



FROM THE EDITOR . . .

NOTICE

The Division of Professional Relations Annual Business Meeting will be held on Monday, August 29, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Florentine Room of the Pick-Congress Hotel, Chicago. This will be followed at 5:30 by our ever popular Social Hour (Board Room, Pick-Congress).

Chicago

In addition to the meetings noted above, I call your attention to the two symposia we will be presenting at the Chicago ACS meeting. The first, "Chemical Industry Career Opportunities for B.S. Chemists," will be held on Monday morning, August 29, at 9:00 p.m., in the Florentine Room of the Pick-Congress Hotel.

The other symposium, "Responsibility to Whom? The Professional's Dilemma," will present four thinking chemists grappling with an exceptionally important current concern. Half of the scheduled time has been set aside for general discussion and audience comments. This symposium will be presented on Tuesday evening, August 30, at 8:00 p.m., in the Windsor Room of the Pick-Congress. Yours truly will be presiding, and the panel will include people with industrial, government and academic backgrounds. This should be a good opportunity for a stimulating evening, so bring your friends.

Contents

The papers in this issue were originally presented at our symposium on performance appraisal, held at New Orleans earlier this year and chaired by Stan Drigot. Comments are welcome.

-Dennis Chamot

THE EFFECTIVE
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

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The first appraisal interview is recorded in Genesis. It was conducted in the Garden of Eden, a one-sided effort by God when Adam and Eve didn't meet their responsibilities and the boss's performance expectations. Maybe this was also the first removal interview. Can't you just hear Adam saying something like "the forbidden fruit responsibility wasn't properly stressed"?

From the same reference, this time Exodus, Moses really didn't have an appraisal interview after leading the tribes toward the Promised Land. He did, however, have a number of counseling interviews and was probably defensive about how long it was taking him to reach his objective. But then again 40 years is a long time to reach an objective.

Little was written about performance appraisal until the 20th Century. With the development of formal managerial structures, the appraisal became a part of organizational life. People did want to know how they stood in the boss's eyes. And boy did he tell them! In a strictly one-way monologue.

To add dignity and authority to the appraisal process, personnel people kept the printing presses humming, forms were churned out in every color, multi-page and multi-question, all designed to record what the boss was telling the employe. The employe played his role as a listener. If the boss got around to asking a question, the employe probably couldn't verbalize his answer. And if he could answer, the boss was probably sufficiently overwrought at having to go through the evaluation process in the first place that he didn't listen anyway. And that is about where we were in the early 1950's.

Peter Drucker was one of the earliest to suggest input from the subordinate. He took the bold step to suggest that the subordinate and his manager work together on short-term objectives.

It was in 1957 that Douglas McGregor published his famous article, "An Uneasy Look at Performance Appraisal." McGregor described the practice of the time. The appraisal was approached with apprehension, more than likely the employe was told rather than questioned, and the goal setting process was uni-

lateral. Once having established the notion that the subordinate bears a major responsibility as part of the appraisal process, much of the work since then has been refinement and tuning of McGregor's basic concepts.

This isn't to say that performance appraisal techniques have not continued to receive a great deal of attention. An article in the Harvard Business Review in 1975 was entitled, "Performance Appraisal: Useful But Still Resisted," and in 1976, one entitled, "Appraisal of What Performance?". And it is likely that consultants, behavioral scientists and personnel people will always have plenty of work as long as there are performance appraisals to discuss, alter and improve.

But let us get on with the topic. I considered entitling my remarks, "The Appraisal Interview—Chore or Opportunity." Because no matter how much anxiety accompanies the interview, after a well done appraisal, both parties will have a better understanding of their relationship, with enhanced opportunities for organizational contribution.

Now the appraisal is really no more than a planned conversation. In general terms, it covers three questions: What's my job? How am I doing? Where am I going? Viewed another way, we could envision it as being examinations of *past*, *present* and the *future*—review of past accomplishments, discussion of present performance, and setting future objectives.

Why do we have an appraisal interview? In Hercules, all of these may enter into any one given interview, but perhaps the interviewer has one or two purposes he wishes to emphasize, including a discussion of performance level and progress toward objectives, establishing new objectives, counseling, reviewing of the reward system and discussing the individual's career interests.

