

ExecTech

ExecTech Guideline How to Conduct Great Performance Reviews

Performance evaluations are stressful or useless when you:

- Conduct the evaluations only once or twice per year.
- Emphasize other matters over productivity, positive behavior and improvement.
- Fail to listen and understand the staff member.
- Are critical, find fault and place blame.
- Are superficial and fail to address problems.
- Discuss vague generalities instead of specifics.
- Shock employees by accusing them of poor behavior based on rumors.
- Present a list of errors accumulated over time.
- End the evaluation with bad feelings.
- Do little between evaluation meetings to help the staff member.
- Do not use the review to create an improvement for the practice.

A good supervisor:

- Constantly reviews employee performance.
- Resolves errors, misunderstandings and disagreements as soon as they are discovered.
- Obtains agreement on the staff member's job purpose and priorities.
- Provides specific, clear-cut direction for the staff member.
- Coaches and motivates the staff member to improve.
- Helps the staff member improve their performance between meetings.

Purpose of Performance Reviews: To increase your practice control and profitability by motivating staff members to improve their productivity, efficiency and cooperation on a one-on-one basis.

How to Conduct Performance Reviews

1. Provide copies of the attached "Staff Member Self-Evaluation Questionnaire" and "Performance Review Forms" to your staff members so they know what to expect. Place copies in a file with other forms that are available to your staff.

2. Schedule thirty minutes per staff member. Subsequent meetings will be shorter as you and your staff get used to this routine.

Review your direct staff as your first priority. Do the same with the rest of your staff with their supervisor present in the room. Later on, delegate the Monthly Performance Reviews to the supervisor.

For example, you give a performance review with the front desk manager who is one of your three direct staff. This front desk manager is in charge of two other receptionists. You and the front desk manager then conduct review meetings with the other two receptionists. You conduct the Monthly Performance Reviews while the front desk manager watches and adds her comments. As soon as she is ready, have the front desk manager conduct a few Monthly Performance Reviews according to this article while you watch and add your comments.

Once you are satisfied with the front desk manager's ability to conduct these meetings, you delegate the responsibility to her from then on. You watch all the stats and review all Performance Review Forms.

3. Prepare for the meeting. Fill out the "Supervisor Questionnaire" in advance of the meeting. The purpose of the questionnaire is to help you consider issues to address in the meeting. You may or may not decide to show your questionnaire to the staff member.

Decide what you want to accomplish in the meeting. For example, *"To increase the flow of new patients, I need Jill to move faster in reception. So my goal for the meeting is for Jill to decide to speed up her work. I think I'll change her stat from Missed Appointments Percentage to Total Services, and give her a \$300 bonus when we hit \$80,000 in monthly Total Services."*

As part of your meeting preparation, work out solutions to problems you expect the employee have. For example, if the employee expects a pay raise that you do not want to give, list your reasons to help the employee understand your decision. You should also prepare specific steps the employee can take to eventually earn the raise.

As with all difficult tasks, preparation is vital to success.

4. Have the employee fill out the "Staff Member Self-Evaluation Questionnaire" form and bring it to the meeting along with their statistics graphs, if available.

You may prefer to have the staff member give you the questionnaire a few days before the meeting.

5. Use "Performance Review Form" as a guideline during your meeting. Your objective is to work out three things: a plan to improve staff member weaknesses, projects you want done and statistical quotas.

6. Do not end the meeting until you and the employee are in agreement with the improvements plan, project targets and stat quotas for the employee. Clear the air of disagreements and bad feelings so everyone's attention can move on to production.

End on a good note! You want everyone to be optimistic about the future.

7. Give a copy of the Performance Review Form to the staff member and file a copy in the person's personnel file.

Ensure you write nothing that might give evidence of labor law violation. For example, sexual harrassment or discrimination based on gender, race, national origin, color, creed (beliefs), ancestry, citizenship, medical condition, age over 40, physical or mental disability, religion, marital status and sexual orientation.

Have the staff member write their comments on and sign the Performance Review form.

Advice for Conducting Private Staff Meetings

Use the following recommendations when dealing with your staff in Monthly Performance Reviews.

1. Purpose. Have the purpose in mind to bring out the best performance possible in your people. Do not allow arguments or debates. Do not seek to make staff members wrong or beat them down. Find ways to increase your staff members' knowledge, confidence and ability. Make their successes your successes, their failures your failures.

