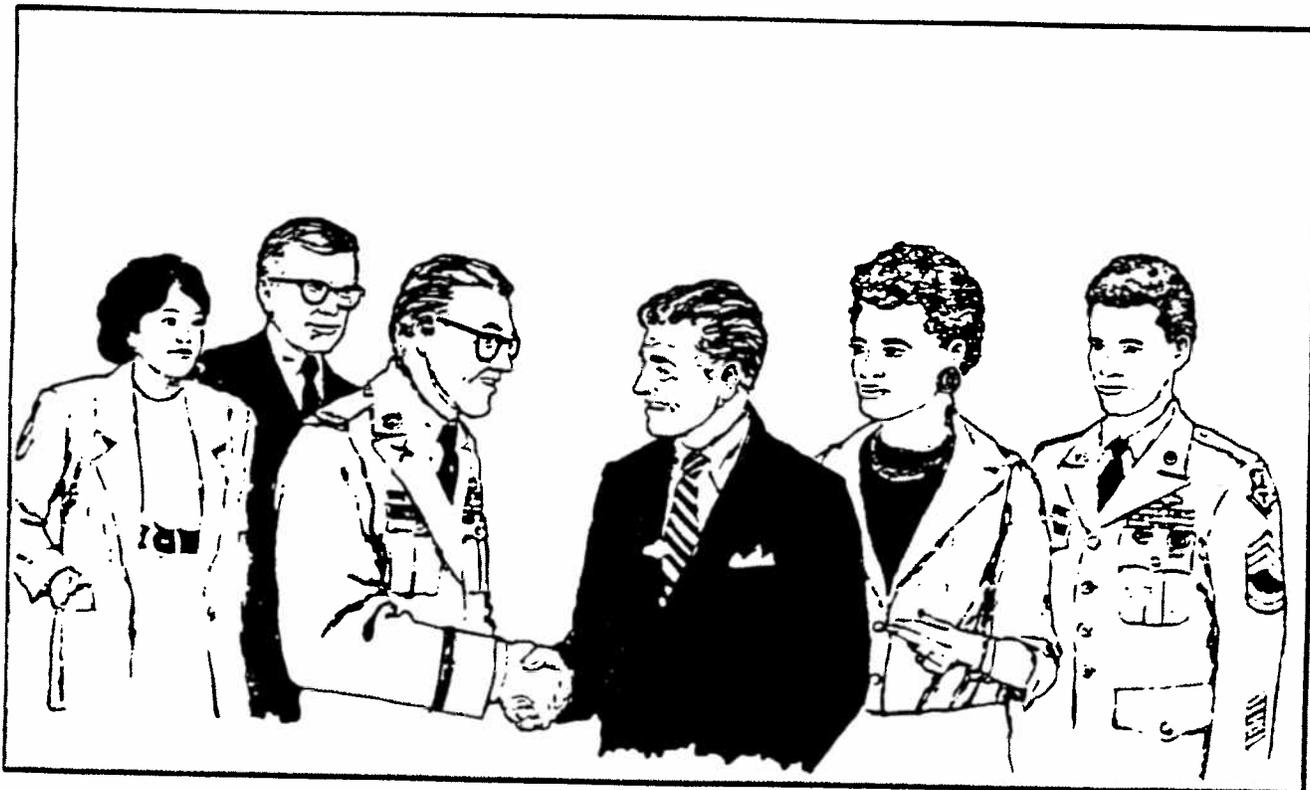


SHARE THIS WITH ALL YOUR
ACTIVITIES. THEY WANT THE
INFORMATION!!!

TAPES NEWSLETTER

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"BUILDING COHESION"

Many of you took the time to respond to the survey questions on the back of the October 1994 edition of the Newsletter. Thank you. In this issue we will start to share some of those comments and our response. We'll continue running the survey questionnaire throughout this year. The Headquarters, Department of the Army video on TAPES has been receiving good reviews. If you haven't seen it yet, contact your servicing Civilian Personnel Office (CPO). In this issue we introduce the first TAPES Single Issue Paper (SIP) -- How to Read a TAPES Evaluation Report. TAPES SIPs will be our way of discussing in brief form, a single item of interest to the field.

