



Performance Planning

A performance plan should outline the duties, tasks, responsibilities, expected behaviors, goals, and objective measurements for each job. Your plan links what you do to the rest of the department, and to the organization.

Line of Sight Goals

The Performance Management System gives all state departments and offices the opportunity to align their goals and objectives with the goals and objectives of the State of Colorado. This alignment is called “Line of Sight” because each set of goals and objectives is in line with each other set.

Goals

Supervisors can choose the method to develop performance plans for their employees. The most meaningful and successful plans are developed collaboratively with the employees in the department. For example:

- Supervisor reviews department and organization goals and objectives;
- Supervisor identifies preliminary desired results and priorities for the work group for the upcoming year;
- Supervisor meets with work group to review preliminary goals and priorities and collaboratively decide on final plan;
- Supervisor gives employees the tools (Position Description and other relevant information) to plan their individual goals;
- Supervisor meets with each employee to collaboratively set job duties, related goals, and measurements; and
- Supervisor identifies the measurement levels of performance that would indicate whether performance is Needs Improvement, Successful, Exceptional (or alternative label).

The employee’s individual performance plan outlines the tasks, responsibilities, goals, and measurements for a particular job. The plan may also specify special projects or activities important to the employee’s position. As supervisors, your task is to guide and support the creation and implementation of the employee’s performance plan. As you develop plans with your staff, you should consider:

- The breadth of tasks to be accomplished.
- The complexity of tasks to be accomplished.
- The quality of work that must be accomplished.
- The volume of work that must be accomplished.

- The timeliness of work that must be accomplished.
- The responsiveness to organization and client needs that must be addressed.
- The positive interrelationships among co-workers and client groups that must be built and maintained.

Since the plan represents the base for future evaluation, the plan must contain a well-considered assessment of significant and on-going tasks the employee will perform during the evaluation period.

Identify critical job functions and responsibilities

Employees do tasks established by management that meet organizational objectives. The planning process should identify these tasks. As part of task identification, supervisors and employees should look beyond the technical tasks established in job descriptions and include additional activities that will later form the basis of performance evaluation. All important evaluation components should be addressed and defined for what needs to be done and to what degree of skill, competence, or quality it needs to be done.

Identify key job measures

Establish job Expectations and Standards - Clear goals and objectives are necessary for effective coaching and meaningful performance reviews. The successful implementation of the Performance Management System involves helping employees understand their job requirements and standards. Employees need to know what they're supposed to do and how well they're supposed to do it. When employees don't meet your expectations, it's often because you haven't made your expectations clear.

If an employee understands and agrees with the goals of the job and the organization, and is working with a supervisor who demonstrates confidence in him/her and provides appropriate feedback, the employee is most likely going to be motivated to succeed.

Measurements - As goals and measurements are set for your employees, you may find you need to measure different kinds of tasks.

The first is the easiest to measure—**tangible output**. Tangible work can be measured by the number of units produced, or some other easily recognized measurement. For example, you can measure the number of calls handled per employee or the number of bills paid per accounts payable clerk. Based on your overall production needs, you can determine how many units of production meet the "Successful" level, and how many meet the "Exceptional" level.

Observable work, on the other hand, describes how employees demonstrate their competencies and skills for duties that may not be quantifiable. To measure performance for these job duties, you will have to observe the related behaviors of the employee.

Added value is a tool used to define different levels of performance. For an employee to move from “Needs Improvement” to “Successful” to “Exceptional”, s/he needs to add to the value of the quality, quantity, accuracy, etc., of work. In other words, the greater the value of the employee’s contribution to the job, the higher their performance level. At the same time, as the performance level increases for an employee, the amount of supervision required for that employee decreases.

There are several approaches to defining observable measures:

Best Results

Let’s say an employee must conduct evaluations of their department’s programs. You can measure the number of evaluations performed. But what if the evaluations and recommendations are not productive in getting the improvements you are seeking? Instead of measuring the number of evaluations, you could measure the program improvement and increased output after six months. This would give you a measurement that will more accurately measure the success of the employee in the evaluation process.

Task Weighting

Another possible solution is to weigh the job duties of your employees according to how difficult they are to perform. If an employee performs various tasks that are difficult to measure, you could rate easy tasks with a low numerical weight, and more difficult tasks with a higher numerical weight. At the end of the appraisal period, you could compute the weighted numbers and compare them to the totals for other employees performing similar job duties to get a reasonable standard to measure individual performance.

Goals or Deadlines

For larger projects, you can break up the project into work modules and set a time limit for each module. Perform progress checks as the project develops. The success of your employees in meeting these deadlines indicates how well they’re performing.

Observation

Sometimes the only way to evaluate a particular job duty is to set aside time to observe the employee while performing that duty. These observations can be formal or informal, but must be scheduled. In a busy office, time goes so fast that it will be time to conduct a performance appraisal before you realize you have not specifically observed your employees.

Sampling

For jobs that require review of applications or forms to ensure that they are correctly completed, you may want to do some periodic sampling to discern whether employees are completing work correctly.

Monitoring and Customer Feedback

Many companies engage in a range of service monitoring activities. Customer service units often telephone-monitor employees for a set of behaviors defined for the job. Companies hire “mystery shoppers” to evaluate staff against specific criteria. Customer survey data and focus group results provide more information on performance.

Based on the criteria above, here are some examples of different types of measurements:

Tangible

- Will complete 40 reports by the end of the first quarter.
- Will respond to all inquiries within 24 hours.

Tangible and Observable

- Will design, test, and implement software application by June 1. Design will meet user specifications; testing will produce zero errors; implementation will be approved by users.
- Will complete 10 audits of college programs by year-end. All audits will be written clearly and to department format. Written audits will reflect full scope of review, with major negative findings prioritized with suggested remedies identified.

Observable

- Will consistently greet all visitors in a friendly manner, including smiling, having the visitor register, using the visitor’s name, asking the visitor the purpose of the visit, and directing the visitor to the proper support person. Will contact the support person and inform visitor of estimated wait time, if appropriate.

In summary, a tangible measurement can be counted or tracked. These measurements often involve quantity of work (productivity), timeliness of work (was it completed according to deadlines or responsiveness standards), accuracy (were there no errors), and completeness (all elements were finished), or combinations of all of these. An observable measurement may not show up in productivity reports or quality reports. An observable measure often requires judgment to assess – is the report complete, does it adequately specify corrective actions, have relationships between co-workers been supported, was knowledge shared. Even though observable measurements may require judgment to assess, the judgments are based on the descriptions of desired behaviors or competencies established in employee plans and used by

departments to determine how well work is done. These judgments represent the evidence of a year's observation of work performed.

Professional Development/Special Projects

There may be training opportunities and special projects that should be noted for the employee. These may include specialized training to improve and advance job skills, special projects, or education. Include measures such as how achievement will be determined, time lines, and the how well the goal should be accomplished.

The planning process is the most critical component of a fair and objective performance management system. If employees know up front what is expected of them, and if they receive on-going feedback about their performance and any changes in priorities for their work group, the evaluation process will generally be perceived as fair and objective.