As a doctor, your public is your patients. You work to improve your relationship with your patients while providing them with a service. As an executive, your public is your staff. You must work to improve your relationship with them while providing the services they need: leadership, training, advice and support. Treat your staff members in the same way you want them to treat your patients: firmly, fairly and honestly with the intention to help.

2. Start each meeting by reviewing statistics. Use staff members' statistics and actual production as your major focus of the review. You want quality work in high volume, not perfect little angels. Do not get picky on the little things while ignoring the big picture.

3. Discuss employee strengths before discussing problems. Always discuss the strengths, successes and good news about the employee's performance before addressing the negatives. The more specific, the better. *"Great news that your stat, percentage of missed appointments, is now less than 3%. I am very happy about that. Your attendance has been nearly perfect. You get along with everyone in the office quite well. I've heard several compliments from patients about your care...(etc.) These are all very good. Now let's look at ways you can get even better. First of all, we need to figure out how we can increase the daily production stat..."*

Starting with the positives sets a good tone for the meeting and makes dealing with problems much easier.

4. Confront the problems. Do not hesitate to tell the person where they stand. They want to know. They cannot improve unless you tell them. Your practice will not succeed unless you confront employee weaknesses. You must be specific: Exactly how much production should they be generating? When did they fail to properly handle a patient? When did they not do their job? When was an order not done?

5. Be direct, but gentle. There is no need to be rude, antagonistic or blunt when correcting poor performance or bad behavior. For example, instead of saying, *"Your typing skills are horrible,"* say, *"We need to work out a way to speed up your typing and eliminate these mistakes. What do you think?"* A team-management attitude results in fast, stress-free corrections.

6. Start by determining if the problems you need to address are true. Before deciding the staff member did something wrong or bad, determine if the facts are valid.

Covertly hostile people try to make good staff look bad. So always let the employee know the source of your information. *"Mrs. Jones told me you were irritable and not too interested in helping her. Was that true?"* The fact may be that Mrs. Jones' owes you \$4500, her checks always bounce and she criticizes her treatment. *"Dr. Pete says you are uncooperative..."* may reveal Dr. Pete is sexually harassing your staff member.

"I noticed you were on the phone with your boyfriend for several minutes yesterday. Is that true?" The fact may be that she was talking to her ill grandfather.

If your information is from a rumor or confidential source, do not use the information. Never say, *"I understand you are criticizing me behind my back, but I can't tell you who told me."* Instead, base the information on your own personal concern or impression: *"I have the impression you are not happy working here. Is that correct?"* *"I'm concerned you do not consider me a good employer; just a feeling I have. Any truth to this?"*

7. Confront the employee with all of your concerns. If you avoid discussing problems, you will reduce your level of communication, build stress and eventually explode. Do not overwhelm the employee with criticism, but get your worries on the table.

"I'm curious how you feel about your schedule." "Do you think I'm being unfair?" "It seems you are fighting me on a few issues."

Bring up disagreements you suspect: *"You rolled your eyes yesterday when I asked you to be on time from now on. Do you disagree with me? Let's discuss it."*

Air out questions you have. *"The other day you made a comment about my personal income which I'd like to clear up. Do you think I make too much money?"*

8. Carefully disagree. Do not create a conflict when addressing points from the staff member that you disagree with. Because you have a great deal of power over your staff, softer approaches are usually sufficient.

"You noted that you are usually enthusiastic on the job. I'm glad to hear it. But sometimes you give the impression, whether you know it or not, that you are not very happy here. For example, you seemed unhappy during yesterday's staff meeting. Did I get the wrong impression?"

"You wrote that you are doing all you can and need an assistant to help bill insurance companies. But last year you were billing the same amount as well as assisting me part time. Am I right? You are a very capable person. Let's figure out what is making things difficult for you..."

9. Be clear about the improvements you want and expect. Leave no room for misunderstanding. Write the changes on the Performance Review Form. If there are several changes you want, cover the most important improvements first and wait on the smaller issues if the person starts to get overwhelmed. Make it clear what you see and what you want.

"The amount of production you are assisting has dropped from over \$10,000 per week to less than \$7,000, while the other assistance's stats are going up. How can we get you back up to \$10,000 again?"

"You do not look up and smile at people when they walk in the door. As a receptionist, you must do this with every person no matter what. Can you tell me why that is so important?"

