

2.3: Performance Appraisal and Feedback

Most companies engage in the traditional performance appraisal system where the employee's performance is measured on some prescribed criteria. The purpose of performance appraisals is generally to provide feedback to the employee on his or her performance in order to correct any deficiencies and to create increased opportunities. Employees are not always satisfied with the performance appraisal process. However, some form of assessment is needed to provide feedback for improvement. Recognition of performance levels can serve to motivate workers toward higher levels of performance or more creative solutions to problems.

Some companies have tied performance appraisals to sustainability performance. Identification of performance dimensions is an important first step in the process. Performance criteria should be directly tied to business goals and objectives. Measures should be meaningful and controllable. Since one of the sustainable organization's goals is to pursue triple bottom line performance, performance appraisal dimensions should reflect the importance of sustainability in the criteria. Management can weight the various economic, social, and environmental criteria higher than other criteria in order to indicate the importance of sustainability to the employee. Performance management should hold managers accountable for meeting sustainability goals through employees.

Trait, behavioral, and outcome appraisal instruments can be altered to include sustainability criteria. Trait appraisal instruments ask the supervisor to make judgments about characteristics of the employee. Typical traits are reliability, energy, loyalty, and decisiveness. Organizations can add traits such as efficient, honesty, or communicative to depict traits the company would like to see employees exhibit. Behavioral appraisal instruments are developed to assess workers' behaviors, such as ability to work well with others, promptness, and development of personal skills. Sustainable examples might be working toward reducing waste or consciously using techniques that reduce negative social impacts. Finally, outcome appraisal instruments assess results. In addition to total sales or number of products produced, sustainable companies can assess energy usage, amount of miles saved on transportation, or recycling levels.

In line with other areas of human resources that suggest online or Web applications, performance appraisals are no different. Organizations can use Web-based performance appraisal software, such as Halogen eAppraisal Retrieved January 28, 2009, from <http://www.halogensoftware.com> or EmpXtrack, Retrieved January 28, 2009, from <http://www.empxtrack.com/performance-management-system> to prevent excess use of paper products and to increase transparency of the process.

Essential to the success of performance appraisal systems on sustainable performance is the cooperation and approval of the employees. The employee must feel that the assessment process will lead to the improvement of the overall sustainability of the company. The need for employee buy-in may require the company to engage in capacity-building activities. One consulting firm suggests capacity-building activities such as providing access to various databases, libraries, or Web sites; creating publications; conducting training; providing consultation; coordinating alliances; and implementing team-building tasks. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from www.jeanpaulconsult.com/

This page titled [2.3: Performance Appraisal and Feedback](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Anonymous](#).