Before I suggest an outline, let me list what makes for an effective interview: A good interview should be preceded by preparation on both sides; it should be characterized by the feeling of trust and security present throughout the year in the work relationship. Naturally, if the work relationship during the rest of the year lacks the trust, the two-hour interview will not establish it like a magic wand. And

the manager should assure a free idea exchange by not talking too much, by allowing adequate time for listening. Both sides should be open-minded, ready to adjust their thinking as new facts are provided by the other party. The interview should be directed toward a constructive result; it should be concluded with an action plan and a commitment by both parties to carry out the plan.

Let us list the steps to follow for a good appraisal.

The superior should provide adequate notice prior to the interview so that *both* parties may prepare for this important activity. To have an appraisal sprung on a subordinate is both discourteous and counterproductive.

Second, it is the responsibility of the superior to establish the proper climate. He should choose an appropriate setting for the interview—a place which is quiet and one in which the interview can be conducted without interruption. The atmosphere should be pleasant, but workmanlike. After all, the interview is not a bull session, but serious business. It should open with an agreement on the purpose of the interview so that both parties can work toward this common purpose.

Before any discussion of performance, it is appropriate to agree upon the definition of the employe's job, including responsibilities and the amount of authority. In terms of the job itself, standards of performance and the expected results should be a part of the definition.

Next should be achievement of goals. The goals agreed upon at the last review should be discussed in terms of the quality and timeliness of goal achievement. There might be a tendency to dwell upon goals not achieved, but equally important are those instances in which goals are exceeded.

In a goals-oriented interview, it is possible for the employe to understand his score on every hole, but not have a clear idea of how he did over the whole course. An understanding, therefore, of overall performance level as viewed by the manager is important.

At this point we turn away from the present and look to the future to establish new goals.

This is clearly one of the most important parts of the process. It is at this time that the superior should share some of his own goals with that of his subordinate so that subordinate's role in achieving the organizational objectives can be understood and mapped out. Obviously, the number of new goals will depend upon the complexity and scope of the individual topics discussed. I recommend three to five job goals, plus one to two personal development goals. Note the significance of listing a personal development goal along side a job or organizational goal. My view is that personal development is as important as the job itself. Personal development goals can be related to the correction of a serious weakness in behavior or technical skill or can be directed toward improving the employe's potential for promotion. When listing goals, an order of priority is important and an action plan for achieving goals is, of course, vital.

The last step is the responsibility of the superior alone, and that is to provide the motivation for goal achievement and improved performance. It may be appropriate for the manager to review the reward system. He should make sure that his subordinate knows the use to which information developed in the interview will be put. He should stress the benefits to the subordinate in achieving the necessary results. And these benefits must be meaningful to the subordinate. It may be a pay increase, promotion or recognition. The manner in which the interview has been conducted certainly will have a profound impact on the subordinate's motivation. If the subordinate sees the job as a cooperative effort, one into which he has had an input, if there is evidence of concern on the part of his boss, then we would expect job motivation to follow.

Thus, this is the outline that I would recommend for the performance appraisal interview:

- Prepare — both sides
- Establish climate and purpose
- Define job content
- List goals achieved
- Discuss overall performance
- Establish future goals and how they will

be met

- Set the climate to motivate

My interest in this subject is very high. I am convinced from my experience that effective manager/subordinate communication is the key to organizational effectiveness and employe satisfaction.

If handled in a perfunctory manner with little regard for the employe's input to the planning process, the interview will result in demotivation and reduced work effectiveness. But if done with concern and preparation and if the employe perceives the sincere interest of his boss, then the result will be motivation and commitment to objectives.

Who knows, if Douglas McGregor had come along earlier, maybe Adam and Eve would still be in the garden.

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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN ACADEMY

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The title of this talk may be somewhat misleading since performance appraisal is not formally recognized as such in academe. Performance appraisal has been defined as a formal rating of how an individual has handled his or her job duties during a given period of time.

Although academic persons always acknowledge that they are judged by their peers, and that any scholar can easily distinguish between good research and bad research or between good teaching and poor teaching, these claims

only serve to disguise the fact that there is no coherent system for evaluating job performance in colleges and universities.

