

Right Brain Video, Inc.

Presents

Continuous Performance
Appraisal

“Coaching is the Key”

A Facilitator’s Guide

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Introduction

This facilitator's handbook is a review of the video ***Continuous Performance Appraisal***. It follows the outline of the video so that you can easily review the major sections and have more information to share with your viewers. It is designed to help you, the facilitator, to better understand and to guide managers and employees through a process that will be rewarding to them and to the organization.

Humor is a useful and powerful tool. It can help establish and convey new information. Changing old practices and establishing new ones can be a little scary and often risky. With its humorous context, ***Continuous Performance Appraisal*** provides a positive, palatable approach to making such a transition. Ultimately, the result will be a more productive, more efficient, and more enjoyable organization.

Our video features Harry Anderson, popular star of TV's *Night Court* and *Dave's World*. His humorous and enlightening approach to serious situations helps focus on unresolved opportunities and identifies solutions without destroying trust. Our goal is to bring humorous solutions to complicated problems and allow people to contribute in a positive way to a winning solution.

Using This Video

We recommend following these steps to get the most from this video.

Preview the video

Watch it yourself. Make note of any practices, both positive and negative, that you recognize happening in your organization. Be prepared to discuss these practices.

Plan the meeting

Consider how you will introduce the video. Why do you want to show it? Do you want the group to note any unique behaviors they recognize being practiced?

Invite your manager. This will validate that your leadership style supports positive team behaviors.

Plan enough time for the meeting.

Discussing the video after it is viewed should invite the most active and responsive session you might have as a group. Some opening discussion questions might include: What did you like best and least about the video? Share some observations about the video. Identify actions that can be implemented to strengthen performance appraisal procedures within our team.

Hold the meeting

Reap the benefits

Watch what happens. Listen to what the “grapevine” says about the video and its techniques. Identify where the opportunities for improvement are in your work unit. Implement the methods presented in *Continuous Performance Appraisal*.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Using This Video	4
What is the Continuous	7
Who Will Benefit?	7
Step 1: Preparation	9
1. Involve the Employee	9
2. Employees Define Their Performance Appraisal	9
3. Manager Gathers Data	9
4. Gathering Information Takes Time	9
Step 2: The Appraisal Meeting	11
1. Putting the Employee at Ease	11
2. Listening to the Employee	11
3. Agree on Mutual Goals and Objectives	11
Step 3: The Follow-Through	13
1. Evaluate Employees in Their Environment	13
2. Communicate Positive Feedback Regularly	13
3. Coaching is the Key	13
Conclusion	15
Preparation	15
The Appraisal Meeting	15
The Follow-Through	15
Right Brain Video, Inc.	16

What is the *Continuous Performance Appraisal*?

The *Continuous Performance Appraisal* is a process that enables the employee and the manager to develop and *continually improve on-the-job* performance. This process assists the employee and manager in defining agreed upon goals, ideas, and objectives. It is called “continuous” because the *follow-through* portion of one Performance Appraisal leads directly into the *preparation* portion of the next one. This way, the *Continuous Performance Appraisal* becomes a tool for year-round performance improvement!

Who Will Benefit?

As Harry Anderson states in the video, using the *Continuous Performance Appraisal* in your organization will benefit the employee, the manager, and ultimately the business itself. By incorporating this process, you will be encouraging employees to become more involved in their careers while helping them to streamline their goals to those of the company.

The Continuous Performance Appraisal

Preparation

1. *Involve the Employee*
2. *Gather Information*

The Appraisal Meeting

1. *Put the Employee at Ease*
2. *Be Positive and Listen*
3. *Agree on Mutual Goals*

Follow-through

1. *Regular, Positive Feedback*
2. *Coaching is the Key*

Step 1: Preparation

To be successful using the *Continuous Performance Appraisal*, the manager must be prepared. This involves the following steps.

