

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BULLETIN

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NEW OPM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WEB SITE

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has a new web site devoted to information concerning employee performance management issues. It is located at the OPM web site <http://www.opm.gov/perform>. The material is divided into four sections:

- Performance Management Overview
- Resources by Topic
- What's New
- Additional Resources

The following is a brief synopsis of each section:

[Performance Management Overview:](#)

This section provides an overview of performance management including explanations of its five basic processes: planning, monitoring, developing, rating, and rewarding.

[Resources by Topics:](#)

A wealth of information can be found in this section including: OPM staff recommendations for selected readings; policy-related documents; publications written by the OPM staff on topics such as 360-degree assessment and pass/fail programs; articles from the OPM newsletter, Workforce Performance, and book reviews.

[What's New:](#)

This section is the place to find a complete copy of the most recent issue of the OPM newsletter, Workforce Performance, as well as information on hot topics and current events.

[Additional Resources:](#)

Here you'll find the very handy Guide to Legal Citations, Frequently Asked Questions, and Links to a variety of related web sites, such as the Merit Systems Protection Board, the General Accounting Office, and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government.



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Office of Personnel Management

The Federal Government's Human Resources Agency



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Performance management is the systematic process by which an agency involves its employees, as individuals and members of a group, in improving organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of agency mission and goals.



Employee performance management includes:

- **planning** work and setting expectations,
- continually **monitoring** performance,
- **developing** the capacity to perform,
- periodically **rating** performance in a summary fashion, and
- **rewarding** good performance.

The revisions made in 1995 to the Governmentwide performance appraisal and awards regulations support sound management principles. Great care was taken to ensure that the requirements those regulations establish would complement and not conflict with the kinds of activities and actions practiced in **effective organizations** as a matter of course.

Additional background information on performance management can be found in the following articles:

- [Chronology of Employee Performance Management in the Federal Government](#)
- [Setting the Stage for Performance Management Today](#)



In an effective organization, work is planned out in advance. Planning means setting performance expectations and goals for groups and individuals to channel their efforts toward achieving organizational objectives. Getting employees involved in the planning process will help them understand the goals of the organization, what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and how well it should be done.

The regulatory requirements for planning employees' performance include establishing the elements and standards of their performance appraisal plans. Performance elements and standards should be measurable, understandable, verifiable, equitable, and achievable. Through critical elements, employees are held accountable as individuals for work assignments or responsibilities. Employee performance plans should be flexible so that they can be adjusted for changing program objectives and work requirements. When used effectively, these plans can be beneficial working documents that are discussed often, and not merely paperwork that is filed in a drawer and seen only when ratings of record are required.



Monitoring

In an effective organization, assignments and projects are monitored continually. Monitoring well means consistently measuring performance and providing ongoing feedback to employees and work groups on their progress toward reaching their goals.

Regulatory requirements for monitoring performance include conducting progress reviews with employees where their performance is compared against their elements and standards. Ongoing monitoring provides the opportunity to check how well employees are meeting predetermined standards and to make changes to unrealistic or problematic standards. And by monitoring continually, unacceptable performance can be identified at any time during the appraisal period and assistance provided to address such performance rather than wait until the end of the period when summary rating levels are assigned.



Developing

In an effective organization, employee developmental needs are evaluated and addressed. Developing in this instance means increasing the capacity to perform through training, giving assignments that introduce new skills or higher levels of responsibility, improving work processes, or other methods. Providing employees with training and developmental opportunities encourages good performance, strengthens job-related skills and competencies, and helps employees keep up with changes in the workplace, such as the introduction of new technology.

Carrying out the processes of performance management provides an excellent opportunity to identify developmental needs. During planning and monitoring of work, deficiencies in performance become evident and can be addressed. Areas for improving good performance also stand out, and action can be taken to help successful employees improve even further.



Rating

From time to time, organizations find it useful to summarize employee performance. This can be helpful for looking at and comparing performance over time or among various employees. Organizations need to know who their best performers are.

Within the context of formal performance appraisal requirements, rating means evaluating employee or group performance against the elements and standards in an employee's performance plan and assigning a summary rating of record. The rating of record is assigned according to procedures included in the organization's appraisal program. It is based on work performed during an entire appraisal period. The rating of record has a bearing on various other personnel actions, such as granting within-grade pay increases and determining additional retention service credit in a reduction in force.

Note: Although group performance may have an impact on an employee's summary rating, a rating of record is assigned only to an individual, not to a group.



Rewarding

In an effective organization, rewards are used well. Rewarding means recognizing employees, individually and as members of groups, for their performance and acknowledging their contributions to the agency's mission. A basic principle of effective management is that all behavior is controlled by its consequences. Those consequences can and should be both formal and informal and both positive and negative.

Good performance is recognized without waiting for nominations for formal awards to be solicited. Recognition is an ongoing, natural part of day-to-day experience. A lot of the actions that reward good performance — like saying "Thank you" — don't require a specific regulatory authority. Nonetheless, awards regulations provide a broad range of forms that more formal rewards can take, such as cash, time off, and many nonmonetary items. The regulations also cover a variety of contributions that can be rewarded, from suggestions to group accomplishments.



Managing Performance Effectively. In effective organizations, managers and employees have been practicing good performance management naturally all their lives, executing each key component process well. Goals are set and work is planned routinely. Progress toward those goals is measured and employees get feedback. High standards are set, but care is also taken to develop the skills needed to reach them. Formal and informal rewards are used to recognize the behavior and results that accomplish the mission. All five component processes working together and supporting each other achieve natural, effective performance management.



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