USER PAMPHLET

Once again, the Publications Center at Baltimore has restocked copies of the TAPES user pamphlet, DA Pamphlet 690-400, Chapter 4302. An account holder may request up to 25 copies without coming through the project office at PERSCOM. If more than 25 copies are required, contact the project office at DSN 221-8009/COM (703) 325-8009.

MID-POINT COUNSELING

The Army Regulation on TAPES, AR 690-400, Chapter 4302 requires that at least two counseling sessions be conducted each year; an initial and a mid-point. The Counseling sessions are documented on the Support Form for Senior System employees and on the Counseling Checklist Record for Base System employees. The mid-point for those in grades 13 and above should have occurred by now or be planned to occur in the near future. We continue to get reports that mid-point counseling is not occurring. Raters and Ratees should look at this failure as a missed opportunity. Feedback on how things are going, even when things are going perfectly, is a responsibility of the Rater and a right of the Ratee. Without

feedback, one can only presume that all is at least going well. This presumption might not be true. Failure to give feedback to a Ratee allows both the Ratee and the mission (since the Ratee's work supports the mission) to receive less than adequate attention. The mid-point can be as formal or as informal as the situation calls for. Just make sure it happens. **Raters should plan for it--and Ratees if it doesn't occur--ASK FOR IT.**

APPRAISAL/AWARD SYSTEMS OVERHAUL

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently issued proposals which seek to deregulate the performance management and awards systems. The aim is to grant agencies greater freedom to design flexible systems which would "fit" the culture of their organizations. Within the Army, these proposals are currently being staffed through command channels. Based on feedback from Agencies, OPM is expected to issue their final guidance in these areas sometime around late Summer.

WHO GETS WHAT?

Annual ratings (with the performance plan attached) are distributed as follows: Original to the Ratee, copy retained by the Rater, and a copy forwarded to CPO for filing.

Special ratings (with the performance plan attached) are distributed as follows: Original to the Ratee, copy for Rater preparing the Special, and a copy to the Rater of record to be attached to the Annual.

RATING RESPONSIBILITIES

On the Base System Evaluation Report, DA Form 7223, all four Responsibilities **must** be rated for nonsupervisory positions and all six **must** be rated for positions with supervisory duties. There is no allowance for a "not rated" Responsibility.

WHAT'S A GOOD PERFORMANCE PLAN?

Performance expectations should be specific, measurable and challenging. The Rater and Ratee should have worked together in finalizing the plan and an understanding, if not agreement should have been reached. The

Senior Rater's review and approval ensure that the objectives/tasks are mission related, challenging and head the Ratee and the organization in the right direction.

TAKING PERFORMANCE-BASED ACTIONS

Raters, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the performance plan contain clearly defined performance expectations?
- Are the results measurable and does the Ratee know what constitutes "Success"?
- Have you discussed examples of work at the "Success" level?
- Has the Ratee received all required training?
- Have specific instances of performance below the "Success" level been brought to the Ratee's attention?

If you answered "Yes" to **ALL** of these questions, you are well prepared to proceed with a performance based action, but consult with your servicing CPO first. If you answered "No" to any of these questions and believe you have a poor performer, consult with your CPO.

DON'T FORGET!!

- Read the TAPES user pamphlet (DA Pamphlet 690-400). It was designed to provide step-by-step instructions on the system.
- A performance plan must be in effect for at least 120 days (from the date the Senior Rater initialled) before an Evaluation Report may be completed.

- Rater and Senior Rater ratings on an Evaluation Report must be in agreement.
- All nonsupervisory Wage Grade employees belong to the Base System regardless of grade level.
- The performance plan must be attached to an Evaluation Report.
- Check either the "Yes" or "No" block in Part IVa of the Senior System Evaluation Report only if the Ratee is a Supervisor or Manager.
- Special Ratings do not go to the CPO for filing. They are however attached to the final annual rating.
- Document performance award nominations/approvals on a copy of page 1 of the Evaluation Report. No awards information on the original.
- The CPO cannot process a performance based award without a completed Evaluation Report attached to it to support the award.
- Each rated objective must be annotated with the appropriate objective rating, i.e. (E) - Excellence, (S) - Success, (NI) - Needs Improvement or (F) - Fails.
- Evaluation Reports may not be extended by additional pages.
- The TAPES HOT LINE (DSN 221-8009/COM (703) 325-8009) is operational to respond to any questions which cannot be resolved at the local level.