The first step of any performance appraisal is the definition of the goals and objectives of the job. Although these may vary depending upon whether the establishment is a college or university, there is no guarantee that even if defined these goals would be adhered to. For example, the goals of the university where I work are stated in the handbook for faculty and administration as follows: "The essential requisite to membership and advancement in one of the University's faculties is a commitment both to the discovery and communication of knowledge . . . A member of a faculty should be interested in students, desirous of associating and communicating with them, and he or she should be possessed of the temperament and

ability to do this successfully . . . Thus a broad human concern for youth and a desire to stimulate and participate in the learning process of those persons with whom he or she comes in association are of great importance in assessing the potential qualification of an individual for appointment and promotion . . .

"The concern of those responsible for evaluating faculty performance is . . . with an individual's growth of intellectual power and his or her ability to communicate new knowledge and insights to students of whatever degree of maturity, as well as to the scholarly community beyond the University . . .

"Publication and other performances which display discriminating judgment, imaginative insight and breadth of scholarship weigh heavily in assessing the competence of an individual. Quantity of scholarly publication

is of much less weight than is the quality of the scholar's study and research efforts. Appropriate participation in the activities of scholarly and professional societies and some external recognition of qualifications and attainments are likewise elements in assessing the merit of appointments and promotions. . .

"Formal faculty appointments at the rank of assistant professor and above are made by the Trustees on the recommendation of the President; recommendations for such appointments and promotions are usually initiated within the departments of instruction, with the department making its recommendations known to the dean of the appropriate faculty. Each separate faculty has its own personnel panel or committee. If the dean and personnel panel fail to approve the recommendation, it is forwarded to the Provost's Staff Conference where a final decision is made. If either the dean or the personnel panel fails to approve the recommendation, the matter is further discussed with the department, which may withdraw the recommendation or request that it be sent to the Provost's Staff Conference. All dissenting opinion must be made available to the Provost's Staff Conference.

"A high degree of consultation within departments is standard practice at the University. Some departments have standing personnel committees."

As may be observed, goals are stated but, since they are far from specific, their interpretation may be difficult. Therefore, the second step of the performance appraisal -- appropriate means to measure individual performance -- is lacking in the academic community.

Performance in research should be based on quality rather than quantity, and this is specifically mentioned in the handbook. However, it is much easier to count papers than to assess their quality, especially when the research is not in the same field as the person doing the evaluation. Outside evaluations, although potentially useful, can be easily manipulated. As one gets to know other workers in the field, it is usually easy to find some who will think the research is great because it resembles their own. A famous ex-supervisor or mentor, if willing to give a good recommendation, will carry a lot of weight with any committee. Very rarely will a promotion committee consist of persons who can analyze the candidate's research thoroughly themselves. Therefore, much of this evaluation is based on hearsay, on another scholar's word or opinion. And as we all know, scholars are human, too.

More recently, teaching ability has also been emphasized, although in my university nobody will get promoted for good teaching. Good teaching is supposedly one of the things to be considered. Teaching evaluation depends solely on students' opinions, derived either from questionnaires or letters. Unfortunately in this case also, the evaluation is not totally objective since the situation contains a possible conflict of interest.

Recently I have read several articles on performance appraisal of teaching, and although these articles admit that it is not an easy job to evaluate teaching, they seem to indicate that good questionnaires are able to give consistent results. This is good news, but such questionnaires are not readily available in all schools or universities.

Lastly, service to the university is recognized as a relevant factor in the evaluation of a faculty member. However, this factor appears

to be important only to administrators such as the dean. Most personnel committees ignore it, and others consider it a negative factor. It is well known that junior persons are often heavily loaded with administrative and teaching duties. These individuals are often the ones who do not get tenure. They become so heavily involved with these duties that their scholarship begins to suffer -- no publications, no promotion.

This brings us to the third step in the appraisal review -- evaluation by the supervisor. Who is the supervisor in the case of a young faculty member? Remember that this point was left vague in the handbook, "Those responsible for evaluating faculty performance" was the term used. Who are they, and why don't they come out of the closet when a junior faculty member is not spending his or her time wisely? In principle, the chairman of the department should be the one to help. However, he or she is the villain in most cases because it is his or her job to see that certain duties are carried out.

You will seldom see a departmental chairman tell an assistant professor he is working too hard for the department. On the other hand, if the junior faculty member spends most of his or her time in scholarly pursuits and in getting well known by the scholars whose recommendations count, they will at the time of promotion be in a better position even if their teaching has been poor and their service to the department nil.

The supervisor is invisible in academic situations, so the last step of an appraisal review -- discussing the supervisor's rating with the individual in question -- never occurs. The discussion in this case is simply good-bye, you haven't met the criteria for tenure.

The lack of a supervisory authority is even more critical in tenured cases. This has given rise to the rumor that most tenured professors no longer work at their jobs. Although I do not

believe this to be true in most cases, I think we all need to be reminded at one time or another of what our job really is and how we could accomplish it better. Self-criticism and self-evaluation is an extremely difficult process even when one attempts it, and most persons are not even aware of it.

As I stated at the beginning, performance appraisal in academy is a nonexistent process. Decisions to promote and to award tenure are necessarily based on impressions rather than facts. The first thing that could be done to improve the situation would be to require colleges and universities to state their goals clearly and list them in order of importance. Once those are known, the administration should make sure that chairmen and personnel panels subscribe to the same goals. Then a concrete system should be established to evaluate the job performance of all faculty members. This is not easy but could be done.

The lack of supervisory planning and proper utilization of the faculty has created an impossible situation for young faculty members. As tenured positions become scarcer, younger faculty members are very concerned about their future. They find it difficult to know what they should be doing to get promoted. They attempt to publish frantically. They try to get favorable student reports by giving out good grades and requiring little in return. They will try every conceivable means of promoting themselves, often at the expense of doing a thoroughly scholarly job. Older faculty members tend to encourage those frantic efforts by expecting more from these young persons than they could do themselves, and by setting impossibly high standards. The situation is not a healthy one and unless universities and colleges want to populate themselves with a totally neurotic faculty, more attention should be paid to performance appraisals as they relate to tenure and promotion in academic circles.

EVALUATION PLAN FOR RESEARCH POSITIONS AND INCUMBENTS

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Please note the title carefully -- specifically, the words "Evaluation Plan." I wish to refer to it later to emphasize a misconception about the plan amongst some of our own scientists.

Previous to our current Evaluation Plan, very serious problems were experienced in the classification of the research scientists. One of the major problems was the inability to recognize outstanding researchers and retain them as researchers. Individual research scientists were promoted only to limited grade levels. Beyond this point, promotion could normally be gained only through the assumption of administrative functions. The results was that outstanding researchers were encumbered with administrative duties in order to keep them in the Agricultural Research Service.

For many years prior to the initiation of this Plan, salary levels for research scientists were established on the basis of written classification standards issued by the Civil Service Commission. These standards provided for the establishment of grade levels primarily on the

basis of assigned duties and responsibilities. This system required that the *incumbent* and the *position* be divorced and only the requirements of the *position* be considered in the establishment of the grade level. The problem became very serious when the Civil Service Commission could not keep the standards up to date.

These facts all added up to many problems when the system was applied to research positions in which the *level* of operation is inherently dependent upon the *creative ability* of the *scientist* in the job. In the old systems the *job* made the *grade*; whereas the proponents of the new Research Scientist Evaluation Plan

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(RSEP) argued that the *scientist* made the *job* and the *grade*.

In essence then, our RSEP provides a method for evaluating and assigning a grade level to research positions on the basis of the complexity of the assignment and the demonstrated accomplishments and competence of the individual in the assignment. This is the "person-in-the-job" concept of position classification.

The RSEP presents real challenges to each research scientist.

- (1) He/she will be evaluated by a group of "peers" who are familiar with the area of work involved
- (2) Advancement is going to be on the basis of specific scientific contributions, and—
- (3) depends primarily upon their own accomplishments.
- (4) There is nothing automatic or periodic about promotions.
- (5) Promotions are contingent upon the scientist's own efforts.

Recall the point I made earlier about this being an evaluation plan. Promotion is only one of the possible results of this review. I would like to stress — there is nothing in the system which establishes automatic promotions or any periodic timing of promotions.

Position evaluations for research scientists GS-9 through GS-15 will be effected by panels consisting of a chairperson, five other peer group representatives, and the Executive Secretary from the Regional Research Personnel Evaluation Committee. Committee members will be GS-13 or above and serve for a 3-year term. Each panel will include at least two, but no more than three, representatives of the same peer groups as the cases to be considered.

Review will be based on individual case material and will include analysis and evaluation of: (1) the assigned area of research in terms of scope of responsibility and inherent difficulty and complexity, and (2) the quality of the scientist's performance as measured by demonstrated competence, accomplishments, and standing in his or her field.

