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Three ways to make your company's performance reviews more effective

Effective performance review procedures don't come into place without careful planning. Here are three tips to remember:

1. Annual performance reviews by themselves don't work.

Most employees want immediate feedback when they do something wrong, and especially if they do something right. Managing performance is about making sure employees are effective on an ongoing basis. Having regular monthly, weekly, or even daily, discussions with employees about what they are doing well and where they can improve is critical to effectively managing performance. A once-a-year meeting can certainly be used to summarize performance from the previous year, but there really shouldn't be any surprises at that meeting because all issues have already been discussed during the year.

2. Have a normal dialogue.

Have regular, informal, ongoing discussions with employees to find out what's happening with them. Have a normal, relaxed conversation. That way, when you do go into serious negotiations over salary or position, it's not an anxiety-filled exercise. After all, it's supposed to be a performance discussion, not an investigation.

3. Look forward, not just backwards.

Use a performance review meeting to discuss not only your observations of past performance, but also to set goals and targets for the upcoming month, quarter, year or whatever time period you need to consider. Discuss areas in which the employee wants to develop to advance their career, and how the company can help them achieve that. Talk about how the employee's position supports overall company objectives and the part they play in helping the company succeed. •

Information provided by Clear HR Consulting Inc. in Vancouver.

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