THE COMMANDER'S ROLE

- . SHOW INTEREST BY ASKING QUESTIONS OF SUBORDINATE CHAIN OF COMMAND AND CPO
- . PERSONALLY CHECK TAPES TRAINING
- . MAKE SURE RATINGS ARE DONE ON TIME
 - YOU SUPPLY DISCIPLINE
 - HOLD RATERS RESPONSIBLE
 - HAVE CPO GIVE YOU LATE RATE
- . PUSH LEADER DEVELOPMENT (COUNSELING/COMMUNICATION)

TAPES NEEDS COMMAND SUPPORT FOR SUCCESS. OER/NCO-ER/TAPES OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO RATEE AND THE ARMY.

(Excerpt from Commander's EEI, dtd Jul 93)

EXAMPLES FROM EVALUATION REPORTS

VALUES/Section V:

- Places the Army, the mission and subordinates first.
- Stable, clear thinking and reliable in stressful situations.
- The most competent secretary I've seen.
- Uncompromising in his integrity and moral courage when compromise would be the easy way out.
- Because of her recognized expertise as a labor counselor, general officers have often sought her counsel.
- Competent; flat out knows Army training and systematic training development; does what it takes to do things right.
- Often increases her workload to meet the needs of others. Sacrifices self for betterment of others.
- Demonstrates great flexibility in completing diverse projects.
- Selflessly volunteered for extra duty on numerous occasions.
- Excellent role model for junior clinicians.

BULLET EXAMPLES/Section VIb

- Attention to operation and concern for safety led to detection of a contractor's error and prevented a major accident.
- Works closely with subordinates on self improvement and expanding horizons. Great motivator.
- Planned and executed an environmental program that received 2 DA-level awards and 1 State award.
- Through exhaustive research, identified need for an Army Management Control Program at the Command and General Staff College.
- Took quick action to correct a situation that affected the work environment; counseled employees and made behavioral change occur.
- Provided superior leadership and technical training to a staff of inexperienced auditors.
- Primarily responsible for winning the _____ Community of Excellence Award.
- Identified and implemented procedures that reduced the food service budget by over \$500k.
- Exceeded the annual _____ energy goals and helped develop the technical design of an approved \$1.2 million energy savings project.
- Maintained number one rating in _____ for military pay accuracy rate.

BULLET COMMENTS (Performance/Potential)/Section VIIb

- Excellent communicator, both written and oral.
- Superb leadership as Chief of _____.
- Innovative, daring approach to job performance which has lead to unparalleled success.
- Top 5% of career field.

- Has the unique ability to motivate soldiers.
- Potential Chief of _____.
- Cares about his people and succeeds in creating great sense of pride and team.
- Demonstrates daily his ability to serve at higher levels of responsibility; merits promotion.
- Advocacy and negotiating skills are equaled by few and surpassed by none.
- Definite potential to serve in positions several grades higher.

NEWSLETTER SURVEY RESPONSES

Positive aspects of TAPES that were cited by respondents were improved communications, ease of completing the Evaluation Report, and increased Ratee involvement.

RESPONSE: Many of the TAPES goals, i.e. improving the civilian evaluation system, facilitating mutual understanding, and increasing employee involvement, are being met. We will continue to solicit and analyze your feedback as we work toward ensuring TAPES works at its optimum to meet the Army's needs.

A number requested information on writing performance objectives.

RESPONSE: We've addressed types of objectives and how to write objectives in this issue (pages 7 and 8).

Many asked us to address performance counseling.

