

THE *Front-line Supervisor*

Presented by **DOR**

Helping you to manage your company's most valuable resource -- your employees.

September 2009

CASE 1 Positive Performance Appraisals

➤ **Q** Can you provide some tips that will help me be more positive and effective in evaluating my employees' performance this year? What are some trouble spots that supervisors must be careful to avoid?

A. The most overlooked benefit of a performance appraisal is its potential to bring employees and their supervisor closer together as partners in maximizing the employees' productivity. So remember to view performance appraisal as a way to help employees improve, not as something that is punitive in nature. Performance evaluation meetings are a two-way street. Employees should never be surprised by your areas of concern. Ambushing them with previously unknown complaints about their performance creates distrust. Always end meetings where you are discussing performance by providing exact instructions on how your employees can improve, and be sure they understand how to earn better ratings in areas that you've marked for improvement. Focus on successes as well as shortcomings. Be sure to praise and thank individuals for tasks that they have performed well at various times during the year. Be specific. For help developing your performance appraisal skills further, contact DOR.

CASE 2 What should I document?

➤ **Q.** What is the part of the documentation process that can be most challenging for supervisors? How does a supervisor create documentation that isn't just a piece of paper that simply represents the supervisor's word over that of the employee's?

A. Documentation of employee performance is often difficult for a supervisor who does not understand how to separate his or her emotional reaction to the employee's behavior and write effective notes that clearly support his or her position. Instead, the supervisor unwittingly slips into writing documentation that personally attacks the employee or makes judgments about the employee's character. Frequently, a supervisor will insist that his or her documentation is accurate and objective, even though the employee may also feel his perspective is accurate and objective. A powerful technique, but one often omitted from supervisor documentation, is to provide concrete examples of what is being discussed: complaint letters from customers, time cards showing proof of an employee's lateness, a consultant's analysis of the employee's poor productivity. Documenting the employee's perspective and response to your position is also powerful.



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