

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

TAPES NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 Issue 1

MARCH 1996

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE
PERSCOM EVALUATION SYSTEMS OFFICE



“BUILDING COHESION”

Inside This Issue

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH TAPES, Pg. 2 |
| 2 | QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD, Pg. 4-5 |
| 3 | EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD, Pg. 5-8 |
| 4 | ACTION VERBS FOR PERF. PLANS, Pg. 9 |
| 5 | WHAT IS PERF. MANAGEMENT?, Pg. 10 |
-

In this issue we'll share with you some of the exciting events that have occurred since the November issue. In response to your many requests, we hope that the examples from the field continue to be helpful. We still get a significant number of callers asking that the newsletter be mailed directly to them. We ask that each of you receiving the newsletter share the information with your coworkers. We remind you that the last two pages of the newsletter contain a survey sheet and our return address respectively. For those of you who receive the newsletter missing the return address, here it is: Commander, PERSCOM, ATTN: TAPC-MSE, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0442.

WE HAVE A WINNER!!

DC-0432-95-0671-I-1 is the document number of the performance-based action Army won before the Merit Systems Protection Board. In the written decision, the Administrative Law Judge cited that the appellant and her rater had an agreed upon plan, that the performance objectives were reasonable, sufficiently specific to permit an accurate measurement of the appellant's performance, and that the appellant was provided sufficient information on what was required to demonstrate satisfactory performance.

DOD PERF. MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

On 31 January 1996, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) approved the Department of Defense (DOD) performance management system. The DOD system is designed to allow their Components (e.g. DA, Navy) the opportunity to develop performance appraisal programs which best suit the Component's individual needs consistent with the DOD system and governing law and OPM regulation.

SYSTEM/ PROGRAM, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Put simply, an appraisal system is the framework of policies and parameters established by an agency (e.g. DOD) for the administration of performance appraisal programs. An appraisal program means the specific procedures and requirements

established under the policies and parameters of an agency appraisal system. For example, the DOD system requires a **minimum** rating period of 60 days, but does not set a maximum period. This means that within DA our minimum rating period **must** be at least 60 days long. (Within DA, the current minimum rating period is 120 days.)

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH TAPES?

As stated in the November 1995 issue, it will take awhile before the modifications to TAPES are staffed with the field. In the meantime, here are some of the changes under consideration: reducing rating levels from 5 to 3 (e.g. S-1, S-3 and Unsuccessful), tightening the rating formulas, and eliminating the current Senior Rater Profile. For those who would like to see the Senior Rater focused on potential instead of performance, we are considering having the Senior Rater assess potential (at least for some "senior" positions). If the Senior Rater remains involved in the performance rating, we are looking at having the Senior Rater only weigh in when the rating level is below or above Level 3. To focus more attention on the importance of the timely development of performance plans and timely mid-point counseling, we are also considering a provision for the ratee to have immediate recourse to the Senior Rater if either requirement is not met within the timeframe specified in the regulation.

YOU REALLY NEED A PLAN

Without an approved performance plan, an Evaluation Report cannot be completed. It is an OPM regulatory requirement that a performance appraisal be based upon a performance plan made known to the employee (within DA, the plan must be in effect at least 120 days prior to the preparation of an Evaluation Report). In addition, OPM requires that the plan be filed in the employee's Official Personnel Folder (OPF) or Employee Performance File (EPF) along with the appraisal upon which it is based. Aside from meeting regulatory requirements, the true importance of the plan is that when done correctly, it records the specific performance

expectations for which the ratee will be held accountable.

THE RATEE'S SIGNATURE

The ratee's signature on an Evaluation Report means that the information in Parts I and IV are correct and that the evaluation has been discussed. It does not mean that the ratee agrees with the rating or that he/she won't pursue informal or formal channels to get the rating changed. If after discussion and attempts to resolve the ratee's concerns, the ratee still refuses to sign the Evaluation Report, the rater should place a statement in the block where the ratee would have signed indicating that the rating was discussed and that the ratee refused to sign.