RESPONSE: An initial counseling session (within the first 30 days of the beginning of the rating period) is required to ensure that the Ratee knows exactly what is expected. It offers the opportunity to discuss the job and how it will get done. At the mid-point (the only other required counseling session), both Rater and Ratee get a chance to see that things are on track and if not, to ensure the Ratee is clear on just what must occur in order to be considered successful in the position. At each session, specific examples of performance at the "Success" level should be discussed as well as examples of performance at the "Excellence" level in order to give the Ratee an idea of what to strive for. While two counseling sessions are required by regulation (AR 690-400, Chapter 4302), it is recognized that an integral part of good performance management is continual communication and feedback from the Rater to the Ratee. **Raters are responsible for ensuring both these sessions occur and how well they meet this responsibility should be taken into consideration when their rating is prepared.** The TAPES video (available from your CPO) shows an initial and mid-point counseling session being conducted.

- * **BE AS MEASURABLE AND VERIFIABLE AS POSSIBLE.** Rater and Ratee should be able to evaluate to what degree the objective was attained.
- * **RELATE DIRECTLY TO RATEE'S ROLE AND MISSION.** May be considered obvious; but good check for validity of the objective.
- * **REALISTIC/ATTAINABLE WHILE REPRESENTING A CHALLENGE.** Objective should serve as a motivational tool. In reach but not too easy to accomplish.

????? QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD ??????

Q: What's a Rater's recourse, if a Ratee refuses to initial the performance plan?

A: First, ensure the Ratee has participated in the development of the plan and the expectations have been discussed to the point of understanding, if not agreement. Then, if the Ratee refuses to initial, inform the Ratee that the following statement will be typed in the space where the Ratee would normally have initialled: "The Ratee refused to initial."

Q: What rating cycle does a Ratee on retained pay and grade use?

A: The cycle for the grade of the position to which they are assigned.

Q: How do I document that an Objective will not be rated?

A: Line through the Objective, write "Not Rated (NR)" and the date the decision was made.

Q: What is the overall performance rating, if a Supervisory Ratee in the Base System receives a "Success" in all Responsibilities.

A: Successful Level 3.

Q: Why have training as a rated Objective, when most courses are pass/fail?

A: A well written training Objective will include the expected results which should be measurable. Training is a tool for improving or enhancing performance. Both Rater and Ratee should be focused on the degree to which performance will be improved or enhanced as a result of the training experience.

Q: A GS-7 Base System Ratee received a Special rating in April 94 and was promoted to a GS-9 Senior System position in September 94. The GS-9 cycle was extended to 30 Jan 95 and the Ratee received an Annual. What are the dates for this Ratee's next rating cycle?

A: 31 Jan 95 - 31 Oct 95.

Q: If I choose to submit a performance based award after the Evaluation Report has been forwarded to CPO, what is the procedure?

A: Using a copy of the complete Evaluation Report (needed to justify the award), you would fill in Part III and submit the nomination through channels to CPO for final processing.

Q: What part of an Evaluation Report is optional to be completed?

A: Only Part V, the Values section; although we encourage Raters to use this section to make positive comments about how the Ratee showed adherence.

Several said refresher training would be beneficial.

RESPONSE: Many CPOs are conducting refresher training using the HQDA TAPES video.

Some of you wanted to know how rating forms are distributed.

RESPONSE: In this issue refer to "Who Gets What?" on page 3.

A number of you would like to see adjustments made to the system, e.g. delinking the Rater/Senior Rater box check, tightening the TAPES rating formulas, and altering the forms.

RESPONSE: TAPES is still in its infancy and there is much to learn about how well it's being accepted. We plan in the very near future to go back to the field with what we've learned so far and to respond to the issues that are being raised by you.

TYPES OF PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

ROUTINE -- Objectives that address the repetitive and commonplace duties that must be carried out. These are the duties that will produce less visible results, but will have serious consequences if not properly executed.

PROBLEM SOLVING -- Objectives that provide for dealing with problem situations. The objective should plan for or address potential problems so that time is available to deal with them without disrupting other objectives.

INNOVATIVE -- Objectives that create new or improved methods of operation in the organization.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT -- Objectives that further professional growth of an individual or his/her subordinates.

HOW TO WRITE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

* **START WITH AN ACTION VERB.** Achievement of a particular objective should come as a result of some sort of action. Commitment to action is basic to the formulation of an objective.

* **SPECIFY A SINGLE KEY RESULT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.** In order for a particular objective to be effectively measured, both Rater and Ratee should have a clear picture of when it has or has not been accomplished.