1. Involve the Employee

Agree on a time and place for the Appraisal meeting at least 30 days in advance. This gives the employees time to prepare their ideas, goals, and objectives. Offer a written guide for tasks that are considered valuable in the review process. These could include existing performance documentation (e.g., sales figures) and an employee self-evaluation (if applicable) as a road map, measuring their current performance against their earlier goals. By having the employees do their own self-appraisals, you encourage them to focus on their past performance and future expectations.

2. Employees Define Their Performance Appraisal

Employees should bring their written ideas to their Performance Appraisal meeting. As mentioned earlier, it will help the employees if they have guidelines to write to, such as their previous appraisal, performance records, and any other valuable and measurable documentation. Not limiting their evaluation criteria is very important. Just as there are no dumb questions, bringing evaluation criteria to a meeting such as this should be looked upon as positive. Strive for open and honest communication.

3. Manager Gathers Data

The manager, like the employee, is also tasked with documenting information that will be useful in the employee's *Continuous Performance Appraisal*. By talking to the employee's co-workers and supervisors, and by using past

performance data, customer comment sheets (if applicable), and any other tangible contributions, the manager can construct where the employee's strengths and weaknesses lie.

4. Gathering Information Takes Time

The manager should plan sufficient time to gather employee information. Poor planning can result in short-changing the information gathering process. The manager's efforts and commitment to this important task will demonstrate to employees a commitment to their growth and performance.

Questions: Preparation

1. What are some good sources of employee performance information in your organization?
2. Does your organization have a written Performance Appraisal form? If so, are there areas where it can improved?
3. What are the benefits of thorough Performance Appraisal *preparation*? How can you help to communicate these benefits to employees and managers?

Step 2: The Appraisal Meeting

Let's face it, Harry Anderson puts it best when he says that the employees will be more than a little nervous! Remember—this may be the most important meeting of the year for the employee, and probably the most nerve-racking as well. An agenda is a good tool to work from as long as the employee and manager have an opportunity to contribute and agree upon it before the meeting.

1. Putting the Employee at Ease

Besides greeting the employee on time, there are several things a manager can do to help set up a relaxing and positive environment. Hold the meeting in a comfortable working area—a place where ideas can be exchanged and tension can be reduced. If possible, hold the meeting in an informal, quiet area, away from outside interruptions. Demonstrate to the employees that their time is important and this meeting has your undivided attention. Offer beverages or other courtesies as gestures that can help settle nerves and ease tension.

2. Listening to the Employee

Managers can set the tone of the meeting as positive, interactive, and beneficial only if they demonstrate that they are willing to listen to the employee. In fact, experts recommend that the manager should be listening up to 70 percent of the time! By demonstrating to the employee that they are good listeners, managers help employees to expand their goals and objectives. Open-ended questions to the employee are a good way to stimulate and build on ideas and thoughts.

3. Agree on Mutual Goals and Objectives

The collaborative effort of the manager and employee will

result in ideas, goals, and objectives that should be recorded for future reference. This then becomes the employee's permanent record and a tool by which to gauge performance, expectations, and aspirations for career advancement. This document of goals and objectives empowers the employees and assists in visualizing the steps necessary to fulfill their *Continuous Performance Appraisal*. By recording these objectives, the employee and the manager can refer back to them for periodic appraisal. It's especially important that the goals be *mutually* agreed upon. Remember—employees are more likely to accomplish goals when they have been involved with their creation.

Questions: Appraisal Meeting

1. Is there an informal, quiet area in your organization that would provide a positive environment for the Performance Appraisal meeting? If not, could one be created? What are other alternatives?
2. Evaluate your own listening skills during a Performance Appraisal meeting. Do you listen 70% of the time? Is there room for improvement? What are some of the benefits of good listening skills?
3. Why should goals be mutually agreed upon?
4. Do you have a good system for recording Performance Appraisal meeting agreements? How can you create one, or improve upon the one you have? Why should agreements be recorded?