- **Conduct mid-point counseling...IT'S THE RATEE'S RIGHT!** It helps ensure things stay on track or get on track if need be.
- The senior rater must initial and date the performance plan in order for it to become effective.
- If the ratee or rater departs within 120 days of the end of the rating cycle, prepare an Annual Evaluation Report.
- If a performance objective or task is not to be rated, line through it, with the rater's initials and a date.

- **Performance problems addressed early in the rating cycle (consult the servicing civilian personnel office (CPO) for assistance) frequently result in the employee being rated at least "Successful Level 3" at the end of the rating cycle.**
- If a performance award is submitted *after* the Evaluation Report has been forwarded to the CPO for filing, a copy of the Evaluation Report (which justifies the award) must be attached to it.
- The ratee signs last, after the rating has been approved by the senior rater.
- Check the "Yes" or "No" block in Part VIa. of the Senior System Evaluation Report *only* if the ratee is a supervisor or manager. This indicates whether or not the ratee exceeded one or both of the specific performance expectations for Supervision (Organizational/Management)/Leadership or Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA).
- When the employee is on detail or temporarily promoted for 120 days or more, a performance plan should be developed and a Special rating prepared for the period.
- **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: What happens to a Special rating?

A: Special ratings are distributed with the original to the ratee and one copy each to the new rater and the rater who prepared the Special. The new rater must consider the Special when he/she prepares the Annual rating and a copy of the Special should be attached to the Annual.

Q: If I have to extend the rating cycle in order to rate my employee, is that rating considered delinquent?

A: No. A delinquent rating is one that is due but has not been received in the CPO within 45 days of the end of the rating period (or the period NTE 45 days set by the local commander).

Q: What is a "Bullet" and where do they have to be used?

A: Bullets are short, concise statements, not more than two lines, used only on the Evaluation Report form to describe Values, examples of performance, and the senior rater's comments on performance and potential. The bullet format does not have to be used in creating the performance plan or when the senior system ratee lists his/her significant contributions.

~~**Q:** What is the relationship between the Senior Rater Profile and Reduction in Force (RIF) points?~~

~~**A:** None. RIF credit is assigned based on the overall performance rating level, i.e. S-1, 20 years, S-2, 16 years, and S-3, 12 years. There is no RIF credit for a rating below level 3.~~

Q: I received my performance plan without the senior rater's initials. Is my plan in effect?

A: No. The senior rater's initials and the date determine when the plan becomes effective. The plan should be returned through the rating chain for the senior rater's initials and date.

Q: Do you have examples of any action verbs to help me get started on my performance plan?

A: Yes. Refer to page 9 of this issue.

Q: I received a new employee just before the rating cycle ended. The employee did not receive an Annual rating in the previous position. What do I do?

A: If the previous rating chain should have rated the individual, you may request that they complete the Annual. If they consent, you will not be responsible for rating the new employee until the end of the *next* rating cycle. If the previous organization is unable to rate the employee, you must extend the rating cycle until the ratee has completed 120 days under an approved performance plan, then rate the individual. The new cycle will be adjusted based on the end date of the extended cycle. **EXAMPLE: GS-12 enters position 4 Sep 95 and the extended rating cycle ends 15 Jan 96. Next cycle would begin 16 Jan 96 and end 31 Oct 96. Thereafter, the ratee would adjust to the Annual cycle of 1 Nov - 31 Oct of each year.**

Q: How do I convert a Special to an Annual?

A: Complete Parts I and II of the Evaluation Report Form. Place a comment on the form (e.g., Part IV) stating that the attached Special is accepted as the Annual. Attach the Special.

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

BASE SYSTEM

COUNSELING CHECKLIST RECORD, KEY POINTS MADE:

- Discussed the TAPES process, job description and rating chain.
- Clean, maintain, and operate vehicles, tools, and equipment in a safe manner.
- Ensure all trip tickets and dispatch forms are properly filled out and turned in on a timely basis.
- Conduct inspection and tests of plant utility system equipment for proper operation.
- Related importance of Values in Block V to the responsibilities of the job.
- Ensure areas dug up for repairs are returned to a natural state.
- Discontinuance of XEROX system will require transfer/conversion of wordprocessing files to new system. Must inventory archives to determine what needs transfer. Coordinate as necessary.