* **SPECIFY A TARGET DATE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT.** Objectives defining routine work processes may well have a target date at the end of the rating cycle. Project oriented objectives should generally identify a specific target date.

A TAPES SINGLE ISSUE PAPER

For those who continue to believe that the overall performance rating is the only way to determine the top performer or to distinguish the best of the best, we offer this food for thought:

HOW TO READ A TAPES EVALUATION REPORTSUPPORT FORM OBJECTIVES

- SCOPE/DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
- WHICH WERE RATED HIGHEST? WHICH WERE NOT?

RATEE CONTRIBUTIONS

- RATEE'S SELF-EVALUATION
- HOW WELL DOES THE RATEE DESCRIBE HIS/HER PERFORMANCE?

DUTY DESCRIPTION

- SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY/RESOURCES INVOLVED
- HOW DIFFICULT?

VALUES

- EXAMPLES OF ADHERENCE
- HOW STRONG IS ADVOCACY?

RATER'S COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

- SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENT
- HOW SIGNIFICANT WERE ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

SENIOR RATER'S COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE

- DESCRIBE OVERALL PERFORMANCE/ADDRESS RATEE'S PROMISE
- DEGREE OF ADVOCACY FOR RATEE'S FUTURE BENEFIT TO THE ARMY

SENIOR RATER BOX CHECK/PROFILE

- SENIOR RATER'S ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL PERFORMANCE
- WHERE IS THE RATEE'S RATING IN RELATION TO PEERS?
- IS SENIOR RATER TOUGH OR EASY?

For many the overall performance rating standing alone does not present a clear picture of the Ratee's level of performance. For those who use the Evaluation Report (hiring officials/awards and training committees, etc), it's usually the actual accomplishments of the individual that provide sound support for the decisions they will be making.

***** GOOD IDEAS *****

Larry Simone, at Corpus Christi Army Depot, made up a book on TAPES for each of his employees. Among the items contained in this book are the TAPES user guide, the employee's job description, and Larry's Support Form and that of the Senior Rater. In addition, Larry has developed an Accomplishment Sheet on which his employees may record their accomplishments on a monthly basis.

A checklist developed by representatives of the CPO at the US Army Corps of Engineers, South Pacific Division, helps members of the rating chain ensure they have taken all the actions necessary to complete a performance plan and the Evaluation Report.

Employee Relations Specialists with the Hoffman Civilian Personnel Assistance Center have developed a handout that reflects counseling dates and the responsibilities of both the Rater and the Ratee for ensuring it's a productive/informative process.

Personnel Specialists at HQ, U.S. Army Garrison-Panama have prepared a TAPES Guide for Raters and Senior Raters and a handy fold over card designed to sit on a desk. The card contains such information as counseling and appraisal dates, key points to remember, and the rating formulas.

As part of their TAPES refresher training, the Garrison Commander and directors in Panama viewed the TAPES video showing a Senior System Ratee develop and then discuss his performance objectives with his Rater. They also saw a skit in which the wrong way to conduct a mid-point was pointed out (short notice to the Ratee and the discovery there was no approved plan).

Bonnie Chambers of the Operations Center, Civilian Army Personnel Services, National Capital Region (CAPS-NCR) developed a TAPES Kit which can be used as appropriate by each of the Personnel Assistance Centers assigned to the Region. The kit consists of the TAPES video, TAPES Tips, and CAPS-NCR and TAPES Newsletters as well as sample forms and the TAPES user pamphlet. The kit serves as a handy resource containing all pertinent information in one place.

This is just a sampling of what many Personnel Specialists and managers are doing to ensure TAPES works -- keep sharing your GOOD IDEAS -- so we can pass them along.

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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(FOLD AND MAIL)

WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. The TAPES user pamphlet (DA Pamphlet 690-400) would be more helpful if:

- 2. I would like more information on:
 - A. Values in the workplace
 - B. Writing performance objectives
 - C. Performance counseling
 - D. _____ (write in)

3. What I like about TAPES (and the reason why) is:

4. What I would change about TAPES (and how) is:
