

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

# TAPES NEWSLETTER

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
PERSCOM EVALUATION SYSTEMS OFFICE  
VOL. 3 NO. 4                      NOVEMBER 1995



## “BUILDING COHESION”

### IN THIS ISSUE:

*Team Leaders as Raters, Page 2*

*Wage Grade Examples, Page 4*

*In Progress Review Responses, Pages 5-10*

During May of this year we solicited feedback on the TAPES Senior System from the Major Command (MACOM) commanders and Army Staff Principals. The overall sentiment expressed in this feedback was that TAPES is an improvement over the former system; however, the feedback also reflected some desired adjustments to the system. Most respondents mentioned improved communications, focus on the mission and ratee involvement as the primary benefits of the system. While it will take some time to staff and finalize any modifications to the system, in this issue we will share with you a sampling of the comments we received from the field. We thank all of you who took the time to respond, and we appreciate the positive comments made on the benefit of the newsletter.

### WHO SIGNS WHEN?

The Evaluation Report must go through the rating chain and be signed before it is given to the ratee for his/her signature. While a rater may discuss performance with the ratee, the overall performance rating cannot be discussed until it has been completed by the senior rater. The ratee's signature does not mean he/she agrees with the rating, only that the administrative data is correct and that the evaluation has been discussed with him/her

### TEAM LEADERS AS RATERS

We are currently working with the Office of the Judge Advocate General on a policy that would allow those in nonsupervisory positions (e.g. team leaders) to serve as raters. In the past, the interpretation has been that only those in supervisory positions (titled supervisor or with supervisory duties in the position description) could serve as raters. Now with increased supervisor/employee ratios and the growing numbers working within the team concept, additional flexibilities are needed. We are proposing that those in nonsupervisory positions be allowed to serve as raters as long as the senior rater is a supervisor. This would hold true unless the overall performance rating is below "Successful Level 3". In that case a

supervisor would have to serve as the rater and the next level of supervision as the senior rater. This exception is needed because only those in supervisory positions can propose or decide performance-based actions or deny a Within Grade Increase (WIGI)

### NEWSLETTER SURVEY

Much of the invaluable information on how well TAPES is working has come from the survey found at the end of each newsletter. All a respondent has to do is fold up the back sheet since our return address is already typed. If there are comments you want to make or issues you would like discussed in future editions of the newsletter, returning the survey sheet is the best way to ensure that happens.

### INITIAL COUNSELING

A performance plan must be initiated within 30 days of the beginning date of the rating cycle. Development of the performance plan and the ensuing discussion(s) between the rater and the ratee set the tone for what follows the rest of the rating cycle. Expectations should be clear. Agreement is the ideal, but understanding is key.



- An Evaluation Report is not complete without the performance plan being attached.
- A performance plan becomes effective the date it is initialed and dated by the senior rater.
- The senior rater rates performance in Section VIIIa of the Evaluation Report and comments on potential and performance (in general) in Section VIIIb.
- Values and how they apply to the workplace should be discussed during an initial counseling session and at others times as appropriate.
- There is no minimum period of time before one can serve as a rater or senior rater.
- If the rater or ratee departs within 120 days of the end of the rating period, an annual rating should be prepared.
- Special ratings do not go to the civilian personnel office (CPO) for filing. They are attached to the annual rating when it is completed.
- Base System and Senior System ratees who are supervisors must have specific performance expectations for supervision(organizational management)/leadership and Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) documented on their performance plan.
- 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.

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

**Q:** Can an Evaluation Report be prepared for an employee who was only available to work 60 days under an approved performance plan that was in effect for at least 120 days?

**A:** No. An employee must have worked at least 120 days under an approved plan before he/she may be evaluated.

**Q:** Can an employee be evaluated on changes made to the performance plan with less than 120 days remaining before the rating period ends?

**A:** Yes, as long as there is enough time to fairly assess the employee's accomplishments, e.g. additions to the plan only require a few days to be completed. Don't make the changes if they would require an extended period of observation by the rater or don't rate the additional performance expectations until the next rating period ends.