EVALUATION REPORT, PART Va, VALUES:

- Always works until the job is done; totally committed to mission accomplishment.
- Extremely competent.
- Always ready to assume additional responsibility.
- Excellent work habits.

- Effectively establishes task priorities.
- Can be counted on to carry out any given task.
- Committed to the success of the DRM Admin Office.

EVALUATION REPORT, PARV Vb, BULLET EXAMPLES:

TECHNICAL COMPETENCE Sustained 100% accuracy having no overage or shortage of funds

High skills level allows for quick repairs which minimizes downtime and increases customer satisfaction.

Knows military correspondence and procedures thoroughly.

ADAPTABILITY/INITIATIVE Constantly finding ways to improve our support.

Has supplies and employees on hand at a moments notice.

Continued efficient operation under new organization.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNICATION Expresses ideas concisely and clearly.

Team player, supports team decisions 100%, even if he disagrees.

Cognizant of all resources available. Constantly works with providers to get patient care accomplished.

RESPONSIBILITY & DEPENDABILITY Ensured materials/services provided despite short suspense.

Nothing ever falls through the crack; too efficient and competent to let this happen.

Considers workload when scheduling non-emergency leave.

SUPERVISION/LEADERSHIP Successfully lead three-man contractor team to provide extensive logistical support command-wide.

Motivates her employees to ensure productivity and customer service goals are consistently met.

Mission focused; consistent in his leadership.

EEO & AFFIRMATIVE ACTION Provided leadership opportunities for his staff.

Always treats customers, subordinates and peers with dignity and respect.

Participates in EEO activities and encourages all employees to do so.

EVALUATION REPORT, PART VIa, BULLET CMTS. (PERFORMANCE/POTENTIAL)

- **Made her office one of the best in my command in administration and correspondence.**
- **Has potential to become a supervisor of the plumbing shop.**
- **Quality of work is consistently high.**
- **Excellent craftsman, work is far above average.**
- **Eager to accept greater responsibilities.**
- **Superb Admin Officer. Combined technical and organizational skills to accomplish mission.**
- **Has the potential to progress to positions with increased responsibility.**

SENIOR SYSTEM

SUPPORT FORM, PART IV, MAJOR PERF. OBJECTIVES/INDIVIDUAL PERF. STANDARDS:

- **Use TQM techniques to maintain quality and streamline production processes.**
- **Develop effective burden sharing with _____ to optimize use of intelligence production assets at both locations.**
- **As staff resources drawdown, evaluate improvements in the command information management system to compensate for personnel shortfalls.**
- **Practice Equal Employment and Affirmative Action principles.**
 - **Ensure employees are aware of and observe EEO standards.**
 - **Take positive action to support the program.**
 - **Analyze causes of any allegations of discrimination and take timely/corrective actions.**
- **Manages and directs personnel assigned to the organization.**
 - **Counsels/appraises employees by due dates; every employee has at least one interim rating.**

TAPES NEWSLETTER BUILDING COHESION MARCH 1996

- Recognizes exceptional performance and takes corrective action for minimally acceptable or unacceptable.
- Maintains a professional and positive work environment.
- Takes action to reduce leave abuse.
- Reduce engineer response time for repairs. Coordinate windows of opportunity for preventive maintenance in all campus buildings.
- Reduce spending for expendable supplies by 15%.
- As the course director, develop the ___ course. Course development includes lesson content, selection of reading materials, and the determination of educational methodologies.

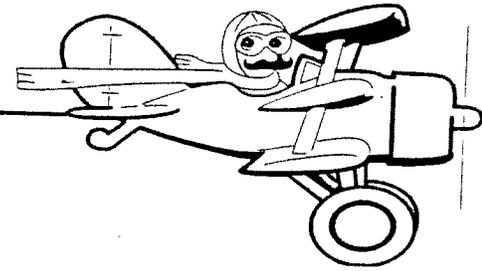
EVALUATION REPORT, PART VIb, BULLET EXAMPLES:

- Honored as 1995 ___ Civilian of the Year for her commitment to excellence in her work.
- Most thorough leader/manager in this command. Always provides best recommendation to the most complex problems.
- Always ensured the proper blend of people-mission orientation to guarantee successful mission accomplishment.
- Improved staff knowledge by directing training program for new librarians.
- Single-handedly accomplished entire workload of the Graphic Arts area for over 6 months. Met all deadlines as requested.
- Stood out as a steady influence during major restructure of administrative staff.
- Created new collection management process for the division. Resulted in more accurate tracking of imagery collected.