Step 3: The Follow-Through

Here is where the *Continuous Performance Appraisal* really kicks into gear! Now that the employee and manager have documented the employee's goals and objectives, the day-to-day activities can more closely follow the agreed upon plan. The manager now has more tools with which to assist the employees in reaching their goals, as well as the opportunity to be more available to them in their work.

1. Evaluate Employees in Their Environment

By being out among the work force, managers can observe, evaluate, and offer positive communication much more readily. Managers who reinforce employee goals and performance will learn that this positive feedback stimulates growth and trust between employees and managers. Instead of simply correcting or criticizing, the manager can now *coach* employees to come up with solutions on their own!

2. Communicate Positive Feedback Regularly

As difficult challenges arise, and they always do, a more positive, trusting working relationship between the employee and the manager will help to create working solutions to these situations. It can never be stressed enough—employees need regular, positive feedback on how they are doing!

3. Coaching is the Key

This is probably the most important step—at least for the manager—as this requires the manager to take a more active role with the employees. With feedback from day-to-day events, the manager can now assist the employees by providing regular feedback and encouragement on

their tasks, projects, or performance. While it is not necessary to “shadow” employees, developing a give-and-take positive environment will encourage employees to trust and seek out guidance and help from their manager. This is also an excellent way for the manager to “catch the employees doing something right!” The manager should also be reinforcing the goals and objectives agreed upon in the Performance Appraisal meeting. **Remember, praise when possible, coach when necessary!**

Questions: Follow-Through

1. Monitor your own feedback: Does it tend to be negative and critical, or do you praise when possible?
2. What opportunities do you have for observing your employees on the job? Do you exercise these opportunities?
3. Do you understand the difference between correcting an employee’s behavior and *coaching*? Explain the difference, and why *coaching* is preferable.

Conclusion

Basically, the *Continuous Performance Appraisal—Coaching is the Key* can be divided into three major sections:

Preparation

Involve the employee well in advance. Provide at least 30 days for employees to develop their own performance appraisal. Agree on a time and place to meet. Request that employees bring their self-appraisal and their goals and objectives for the coming appraisal period.

Gather information. To make an accurate assessment of employees, the manager must spend sufficient time gathering the data required to evaluate the performance of the employee. By having detailed information, the manager will be able to more correctly gauge how employees are doing compared with their goals and objectives. Remember, this information can come from co-workers, other supervisors, customer comment sheets and letters, and other performance documentation. Don't forget another useful tool: actually *observing* the employee on the job, as Harry and Byron were doing!

The Appraisal Meeting

Aside from being on time (and letting the employee into the office!), managers should set the tone early for employees. This will help them to feel more relaxed and allow them the confidence to be open and focused on this important meeting. Hold the meeting in a comfortable place, away from distractions. Managers should allow plenty of time, up to 1 1/2 hours for this type of meeting. Managers should ***listen, listen, and listen some more!*** Document all agreed upon goals and objectives. Note any tasks that are dependent on the manager to fulfill. Keep this meeting a *positive* one!

The Follow-Through

The most active part of the *Continuous Performance Appraisal* for the manager (and potentially the most productive) is the follow-through. The *Continuous Performance Appraisal* is a winning, fulfilling process for the employee, manager, and the company, but every aspect must be implemented for all to reap its rewards! Managers now have new tools with which to evaluate the employee. With this process, managers can more successfully evaluate their employees, communicate positive feedback, instill more trust and communication, and—above all—**praise when possible, coach when necessary!**

Right Brain Video, Inc.

With headquarters in Seattle, Washington, Right Brain Video, Inc. was formed as a corporation in July, 1994. Bill Stainton and David Wood, founders, have collectively over 25 years of experience in the fields of management, television production, entertainment, and performance. Their first video, *Office Politics: Not Necessarily the Truth*, won the **1995 Telly Award for Best Training Video**. Other titles in the RBV catalog include *Hiring the Best!*, which takes the guesswork out of the hiring process; and *Exceeding Expectations!*, a Customer Service guide for creating true customer loyalty. Right Brain Video's goal is to produce humorous, up-to-date training videos and related products.

Notes

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