**Q:** Is it permissible for Base System employees to submit their list of accomplishments to a rater?

**A:** Yes, however, the list should not be filed with the Evaluation Report and counseling checklist.

**Q:** Does the senior rater have to make a statement on the ratee's performance and potential?

**A:** Yes. If the senior rater is relatively new, the rater may suggest some comments for the senior rater's consideration. Under no circumstances should this section be left blank.

**Q:** What happens when the rater is unavailable to prepare the Evaluation Report?

**A:** The intermediate rater (if there is one) or senior rater should prepare the report.

**Q:** Is it appropriate to add collateral duty performance expectations, e.g. EEO counselor objectives/tasks, to a performance plan?

**A:** No. Collateral duties are additional duties amended to an individual's position of record and therefore not a part of the primary purpose for which the position was established. If one wants to assess the accomplishments of an employee performing collateral duties, establish a separate performance plan. The bottom line is that failure to perform collateral duties successfully cannot form the basis for removal from the employee's position of record; it can form the basis for removal from performing the collateral duties.

**Q:** What is the required level of performance in order to grant a WIGI.

**A:** Successful Level 3.

**Q:** Can I prepare an Annual appraisal for a ratee who spent the better part of the rating period on detail and only has a Special appraisal?

**A:** Yes. The rating chain may choose to adopt the Special as the Annual by attaching the Special to an Evaluation Report indicating that the Special is accepted as the rating of record. This rating must be authenticated in Part II of the Evaluation Report.

### EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

#### PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS (WAGE GRADE POSITIONS):

Equipment operation: Ensures tractors & trucks are not overloaded.

Safety: Operates all equipment in a safe manner. Attends all safety meetings. Cleans vehicles and equipment once a week.

Accurately counts, verifies, and stores items in a neat and organized fashion.

Finishes special projects in a complete and timely manner.

Maintains safe and accident free driving practices.

Ensures work and shop areas are clean.

Processes all received items within two (2) work days.

Accomplishes summer maintenance and special projects within established time.

Keeps tools and work areas clean in compliance with safety codes.

**BULLET EXAMPLES FROM WAGE GRADE EVALUATION REPORTS:****Technical Competence:**

- o Established an effective system for record retention.
- o Great knowledge of the automotive and equipment field.
- o Produces more than expected in volume and quality of work.

**Adaptability and Initiative:**

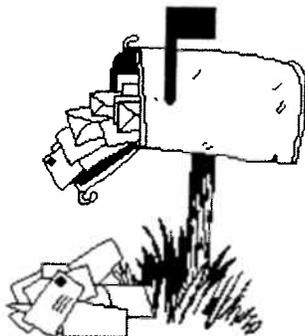
- o Adapts to change without interruption to the work schedule.
- o Responds to tough challenges with professionalism.
- o Seeks self development by trying new things.

**Working Relationships & Communications:**

- o Follows instructions well and tries to clarify anything not understood.
- o Always available for assistance as needed.
- o Uses communication skills to bolster the organization's image.

**Responsibility and Dependability:**

- o No instance of negligence during this rating period.
- o Very reliable, as evidenced during last snow storm.
- o Takes ownership of mission responsibilities.

**RESPONSES FROM THE FIELD ON THE SENIOR SYSTEM IN PROGRESS REVIEW**  
(A sampling of the many varied comments received from the field)**POSITIVES**

The implementation of TAPES has resulted in more meaningful civilian performance evaluation. It has tied performance directly to mission objectives and facilitated communication by passing those objectives down from the leadership as support forms are developed.

The opinion of the system as being simplistic enough to allow individualizing, yet structured enough to maintain control was stated on several occasions.

Other positive aspects of TAPES are the inclusion of the counseling and awards nomination blocks on the appraisal form and standard rating cycles for Senior System employees.

Overall, our experience with TAPES has been very positive. We believe the system meets the essential performance objectives in an evaluation system and believe that is it more user friendly than the former system.

### RATER/SENIOR RATER LINKAGE

Some agencies disagree with the requirement that the rater and senior rater agree, while others contend it enhances communication between the two by requiring them to discuss ratings.