10. If the employee flatly denies a problem or weakness, let it go for now. *"So there really is no problem with you getting irritated with patients like Mrs. Smith? Okay, that's good. I think being nice to our patients, no matter how nasty they get, is the way to go. Do you agree?"*

Give your staff the benefit of the doubt unless the facts clearly prove otherwise. If the staff member turns out to be lying despite your faith in them, discipline them immediately.

11. Do not try to be popular with or admired by staff. Be passionate about your success and fair in your dealings with staff. Popularity does not increase your profits or decrease your stress. Seeking admiration can, however, make you act against the best interests of your practice.

12. Keep good records. Ensure the Performance Review Form lists the weaknesses, poor attitudes and performance problems you want resolved. If you note the staff member is performing satisfactorily, then later terminate the employee due to poor performance with no further documentation, the review could act against you in a wrongful termination case. So make sure the Performance Review form is complete and accurate.

13. Major decisions. Avoid making major decisions about pay raises, bonus plans, vacations, benefits, promotions, disciplinary actions or other major changes during a meeting with an employee. You may react irrationally instead of acting wisely. There is nothing wrong with saying, *"Could you put that in writing for me?"* or *"Let me think about that until we meet again on Monday."*

Tell your staff member exactly when you will have a decision for them and keep your word.

If you make a decision that will be unpopular with the employee, include steps the employee can take to get what they want.

14. Do not discriminate. Each performance review should be conducted using the same format for all staff members. Also, if you conduct a performance review on one of your staff, you must do the review with them all. For example, if you only do the review on a troublesome staff member who happens to be Latino, and you do not do the review on your other staff who are not Latino, you are at risk.

15. Keep your word. Set a good example and build respect and trust with your staff by doing whatever you say you will do. If you promise to help train someone, do it. If you agree to give a decision by Wednesday, make sure your decision is on Wednesday. Set the date for the next Monthly Performance Review within 30 days and keep it.

16. End in agreement. When disagreements exist between an employer and employee, productivity goes down and stays down until the disagreement is resolved. Therefore, resolve all disagreements before ending the meeting. Make sure you and the staff member are in agreement on the needed changes and plans for improvement.

While you might not end with an excited, motivated staff member at each meeting, continue to follow the recommendations in this guideline and the advice of your consultant. You will eventually be able to motivate anyone.

17. Have fun during the meeting. There is no reason any of the meetings need to be somber and serious. In fact, correction is difficult if the supervisor or staff member have their defenses up. If you are unhappy with the person's performance, make it clear you dislike their actions, not them. You should like them personally. A friendly, but firm attitude is the most effective.

If you are happy with the overall performance and stats of the individual, the meetings are still important to conduct. They may be the reason you are happy with the staff member, so should be a permanent part of your routine. Meetings with top-level staff members are fast and enjoyable.

Results

You will build a strong organization if you practice good staff management. Monthly Performance Reviews with your staff put you in better control of your practice. Follow the advice in this article and you will create a strong organization. Major goals are easier to reach with a powerful team behind you.

Attachments

Staff Member Self Evaluation Worksheet

Supervisor Worksheet

Performance Review Form

Staff Member Self Evaluation Worksheet

Staff Member Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Fill out both sides of this sheet for your Performance Review. Give this form and your production statistics graph, if available, to your supervisor before your meeting.

1. Please rate yourself on each job quality using a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being **true** and 1 being **false**.

Job Quality	Rating	Notes
My production statistic is increasing		
My production is as high as humanly possible		
The quality of my work is better than expected		
I get my assignments done faster than expected no matter what obstacles I run into		
I get as much work done without supervision as I do with supervision		
I constantly take the initiative in finding ways to improve my performance		
I find ways to improve this company or save it money		
I promote the doctor(s) and practice at every opportunity		
I bring in new patients		
I resolve disagreements with management through communication or by suggesting alterative solutions		
I cheerfully provide the correct amount of information to the correct people		
I do not report bad news until I have handled the situation myself whenever possible		
I do not allow personal problems to interfere with my work		
I am reliable and have perfect attendance		
I am proud of my appearance		
I am working well with other staff members		
I understand and follow the office's policies		
My work area is clean and organized		
Total Score		

