can take numerous forms. Sometimes the boss meets the subordinate, reviews progress in general terms, and then announces the basic direction for the upcoming year. At other times, the manager has a detailed work report on the subordinate and is able to pinpoint strengths

and weaknesses in great detail. In either case, this step is not finished before the manager has told the subordinate how well he or she is doing. The more definitive the manager is, the more useful the feedback will be in directing and motivating the subordinate. Once this fourth step is completed, the manager and the subordinate are ready to establish performance standards for the next evaluation period. Building on current success [and sidestepping failures], the two can determine the department's needs and the subordinate's abilities and the work to mesh them (Hodgetts, 1993, p.314).

Uses of performance appraisal

In general terms, performance appraisal plays two roles in an organization, and these roles are often seen as potentially conflicting. The first role is to measure performance for the purpose of rewarding or otherwise making administrative decisions about employees. Promotions and layoffs also hinge on the ratings, sometimes making it difficult.

Another role is development of individual potential. In this case, the manager is featured more as a counselor than as a judge, the atmosphere is often different. The developmental function of performance appraisal can also be identified in areas of employee growth in organization. For example, in performance appraisal interview that was targeted exclusively to development, an employee found out that the only factor keeping her from being considered for a management job in her firm was lack of knowledge of cost accounting. Her supervisor might recommend her to take such a course at night or local college, (Robert & Jackson, 1995, p. 345).

Performance Appraisal tools

There are many kinds of appraisal tools that can be used to evaluate employee performance. The most commonly used are graphic rating Scales, Alternation ranking method, paired comparison method; behavior anchored rating scales and management by objectives.

Graphic rating Scales is the most widely used of all the performance appraisal tools. It helps to evaluate employees on the basis of predetermined factors. Each subordinate is rated by circling or checking the score that best describes his or her performance for each trait. The assigned values for the traits are then totaled. (Gray, 1994, p.334).

Alternation ranking method is another way of evaluating employees from the best to worst on some trait. It is easier to distinguish between the worst and best employee than to just rank them, an alternation ranking method is the most popular. First list all the subordinates to be rated, and then cross out the names of any not know well enough to rank. Then, on a form indicate the employee who is the highest on lowest. Then choose the next highest and the next lowest, alternating between highest and lowest until all the employees to be rated have been ranked (Gray, 1994, p.334).

Paired comparison method, is normally used to compare each employee with every other employee in the rating group one at a time. The number of comparisons can be calculated using the following formula: $n [n-1]/2$, where n is equal to the number of people rated. For example, a manager with 10 employees would compare each employee's performance with that of each of the other 9 employees. The manager would have to make 45 different comparisons on each rating factor. The paired comparison method gives more information about individual employees than the straight ranking method does (Mathias & Jackson, 1994, p. 356).

Behavioral anchored method focuses on the worker's behaviors. That is, instead of ranking leadership ability, the rater asked to assess whether an employee exhibits certain behaviors (for example, works well with coworkers, comes to meetings and work on time). In one type of behavioral instrument, Behavioral observation scales, supervisors record how frequently the various behaviors listed on the form occurred, (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, Cardy, 2001, p. 231).

Management by objective specifies the performance goals that an individual hopes to attain with an appropriate length of time. The objectives that each manager set are derived from the overall goals and objective of the organization, although MBO should not be a disguised means for a superior to dictate the objectives of individual managers or employees. Although not limited to the appraisal of managers, MBO is most often used for this purpose.

Conclusion/Summary

There are many things managers should know before carrying out or conducting performance appraisal in their workplace. Managers should be familiar with the job being appraised. Knowing what the person has been doing is very important, because some people can look productive while doing simple or meaningless tasks. They could be overrated. Conversely, effective worker might be underrated by someone not familiar with the job the individual is doing. Managers should know the factors to be evaluated, such as how well the individual is performing the job: work quantity, work quality, speed, accuracy, ability to get along with others, and communication effectiveness.

Managers should also let their subordinates know the factors that they are being evaluated to avoid the amount of tension and anxiety associated evaluation, since some jobs can be measured daily or weekly basis, such as secretaries or office workers that handle short-term assignments. They can be evaluated from week to week.

Recommendations

The performance appraisal should be continuing process that must be reviewed, since the welfare of the organization and employees solely depends on it. Management should take the initiative and the leadership necessary to ensure that it is adequately done. Management should not use performance appraisal as a punitive instrument, rather as an instrument to help employee get their objectives. Management should compensate employees based on the objective measures of performance, even though performance is at least partially determined by factors beyond their control. Management should also address issues or problems arising from performance appraisal immediately. Management should be fair in conducting performance appraisal to protect itself against lawsuits for discrimination.

GLOSSARY

Appraisal: To Evaluate someone's performance

Appraisal Cycle: The process of how evaluations are conducted.

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales: [Bars] a performance evaluation method that consists of developing a series of critical incident behaviors, ranking them on a scale, and then using the scale to evaluate the personnel.

Conflict: The result when individuals or groups in the organization clash over some issue that, at least to them, is important sometimes this occurs on an interpersonal basis and at the other times it takes place between groups.

Development: Efforts to improve employees' ability to handle a variety of assignments.

Feedback: The degree to which the work required by a job result in the individual receiving direct, clear information about his or her performance effectiveness.

Graphic rating scales: the most widely used of all performance appraisal tool, it is a list of factor and degrees of factor on which the individual will be rated. The evaluator reads every factor and then checks the degree of each that applies person being evaluated.

Group: A social unit consisting of two or more interdependent, interactive individuals who are striving to attain common goals.

Leadership: the process of influencing people to direct their efforts toward the achievement of some particular goal[s].

Management: The process of achieving organizational objectives through the effective use of resources

Management by objectives [MBO]: An overall performance appraisal system used at all levels of the employment hierarchy.

Organizational Development: An effort to improve an organization's effectiveness by dealing with individual, group, and overall organizational problems from both a technical and human standpoint.

Paired Comparison method: A performance evaluation method, involving comparing each individual is being rated against every other individual, on a number of different bases, including work quality and work quantity.

Performance Appraisal Cycle: A four-step process used in appraising individuals, it consists of [1] establishing performance standards, evaluating individual performance, and determining individual performance.

Role: An experienced behavior.

Standards: The amount of work expected from each worker every day. This concept was popularized by the scientific managers.

Understanding: The second step in the communication process, which involves getting the receiver to comprehend the meaning of the transmission.

Work: The use of physical and/or mental effort that is directed toward the production of accomplishment of something.

REFERENCES

Hodgetts, R.M. [1993]. Modern human relations at work.

New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers

Gary, D. [1994] Human resources management. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Gomez-Mejia, L. Balkin, D and Cardy, R. [2001].

Managing human resources. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Mathisa, L.R. and Jackson, J.H. [1994]. Human resources. New York: West Publishing Company

