

TAPES NEWSLETTER

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"BUILDING COHESION"

This issue of the TAPES Update kicks off a quarterly newsletter for MACOM and installation commanders and their staff and operating Civilian Personnel Offices (CPOs). We intend to (1) provide feedback on the system, (2) share good ideas about what activities are doing to implement TAPES, and (3) answer your questions. We will meet these objectives if you let us know what you want to read about in future issues of the Update, and most importantly provide us your **GOOD IDEAS** so we can share them across the Army.

TAPES REG/PAM/FORMS

Local Civilian Personnel Offices (CPOs) were sent a specified number of regulations, pamphlets and forms. All supervisors should have a personal copy of the pamphlet. Each unit should keep extra copies of the pamphlet so employees have easy access to the information. You may order extra copies of the forms from the Publications Center, Baltimore. For extra copies of the pamphlet, call DSN 221-8009/CML (703) 325-8009.

TAPES INFORMATION BRIEF

In June a packet of information highlighting essentials of TAPES was sent to all Army General Officers, Adjutants General for distribution to installation/post commanders (Colonel and below) and to Civilian Personnel Directors and Operating Civilian Personnel Officers. We hope this information proved useful. For extra copies, call MAJ Piccirilli, DSN 221-9610 or CML (703) 325-9610.

ELECTRONIC FORMS

TAPES forms may be electronically generated. Your Information Management Officer (IMO) should be in receipt of the templates as part of the next E-forms issue (Aug-Sep) from the Army Publications and Printing Command (USAPPC). Use of the forms requires PerFORM PRO Windows or PerFORM GEM Filler software which is available for purchase from the Navy Standard

Desktop Computer Companion Contract. Your local IMO will also have access to the TAPES forms via the Army Electronic Forms Bulletin Board. For further information, you may contact Mr. Jose Herrero, USAPPC, on DSN 221-6294 or CML (703) 325-6294.

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

Attendees at a recent Advanced Management Employee Relations course suggested these approaches for implementing TAPES:

- Point out the many similarities between TAPES and the Performance Management System to help soften natural resistance to change.
- Emphasize "easy to sell" aspects e.g. less work (standards provided, bullet narrative, check the box ratings), standardized rating cycles (Senior System), help better manage awards budget and reduce confusion of when ratings are due; employee participation, Rater/Ratee dialogue heightens morale/reduces likelihood of grievance.
- Devise innovative/effective training programs (videos, special bulletins). Encourage active participation by the Command Group and the Union.

DON'T FORGET!!

- Bargaining Unit agreements concerning TAPES must be forwarded to MACOMs for agency head review in accordance with 5 USC section 7114 (C). The Directorate of Civilian Personnel, ODCSPER, is available to assist installations going to the Panel.
- GS/WS 13 and above and SES, GM, ST and SL Ratees whose last rating period ended six months or more prior to 1 Jul 93, must receive a close out rating (annual rating) under the Performance Management System. The end date for this rating cycle is 30 Jun. The rating will be treated like any other annual rating. (For some this will be a second annual.)
- Performance plans (the Support Form) should be completed within 30 days of the beginning of the rating period. The initial plan **must** be reviewed and initialled by the Senior Rater.
- During initial counseling sessions, Raters and Ratees **must** discuss the meaning of DA values and examples of adherence so that each is clear on the others viewpoint.
- The Support Form may be supplemented with additional sheets of paper
- Performance plans should be developed for Ratees on long term training, as appropriate. If the Ratee is in a classroom environment, the plan may be developed based on the course curriculum.
- Identification/documentation of training and professional development requirements is an inherent part of the counseling process and as such should be included in the performance plan when appropriate.
- The TAPES HOT LINE (DSN 221-8009/CML (703) 325-8009 is operational to respond to any questions which can not be resolved at the local level.

FIELD QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q: If a measure is included in the written objective, do the preprinted standards have to be used?

A: No. The preprinted standards (measurement tools) are provided to meet regulatory requirements and to free the Rater from the time consuming task of developing them. The Rater may now use that time for the crucial task of discussing performance expectations with the Ratee. If the objective is written without a measure, the preprinted standards must be used in order to determine level of performance. Example: Develop lesson plan for TAPES training.

