

Quick Guide: How To Conduct Effective Appraisals

The formal appraisal is a manager's golden opportunity to talk to members of their team about their performance (past, present and future) and to align performance objectives with the direction of the business. But many staff, see it as not worth their while. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you and your appraisee get the most from the appraisal process:

1. **Make sure you have had your own appraisal first.** You can then better prepare your team's appraisals: you will know your own objectives and where the business is going, and so cascade these to your team.
2. **Prepare well!** Gather your information: your performance management notes from throughout the year; their up to date job description; their [competency framework](#); copies of the last review; other people's feedback, if appropriate.
3. **Draft an agenda** after comparing the appraisee's completed form with your own evidence. If necessary meet or speak to anyone who should provide input on your appraisee's performance or other issues to be raised during the meeting.
4. **Set draft objectives** for the appraisee which will meet the needs of the business and your department's objectives. These objectives are designed to be the focus of what you want the person to achieve over the coming year.
5. **Encourage your team member** to set at least two objectives for themselves before they get to the meeting. This helps you see the direction they want to go in and allows them to take more responsibility for their own development.
6. **Conduct the formal meeting in three stages:** review past performance (briefly only!); agree future performance objectives; consider and agree training and development needs.
7. **Listen actively:** pay attention and avoid interrupting. Take notes, show interest, maintain eye contact, and remain calm! Above all, avoid **Labelling** – putting an appraisee into a category before hearing all the evidence.
8. **Build in an "open forum"** for your appraisee to raise anything not already on your agenda. But be prepared to postpone this if you cannot deal with it straight away or if you need to check anything.
9. **Schedule a formal mini-review** for six months' time to encourage action, even if you don't usually do this: goal posts move, people change and business needs move on.
10. **Remember that appraisal is an on-going process.** Don't file it all away in your bottom drawer until next year: it is a working document that is in use all year round.

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