

THE MANAGING YOUR APPRAISAL POCKETBOOK

By Max A. Eggert

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

This Pocketbook is dedicated to Steve Dorian at P&O Services, Michele Jackson at TAB (NSW), Rohanne Young at AMSA and Elizabeth Dunbavan at Booz Allen & Hamilton without whom my first consulting year in Australia would have been very different indeed!

“An easily read and understood guide, packed with information and tips which will help readers achieve the best results from their appraisal interview.” **Katie M. M. Rae, Education and Development Manager, Royal College of Nursing Institute, Scotland**

“An excellent and handy tool. Covers the whole appraisal process and can be used either as a step-by-step guide or for referencing particular aspects. Just what busy managers need - whether they are appraising or being appraised.” **Chris Bunker, Manpower, Careers & Performance Development Manager, Cathay Pacific Airways, Hong Kong**

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PERFORMANCE & MEASUREMENT

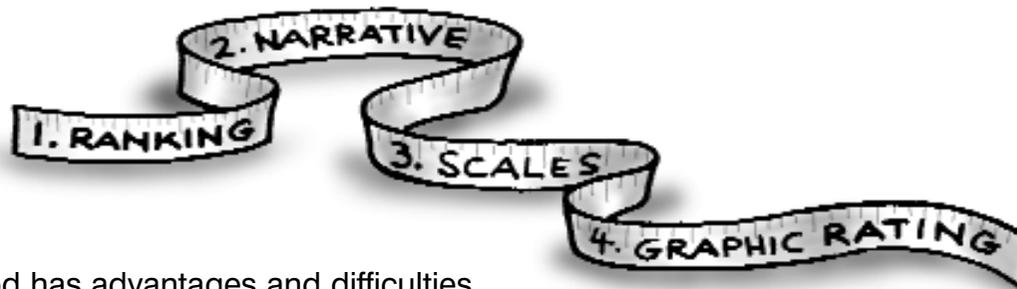


METHODS OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Measuring performance is not easy; so many factors are involved. It would be wonderful if there were standard rules, gauges or measures for performance but unfortunately no such instruments are available.

However, there are some excellent methods of measurement and these include:

1. Ranking
2. Narrative
3. Scales
4. Graphic rating



Note: Each method has advantages and difficulties.

There is no one perfect system. Your appraisal will depend on the style of your organisation, working procedures and environment and on your product or service.

Remember, however imperfect the system, performance appraisal is better than no feedback at all.

PERFORMANCE & MEASUREMENT



METHODS

1. RANKING

A simple system. Each person is compared with others in the team on a criterion and given a place/rank - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. Eg: 5 people (Messrs Brown, Green, Black, White, Grey) are assessed on: speed of work, quality of work, and co-operativeness. If on speed of work Mr Brown was ranked better than Mr Green who was better than Mr Black who was better than Mr White who was better than Mr Grey, the chart would look like this:

Speed of work			Speed	
1st	Mr Brown		Brown	1
2nd	Mr Green	<i>or like this</i>	Green	2
3rd	Mr Black		Black	3
4th	Mr White		White	4
5th	Mr Grey		Grey	5

If we include rankings on quality and co-operativeness, the full picture could then be:

	Speed	Quality	Co-operativeness	Total
Brown	1	3	3	7
Green	2	1	5	8
Black	3	2	1	6
White	4	5	2	11
Grey	5	4	4	13

PERFORMANCE & MEASUREMENT



METHODS

1. RANKING CONTD...

The chart on page 43 shows that whilst Mr Green is excellent in quality (1) and good on speed (2) he is not that co-operative (5). Now compare each person's performance by adding each person's scores for each of the 3 criteria (Total column):

Mr Brown	7
Mr Green	8
Mr Black	6
Mr White	11
Mr Grey	13

The best employee overall is the one with the lowest score. Second best has the next lowest score and so on. The final rankings are:

1st	Mr Black
2nd	Mr Brown
3rd	Mr Green
4th	Mr White
5th	Mr Grey

In appraisal the following observations might be made:

Mr Black: Good overall performance but could work a little more quickly, as Mr Brown does.

Mr Green: Good speed/output but need for discussion about lack of co-operativeness.