2. What is the primary purpose of your job?

3. What do you consider to be your three most important duties? Which of these three is the most important?

4. What is your general tone level while on the job?

Enthusiastic

Cheerful

Interested

Conservative

Content

Bored

Antagonistic

Angry

Suppressed hostility

Afraid

Sad

Apathetic

5. Are you distracted from doing your job in any way? If yes, please explain.

6. How could you make yourself more useful to the practice?

7. In what other ways could you improve your performance?

8. What level of production do you think you can achieve over the next 30 days?

9. Does your supervisor's management style impede you in doing your job in any way? If so, please explain.

10. What can your supervisor do to correct the problem?

11. In what areas could you use more training?

12. In what other ways can your supervisor help you to do a better job?

13. Any suggestions that would help make the practice more productive or efficient?

Supervisor Worksheet

Staff Member Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Pay: _____ Bonus Plans: _____ Benefits: _____

Staff Member's Production Statistic(s): _____

Staff Member's Stat Ranges and Trends since Last Review: _____

Instructions: Use this form to prepare for a Monthly Performance Review meeting.

1. Rate each job quality of the staff member using a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being **true** and 1 being **false**.

Job Quality	Rating	Notes
Staff member's production statistic is increasing		
Staff member production is as high as humanly possible		
The quality of staff member's work is better than expected		
Staff member gets his/her assignments done faster than expected despite the obstacles		
Staff member gets as much work done without supervision as with supervision		
Staff member constantly takes the initiative in finding ways to improve his/her performance		
Staff member finds ways to improve this company or save it money		
Staff member promotes the doctor(s) and practice at every opportunity		
Staff member brings in new patients		
Staff member resolves disagreements with management through communication or by suggesting alternative solutions		
Staff member cheerfully provides the correct amount of information to the correct people		
Staff member does not report bad news until he/she has handled the situation whenever possible		
Staff member does not allow personal problems to interfere with his/her work		
Staff member is reliable and has perfect attendance		
Staff member has good appearance		
Staff member works well with other staff members		
Staff member follows the office's policies		
Staff member's work area is clean and organized		
Total Score		

2. What is the staff member's primary job purpose supposed to be?

3. What are the staff member's five most important duties? Which of these five is the most important?

4. What is the staff member's general tone level while on the job?

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful | <input type="checkbox"/> Interested | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Content | <input type="checkbox"/> Bored | <input type="checkbox"/> Antagonistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Angry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covertly hostile | <input type="checkbox"/> Afraid | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathetic |

5. Is the staff member distracted from doing the job in any way? If yes, please explain.

6. How is staff member performance improving?

7. How could the staff member be more useful to the practice?

8. What, if any, disagreements do you suspect staff member might have with you or the practice management?

9. If you could change anything at all about this staff member's performance, what would you change?

10. What does the staff member need to do to help the practice reach its goals?

11. What barriers or deficiencies might get in the staff member's way?

12. What are the solutions to the barriers or deficiencies?

13. In what areas could the staff member use more training, coaching or assistance from you?

14. What level of production does the staff member need to achieve over the next 30 days for the practice to make steady progress toward its goals?

Performance Review Form

Staff Member Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Pay: _____ Bonus Plan: _____ Benefits: _____

Staff Member's Production Statistic(s): _____

Instructions: Use this form as a guideline during Performance Review meetings.

_____ 1. Review the stat quotas, project completions and improvements plan from the last Performance Review.

Stat quotas from last Performance Review:	Staff member's recent stat ranges and trends:
Project targets from last Performance Review:	Project targets done:
Areas for improvement from last review:	Improvements made:

_____ 2. Discuss the purpose and priorities of the job to ensure the supervisor and staff member are in agreement.

_____ 3. List and discuss the staff member's top strengths:

_____ 4. Resolve any disagreements staff member has with supervisor or practice management:

_____ 5. Review staff member's Job Quality scores. Discuss scores you disagree with and why.

_____ 6. Discuss the other sections of the Staff Member Self Evaluation Worksheet.

____ 7. Work out new plans to improve staff member performance, projects you need completed and stat quotas for the next 30 days.

Areas to improve:
Project targets to be done:
Stat quotas:

____ 8. Final supervisor comments:

Supervisor signature: _____ Date _____

____ 9. Staff member comments:

Staff member signature: _____ Date _____

Scheduled date of next Performance Review: _____ Copy to: _____ Employee _____ Personnel File