Discussion on proposed action number 2 (allow rater to rate performance and the senior rater to rate potential) reflected failure to see a real need to change the system.

Agree with proposed action, would better meet the needs of the workforce giving the ratee a more accurate official rating with appropriate emphasis placed on potential.

It is the overwhelming opinion that the senior rater does not have the daily interaction and regular contact with the employee. Therefore, the senior rater should be eliminated.

The senior rater's rating on employee potential was viewed favorably.

Senior raters would like additional flexibility to render a more independent evaluation. Currently senior raters are virtually "locked in" by raters in determining the overall performance rating.

### RATING CYCLES

Standardized cycles help all parties to understand when ratings are due. This encourages timely receipt of appraisals and operating CPOs are better able to monitor delinquent reports.

The comments that were received were split with half stating leave the cycle as is and; half stating the local commander should be given authority to determine rating cycles.

General consensus was that, although there will always be dissenting opinions, the overall current cycle is a win-win situation for careerists, supervisors, and CPO.

Although the use of standard rating cycles has been an asset in monitoring the receipt of appraisals, we have had complaints from supervisors concerning the workload generated by this approach.

It is felt that activities should be given some flexibility in this area.

SENIOR RATER PROFILE UTILITY HAS BEEN DELETED

Completing the "profile" block seems to serve no valid purpose and holds the appraisals at the supervisor's level creating an undue delay.

A large majority of respondents dislike the senior rater profile and believe that it should be deleted from the TAPES form in its entirety.

Suggest we follow the military system and develop a cumulative senior rater profile. The profile is rather meaningless if we don't have a clear picture of whether a specific senior rater is an "easy" or "tough" rater.

Support the change to senior rater's assessment of the ratee's potential. The profile at this time provides no value to civilians.

Have not recognized this as a problem. Would prefer it become a tool for measuring potential vice assessment of rating reflecting past performance.

Almost all commenters stated the senior rater profile should be eliminated.

#### REQUIRING THE LAST THREE APPRAISALS FOR MERIT PROMOTION

We concur with the proposed action to include the last three performance appraisals for merit promotion actions.

Certainly, if the senior rater profile remains part of TAPES, requiring the last three ratings for merit promotion actions would increase its utility.

Nonconcur with the proposal to require that applicants provide their last three appraisals for merit promotion actions. We believe the potential benefits of this proposal are not sufficient to warrant the added paperwork requirement.

Agree to using the last three performance appraisals for merit promotion actions.

Requiring employees to provide their last three performance appraisals is an unnecessary burden on the employee, and increases the volume of papers to be handled by the personnel office. Any possible gain by providing a performance history is overcome by the foregoing.

The proposal to include the last three performance appraisals/rating potential, though interesting, would end the meaning of a senior rater profile as understood by the military supervisor.

### RATING FORMULAS

We agree that tightening of the TAPES formula will probably only result in more objectives being rated "Excellence." Recommend keeping as is and considering the Evaluation Report as a whole.

The rating formula seems to have resulted in the ratings being a little more realistic (a small percentage being rated "Excellence" in all objectives). We would suggest gaining the experience of another rating cycle before making any additional changes in this area.

Strongly recommend raising the percentage to at least 75-80%.

Respondents were evenly divided regarding rating formula options.

- The first option is to make no change to the current rating formulas. These supervisors reason that changing the formula will not change inherent inequities that always exist-- lenient versus harsh supervisors, varying "challenge" levels of individual objectives, and the difficulty in accurately measuring objectives.

- Of the supervisors who felt that the rating formula should be changed, all believed that it should be made more difficult to receive level I and that the formula for that rating should require either that more than 75 percent of objectives be exceeded or that 100 percent of objectives be exceeded.

Recommend no change to the rating formulas; however, this issue should be re-examined after the next rating cycle.

No matter what formula you use, it will be inflated so why beat this dead horse again.

### RATING LEVELS

There is limited support in the command for moving towards a three tier or pass/fail system at this time.

No support was expressed for going to pass/fail system.

We support a three level summary rating instead of five.

Go with "pass/fail." At least try it.