EVALUATION REPORT, PART VIIIb, BULLET CMTS (PERFORMANCE/POTENTIAL):

- Unlimited potential, ready for an SES position now!
- Knowledgeable, organized, accurate and dedicated to customer service.
- Has demonstrated ability to serve as a team leader.
- Destined to be a MACOM Chief of Public Affairs.
- Seeks challenge and responds successfully.
- Unique ability to assess problems and solve them before they reach crisis proportions.
- His pride in doing good work shows daily in his approach to the mission.

SOME ACTION VERBS TO HELP YOU WRITE
YOUR PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

DECISION MAKING

Approve
Require
Decide
Test
Accept
Authorize
Terminate
Render
Consider
Solve

MANAGEMENT

Execute
Approve
Direct
Organize
Meet
Establish
Manage
Anticipate
Evaluate
Plan
Adjudicate
Analyze

CHANGE

Modify
Upgrade
Create
Stimulate
Improve
Compare
Design
Make
Activate
Establish

PLANNING & CONTROL

Plan
Forecast
Assume
Allocate
Schedule
Control
Measure
Progress
Formulate
Acquire
Extend
Monitor

COMMUNICATION

Write
Inform
Declare
Interpret
Contact
Issue
Testify
Display
Critique
Brief

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Identify
Evaluate
Determine
Review
Analyze
Research
Define
Develop
Prepare
Recommend
Submit
Propose
Investigate
Compile

ADMINISTRATION

Purchase
Requisition
Reject
Store
Administer
Supply
Procure
Secure
Engage
Process
Insure
Reclaim

HELPING

Assist
Arrange
Give
Guide
Counsel
Serve
Contribute
Initiate
Solve
Motivate

AUDITING

Review
Analyze
Report
Conclude
Change
Recommend
Guide
Assist
Evaluate
Compare
Assemble

SUPERVISION

Adhere
Supervise
Request
Exercise
Participate
Maintain
Delegate
Encourage
Counsel
Assess
Develop
Report
Foster
Demonstrate
Meet
Assign
Motivate

EXTERNAL ACTIVITY

Negotiate
Represent
Cooperate
Publicize
Strengthen

PERSONNEL

Train
Select
Interview
Promote
Demote
Remove
Transfer
Handle
Employ
Appraise
Recruit
Screen
Discharge
Seek

A TAPES SINGLE ISSUE PAPER

SUBJECT: WHAT IS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT?

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines performance management as the systematic process by which an agency involves its employees, as individuals and members of a group, in improving organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of agency mission and goals. Put simply, performance management is about the effectiveness of an organization and its employees in meeting the agency's mission.

If we can agree that better meeting the mission is an important goal, why then is performance management often viewed as a meaningless paperwork drill. Perhaps it's because more focus is given to the paperwork used to document the process than the outcomes brought about by the process itself.

The basic procedural requirements of performance management as defined in OPM regulation are:

1. At the beginning of the rating cycle, communicate to the employee and record the expectations for which the employee will be held accountable. (Eliminate the guess work and assumptions)
2. Provide feedback to the rated individual at least once during the rating cycle to make sure things are on track. (Provide a reality check.)
3. Provide the employee with an evaluation of his/her accomplishments in relation to his/her performance expectations. (Give a report card.)

Simple, huh? Of course there is more. Performance management also involves, employee development, improving performance (both employee and organizational), recognizing and rewarding accomplishments and using the results of performance appraisal as the basis for appropriate personnel actions. Some have argued this is trying to accomplish too much with one system.

As the Army and most of the civilian Federal sector struggles with relooking their performance management systems/programs, **perhaps documenting the process would be more acceptable if we focused more on securing the benefits of the process, i.e., well informed/motivated/productive employees whose work efforts result in specific accomplishments that meet or exceed established goals thereby moving the organization forward. Why? Because, even if the process didn't have to be documented, we'd still have a stake in the outcome.**