Panels will make mandatory reviews of GS-11 and GS-12 scientists who have not been reviewed during the preceding 3 years; GS-13 scientists who have not been reviewed during the preceding 4 years; and GS-14 and GS-15 scientists who have not been reviewed during the preceding 5 years.

The evaluation material for each employee is sent to each Panel member at least two weeks before the called meeting. Each member reads, studies, and evaluates the case material, including selected publications. During the two-week period, particular members can obtain any additional information regarding the research which they feel they need in order to score the case. Also, each case receives an in-depth review by a panel member best qualified in that area of research.

When we come to our meeting, the first thing done on each case is to record a score from each member. Four basic factors are scored: (a) the assignment; (b) supervision received by the scientist; (c) the guidelines available to the scientist in his or her specific area and the originality demonstrated by the scientist; and (d) his or her scientific contributions.

After the initial score is posted on the case, discussion is opened. We try to bring out all pertinent facts relating to the *assignment* and to the scientist's *performance*. This discussion is strictly confidential.

The documented research is evaluated. This includes personal knowledge of the scientist's contributions. We look at the scientists' reputation in their field and any other pertinent factors which may be established through the discussion. Hopefully, the discussion leads to a consensus score. This means that we can all agree to and support the action decided upon.

If members cannot agree with a potential consensus score, they can prepare a minority report. This expresses the reasons for not agreeing with the score decided upon by the majority of members. This minority report is used infrequently, but it is one of the appeals systems built into the Plan.

To summarize then, the evaluation action of our Panel takes one of three directions: namely, promotion, remain in grade, or demotion. This illustrates once again that the mandatory evaluation is not an automatic promotion. It is a periodic measure of progress. I would like to emphasize that the "middle" decision, "remain in grade," requires that an acceptable level of progress be maintained by a research scientist. In addition to recommendations which suggest reassignment, additional training, or anything else which the members believe may contribute to better utilization of the scientist's skills.

Let us examine the components of the evaluation material. It is divided into two major parts. The first part, which is prepared by the supervisor, is the assignment. The second part, which is prepared by the researcher, is the accomplishments section. Accomplishments, of course, must be reviewed by the supervisor for accuracy. We insist that the supervisor clarify in writing this accuracy since this is part of the documentation supporting classification. Let us look at each of the three major components of the second half of the evaluation material a little more closely. These are the ingredients which the Panel needs in each accomplishment paragraph in order to evaluate the contribution. First, of course, is a clear concise statement of just what the accomplishment is. Second, a statement telling the significance of the contribution — its scientific significance, its practical value, or any other comment that helps us evaluate the significance. Some scientists have expressed the opi-

nion that there is no one on the Panel that can evaluate their research. If this feeling exists, then the statement on significance takes on even more importance.

Then, we need to know the scientists' roles in attaining the accomplishment. Did they do the planning, conduct all of the research, do all of the writing, etc.? If the accomplishment was a team effort involving joint authorship, the specific role of the scientist being evaluated is extremely important.

Publications, patents, etc., which document the accomplishment should be cited. This permits Panel members to examine these documents and ascertain for themselves the validity of the accomplishment as stated. Only those publications which have been accepted for publication can be cited.

Leadership accomplishments should be presented under Section 4 also.

In evaluating publications we look for these three factors: quality, frequency, and currency. Number of publications alone is not our only criterion as some seem to believe. Another part of the case material lists personal data. The final section of the case provides for other significant information, anything not covered in 4 and 5 which is important in the evaluation of the individual as a scientist.

The RSEP presents challenging responsibilities to each of the three parties involved in its operation. There is the responsibility of the scientists for (1) completing their research and documenting it, and (2) for maintaining the currency of their evaluation file.

There is the responsibility of the supervisor to (1) keep abreast of scientists' research progress; (2) encourage them to publish; (3) remind them to keep their evaluation file up to date; (4) recommend them for promotion when they are really ready for it; and (5) be sufficiently familiar with each scientist's accomplishments to certify the accuracy of descriptions and see that accurate descriptions are presented.

Finally, there are the Committee's responsibilities (1) of striving for equitable evaluation of the assignment and accomplishment of all research scientists in the Agricultural Research Service, and (2) stressing the importance of communication by supervisors of the findings and recommendations of the Committee to the researcher. We insist and ask for certification of this communication as it is extremely important for the growth and development of each research scientist.

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