Mr Grey: Needs considerable help because not as good as his colleagues in all 3 areas. (NB: His performance may be acceptable in absolute standards, even though he is last compared with his colleagues. It certainly does not mean he should be disciplined for poor performance.)

PERFORMANCE & MEASUREMENT

METHODS

2. NARRATIVE

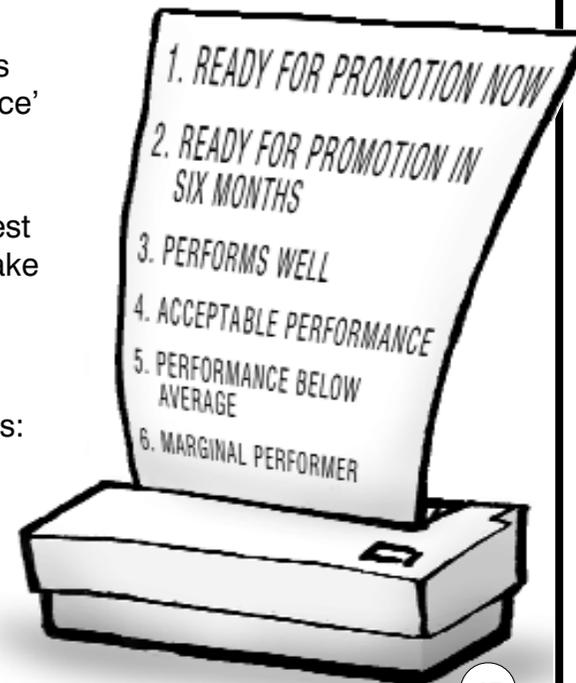
Here your manager writes a brief essay about your year's performance - a 'state of play' report or 'internal reference' for you. These are hard to do, take ages to write and so are not popular.

Narrative appraisal is also difficult to assess as in its purest form no mark is given and it is hard for an outsider to make an accurate assessment of the individual within the total context of the job.

Essays can conclude with an overall grading/comment, as our printout here shows:

This appraisal method is the most subjective of all since your manager selects those aspects of your performance he/she thinks appropriate.

You may have worked hard and successfully in one area but this could be overlooked. Added to this, not all managers can express themselves well on paper - hence narrative quality/value are likely to be marginal.



PERFORMANCE & MEASUREMENT



METHODS

3. SCALES

Important parts of your job are given a scale and your performance is given a score.
(Note, this is not the same as ranking your performance.)

For example, your appraisal form could look like this with 1 being good and 6 being poor:

Speed of work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Quality of work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
Team attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	6

PERFORMANCE & MEASUREMENT



METHODS

4. GRAPHIC RATING

If, for example, your job requires you to deal with people, a Behavioural Criteria Rating Scale could look like this with the criteria and rating definitions:

Criteria	Dealing with people.	
Rating definition	Excellent	Is popular. People seek out his/her company. Easy conversationalist. Attentive and speaks well at meetings.
	Average	Comfortable with others. Finds something to say when conversation lulls. Will exchange information.
	Poor	Prefers own company. Frequently lost for words. Doesn't initiate conversations. Appears embarrassed when speaking in front of others.

While very fair, this system entails a huge task to describe all the major components of a job in this way. Each job has its own appraisal manual and consequently is not the most popular form of assessment or appraisal.

PERFORMANCE & MEASUREMENT

MEASUREMENT PITFALLS



Making judgements about people is not easy; much can go wrong.

Whilst your manager has probably been trained in assessment it is important you are aware of the possible difficulties and help your manager avoid them.

It is in everybody's interest to get this right because all the interested parties have something to gain from a correct judgement - most of all you!

The main potential dangers are:

1. The Halo effect
2. The Horns effect
3. High/low standards
4. Centralism
5. Bias and preference
6. Stereotyping
7. Prejudice
8. Recency
9. Golden moments
10. The big bang

About the Author

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Max is a management psychologist specialising in assisting individuals reach their maximum potential. Besides being retained by major international corporations as coach, mentor and strategist, he has been interviewed frequently on TV, radio and in the print media both in Australia and in Europe.

Max has degrees in psychology, industrial relations and theology. He has fifteen books in print in twelve languages, one of which is a standard text and two are frequently in the ten best business books. Several of his books are on the recommended reading lists of Sydney, London, Harvard, Westminster and Sussex Universities.



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