If the objective is written containing measurable criteria, there is no reason to use the preprinted standard. Example: Develop detailed lesson plans for the conduct of supervisory and employee training on TAPES. Ensure that course of instruction is designed to present to the audience a clear picture of their personal responsibility and knowledge of the system's procedural requirements. Lesson Plan(s) will be completed so intended audience is trained (insert timeliness measure).

Using the second example, Rater and Ratee know that the lesson plan must be detailed to the point of defining system responsibilities and procedural requirements. Timeliness may also be determined.

Q: Are supervisors/managers required to develop objectives for supervision and leadership and Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) responsibilities?

A: Yes

Q: Will Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) responsibilities lose their importance since TAPES rating formulas no longer require a supervisory/managerial Ratee exceed in this area in order to receive a top level rating?

A: No, rather than denigrate EEO/AA responsibilities, TAPES is designed to enhance Army's EEO/AA performance by facilitating the development of challenging individual goals. Review of the old system led to the conclusion that the "must exceed" requirement often led to the creation of easy to exceed standards. With TAPES, EEO/AA remains a critical program area for supervisory and managerial positions and as such Ratees are charged with establishing meaningful, challenging performance expectations which realistically meet organizational needs. By doing away with the absolute requirement to exceed the EEO/AA element, we believe the ratings assigned to that element will become more reflective of actual performance. To bring EEO/AA responsibilities into focus, TAPES features Army-wide standards, EEO/AA as a rated responsibility in the Base System and a special page outlining EEO/AA supervisory obligations.

Q: Who has the final say, when Rater and Ratee disagree on performance objectives?

A: The Rater.

Q: In the Base System, what is the overall performance rating for a Supervisory Ratee who receives Success in all responsibilities?

A: Successful Level 3.

Q: A GS-13'S last rating cycle ended 31 March 1993. What is the rated period as he/she transitions to TAPES?

A: Initially, 1 Apr 93 - 30 Jun 94 (Apr 93 - Jun 93 under a Performance Management System Plan then within 30 days after 1 Jul 93 a TAPES performance plan should be certified). Thereafter, the rating cycle will be 1 Jul - 30 Jun of each year.

Q: If the rating period for a PRMS (GM) employee needs to be extended beyond 30 Jun 93 to allow the 120 day minimum rating period, when will TAPES began for the Ratee?

A: On the first day after the close of the extended rating period (e.g. 1 Aug 93), the Ratee will begin developing performance objectives on the Support Form (DA Form 7222-1).

Q: Are local Interns/Functional Trainees serving in developmental positions targeted for graduation at the 9 level or above in professional or administrative series of work covered under the Senior System?

A: Yes

Q: An Intern's Performance Management System (PMS) rating cycle would have ended 31 August 1993. When does he/she start developing a TAPES performance plan?

A: 1 September 1993. Interns in a PMS rating cycle which is nearing its conclusion (e.g. 120 or less) should complete the cycle and at the beginning of the next rating cycle develop a TAPES performance plan.

Q: If a number of Ratees are on the same position description, is it possible for them to have the same performance objectives?

A: Yes, e.g. those which address the routine/regularly occurring position requirements. However; when appropriate, individual objectives (e.g. those addressing problem solving or innovative approaches and those related to professional development) should be reflected in the performance plan.

GOOD IDEAS:

Training is going very well throughout Army. Several installations have completed training on TAPES for the Senior and Base System. Some activities have given us permission to share what they are doing to help train and smoothly transition to TAPES.

At HQ, Information System Command, Doris Polite developed a slide show presentation on the Senior System. It includes a Question/Answer session and allows the user to self-pace his/her introduction to TAPES. She plans to follow-up with a similar presentation covering the Base System.

In Panama, Jack Penkoske has produced a 15 min video with the DCSPER and Director of Civilian Personnel introducing the work force to TAPES. Following the introduction is a walk through of the Senior System Forms. Panama plans to follow this effort with a video on the Base System.

The Commander, Military Traffic Management Command - Eastern Area, provided a copy of his Support Form to all GM employees so they would receive the necessary direction from the top to guide them in developing their performance objectives.

If we missed out on printing your GOOD IDEA, please let us know and we'll share it in the next Update.

N E W S B R E A K S

OPM PROPOSALS - The Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), James B. King, in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Compensation and Employee Benefits, outlined proposals that OPM would submit in the form of legislation to Congress to reform the performance management system. OPM's plan concentrates on general guidelines in the performance appraisal area that allow Agencies the flexibilities to develop tailor-made programs that reflect their organizational philosophy and support their strategic goals. TAPES does exactly that. For the past several years, Army has been a strong advocate for this flexible approach. The OPM proposals reinforce the implementation of TAPES. We will continue to follow this issue with positive anticipation and provide prompt information as it progresses.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS - The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (ODCSPER) has filed a brief with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) arguing that a Fort Jackson contract provision prohibiting the use of values and ethics in TAPES is nonnegotiable. The provision violates management's right under Federal labor law to direct employees, to assign work and to discipline. It prohibits management from holding employees responsible for complying with the Army's values and ethics in the accomplishment of their duties. The FLRA's decision will be precedential throughout the Army. If the provision is found nonnegotiable, there will be no duty to bargain on union proposals seeking to limit our use of values and ethics in the appraisal process. If found negotiable, activities will have to bargain on the topic if proposed by a union. Activities faced with similar proposals should, absent settlement between the parties, raise the matter to the Federal Service Impasses Panel like Redstone Arsenal has done on a similar issue. We'll let you know how these cases are resolved in a future newsletter.

NOTE: Many activities have successfully completed TAPES contract negotiations and report that approaches like the following helped:

- Prior to entering negotiations, the union was briefed on the intent and procedures of the system.
- Unacceptable proposals were countered with alternative language (work toward acceptable language. Don't declare proposals nonnegotiable)
- Pointing out how TAPES benefits the Ratee, e.g. system focused on good performer, emphasis on Ratee/Rater dialogue, instructions provided on how/when to counsel (DA Form 7223-1), Ratee has written input, standardized cycles reduce late rating, recognition of total Ratee contributions, generic standards display specific criteria for evaluating performance in supervision and Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EEO/AA).

RECURRING ISSUES

TAPES EVALUATION REPORTS AND OUTSIDE AGENCIES - If an employee decides to depart Army, his/her TAPES rating will present the picture of a valued and productive employee. TAPES ratings will reflect specific work accomplishments, a summary of major duty responsibilities, and positive comments about Ratee contributions which went beyond general work output (Values).

VALUES - Values are central to any culture and are fundamental to performance in any professional organization. Army leadership views the incorporation of Army's values into the civilian evaluation system as a gain for Army. With open dialogue and time, Rater and Ratee will look upon values and the role they play in meeting the mission from the same viewpoint. Leaving open the option to make comments; while encouraging that comments when made be positive is a technique which will result in a majority of ratings having positive comments. The process will enhance the Rater/Ratee relationship and reinforce commitment to the values. For those already wondering about examples of positive comments (other than the examples in the pamphlet) consider reviewing some of the citations used for award certificates. That's the document many Raters used in the past to recognize Ratee contributions which went beyond pure work output.

On the other hand, in the rare instance that a negative comment on values adherence is deemed appropriate, the evaluation report should never be the first instance the Ratee is informed that something is amiss. The report should be one of the last mediums (prior discussion(s), written warning), if not the last medium to address the shortcoming.

SENIOR RATER PROFILE - The Senior Rater Profile is intended to provide a fairer interpretation of what the overall summary rating means by putting the rating in perspective (how many other Ratees at the same grade did the Senior Rater rate at this level for the rating period). It is important to keep in mind that the profile is a ratings profile i.e., the Senior Rater's distribution of ratings for the same grade level for a one year cycle. It is not a potential profile (maintained over many years at PERSCOM) like the military. If this information proves useful e.g., to those making selection decisions, consideration will be given to maintaining it like the military. We'll continue to review feedback on the usefulness of the profile.

**PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR FEEDBACK
AND ESPECIALLY YOUR GOOD IDEAS SO WE
CAN SHARE THEM ACROSS THE ARMY**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the Evaluation Systems Office, PERSCOM, DSN 221-9659
/9660 or CML (703) 325-9659/9660. FAX DSN 221-0742/
CML (703) 325-0742.

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